

BAPTIST TRUMPET

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Are You Ready to Be Home?

By Jeff Herring, Executive Editor

I was blessed to be able to get away after the paper went out last week to spend some time with my family over spring break. We spent a lot of time driving in the car together, but also just enjoying some great activities and quality time with each other. Besides a getaway with the family, it was also a celebration of my daughter, Abigail's 22nd birthday since last year's celebration was limited due to the pandemic lockdowns that were in place. I should also note that I failed to mention in last week's article that "all" of my family was not able to be in Nixa last weekend since my girls were visiting a friend in Virginia. (I got in trouble for not making that distinction last week ☺.)

Kristin, Austin and I left Tuesday afternoon to meet the girls in Knoxville, Tenn. We spent the night and then headed to Gatlinburg for a couple of days.



On Friday (Abby's birthday), we headed to Nashville to visit some friends and celebrate Abby's special day. Our plans were to head home Saturday afternoon, but due to the heavy thunderstorms that were expected between Nashville and Little Rock, we ended up staying over and leaving early Sunday morning.

We traveled over 1,200 miles and spent 20+ hours in the car. As I drove the final leg heading back home, we crossed the I-40 bridge and passed the Arkansas sign, and I had the thought, "I'm ready to be home!" We had a great time and enjoyed some great quality time together as a family and with some great friends, but there is nothing like being home and sleeping in your own bed.

I also thought about this coming Sunday when our church will resume full in-person worship with a special Easter service on the parking lot. The following week, we will be back to our regular service schedule with Bible study classes (Sunday School) for the first time in over a year. The same thought crossed my mind, "I'm ready to be home!" While I am so thankful for the technology that even allowed us to join the live worship service as we drove home this past Sunday, I am so looking forward to being back "home" with my church family. There is nothing that can take

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MOVING with Ministers and Staff

This is only a news column, and the publishing of a person's availability should not be considered a recommendation by the Trumpet. To view previous listings from this column, visit our website at www.baptisttrumpet.com.

Joel McMasters has accepted the pastorate of Central Baptist Church in Trumann and is already on the field.

Immanuel Missionary Baptist Church in Jonesboro is seeking a full-time pastor and interim pulpit supply. For more information, please call (870) 205-8195 or send resume to P.O. Box 355, Jonesboro, AR. 72403-0355.

Dr. Ray Thompson has retired as pastor of Enon at Gilmer, Texas.

Chris Price is available for pulpit supply. He is a member of Mt. Calvary, Carthage, Texas and can be contacted at (903) 203-4958 or pastor.chris.price@gmail.com.

First at Palmer, Texas is seeking a pastor. Send resume to pastorsearch@fbcpalmer.org or P.O. Box 70, Palmer, Texas 75152.

Northside at Garland, Texas is seeking a pastor. Send resume to Linda Arnold or Betty Hoffman, 2510 N. Glenbrook Drive, Garland, Texas 75040 or northsidegarland@gmail.com. For more information, call (972) 495-2986.

Enon at Gilmer, Texas is seeking ordained ministers as well as licensed ministers for pulpit supply. Contact steven.waller60@yahoo.com.

Lighthouse at Payne Springs, Texas is seeking a bivocational pastor. Send resume to P.O. Box 142, Eustace, Texas 75124 or shirleyrawlinson46@gmail.com.

New Bethlehem at Cut and Shoot, Texas is seeking a bivocational pastor. Send resume to 14630 Millmac Road, Conroe, Texas 77303 or nbbc2112@consolidated.net.

Calvary First at Mesquite, Texas is seeking a bivocational senior pastor. Send resume to Mike Lampkin, 1001 Walford Drive, Forney, Texas 75126, mike_lampkin@att.net or call (214) 862-4406.

Lakeridge at Lubbock, Texas is seeking a senior pastor. Send resume to Karen Isaacs, 4601 82nd Street, Lubbock, Texas 79424, psc@mylrb.org or call (806) 771-0514.

Keltys First at Lufkin, Texas is
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Virtual Women's Conference

By Heidi Sorrels, BMA Pastor's Advocate • Healthy Church Solutions

BMA ladies, you don't want to miss "She Smiles," a free, online event with Katy McCown on Tuesday, April 6 from 6:30-8 p.m. hosted by BMA Missions, Healthy Church Solutions and the Healthy Church Podcast. This event is for pastor's wives, women in ministry and ladies of any age who need to be reminded that fear doesn't have to have a hold on us! There will be three door prize drawings of Katy's new book, *She Smiles Without Fear: Proverbs 31 for Every Woman*. Register and get your link by contacting Heidi Sorrels at heidi@bmaam.com to sign up and be entered in the drawing.

Katy is president of She Laughs Ministries, a writer for Proverbs 31 Ministries and a national speaker. Through all life's uncertainties and surprises, Katy has learned some things about "living sure" even when the future is not. She and her husband, Luke, a former NFL quarterback, are raising six children on their ranch in Texas. They are members at Larry Barker's church and serve there faithfully as ministry leaders. Katy was interviewed recently on the Healthy Church Podcast. If you'd like to know more about her, you can listen to it by visiting cutt.ly/KatyMcCown.



Encouragement for Women

By Linda Black, 1st Vice President of Arkansas State WMA

I encourage all ladies of the BMA to attend a district, state or national WMA meeting, even if you don't have a local ladies WMA, because of the encouragement and fun you will have with other ladies of the BMA. You will get to know some wonderful women that have life experiences and valuable knowledge that needs to be shared will all, especially younger ladies who will learn and gain beneficial insight.

Just a reminder that the State Ladies Retreat is Sept. 18, (notice the date change) from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Central Baptist College in Conway. Make plans to attend and have some fun and get to know other women in the BMA.

The National BMAA meeting is Aug. 2-4 in Waxahachie Texas at Farley Street Baptist Church. Watch for more details in the *Baptist Trumpet* in the coming months.

Book Swap/Trade/Repurpose

Where? WMA Ladies Retreat @ CBC

When? September 18, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

What? unused or slightly used Bible study books, christian novels, commentaries, bible dictionaries, concordances, children's literature and books, christian books, etc.

Who? You, your friends, your neighbors and any other women you can drag with you to our retreat!

Before coming to the retreat, rummage through your bookshelves, closets, cedar chests, storage totes and any other hiding place you stick stuff, and bring books as described above. You will be giving your books freely, and in exchange you will be able to freely take books of your choosing back home with you. The state officers will gather any books not taken and decide how they can best be used.





Terry Kimbrow
President

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Men's Basketball

• **Kansas City, Mo., March 25** — For the second consecutive season, CBC has had two players named NAIA All-Americans. Only players that were selected to the American Midwest Conference's (AMC) first team are eligible to become All-Americans, and those two players for CBC were **Tedrick Wolfe** and **Kelvin Robinson**, who both earned honorable mention honors from the NAIA.

Volleyball

• **Little Rock, March 23** — Heading to the road for the first time this spring season, CBC took on the Panthers of Philander Smith College at Mims Gymnasium. CBC (10-11) lost the first two sets, took the next two and lost in the fifth to PSC (9-8) by scores of 23-25, 22-25, 29-27, 25-17, 15-8.

• **Conway, March 27** — Looking to return to a .500 record, CBC hosted the Stars of Stephens College in an AMC tilt inside Reddin Fieldhouse. CBC (11-11, 4-4 AMC) took care of business, sweeping the Stars (3-9, 1-6 AMC) 3-0 by scores of 25-22, 25-15 and 25-19.

Baseball

• **Conway, March 27** — After splitting the first two games of the series, CBC looked to take the final two games from William Woods at Victory Field. CBC (10-9, 4-4 AMC) mounted comebacks but came up short in both games, falling 10-9 and 8-5 to WWU (13-7, 5-3 AMC).

Softball

• **Conway, March 27** — Opening AMC play, #13 CBC took on the Owls of William Woods University at City of Colleges Park. #13 CBC (14-6, 2-0 AMC) scored 13 runs on 25 hits in a doubleheader sweep, winning 5-1 and 8-1 over WWU (6-10, 1-3 AMC).

Track & Field

• **Shawnee, Okla., March 27** — Competing for the third time this season, CBC was at Oklahoma Baptist University for the Bison Invitational. CBC had many athletes that set personal records on the track.

On the men's side, **Dylan Burnham** competed in two events, finishing fifth in the 400-meters with a time of 51.60 and setting a PR in the 200 with a time of 23.01 which was good for a 14th place finish and both times are the best in the NAIA this season. **Jamal Washington** competed in both the 100- and 200-meter races, posting an 11.18 in the 100, best in the nation so far, and a 23.08 in the 200. **Javon Cooper** ran a 14.83 in the 100 while **Ryan Chamberlain** posted a time of 52.41 in the 400 to finish ninth and post the third fastest time in the NAIA.

On the women's side, **Ally Swaim** did it again, besting her personal record



Student Ministry Matters

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Audio Learning Through Podcasts

Over the past few years, podcasts have made a real impact in the area of continuing education for those of us in ministry. While there are plenty of podcasts out there that are simply fun stuff to listen to, there are a number of great podcasts being produced that can help you as you serve. I think of them as **free** continuing education. We are all looking for inexpensive ways to grow ourselves.

If you have never listened to a podcast and are not really sure how to, it is much simpler than you may realize. Most of us are walking around with the easiest means to download them. Apple iPhones have a Podcast app and other phones offer similar services. Simply go into that app, put in the name of what you are looking for and check it out. If you don't want to utilize your phone, you can often find the podcasts through social media or some will have their own websites.

Even after understanding how to find and listen to them, the question of what remains. What do I listen to? There are thousands upon thousands of podcasts being produced. Let me highlight a few being produced by people in our circles:

• **The Healthy Church Podcast** — Larry Barker (director of North American Missions for the BMAA) and Drew Cline (pastor of South City Church of Little Rock) share episodes focusing on the health of churches. They talk about the many different aspects of life and ministry in the church. For those concerned about your local church, Larry and Drew share encouragement and practical ideas to strengthen our churches.



• **The Preaching Lab** — Clif Johnson, Adam Thomas, Dustin Wisely and Jason Goodwin serve as the regular hosts on this podcast about preaching and pastoring. Their heart is to help the bi-vocational pastor get the most out of his preaching. They are fun to listen to as they speak about the primacy of preaching. They currently have 100 episodes available.

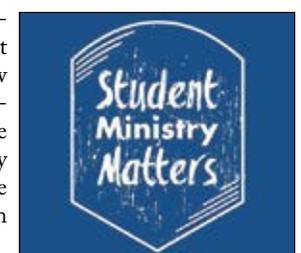
• **Chair 2 Leaders** — Hosted by Ben South and Danny Smith, this podcast provides encouragement for those of us serving in the second, third or fourth positions of authority in the local church. Most student ministry workers will find themselves in that type of role. Ben and Danny provide great interviews and words of exhortation.



• **Day by Day & The Lori Cline Show** — Both of these podcasts are from Life-word Media Ministries. They are the audio of their daily social media video shows. If you are unable to sit and watch their shows, these podcasts serve as a great way to enjoy the content that Clif Johnson and Lori Cline share. They provide words of encouragement that we all need right now.



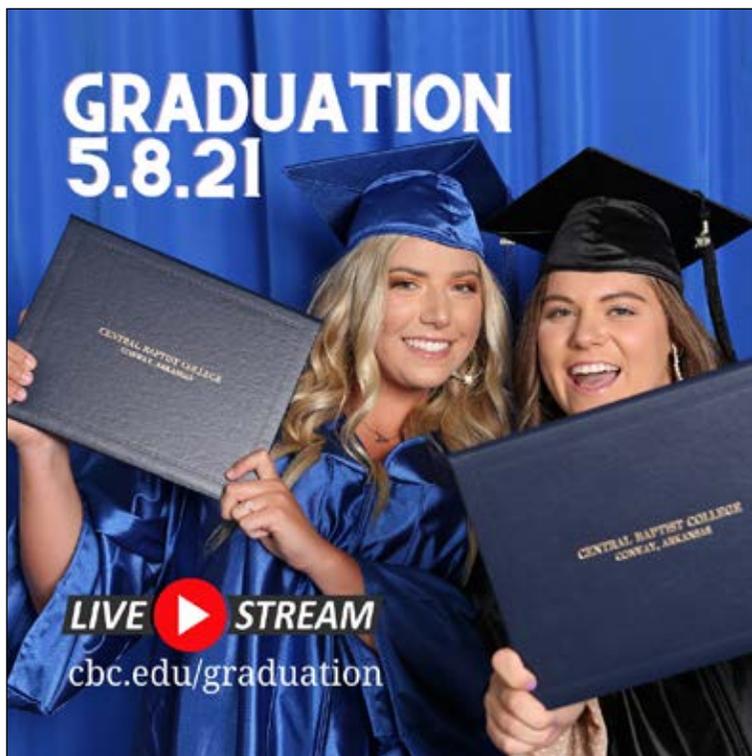
• **Student Ministry Matters**. This is our podcast that seeks to continue the conversation about student ministry. We cover topics and interview leaders that can provide insight into different aspects of student ministry. Chris Vines and Zac Lee serve as my co-hosts as we seek to provide weekly helps for those working with students. It can be found at studentministymatters.podbean.com or through most major podcasting platforms.



This is far from an exhaustive list, but it does highlight those in our work that are utilizing this avenue to impact others. If you haven't tried podcasts, this is a great place to start for those of us in ministry.

in the 100-meter hurdles with a time of 14.57 that sits as the third fastest time in the nation and just .02 seconds off the NAIA A Standard time. She also competed in the 200-meters and finished 12th with a time of 26.76.

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Spring 2021 Commencement Announced

Central Baptist College is pleased to announce that our Spring 2021 Commencement will take place on Saturday, May 8. Due to the continuing concerns surrounding the COVID-19 global health pandemic, we will once again offer private ceremonies for each graduate.

This year's class consists of 131 total graduates, 107 in the Traditional program and 24 in the PACE program. Our Academic Leadership Team is organizing this year's commencement activities, and the directives and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and by the Arkansas Department of Health will be taken into consideration as 100 of this year's 131 graduates are making plans to participate in this year's ceremony.

Each graduate who participates will be given a private appointment time. Upon entry into the Harold E. Cooper Educational Complex, the graduate and their entire party will be escorted to a private holding room where he or she will be greeted by either a CBC staff member or a student volunteer. While graduates wait for their official graduation time, a CBC faculty or staff member will be with them to pray specifically for each graduate.

At the appointed time, the graduate and his/her party will be escorted into the Burgess Auditorium for his/her private graduation ceremony. CBC faculty will be socially distanced throughout the Burgess Auditorium to celebrate with the graduates. Once the graduate's guests are settled, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Gary McAllister will officially present the graduate by announcing his/her name and degree earned. The graduate will then walk across the stage, receive a diploma from President Terry Kimbrow and have a photo taken. Photography will be provided by *Donna Evans Photography*.

The graduate will then be able to walk from the Harold E. Cooper Educational Complex, down the Legacy Walk and through the Ratliff Bell Tower, where he/she will be able to take photos and celebrate with his/her family and friends.

For more information about CBC's Spring 2021 Commencement, visit cbc.edu/graduation. A livestream of graduation will also be available at this site. Graduates will be able to inform friends and family of their approximate graduation time so those who cannot attend in person can watch the livestream. 2021 graduates should check their college issued email accounts for graduation information.

Graduates who are unable to participate in person will have their diploma, tassel, program and any cords they have earned, mailed to them.



HEALTHY CHURCH SOLUTIONS

P.O. Box 878 • Conway, Ark. 72033-0878
(501) 455-4977 • larry@bmaam.com

LARRY BARKER, Director of Operations North America
BMA of America Missions Department

healthychurchpodcast.com • healthychurchsolutions.org (coming soon)



The Confusing In-Between

As a leader, there have been a disproportionate number of losses and challenges over this last year. Your church is nowhere near where you believed it would be this time last year. Anxiety, uncertainty and confusion are real during this time of confusing in-between. You thought things were getting on the right track, then the rug was pulled out from under you. People who were faithful cannot be found and people you invested in are not coming back. The dreams you had of where your church would be by now haunt you with what might have been. The toll that it has taken on so many people's lives weighs heavily on you.

Our western culture has programmed us to always be in control of the outcome. Success is seen as moving upward while getting bigger and better. Success is, all too often, determined by worship attendance, the size of our campus and how big the offerings are. What do you do when none of the above is happening and you do not know what to do? Where do you go when you have more questions than you do answers? How do you handle life when you feel like nothing is happening and you are not redeeming the time? How do you cope with not being in control of your ministry the way you wish you were?

Everyone has a picture of what the ideal church and ministry looks like, but it is very seldom ideal. You dream about the sweet by and by, but how do you deal with the nasty here and now? You have been programmed and molded by the culture to always be focused on producing and making things happen. Charisma and image have become more important than character. You have been told that it is all about how much you accomplish and being busy replaces being who God has called you to be. You are busy, but you are also overwhelmed, frustrated and severely undernourished spiritually by being driven to be "successful."

In *Intimacy with the Almighty*, Charles Swindoll shares this quote from a pastor: "Nobody around me knows this, but I'm operating on fumes. I am lonely, hollow, shallow, enslaved to a schedule that never lets up." Does that describe you all too well? Does that hit way to close to home?

It is very easy to emphasize doing for God over being with God. Yet, Jesus Himself understood the importance of pulling away and getting alone with the

Father. In the very beginning of His ministry, we read in Mark 1:35 (HCSB), "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed."

Jesus began His ministry with 40 days of prayer and fasting in the wilderness. Satan offered Him three shortcuts to get what He wanted instead of waiting on God's timing. He refused to break His fast, bypassing God's plan, and fix His hunger problem. He rejected the idea that He had to place Himself in a position to require God's supernatural deliverance. He refused to believe that

and waited on His provision. He willingly submitted to God's timetable and waited for the Father to exalt Him at exactly the right moment. Why do we view waiting on the Lord as wasting time and opportunity? Jesus didn't!

Have you allowed your checklist, schedule, busyness and frenetic activity to replace the importance of being still and silent before Him while listening to His voice? If you desire to abound in Christ and flourish with Him, you must first be willing to abide with Him. Maybe when you are experiencing a confusing time of in-between, God is saying to the Martha in you to slow down for a minute. Maybe God is saying to the Mary in you to feel free to sit at His feet and enjoy His presence. Maybe, just maybe, He is getting your attention. "But the Lord is in His holy temple; let everyone on earth be silent in His presence" (Hab. 2:20).

During those times when you have more questions than you have answers, it just might be that God has you right where He wants you. He wants you to begin asking, "Lord, what are you doing? How can I cooperate with your plan?" You determine to wait on His instructions and His timetable and resist the temptation to fix it yourself. God's timing is always perfect. Solitude and silence in His presence has been referred to as the furnace of transformation, especially in the moments of uncertainty because of the seasons of the confusing in-between that occur in all of our lives. Waiting on Him is the path to intimacy with the Almighty.

This last year has definitely been challenging, but you can rest assured that God had and still has a plan to transform you from the inside out. He is teaching us to become even more aware of how powerless we are and how little we actually are in control. God has been emptying us of ourselves and humbling



MOVING (Continued From Page 1)

seeking a full-time lead teaching pastor. Send resume, ministry philosophy and any sermon links to jobs@keltys.org or to P.O. Box 3043, Lufkin, Texas 75903, Attn: Pastor Search. Visit keltys.org/pastorsearch for more information and a job description.

First at Morton, Texas is seeking a pastor. Send resume to jimmysealy@aol.com or to FMBC Box 981, Morton, Texas 79346.

Campground at Gulfport, Miss., is seeking a pastor. Please send resume to southernirrigation@att.net.

Matt Barker of Nixa, Mo. is available preaching appointments as the Lord leads. Contact him at (501) 408-9500 or mattbarker1988@gmail.com

Douglas Brand, a member of Fellowship Baptist Church in Potosi, Mo., is available for preaching appointments as the Lord leads. He also has experience in music ministry. Contact him at (573) 315-0930, (573) 315-0931 or dbrandministries@gmail.com.

Caleb Houston, youth minister of Kewanee, Mo., is available for weekend revivals, youth events and pulpit supply. Contact him at (573) 521-7826 or calebhouston@yahoo.com.

Denver Page, a member at Landmark, DeSoto, Mo., is available for preaching appointments as the Lord leads. Contact him at (636) 942-3503.

us to sit in His presence, listen to His still small voice and wait for His direction. During this season of the confusing in-between, you must realize that waiting on Him does not mean doing nothing. It requires solitude, stillness

Just Thinking...
By Tom Mitchell
President, BMA of Arkansas
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How Long is Everlasting?

In my nearly 57 years of ministry, the one question that seemingly persists is, "Can a believer lose his salvation?" Of course, the answer is a resounding, "No!"

Still, there is always the need to elaborate. I usually respond to the person by asking a series of questions:

- First, "Do you believe that Jesus has forgiven your sins so that you may have everlasting life?" Almost always the answer is, "Yes."

- Second, "How long is everlasting?" The answer is usually the correct one: "It is never ending."

When Jesus was conversing with Nicodemus about being born again, the Lord told the man, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

- That brings about asking a third question. "Do you have everlasting life the moment Christ saves you or do you wait until you die to gain it?" The correct answer is, "I received it at

and silence as we seek His face, pray without ceasing, and stay in His Word.

What is God saying to you, during the confusing in-between, and what change does He want you to make in your life and in your ministry?

the moment I was saved."

- I then ask, "Do you think Jesus is a weak Savior?" "No! Of course not!" is the answer given. I then say, "Only a weak Savior would let one whom He has saved slip from His grip."

- Next question: "Does Jesus ever lie?" Again the answer is, "No!" To which I reply, "But if one lost his or her salvation, that would mean a weak Savior lied, because He promised everlasting — from that point on — salvation from the condemnation of sin."

The truth is that Jesus Christ is not merely a Promise Maker, He is a Promise Keeper. Once He saves a person, that individual is everlastingly saved and secure in Christ Jesus!

The apostle Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit wrote: "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:37-39).

Brothers and sisters, claim the truth — once a person is saved, he or she is always saved... because Christ gives everlasting life!

BMA Camp 2021

PASSION

2 Timothy 2:2

Join us for
BMA Camp
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at Budd Creek
Baptist Camp in
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June 21-24

Chris Vines, Camp Speaker

Doug Mickan, Worship Leader

For an information packet, contact Jeff Herring at (501) 425-4781 or jherring0805@gmail.com



By Executive Editor
Jeff Herring

JOURNEY (Continued from pg. 1)

the place of the “assembling of ourselves together.”

I realize there may be some who still have safety concerns about meeting together with large groups, but I hope you have the same desire to be “home” with your church family. I am afraid too many of those that were “attending” church over a year ago have become comfortable simply checking off the box of joining via whatever technology is offered rather than longing for the community that comes from doing life together as the family of God.

“For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others” (Rom. 12:4-5 NIV).

Are you ready to be “home” and do you part as a fully functioning member of the body of Christ?

Special Emphasis Update

Please continue to join with us as we seek to “Build for the Future” by raising the support that we must have in order to continue the work of the *Baptist Trumpet*. If you have any questions about the ministry of the *Baptist Trumpet* or would like for me or Allan to come and share with your church or group meeting, please let me know.

2021 Special Emphasis • Goal - \$45,000

Previous Balance (March 24)	\$5,556.74
Landmark, England Ester Circle WMA	\$50.00
Anonymous	\$160.00
Anonymous	\$300.00
Total	\$6,066.74



By Executive Editor Jeff Herring

Arkansas Governor Signs Two Good Bills Into Law

“Last week, Gov. Asa Hutchinson signed two really good bills into law. The first was S.B. 354 protecting fairness in women’s sports,” said Family Council President Jerry Cox. It prevents biological males who identify as female from competing in women’s athletics at school. It is now Act 461 of 2021.

The second is S.B. 289 that protects healthcare workers’ rights of conscience. It prevents healthcare workers in Arkansas from being forced to perform medical procedures that violate their deeply held convictions. It is now Act 462 of 2021.

“These are two really great pieces of legislation that Family Council strongly supports. We are grateful to Arkansas’ lawmakers for passing these good bills, and we are grateful to Gov. Hutchinson for signing them into law. This year, the Arkansas Legislature has passed several laws promoting, protecting and strengthening traditional family values. Arkansans should be proud of their elected officials for supporting such good legislation.” (familycouncil.org)

Church Members Are Minority In U.S. for First Time

Church members are in the minority for the first time in at least eight decades, with just 47% identifying with a congregation according to a Gallup

poll released March 29. The number was 70% in 1999. A growth in adults with no religious preference and lower rates of church membership among people who do have a religion are major trends driving the decline, Gallup said.

Younger generations hold the highest rates of those with no religious preference, including 31% of millennials and 33% of adult Generation Z (those born in the mid-1990s to the early 2010s). Concurrently, among those who do affiliate with a religion, declines since the turn of the century were highest among younger generations, with the share of millennials declining from 63% in 2000 to 50% in 2020.

The poll updates a 2019 analysis that examined the decline in church membership over the past 20 years. Findings are based on responses to a battery of questions Gallup asks Americans twice each year about their religious attitudes. Each three-year period consists of data from more than 6,000 American adults. (baptistpress.com)

Colorado Cake Artist Again Defending Religious Liberty

Colorado cake artist Jack Phillips is again defending his freedom to practice his Christian faith in a case that is part of the ongoing, legal faceoff between religious liberty and sexual liberty. Phillips — who won a significant, though

limited, victory at the U.S. Supreme Court in 2018 — appeared as the defendant in a state-court trial that began March 22 as a result of a discrimination lawsuit filed for his refusal to provide a cake celebrating a gender transition. Denver District Court Judge A. Bruce Jones presided over the two-and-a-half-day trial in a lawsuit by Autumn Scardina that contends Phillips violated the Colorado Anti-discrimination Act (CADA) by denying service based on “sexual orientation.” It is uncertain when Jones will issue an opinion.

Scardina, who reportedly began identifying as a woman in 2010, filed suit against Phillips, owner of Masterpiece Cakeshop, in 2019 after Phillips declined to make a pink birthday cake with blue frosting to commemorate the gender transition.

In its 7-2 opinion in 2018, the Supreme Court ruled the Colorado Civil Rights Commission (CCRC) violated the religious free exercise clause of the First Amendment by penalizing Phillips for refusing to design and decorate a cake for the wedding of two men. The high court said the commission demonstrated “religious hostility” toward Phillips — who believes marriage is only between a male and a female — but also indicated it might rule differently in other contexts with similar facts.

Lawyers for Phillips in both cases have argued that he doesn’t refuse people but rather messages that contradict his religious beliefs. Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) represented Phillips in the earlier case that went to the Supreme Court and is supporting his defense in the latest one. The cases involving Phillips are among multiple ones in the last several years dealing with the freedom of business owners, especially wedding vendors, to exercise their religious faith by declining to provide services for such events as same-sex ceremonies. (baptistpress.com)

Sixth Circuit Upholds Rights Of Shawnee State Professor

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit ruled March 26 in favor of Dr. Nicholas Meriwether, a philosophy professor at Shawnee State University, reversing a district court’s dismissal of his lawsuit against university officials. The university punished Meriwether because he declined a male student’s demand to be referred to as a woman, with feminine titles and pronouns. The court ruled that, based on the allegations in the complaint, the university violated Meriwether’s First Amendment rights. (adfmmedia.org)

Teens are More Pro-Life and Having Fewer Abortions Than Ever Before

Over time, there has been a sharp decline in the number of pregnancies, births and abortions in America. Those who support abortion are quick to claim that an increase in contraceptive use is responsible; however, the facts don’t support this theory. The real reason is much more encouraging. Actually, one of the best sources of data on abortion is the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute, originally founded as the research arm of Planned Parenthood. Recently, Guttmacher published statistics on the long-term rates of pregnancies, births and abortions.

Between 1980 and 2017 the data shows a long-term, jaw-dropping decline of over 82% in the abortion rate among females 15-19. At the same time, the abortion rate for women 35-39 dropped by only 8.5%. Adding to that impact were over 10% more pregnant females 15-19 who chose life for their babies. But more importantly, teenagers are now much less likely to become pregnant. After peaking in 1990, the pregnancy rate for girls 15-19 dropped by 73%.

Why the decline? Teens and young adults are more pro-life than the generations before them. It is, in part, due to the consistent, dedicated effort to educate all Americans to the stunning beauty of the unborn child, juxtaposed with the dark and deadly reality of abortion. (lifeneews.com)

Arkansas House Passes Home School Resolution

On March 23, the Arkansas House of Representatives passed H.R. 1021 by Rep. Cameron Cooper (R/Romance), celebrating 35 years of home schooling in Arkansas. The resolution highlights the benefits of home schooling as well as the way home schooling gives parents flexibility in educating their children. H.R. 1021 passed easily on a voice vote while home schoolers from White County watched from the gallery above the House Chambers.

Home schooling has been legal in Arkansas since 1985, when former Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton signed

the state’s first home school legislation into law. “Home schooling has come a long way in the past 35 years, and home schoolers are leaving a legacy in our state,” said Family Council President Jerry Cox. Men and women who were home schooled as children are making a difference in Arkansas. They own businesses and are leaders in their communities. “Home schooling is great for the State of Arkansas,” said Cox. “It’s good to see lawmakers recognize that fact by passing H.R. 1021.” (familycouncil.org)

Scripture Engagement Slacked in Pandemic, Even as Bible Sales Grew

Americans bought more Bibles in 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic spread, industry leaders said, but a major study shows Bible engagement during the pandemic was no greater than the previous year. Both Lifeway Christian Resources and Thomas Nelson Bibles saw increases in Bible sales, which a Thomas Nelson executive described as an increase seen industry wide. But the American Bible Society (ABS), in conducting both its annual State of the Bible research in early 2020 followed by a special COVID-19 study months later, found that Bible engagement slacked after the pandemic began.

“While State of the Bible data show that Scripture engagement was up significantly in January, compared to the same time in 2019,” ABS said in its report, “by June Scripture engagement had fallen to below 2019 levels.” January’s Scripture engagement of 70.9 million adults, or 27.8%, marked the highest level since 2011, ABS said,

See NOTES, Page 12

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Baptist

Mississippi

JOURNAL OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF MISSISSIPPI

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President's Perspective

By Dr. Scott Carson, President • Southeastern Baptist College

Do you like rollercoasters? For as long as I can remember, I avoided them at all cost. Everyone screaming their lungs out was pretty much a turnoff for me. I remember wondering why anyone would want to terrorize themselves like that! However, after having children and listening to their pleas for me to accompany them on coasters, I have discovered some are fun, but others are, well, terrifying! I learned I could handle some short drops and tight turns like on the Runaway Railroad at Disney. I can also do twists and loops with much joy. But the big drops? No! If I see a roller coaster that has steep and sustained drops, I will not get on it.

You may be asking, "But were you not an airborne paratrooper?" Yes, I was. I have 78 jumps from various aircraft, but it's actually a very different experience from that of a roller coaster. Except for one jump, I never experienced a falling sensation while parachuting. It was more like stepping into a fast-running river that knocked me off my feet. Only once, off the tail of a CH-47 Chinook Helicopter, did I get that gut wrenching feeling of falling. So, for me, jumping from an aircraft became rather fun and I had to remind myself each time that what I was about to do was extremely dangerous and could kill me if I wasn't careful.

I sometimes feel like I'm on a roller coaster ride here at Southeastern
See MS COLLEGE, Page 8

Life is Interesting

By Dwight Lindsey, Director • Miss. Baptist Children's Home

God's Word in Ecclesiastes can take us through the ebbs and flows of this life. There are good days, bad days and mediocre days, you name it — if it is apart from God, it is vanity. Ultimately, the preacher brings us to the conclusion that our everything is to fear God and keep His commandments. My most fulfilling moments are when I feel like I am witnessing God's awesomeness and faithfulness prompting greater fear and obedience in me.

God doesn't owe any of us terrible and faithful works. He does not perform to earn or generate our applause. He does it because of who He is. When believers see Him for who He is in what He is doing, then we cannot help but to be moved to worship.

I think of the joy the 70 had as they returned to Christ in Luke 10:17-20: *"And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."*

See MS MBCH, Page 8

New Column for Teachers

By Editor Don Brown

I reached out to our BMA Theological Seminary (BMATS) and shared with them an idea to present short, helpful suggestions for our classroom Sunday School teachers and Bible teachers. The faculty and staff agreed to begin helping in this effort. I am greatly appreciative for their willingness to take on this project.

These are the first two articles in this series by Dr. Philip Attebery, the Academic Dean at BMATS are shown below. I hope our teachers will find this helpful as they stand before those students put in their care. Many of our church's classroom teachers are not "professional teachers" but they feel a calling to serve. Our prayer is that these regular tidbits of wisdom will help and encourage them to be able to reach their students and to be more effective in sharing God's Word.

Say it Again

Several years ago, while studying the first chapter of II Peter, I discovered a teaching idea. Peter promoted the need for spiritual growth by adding to a believer's saving faith. Such additions keep us from being useless and unfruitful in our knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, what is the teaching idea? Repeat your message, or say it again. Most of us

See MS TEACHERS, Page 8

Mentoring The Next Generation

By Houston Butler, Member
Central • Southaven, Miss.

No matter what career or profession an individual enters, mentoring is a necessary aspect of the entrance process. Mentoring goes back as far as history itself. The very first man, Adam, was mentored by God. Genesis 2:15-17 shows the mentoring between God and Adam, *"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die'"* (ESV) God had a greater understanding of what was at stake and more knowledge of the situation than Adam, which is why God told him that he could not eat of the tree. It wasn't a "because I said so" commandment, but God knew the repercussions of the actions if Adam did eat of the fruit. We can take a few lessons from God on impacting the youth of our day!

We continue through the course of history and we see a development of apprentices. A person who has experience in a field of work is essentially mentoring apprentices into a specific type of craft. We still have the same type of mentoring as younger individuals enter into careers.

As a teacher, the last semester of my

See YOUTH, Page 9

Because Christ is King

By Dr. Josh Howard, Assoc. Pastor
Calvary • Horn Lake, Miss.

The recent arrest and imprisonment of a Canadian pastor has led to some difficult, important questions — questions about the role of the church, the reach of the State and the parameters of persecution. A question that arises from this is significant: what is persecution?

First, let us recognize that persecution may be different than we expect. Many of us have thought of persecution in a rather simplistic way — evil men in clearly evil uniforms showing up at our doorstep and demanding that we deny Christ. This may, indeed, happen to some, but many Christians will face persecution under different circumstances than these. Simply put, Christians will suffer because Christ is King. There is spiritual conflict taking place behind the worldly conflicts we experience (Eph 6:12), but we should recognize that persecution is rarely identified this way.

For example: John the Baptist was beheaded for condemning a public official's immorality (Matthew 14); the Pharisees beat and imprisoned the apostles out of jealousy (Acts 5:17, 40); Stephen was stoned for blasphemy (Acts 6-7); Paul and Silas were imprisoned for obstructing the local economy (Acts 16); Paul was jailed as a political instigator and insurrectionist (Acts

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The Missouri Missionary Baptist

"Holding Forth The Word of Life"

Philippians 2:16

Editor - James Hoffmann - 176 Bear Creek Dr. - Wentzville, MO 63385 - www.bmamissouri.org - \$10/year-12 issues

Plan Now as We Look Forward!

By Ben Kingston, Director • BMA of Missouri Missions

Our missions symposium in May each year is coupled with the Mid-year Association meeting on the following day and this year's dates will be May 14-15. The missions symposium will be on Friday and the association meeting will be on Saturday. The meetings will take place at New Testament Baptist Church in Sullivan. Josh Wright is the pastor, and he has made some hotel recommendations that will be included in this article.

We are begging, yes, I said **begging** all our pastors and pastors' wives and their respective church members to come. We are in unprecedented times, and many of our churches and church staffs are struggling and need encouragement — the Friday service has been prepared to meet this need. The first hour will be an overview of the missions efforts of the Missouri churches in the Philippines and in St. Louis with Juan Fernandez giving a report. We will take a break with some refreshments, then Josh Wright will share a special message of encouragement for our churches and pastors and their families. This message will be born out of a heartfelt concern for where our churches and staffs are as a result of the pandemic and the daily struggles of life and ministry.

Pastor, please ask your people to prayerfully consider attending and churches, please ask your pastor to go with you. Bro. Josh and I feel strongly that the need for encouragement is association wide.

The schedule is as follows:

Friday Missions Symposium — 6:00-6:40 p.m., First Session; 6:40-7 p.m., Break; 7-8 p.m., Second Session.

Saturday Mid-year State Association Meeting at New Testament will begin at 9 a.m. The schedule for this business meeting and time of fellowship is under the direction of Moderator Jerry Adams. Each church of the BMA of Missouri is allowed three messengers to represent them at this meeting and everyone is welcome to attend as our guests. A meal will be provided after the meeting.

See MO MISSIONS, Page 7

Four Big Announcements About Camp

By Chris Polk, Camp Garwood Superintendent

My family and I headed to camp for the big snow storm and had a great time — playing in the snow beats working in it any day. You can see pictures from that trip on the Facebook page if you are interested.

Now that winter is officially over, we have turned our thoughts to spring and are looking forward to seeing everyone at camp. As always, we ask that you pray for us and all the folks that will be working to make camp possible this year.

The following are announcements that were recently made in the Camp Garwood Facebook group:

• **Big Announcement #1** — Camp has purchased this tractor! We have needed to make this upgrade for a while. We were not really looking at this time, but this opportunity came up and the committee and I thought it was time. However, now that we have it, we need to pay for it. We have the funds in the account but, rather than wiping out the account, we borrowed the money from the loan fund. We will get the old tractor ready to sell, along with the implements we don't need and will designate all DEW funds toward the tractor



See MO CAMP, Page 7

10 Signs the Tribulation is Near

- **Deception** — Many will say "I am the Christ" (Matt. 24:5).
- **Dissent** — Wars (Matt. 24:6-7).
- **Devastation** — Famines (Matt. 24:7).
- **Disease** — Pestilences (Matt. 24:7).
- **Disasters** — Earthquakes (Matt. 24:7).
- **Death** — Hated for my name's sake (Matt. 24:9).
- **Disloyalty** — Betray, hate one another (Matt. 24:10).
- **Delusion** — False prophets (Matt. 24:11).
- **Defection** — Turn away from God and each other (Matt. 24:12).
- **Declaration** — Gospel preached in all the world (Matt. 24:14).

— www.DavidJeremiah.org/charts; via Missouri Baptist

Baptist Progress

Official Publication of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas

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New BMA of Texas Logo

By Jerry Fulton, Editor

The Baptist Missionary Association of Texas is debuting a brand-new logo. After praying and thinking about the mission and makeup of the association, it was decided that the BMA of Texas is a family of unique churches making Christ followers in an increasingly diverse Texas. The logo symbolizes all these things:

The family (togetherness) aspect is symbolized by the round shape (circle) of the logo.

Unique churches making Christ followers is symbolized by the unique, diverse shapes of people in the logo.

Of course, Christ and the association's mission to glorify Him by fulfilling the Great Commission is symbolized by the cross in the middle of the logo.

In the future, the vision of the BMA of Texas — "A family of unique churches making Christ followers in an increasingly diverse Texas" — as well as the logo will be used in publications, on websites and more.



A Good Neighbor

By Heith Mitchell, Executive Director • BMA of Texas Missions

Jesus instructed us to, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus not only taught this truth, but He modeled it perfectly. The people around Him didn't always want to love their neighbors. They looked for a loophole. Jesus was asked, "Who is our neighbor?" You likely know the story Jesus used to teach a Jewish audience that a Samaritan was a good neighbor.

Emmanuel Baptist Church in Garland just loved their neighbors well. This BMA church started back in the 1960s near downtown Garland. This church saw healthy missional ministry for many years. They have struggled for a few years now. Their neighborhood transitioned in ways they didn't realize. In the last five years, they have gone into their neighborhood and learned that it now speaks Spanish. They began to pray for these neighbors and for laborers who could reach them. Last year, they were able to start a Spanish-speaking church. They just chose to end their services and leave their building to the Spanish church. This church is reaching the neighborhood and BMA of Texas Missions is helping.

Go Forth Baptist Church in Kilgore is loving their neighbors well. They are sharing Jesus and seeing salvation and life transformation stories. They recently outgrew their building and merged with another church, assuming a bigger facility. (See "Kilgore Churches Merge" in this issue.)

The question of what to do with the old Stone Ridge building came up. Obviously, they could have sold it and funded future expansion, but they chose instead to love their Spanish-speaking neighbors. There is currently no Spanish-speaking Baptist church in Kilgore. Go Forth is starting one out of their old property and BMA Texas Missions is helping.

I would love to come and share Texas Missions with your church or association. I have open dates and look forward to hearing from you. We also have resources we can share with you. Let us know.

Kilgore Churches Merge

By Paul Gauntt, Correspondent

When two churches merge, one of the foremost questions the people contemplate is, "What shall we call ourselves?" Sometimes the perfect name for a church is found right on the street sign. At first, John Gradberg, the pastor of the merger, was a little skeptical; but the more the name on

the street sign resonated in the heads and hearts of the people located on the corner of U.S. Highway 135 and Goforth, the more the name "Go Forth" stuck.

After a one-week postponement of the celebration of the merger between Stone Ridge Baptist Church and Vic-

I'm Just Sayin'

By Jason Curry, President
Texas Baptist Home for Children

In 1919, the Waxahachie Rotary Club along with the city, and chamber of commerce, worked together to do something quite wonderful for the kids living in the orphanage. They invited and arranged for a grand dinner to be laid out at the Rogers Hotel in Waxahachie.

T.C. Melton said, "Every child was given special attention and ate to their hearts content." In June of 1924, Georgia Dorsey Edwards who grew up in the orphanage describes the boys needing a place to sleep so a group along with the Rotary Club constructed a sleeping porch and bought beds and mattresses.

She said, "I remember how we worked hemming sheets and making pillowcases."

We have endured a lot over the years but are proud of where we are today. We were started as an orphanage, have transitioned to group homes or cottages and are now exclusively a child placing agency with foster homes on campus, and are hopeful about the future and the changes that will come.

What that means today is our organization does not house children like we did as an orphanage. We recruit and equip foster and adoptive parents to care for children that CPS places in our care. Our numbers raise and fall year to year and month to month, but it is not about how many kids we care for it is about providing the best quality care we can.

The days of the past remind us how far we have come, but also stands as a standard we never wish to forget. Children in our care need an opportunity to make a future and TBHC is still a place of hope for them and a place making a difference in lives. God bless you for helping kids know they matter!

Victory Road Baptist Church, both of Kilgore, due to the greatest blizzard to hit the states in 125 years, the new congregation celebrated the merger on Feb. 21.

Victory Road was an ABA (American Baptist Association) church and Stone Ridge was a BMA church. Both churches saw the benefit of working together to carry out their part of the Great Commission.

John Gradberg has been pastor of Stone Ridge for 15 years. The church grew to the point that they were able to put him on full-time three years ago. He and his wife, Mickie, are natives of Gary. They have two grown children, Sarah and John. John and his wife live in Longview. Gradberg has been pastor at Bethel, Port Acres in Port Arthur; First, Itasca; First of Cockrell Hill, Dallas; and his home church, First, Gary.

Jerome and Emma Denmon were part of the Victory Road group. Jerome shared his thoughts concerning the merger.

"If this was not a God thing, then I don't know what a God thing is," he
See MERGE, Page 10



Louisiana Baptist Builder



ABS Officers at planning meeting

Greetings from Tech!

By Danny Eddy, ABS Director • Louisiana Tech University

At the time of our last writing, winter quarter was almost over, and we were looking forward to three days of Mardi Gras break before finals began — but that turned into a whole week of snow and ice! We were fortunate here to only have brief periods of power outage, and no problems with water. The greatest problem was that wherever you were when it started falling, you were stuck there until it melted!

We ended the winter quarter with an average of 15 at our IMPACT Worship. Now, after a short week of quarter break, we are back in session today for spring quarter. The officers recently came back early for a planning meeting, and it was a very profitable time. We've added new officers to replace those who have graduated, and it was great to see them offering ideas and taking responsibilities. It was encouraging and we hope to put things on the calendar that we've not been able to do for the past year!

Things are looking up in Louisiana, but Tech remains cautious and safe. Many of the classes are still virtual, and organizations like ABS still have guidelines to follow, but we are moving closer to normalcy, and the students are excited about doing more outreach on campus and inviting new people, which we have really not been able to do this year. We only have two days of break this entire quarter, so the next 10 weeks will fly by. Please pray for our students, that they would be growing in their walk with the Lord, even as they juggle the pressures of virtual classes, jobs, and the pace of the quarter system. And for ABS, that this ministry would be doing God's will on this campus and reaching students.



Finals week at ABS

Alyssa taking notes for the calendar.

Louisiana Baptist Builder

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Who's in Your Driver's Seat

By Narita Roady

Two elderly women, Sylvia and Minnie, were out running errands in a rather large old car. Being literally "little" old ladies, they could barely see over the dashboard. As they were traveling along, they approached an intersection. Although it was clear that the traffic light was red, they just sailed on through.

Minnie was in the passenger seat. She thought to herself, "I must be losing it because I am certain we just went through a red light." A short time later, they came upon another intersection and, once again, the light was red — and, as before, they sped right through. This time Minnie was nearly certain that the light had been red, but still had that nagging feeling in the back of her mind, thinking she was getting senile.

Getting anxious, she decided to concentrate on the road. At the next intersection she adjusted her glasses and peered intently at the road ahead to make sure she wasn't seeing things. Sure enough, at the next intersection

the light was, without a doubt, red — and, as before, they flew right through. She turned to the other woman and said, "Sylvia! We just ran three red lights in a row! You could have killed us both!" Sylvia turned to her friend with a shocked expression and said, "Oh no! Am I driving?"

How easy it is to bump God out of the driver's seat of our lives and take over. We often don't even realize we are doing it because it progresses in small, subtle ways — a little bit here, a little bit there, and before we know it, we are running our show. How can you know? Watch for these little signposts along the way:

• **Your Bible has become another book on the shelf or a decoration on your nightstand.** The only time it is in your hands is when you go to church, that is if you even take it to services with you. God's Word is His message and guidance for us, a mirror for our souls.

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-

edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

When we neglect reading His Word, we have set out on our own. Our ideas, feelings and thoughts become our guiding force. Without its power and influence, we will fail to see when we are heading for trouble and our choices are leading us in the wrong direction. There is no need to remind you "who" is right beside you "helping" you navigate...yup, the devil. You are, without a doubt, headed for trouble.

"Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psa. 119:103-105).

• **Another essential part of our walk with God is prayer.** You will find yourself treating the Lord like a genie in a bottle as your supplications consist of "gimme, gimme, gimme." Thanksgiving and praise are probably non-existent. Your prayers look more like demands that requests, and you are always asking for **your** will to be done, not His.

You do not set aside a specific time to spend talking to your Heavenly Father. Mornings are too rushed, and by nighttime you fall in bed exhausted or unwind and relax it front of the TV. You have not only taken control of your life at this point, you have the audacity to give the Lord orders! And you wonder why your prayers aren't answered!

"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:3).

• **Attending worship services may have stopped completely.** You may not even be able to remember the last time you attended, unless, of course, it was a holiday. If you do still go to church, it's because you want to socialize, for show or out of guilt or

See OK DRIVER, Page 9

he didn't eat or drink. But they also condemned Jesus because He did eat and drink, and they said He was a winebibber and a glutton. Don't you just love that type of critic?

I once had a boss who was much the same way. It didn't matter how I did something, or what decision I made, he would find a way to condemn it. As irritated as I got with him about that, I can only imagine what inflection Jesus Christ must have used in His condemnation of His critics in this passage, especially since their criticism was aimed at God's chosen forerunner of Christ and God's only Begotten Son — something far more serious than my boss' criticism of my decisions.

But God's condemnation of criticism also extends to criticism of any of His children. *"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand"* (Rom. 14:4).

MO MISSIONS (Continued From Page 5)

The hotels we recommend are:

• **Budget Lodging 866 S. Outer Rd. St Clair, Mo. 63077; (636) 629-1000.** (Owner Jason Alexander said he will donate 15% of the cost of each person's stay to the BMA Missions Fund, but you must include "BMA" on your reservation. We are very grateful for this kind gesture from Bro. Jason.)

• **Comfort Inn, 736 S. Service Rd. Sullivan, Mo. 63080; (573) 468-7800.**

We look forward to seeing you May 14-15 at New Testament Baptist Church.

A Page from My Heart

Almost everything we own will outlive us — the question is, will our influence? I am wearing a dead man's shoes. I love the shoes, they are comfortable. But remembering the one I got them from is even more comforting. Jim is a good man. I say "is" because he is still as alive as Moses or Abraham. Yet, his time here on earth is done, as mine will be soon.

Dear Christian, what are you doing that will last? Will your influence outlast your possessions and your body? How can we make sure that our influence doesn't fade when our life does? The key is to not make our possessions our focus because they will be somebody else's soon enough, but to make our influence on our loved ones and those that we are called to love our focus.

Does Matt. 28:18-20 guide your life? Are you living each day, each moment for the gospel's sake? Now you and I know that no one makes 100%, but is it our focus? You see, success is not what we are called to, but rather obedience. Each failure is an opportunity to start again.

Recently, we as a people (Christianity) have been dealt a punch in the gut with the revelations of Ravi Zacharias and his moral failings. Many of us who were blessed, encouraged and instructed by his teachings have struggled with how to answer people on the fallout. A friend of mine and I sharpen each other through text for the gospel's sake, and he recently asked me what I thought. This is my answer:

I do not believe that man's flesh negates the Spirit's instruction. Now, does it make it harder for mortal man to stomach it? Well certainly, but that gets us back to the "he who has no sin cast the first stone" discussion. Am I saying that it's no big deal? Absolutely not! It's about the worst-case scenario a Bible teacher could experience, as far as stumbling at the finish line. For those who do not want to believe the difficult truths that the Spirit taught through him, they now have their excuse! And for those of us who want to believe, we have our doubts because of the fragility of someone we thought was the Rock of Gibraltar!

Personally, I believe everything he taught that is confirmed by the Word is still valid and usable — we will just probably have to leave his name out

of it when we quote him, which most likely should be judgment enough. I can only imagine the pain, grief, shame, doubt and despair that his wife, children, family, friends and associates are going through because every one of them knows the validity of the truths that he taught. They know the validity of Scripture, and here their crown jewel teacher has marred all of that. Obviously, we can rise above this, but we're going to have to seek the Spirit's healing and navigation through this.

So again, dear saint, I implore you be obedient to the gospel and the righteousness that the gospel demands, and one day soon you will hear your Master say, *"Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into your rest."* And maybe, just maybe, your nephew or niece will gain a possession you once had and remember the influence of a loving uncle or aunt more than the possessions.

MO CAMP (Continued From Page 5)

purchase this year.

So, with that being said, are you a DEWR — anyone who gives \$75 annually to camp? That's roughly 20¢ a day or \$1.50 a week. Will you be a Camp Garwood DEWR?

Camp week in years past cost around \$8,000. We don't know yet what our food costs will be this year, so we are planning for a \$10,000 week, and we know there will be some extra repair/replacement costs to get camp ready — freezer, slide, archery, etc. On top of that, the tractor loan is \$17,500.

This may be too much information but although I could simply say, "Hey we need money!" I'd rather lay everything out for you.

• **Big Announcement #2** is not as "big" and is not requesting money, but it is still huge in importance. As spring quickly approaches, we are asking groups to adopt a dorm. This will involve a good cleaning, wiping down each bunk and making minor repairs as necessity and ability allow — lighting, toilets, leaking sinks, gutters, painting, cleaning up leaves, etc.

Dorms 1-9, upper shower house, lower shower house, Dining Hall, Kitchen, Canteen and the Tabernacle are all currently available. There are other projects available if your group is larger and more energetic — things like cleaning and treating woodwork, cleaning off the golf course, setting out tables and trash cans to name a few. There are also more involved projects, so if you are interested, just ask.

It's been a while, and I know everyone is excited to get back to camp. This is your opportunity to get some early camp time and help us get ready.

Although this announcement is getting long, there's another reason we are asking groups to adopt a dorm. In the past, someone would send a message, "Hey, we cleaned this building." Then a couple weeks later, someone else would say, "We cleaned this building." One year the same building was

See MO CAMP, Page 9

Dual Controls

By the Late Jesse Spurlock

It had just turned cold, so we put the electric blanket on the bed. There are dual controls on it, so it can be adjusted for comfort for either side. I wasn't all that cold, so I didn't turn my side on. However, I woke up about an hour after going to sleep and was burning up. I looked at my control and it was still off. However, Lelia's control was on "high." (Actually, more accurate terms would be "bake" or "broil.") I put my foot on her side of the bed, and it was cold.

When we put the blanket on the bed, we had inadvertently switched the controls, so that her unit controlled my side of the blanket and mine controlled hers. She had turned hers up to get warm. When she continued to be cold, she cranked it on up. I quickly solved the problem by turning her side off and mine on.

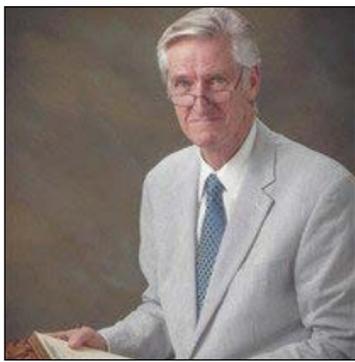
This incident reminded me of the time I went to a dentist. He had deadened my gums and had begun to work on my teeth. However, the sharp fingernail on his little finger was digging into my chin which hadn't been numbed. As I began to squirm, he thought it was because of the work he was doing on my teeth and eased up on the drilling. However, the more he shifted pressure away from the drill, the more his fingernail dug into my chin! He suddenly stopped drilling

and reached for the needle to give me more pain medication. That was when I was finally able to tell him the real problem.

This incident also sort of reminds me of Jesus' illustration of the people of His generation in Matt. 11:16-17. He said His generation was "...like unto children sitting in the market place and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented."

They were "calling the shots" without any authority, and were getting upset because they weren't getting any response from those who were not under their control. It was like Lelia, who was giving the blanket a command, but it wasn't responding to her side, because it wasn't controlling her side. Although she cranked up the heat even more, she still got no results on her side.

In the passage above, Jesus' condemnation was more serious than the control on an electric blanket. He ends His illustration by saying, *"But wisdom is justified in her children."* His critics were using a double standard of judgment. They condemned in such a way that it didn't matter which way something was done, they were going to condemn it. They condemned John, saying he had a demon because



Keith Gordon Passes Away

Gerald Keith Gordon, 74 of Pearl, Miss. passed away Feb. 18. He was ordained by Creston Hills Baptist Church in Jackson, Miss. and attended Southeastern Baptist College (1965-1970). He later earned his B.S. from William Carey University (1978), M. Div. from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (1981) and D. Min. also from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (1986). He had been in the ministry for 56 years.

Survivors include: his wife of 49 years, Judy Holifield Gordon; a daughter, Dr. Jessica E. Gordon; a son, Gerald K. (Lauren) Gordon, II; a grandson, Nicholas Gordon; and three sisters, Cathy Johnson (Jay) of Asheville, NC, Donna (Nick) Strickland of Gulfport, Miss. and Connie Lowe of Laurel, Miss.

Services were held Feb. 26 at First Baptist Church Shady Grove in Laurel, Miss.

MS TEACHERS (Continued From Page 5)

know what we need for spiritual growth and have strong beliefs. Peter recognized those facts, but felt it “meet” or right to do all he could to “stir up” his readers by way of reminder. The word “meet” refers to something right in God’s eyes. In II Peter 1:12-15, he mentioned “remembrance” three times. Knowing his death was near, Peter stressed his diligence to do all he could to help his readers remember these truths after his death. He did so by saying things again.

Since noticing Peter’s emphasis, that reminding others of what they already know and heartily believe is right in God’s eyes, I have attempted to “preview” and “review” sermons or lessons. Be encouraged to ask students what they learned about the previous lesson (i.e., say it again). Or go ahead and give them a preview of what is to come then when you teach, say it again. Most educators agree that it takes hearing something multiple times before it “clicks” or becomes permanent.

Follow Peter’s example and repeat points and highlights of your messages. Let me encourage you to, “Say it again!”

Let Them Do it for Themselves

One of my favorite resources on the topic of Christian education is the book *Teaching to Change Lives: Seven Proven Ways to Make Your Teaching Come Alive* by Howard Hendricks. A

MS COLLEGE (Continued From Page 5)

Baptist College (SBC). We have so many blessings each week, only to be followed by a sudden drop in our joy as a new significant problem arises.

This past week, select members of the staff and I attended the Annual Accreditation Conference in Orlando. This has been the first time since I’ve been at SBC that more than two staff members were able to attend. The conference and the breakout sessions were extremely informative, motivating and even transformative! Our staff is very excited to apply what they learned toward the future of SBC.

As we were in a taxi going to the airport for our return journey, we watched the final moments of the men’s Chargers Basketball Team win the Bible College National Invitational Tournament! We were overjoyed for the team and for SBC! As we continued our celebration at the terminal, sending congratulations to the team and coaches, I received a text message informing me that our handyman had resigned. Oh, what a “drop” in our emotions as we sought to understand the challenge that this new situation had just created. We absolutely need a proactive maintenance person! There is an endless list of things that need attention on campus, another list of things that must be maintained and another long list of things to improve. These ups and downs are now so common we can almost predict them.

For every three ups, there is one down but, praise the Lord, it isn’t the other way around! We are excited to see God’s hand advance the school in miraculous ways; yet out of nowhere, we know another significant challenge will arise and must be faced and overcome.

Please pray that the Lord will soon send us a part-time handyman! The staff and I can only spare so much time toward the maintenance of the campus. We need to quickly find someone who

particularly favorite point for me encourages teachers to “tell the learner nothing — and do nothing for him — that he can learn or do for himself” (p. 18). I have tried to use this principle when teaching.

For example, I once taught a Sunday School class when the lesson focused upon the doctrine of sin. Although our Sunday School book directed us to a lesson text, I asked the learners to find some passages on the topic of sin. One 40-year-old man asked, with great expression, “How are we supposed to do that?”

I referred him to the concordance in the back of his Bible. He then said, with amazement, “You know, I have always wondered what that (the concordance) was there for!” Not only did he learn about sin that morning, but also about how to use his Bible to find other verses when a teacher is not around. That excites me!

If you were to teach a lesson soon, what is something you could “let them do for themselves?”

possesses the experience, knowledge, skills and energy necessary for day-to-day operations and the continued improvement of our infrastructure.

“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair” (II Cor. 4:8).

Why?

I was recently in deep discussion with a person about my purpose for being at SBC. He has asked this direct question several times since my assuming the presidency of SBC: “Why, when you could be 100% retired and doing all the things you could not do while in the Army, are you involved with a small and financially struggling college in south Mississippi that is often rife with high stress situations?” How does one answer that question for a person who doesn’t fully grasp the concept of a calling from God, that I desire to be fully surrendered to the Lord and therefore, must do what He asks?

When answering his questions of perplexity in prior discussions, there appeared to be a slight flicker of understanding, only to be quickly dismissed with the usual comment that it was beyond his comprehension. His life has been the American dream, and I find nothing wrong with it. He was a successful businessman, retired early, traveled to every state and around the world, golfed, fished and visited friends and family often. His expectation for my life is that I should be doing the same, otherwise what is the point?

Believe me, I have often reflected on doing just that, and it is a definite temptation! But I am convinced that I am where God wants me to be at this time of my life and doing what God wants me to be doing for His purpose at SBC. I feel God was training me in the last 10 years of my Army life as I earned a reputation for resetting broken or failed chaplain programs and making them respected and successful again. I confess that it was not easy, and it was often exceedingly challenging, but the Lord always enabled me to see a pathway to accomplishing the mission.

A couple of days later after my in-depth discussion with this person, and before I left for work in the early morning, I received an estimate via text message for an essential project we must complete by the end of this summer in order to accommodate more students. Hearing the cost, my heart skipped a beat! It was much higher than anticipated. As I drove to campus, I prayed about the money we needed and wondered where on earth we could find so much in such a short period of time. Suddenly, a name came to mind of someone I had not communicated with in some time and an account he managed for the college that had not recently been accessed. In the past few years, the money from this source was helpful, but not a substantial amount. As I walked into my office, the very person I was thinking about called me. A coincidence, I think not! This person informed me that he had much more money ready to be transferred to

MS KING (Continued From Page 5)

24:5); and many other examples exist (Heb. 11:35-38). Would we suggest that these did not suffer for Christ because the world slandered them even as it persecuted them? Why did they truly experience persecution? They suffered because Christ is King. Suffering may come in different forms and in different degrees (Heb 12:4), but we should be slow to disregard persecution against brothers and sisters in Christ. To ignore this is to ignore the slander that was levied against our Savior (Matt 27:37). We suffer because Christ is King.

How might we respond? Pray now — and pray often. Be constant in prayer (Rom. 12:12) and trust in the Lord always (Prov. 3:5-6). This is foundational, indispensable and essential. Further, expect persecution in this life. This is surely never popular advice, and no one is eager to hear these words. Yet consider the lives (and deaths) of the apostles. The early church did not suffer persecution because they had failed — they experienced persecution because Christ has triumphed! We follow in His footsteps, and this brings persecution in this world (II Tim. 3:12; John 16:33). Again, we will be persecuted — because Christ is King.

In keeping with the above, we must determine to stand with fellow believers. Those who are reading this may very well not fear imminent persecution — many of us may feel quite shielded from the evils of this world. But consider Paul’s words from the conclusion of Colossians: “Remember my chains” (4:18). Stand with fellow believers, knowing that the Christians

SBC and it was exactly half of what we needed for the project!

As soon as the call ended, I prayed about the other half of the monies needed and another person’s name came to mind. I gave her a call, explained the project and she quickly stated she could easily match the other half! Praise the Lord!

Now, going back to the person I referenced above and his question. While visiting him again, I told him about what had happened and explained that this is what has consistently been happening over the last five years. We have a major need, we have no way to resource it, we pray, God answers and His answer is a confirmation of not only my calling, but also a confirmation for all the staff and faculty supporting the college. This person seemed to finally understand that a committed disciple of Christ is fully surrendered to the Lord and His leading.

Instead of sitting here and typing this, I could be fishing from a 23-foot, center console fishing boat off the coast of Mississippi (something I really miss), but I am dedicated to the future of the BMA of Mississippi’s Southeastern Baptist College. The Lord’s confirmation of my calling and His will for our school is evident, as He consistently and miraculously meets the requirements of SBC, each and every day.

experiencing persecution around the world are members of the same body (Eph 1:22-23; 2:19-22). We are bound together and stand together — because Christ is King.

Finally, we should not take lightly the command to proclaim the gospel. When the commands of the State prevent us from following Christ’s commands, we must remember the example set for us in Scripture (Acts 4:18-20; Acts 5:28). The worship of the church and preaching of the gospel are essential. We simply cannot compromise — because Christ is King.

In the waning days of World War II, pastor-theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer was one of the last prisoners executed by the Third Reich. Choosing to remain with his people who were suffering under the Nazi regime, Bonhoeffer was unceremoniously hanged as an enemy of the State. His last words were reportedly: “This is the end. For me the beginning of life.” Let us live with a faith that trusts God in all things (Rom. 8:28). Let us live lives that testify that Christ is King.

MS MBCH (Continued From Page 5)

We are not stepping on snakes or scorpions here at the Children’s Home, but we are joyous as we see the power of God unfold. We have seen a boom of growth that keeps us abuzz with excitement and, as Jesus said in the text, we are even more excited that God not only moves and works in ministries here, He is still working in our eternal life.

I don’t know that I sugarcoat too well, that is why I want you all to see the blessings in what we are calling someone to in this ministry. The past two plus years have been some of the hardest ministry I have ever been involved in, and some of the most fulfilling. There are days that never seem to end and days you wish would never end. There are moments that are heartbreaking and moments that bring tears of joy. Any time we feel like we are at the end of our rope, it seems like we are just hitting another leap of faith that lands us in the providence of God.

Some of you may be reading this and thinking, “What kind of roller coaster are they on?” My response is, “The Christian kind!” What path that follows Christ is not filled with ups and downs? This is as normal as one can be in the faith.

Our invitation still stands — we need a couple to join us in our normal. We need people who are committed and resolved to this ministry. Christians don’t say “no” to parenting because God is the Heavenly “Father.” He doesn’t throw us away, and He doesn’t shirk the responsibilities of His nature. It will be hard, but it will be worth it.

My experience has shown me what God has always meant in His Word when He describes His fatherhood, and where I can so often fall short of that standard. Please pray for us. Please pray for a couple to join us. Please pray for God to show you if that couple might be you and your spouse. Thank you for all your support and prayers.

MS YOUTH (Continued From Page 5)

education I had to do student teaching, which is working under a more experienced teacher. Medical students have to endure months to years of clinical hours and residencies in their field of study. New police officers are partnered with an FTO (field training officer), who assists the rookie with how things are to be done, from paperwork to traffic stops and everything in between.

As Christians, we know that, no matter what we do as a profession, we need to mentor people as believers and let the bible lead us in all we do, especially when it comes to impacting youth in our day! We need to remember that our vocation is our ministry location!

We also see mentoring in the Bible on two different occasions. The first major occasion is with Jesus and His disciples. Jesus hand-selected 12 men He would invest Himself in spiritually, emotionally, physically and intellectually. Throughout Christ's ministry, He taught and witnessed to a plethora of different individuals. However, at the end of the day, He poured directly into the lives of those 12 men: *"He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything"* (Mark 4:34).

Even further, within those 12, Jesus had an inner circle of 3 — Peter, James and John — in whom He more intimately invested. Through the 12 disciples, we can also notice that mentoring is not 100% successful. Judas was one of the disciples and he ultimately turned away and betrayed the relationship that Christ had invested in him.

The second occasion we see is the relationship between Paul and Timothy. Timothy was a young disciple (Acts 16:1-3). When Paul came to Derbe and to Lystra, a disciple named Timothy was there. Timothy was the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. Eventually, he became the pastor at the Church at Ephesus. Paul who had years of experience in ministry and Jewish training took Timothy under his wing and trained and mentored him.

Dr. Tim Elmore presents these questions in his book, *Life Giving Mentors* — Who are lifegiving mentors? Why is mentoring necessary? Who should be my target? Who are life-giving mentors? These questions are vital in the process of mentoring. We have to answer each question and self-evaluate through those answers to ensure that we are mentoring correctly.

The answer to the first question is one that I feel has already been answered, but will restate. Life-giving mentors are individuals who mentor and lead through relationships and focus on the development of the mentee. Both Jesus and Paul were life-giving mentors. The

Bible provides us with several passages regarding lifegiving mentorship: Prov. 22:6 (*"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it"*); Prov. 27:17 (*"Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another"*) and Eccl. 10:10 (*"If the iron is blunt, and one does not sharpen the edge, he must use more strength, but wisdom helps one to succeed"*). In each of these passages, the underlying theme is teaching and training through relationships.

Proverbs 22:6 shows when this training should start. Typically, this verse is used within the context of parenthood, however, I feel like that is underplaying the importance of the verse in its entirety. Training and mentoring don't have an age requirement. Proverbs 27:17 focuses on the direct relationship of two people sharpening each other and building each other up through both encouragement and reproof and correction. Although this process is not always fun, and sometimes is even painful, it is necessary for the growth of both individuals.

The last verse, Eccl. 10:10, confronts what happens if one is not trained properly from the beginning. If that individual has not been "sharpened" then more strength is required during the process. The verse ties directly into my favorite quote, which is by Frederick Douglass: "It is easier to build strong children than repair broken men." If we are building and training from the beginning it will be easier than trying to repair the broken men later.

Why is mentoring necessary? The second question, in my opinion, is the most important. Is mentoring really necessary? First and foremost, we have seen that mentoring is a biblical truth and principle. We can further see the importance of mentoring in I Cor. 11:1, Titus 2:3-5 and Heb. 13:7. The apostle Paul, who truly understood the importance of mentoring, writes all of these verses. In I Cor. 11:1, he writes to the church at Corinth, *"Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ."* He understood that mentoring, at its core, was leading through example.

Leading by example can also be seen in Titus 2:3-5: *"Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled."* Paul was clear that the older women were to be examples and mentors to the younger women.

The last verse that Paul writes is to the Christian community as a whole in the book of Heb. 13:7: *"Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith."* He told them to remember the example set for them through their faith and imitate that same type of faith.

Who should be my target? The final question deserves both an individual answer and a blanket answer, which

can both be the same. Who should be the target of our mentoring? The next generation should be our focus. Again, we can turn to Scripture to answer this question. Psalms 145:4 provides us with the blanket answer to this question: *"One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts."* Each generation should mentor and train the generation that comes after them. Granted, a younger individual can train an older one, this is typically not the case.

"And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (II Tim. 2:2). As we look back at the relationship between Paul and Timothy one last time we see that Paul was not just training Timothy in an effort to benefit Timothy, but also the next generation. Paul, ever so subtly, commands Timothy to take what he has heard and learned and train and teach others. What we are taught we must pass on to the next generation.

Lastly, David wrote in Ps. 71:18: *"So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come."* This verse should be the prayer for each of us. That no matter how old we are or become, we should continue to proclaim Christ to the next generation. The more we can train and mentor, the more that can eventually be mentored, leading to an exponential change in our culture and the youth of tomorrow.

No Thumbs

By Barbara White

The other day I was remembering the dog food television commercial in which a little dog was excitedly saying "Bacon, bacon, bacon. I would get it myself, but I don't have thumbs."

He knew, as we do, that to grasp something you need thumbs. Well, apparently, my brain doesn't have thumbs because I just can't grasp the reason for all that's going on these days. Some of these baffling ideas are aimed a Mr. Potato Head, Dr. Seuss, no calling mother and father, and the list goes on and gets more ridiculous the further it goes.

But hang on, this is not a first for humanity. Many times, the Scripture records: *"The people did that which was right in their own eyes."* There have always been dire consequences for such actions, and I am confident there will be dire consequences for some of the things that are going on these days. So hang on! God's promise to be with us even to the end of the world is even more precious these days!

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habit. You may or may not bring your Bible, but it is not opened. Your mind wanders about what you will have for lunch or planning the rest of your day — your focus is definitely not on the message. To be honest, you can't wait till the preacher says the final "amen" and you can go home.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 1:16-17).

• **Daily life is prioritized according to your plans that you believe will bring you success and make you happy.** God's purpose for your life, what He has laid upon your heart, is forgotten. Even in your long-term or short-term goals, the passion and zeal to serve Him in all areas, even moment

MO CAMP (Continued From Page 7)

"cleaned" three different times by three different people. Hopefully, this way we get more accomplished with the same effort.

You can begin after Easter since that's when the water will be back on. Please talk to your groups and let me know where you can help!

• **Big Announcement #3** — This announcement is just a reminder that we have entered a new year, and everyone who is 18 and older will need to complete an adult screening form. The form can be found at www.bmamissouri.org. While on the website, print out the camp rules and Child Protection policy. Make sure to get all this completed before coming to any overnight activities!

• **Big Announcement #4** — Finally, the fun announcement! This year's DEWR retreat is scheduled for Aug. 13-14. This retreat is a fun weekend planned especially for our Camp Garwood DEWRs. In the past, we have ordered special T-shirts for DEWRs, but we will not be doing that this year. While we don't have all the details worked out, we can promise a great weekend of fun and fellowship in one of the most peaceful valleys in the world. We have moved this retreat to after camp, and I hope this works out for everyone. We couldn't get an earlier date to work out. Be a DEWR and come to the retreat!

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by moment, is gone. You have gone deaf to the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit leading, prompting and alerting you to Your Father's will. Your feelings may be saying "the future is bright and your direction is sure" but, truthfully, you are headed nowhere.

"Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil" (James 4:13-16).

• **When trials come your way, instead of turning to God and trusting Him to provide for your needs and answers, you fret, worry and are consumed with anxiety.** Problems come to all of us. Small ones are frustrating but big ones can be downright frightening even to the point of appearing to have no answers. We all have a bit of worry wart in us, some more than others, so it is normal to be alarmed, as well as fear, at first. Ultimately, what matters is how quickly you turn it over to God. Since you may be doing life solo, you look to yourself and others for solutions. Of course, there are none, hence your desperation and emotional turmoil.

"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body?" (Matt. 6:25). *"He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord"* (Psa. 112:7).

• **Most of us have ideas about how we intend for our agendas to transpire.** If we are wise, we would know that it isn't reasonable to expect everything to go our way. Taking control of your life bypasses that reasoning, and you begin to expect each detail of your "script" to play out. When it all doesn't pan out, you get angry. That is a big sign!

This one shows you have taken over to the point you are a one man (or woman) show in life's arena! When you think about it, that is quite audacious to think the universe and Creator should following your direction! *"A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps"* (Prov. 16:9). *"There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand"* (Prov. 19:21).

If you see yourself in any of these warning signs, **stop!**

Spend some time with the Lord and have a serious talk. Determine if you are in your driver's seat and you've bumped Him over to ride shotgun. There is a good chance if you are at this point, you may even be mad at God and blaming Him for the chaos you find yourself facing.

One of many things I love about the Lord and our relationship is that He always allows U-turns. As a matter of fact, He delights in them! You're never

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MERGE (Continued From Page 6)

said. "We had the building space, but we needed people."

In a separate conversation, Dale Easterling, who came from Stone Ridge, offered his take on the merger. "I was a part of Stone Ridge from day one," he said. "I was there when Derl Lee started the church and through E.L. Jones' ministry. We had entered into prayer asking God for a larger auditorium. This was God's plan for us to have it." From the first hymn that was sung until the dismissal prayer, the spirit of the services was indicative of how God's will was worked out as the two churches came together. John Gradberg, pastor, gave several words of encouragement and instruction to the church.

"This is statically improbable for church mergers to survive. Normally, this merger would have fallen apart by now because, too often, there are too many chiefs." Gradberg said. "But that's not the case here. As of today, Victory Baptist Church no longer exists," Gradberg said in his introductory remarks to his message, "and Stone Ridge, as we know it, is no longer in existence as of today — we are now the Go Forth Baptist Church."

The pastor emphasized the fact that there are many concessions that must be made among two groups of people who come together in a merger.

A highlight of the day was the baptism of Alicia Haydock by her husband, Justin. It was the culmination of an amazing story of God's redemption and restoration.

"Justin came to me one day and said, 'Pastor, I'm just going to confess to you right now that I've been living in sin,'" the pastor said. Dumfounded because a pastor hardly ever hears such a blatant expression of confession, Gradberg calmly and compassionately asked, "Okay, tell me about it."

Haydock said, after his first marriage failed, he remained single for one-and one-half years. Then he connected with a young lady by way of a dating service on Facebook, and the two developed a bond over the internet. When they both eventually ended up in east Texas, their relationship continued to grow, and they lived together for almost two months.

They came to church and heard Gradberg preach sermons on "Being in God's Will," and messages about the consequences of living in sin.

"Those messages really impacted me," Haydock said.

Miraculously, at virtually the same time, Alicia was at home listening to her music on Spotify, and a song by Casting Crowns, which she did not download, suddenly came on her system. The song addressed the same subject in which Justin and the pastor were engaged. She couldn't shut it off — not necessarily because it grabbed her attention, she literally couldn't shut it off. The couple agreed that had to be the intervention of God.

After Justin asked the pastor what their options were, he promptly counseled them to separate — for one of them to move out, which would be an expression of repentance. They later decided it was time for a marriage ceremony.

"We were driving down the road one day when I proposed to Alicia. I told her that I loved her and knew that God had brought her to me for a reason," Haydock said.

Rather than follow through with their original plans to marry in September, it was only a couple of weeks later (Jan. 10) that the couple came to the church and joined — she came on her profession of faith and he publicly reaffirmed his salvation. The couple was not only received into the fellowship, but Gradberg performed the wedding in that same service. They had marriage license in hand.

"We had an entire church to stand up with us during our wedding," Justin said with a smile.

On the day of the merger celebration, Feb. 21, Justin baptized his wife. He used the terms, "I baptize you, my sister and wife, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

Gradberg tells of another unusual circumstance whereby a young lady came to Christ as a result of Go Forth.

"Laura Welch, who is a paramedic, was saved a couple of months ago," Gradberg said. "I was working for Rusk County Sheriff's Office and got sent on a call for a man who was down in his house with a medical condition and the doors were locked." When Gradberg arrived, Laura was taking the air conditioner out of his window to crawl in to help him.

"The next week, we had a call with a mental subject who was out of control," the pastor said, noting that when he went into the house to try to subdue him, (Laura) came in with me."

The two became friends on Facebook, and she started attending the church. She was soon saved and baptized, and is a faithful member of the church.

The pastor's Feb. 21 message was a challenge from Joel 1, highlighting the judgment of the Lord on His people through plagues, and how imperative it is for God's people to seek an intimate, life changing relationship with the King of kings. He said God's people need "spiritual passion, spiritual prayer and spiritual unction."

The American Baptist Association divided in 1950 over church polity and missions direction during their national meeting in Lakeland, Florida. The withdrawing group met at Temple Baptist Church in Little Rock a few weeks later and organized, naming itself the North American Baptist Association and later changed its name to Baptist Missionary Association of America in 1969. But in later years, both groups have participated in joint preacher's conferences, and two churches in Amarillo, Journey Street (ABA) and Ridgcrest (BMA)

OK DRIVER (Continued From Page 9)

too late and you can never go too far to make one. His arms are always open to prodigals. The best part is, even when you have traveled alone in the wrong direction, He is beside you all the way as you embark on your new path.

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7).

The Oklahoma Baptist

Mike Mobly,

Editor

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merged in the late 1990s, thus setting a precedent. The newly merged Amarillo church was named Cornerstone Baptist Church. Even though the former Victory Baptist Church was a part of the ABA, Go Forth Baptist Church is only associated with the BMA.

American Baptist Association Pastor John Williams, who is an alumnus of Jacksonville College (1965-67), was pastor of Victory Road Baptist Church for 11 years, and looks back on his tenure with the church.

"People were saved and lives were changed," Williams wrote in an e-mail. "As you enter this new era with a new name and under new leadership, I know you will continue to preach the gospel and be God's Lighthouse in Kilgore — you will always be in my prayers. God bless you all."

Popular evangelist, David Ring, was scheduled to preach the celebration service on Feb. 14. When the service was postponed, Ring, who had totaled his car upon coming into town, was stranded in Kilgore for the week, and had agreed to remain to preach the service Feb. 21. But he was taken ill and had to be flown home on Saturday, the day before the rescheduled service.

For further information concerning the Go Forth Baptist Church (BMA) of Kilgore, you may visit the church's Facebook site by just typing "Go Forth Baptist Church" in the search box. You may also view the Feb. 21 service in its entirety on the Facebook site. Visit the church website at goforthbaptist.com.

Baptist Progress

Jerry Fulton, editor
editor@baptistprogress.com

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Deaths

J. C. Burroughs, 90 of Damascus, passed away March 25. He was a member of Sand Springs Baptist Church.

Mary Clearine King, 92 of Searcy, passed away March 25. She was a member of Park Avenue Baptist Church,

Joye Ella Flowers Scroggin, 82 of Center Ridge, passed away March 25. She was a member of Central Baptist Church in Conway.

Harold G. Rogers, 91 of Magnolia, passed away March 22. He was a member of First Baptist Church.

Gene Raney, 80 of Fordyce, passed away March 17. He was a member of Sulphur Springs Baptist Church.

Melvin George Dycus, 83 of Trumann, passed away Feb. 12. He was a member of Parkview Baptist Church.

Joan Rutherford, 77 of Trumann, passed away Feb. 4. She was a member of Parkview Baptist Church.

Opportunities For Service

Maysville Missionary Baptist Church is seeking a part-time youth minister. For more information, contact Pastor Samuel Reddin at (501) 733-9650, sjreddin@gmail.com or 9 Cumbrian Dr., Bella Vista, Ark., 72714.

Meadowside Baptist Church in Pittsburg, Kan. is seeking a full-time pastor. Contact Greg Hardister at (620) 704-6860.



Contact BMA Foundation Executive Director Charles Attebery for more information.
charles@bmaamerica.org or cell 501-472-2183

A Gift That Keeps Giving

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Jacksonville College is Seeking Applicants for President

Jacksonville College is a vibrant, faith-based, liberal arts institution. Founded in 1899, the college is located in Jacksonville, Texas and is affiliated with the BMA of Texas and the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention.

The college is currently accepting applications for the office of president. Applicants must have an earned Doctorate degree, with Education or related disciplines preferred. This confident, well-spoken leader must be a conservative, growing Christian with deep experience in institutional development, fundraising and administration. Pastoral ministry-related experience is a plus.

For consideration, please send a cover letter; a personal resume which includes family information, your history of work experience, your personal testimony of faith; contact information for three references to dpage@hillcrestbc.com.

Apply by April 10, 2021 for full consideration.





Missionaries

Michael Hight, Hispanic Coordinator; (501) 326-0198
 Ruben Isturiz, Misión Ebenezer, West Little Rock; (501) 707-5388
 Carter Pearce, Grace, Green Forest; (870) 688-7412
 Juan Carlos Posadas, Misión Creciendo en Cristo, NLR; (501) 712-8752
 Jim Tollison, Mustard Seed, Cain; (870) 370-3938
 Chad White, Connection Point, Brookland; (870) 243-4683
 Darrin Smith, Life Journey, Fort Smith; (479)-763-8909
 Johnny Shew, Faith Chapel, Flippin; (870) 421-1984
 Clinton Morris, Not Alone, Springdale; (870) 316-1519
 Office Location: 10712 Interstate 30 • Little Rock, AR 72209
 (501) 565-4601 • E-Mail: bmaofarkfrontdesk@gmail.com
 Mailing Address: PO Box 195514, Little Rock, AR 72219
 Director's Email: arstamis@comcast.net
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PAUL WHITE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Western Tour

I was privileged this Monday with the opportunity to visit with what I call our western division of missionaries. The first stop was in Flippin, where Johnny and I discussed a possible design for a future building. It was a very productive meeting. From there I joined Carter for lunch in Green Forrest, where we had a very good visit discussing past, present and future opportunities in that area. That afternoon I had coffee with Clinton in Springdale. He shared how the process is presently exceeding his expectations. He also shared with me some material they are formulating concerning mission statement, core values, etc. That evening I visited with Darrin in Fort Smith. After sharing his excitement for the future, I retired for the evening. Tuesday morning, I met with Jim in Van Buren over breakfast and had a good visit with him as we discussed the future organization into a church among other things, then I headed back to the office.

I am thankful for each of our men and hope to visit the rest of our missionaries next week. Please remember each of them in your prayers.

From Our Missionaries

Connection Point, Brookland: Chad White writes, "It was a good week here at Connection Point. It was spring break week, and we have had several of our families traveling and taking vacations. However, we had a good crowd to worship with us Sunday. Alex White delivered the sermon as he took us on a journey from the triumphal entry to the cross. We enjoyed a good day, together."

"Unfortunately, our online streaming audio was really poor this week. We are continuing to work to improve the quality of our online worship experience."

"We are looking forward to our community-wide Egg Hunt this Saturday. We were unable to have it last year and can hardly wait to share the real story of Easter with the kids in our community. Pray that we will have beautiful weather and a great turnout."

The Mustard Seed, Cain: Jim Tollison writes, "We had a good week at the mission. Our local schools were on spring break this week, and we had several of our folks enjoying getaways. We are expecting a good crowd Wednesday and Sunday."

"We are planning a baptismal service on Easter Sunday. There is no better way to celebrate Easter than seeing someone express a picture of the resurrection. We have one candidate at the time of this writing. Following the services, we will have our annual Easter egg hunt and cookout fellowship."

"I hope you all have a great Easter service next week. Thanks for all your prayers and support."

Misión Creciendo en Cristo (Growing in Christ), North Little Rock: Juan Carlos Posadas writes, "Tuesday and Thursday, we continued giving dinners to 100 people each day."

That allowed us to visit some families in the community and bring them the blessing of a hot dinner, strengthening ties of friendship."

"On Saturday, we presented the film 'Jesus,' edited for children and we had an attendance of 16 people. Next Saturday, April 3, we will see the Jesus movie in its full two-hour version. This is a good opportunity for our congregation to visualize the life and ministry of Jesus, especially for those who have not grown up attending a church and do not know much about the life of Jesus, those we have a high percentage of in the congregation."

"On Sunday, we had the beautiful privilege of having Jerry Kidd and his wife, Sue as our guests. Bro. Kidd shared the Word of God and some of his experiences on the mission field and spoke to us in Spanish. We thank God for this beautiful couple who are committed to the Lord. We pray that God will continue to use them in His work."

"Listening to the missionary experiences of Bro. Jerry was a very appropriate framework to launch the practical challenge to the congregation — to commit to God to participate in missions, through the promise of faith of offering and pray monthly for world missions, especially for Cristian and Vanessa Martinez, our missionaries in Romania. We also thank God that we already have some members of the congregation who have committed by faith to get involved in missions. Glory be to our King and His name be exalted in all the earth!"

Grace, Green Forest: Carter Pearce writes, "Sunday morning, we greeted two families and welcomed them back. They had been away for a while. One of the families was ill with COVID-19 and chose to recover fully before return-

ing to worship services. The other had a potential business opportunity out of state and spent several weeks searching for God's will for their future."

"The past month has been quite challenging. With these two families out and another of our families dealing with their own struggles, our numbers have been very low. We are also facing difficulties with how to reach other families in our community. Through community events, door-to-door outreach and building relationships, we have been able to meet those in Green Forest and beyond with the message of Jesus and our love for our community, but it has been several months since we have had great prospects join us for worship."

"Ministry is challenging, especially in the current U.S. climate, but God is still in control. We trust in Him today as we always have. Please pray with us that we will be what God wants us to be in our community and for our community in 2021. We have seen God do great things in Carroll County during the past three years, and we expect great things to come. May each of us be what God wants us to be this year!"

Ebenezer, West Little Rock: Ruben Isturiz writes, "Last week was spring break for my children, and it was a good week to spend time with them and to be able to enjoy with them at home, since they usually take their classes in person. Friday, we were able to go to Memphis to visit several historical museums and see part of the history of the USA."

"The Berean Group (cell) in Chenal rested, but we thank God that the Baseline Berean Group was able to restart activities after a long period of inactivity due to the pandemic. Several have already been vaccinated, so now there is more confidence to meet. It is an answered prayer. Keep praying for the Vidal family. They have not restarted the Bible study and my wish that the Holy Spirit will put that wish in each one of them. I believe in prayer and every time I have asked you for prayer, the Lord has done wonderful things. I also ask you to pray for the activities on Easter Sunday. Our service will begin at 6 a.m., then we will have breakfast together. My desire is that we can pass on the Word of God. To God be the glory!"

Faith Chapel, Flippin: Johnny Shew writes, "We had several out this week for different reasons. Most are sick and one has been in the hospital for 22 days. Our prayer list is very long, but we know that God hears our prayers and answers them according to His perfect

will. What could be better than that?"

"As we study and prepare for Easter, we are trying to stay mindful of what Jesus did for us on the cross, and that His grace is still sufficient for us, no matter what we are going through. Please continue to pray for us, and our mission in Flippin, and mention our prayer list in your prayers, too. God knows who is on it, and their needs. We will do the same for you."

Not Alone, Springdale: Clinton Morris writes, "This week was emotionally hard. My grandmother, who has been battling cancer, went to Hospice on Monday and then passed into glory on Friday evening."

"I had several conversations throughout the week with folks at the coffee shop. I also started meeting with Drew during the week so that we can develop a closer relationship. We have had some great discipleship moments."

"One of my friends in Arizona is getting to the point of retiring and is looking for a direction for him and his wife. I am praying that God may direct him my direction."

"I spent most of the week working on my Church Values, Mission Statement and Vision. This is going to be a long process, as is anything that takes creativity and focus. Drew and Kaley are also in the process of proofreading the documents, and this has brought them even more into the core of the church."

"Pray for Drew as he works on a



Beacon, Taylor gained three by letter; Karry Easley, pastor.

Central, Prescott rejoices over two by baptism; Roy Johnson, pastor.

Central, Trumann added two by letter; Joel McMasters, pastor; Brenda May, reporter.

Fairview, Jonesboro welcomed one by letter; Gary Henderson, pastor.

The Bridge, Mountain Home witnessed one by baptism and two by letter; Hershel Conley, pastor

co-worker, Cam, and another couple who is searching for a church. The documents we are working on will help in these situations.

"Josh and Joanna are very busy with work this time of year, but they are planning on coming to our house in the near future and want to be in the Bible study."

"Thank you for praying for our second meeting with Jesse and Katherine. It was a night/day difference from our first dinner meeting. They were both very relaxed, and it was miraculous. Keep praying for them and for us. We have asked the Holy Spirit to provide us with His opportunity to witness to them."

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Bunnies, Baskets, or the Beloved?

By Kerry Stitch

"But God raised Him up, releasing Him and bringing an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held by death's power" (Acts 2:24).

Crosses... we spot them everywhere. They adorn jewelry, t-shirts, car decals and stationery, but do we forget their true significance? This week the world will turn its attention to The Cross. Yes, for some it may be the chocolate version next to the Peeps in the candy section, or the yard art placed in the newly refreshed mulch for spring; but let's not miss its most important message — Jesus' sacrificial love gift to us!

You see, how we approach Easter matters to the Christian. I'm not against baskets, ham baking with homemade rolls or an adventurous egg hunt, but if that's all we come away with, we certainly have missed the point. Let's be transparent, it's only Good Friday because Jesus chose to suffer mistreatment through His trial, endure an excruciating death on the cross and then expose His resurrection through His empty tomb. And we think we have some rough Fridays! (Perspective is huge, isn't it?)

God continues to be in the "rolling stones" business. That's encouraging for us, right? Last I inquired, His background check was impeccable and His resume unblemished. Through His resurrection, Jesus has scripted so many promises to us beyond His Word and evident in His creation. The warmth and color of spring surround us through blooms, birds and basking in the sunshine.

Will you intentionally revisit the cross of Easter this year? Will it be **the focus** and priority of your celebration? Enjoy the customs with family, but don't forget to center your gratitude on the Rock, the Messiah and the Resurrection. Allow Good Friday to be your touchpoint with His cross and get packed, because Jesus didn't say, "I am finished." He said, "It is finished," because He was just getting started.

Let this week, just like the coming spring, grow a fresh desire for discipleship in you and bloom a deeper love for Him in your daily walk. That's the kind of Easter He deserves.

NOTES

(Continued From Page 4)

but by the first week of June, engagement had fallen to 22.6. The decrease means 13.1 million Americans were no longer consistently interacting with

Scripture, a change ABS contributed to the "significant pressure" of the COVID-19 crisis. While women were previously more scripturally engaged than men, engagement during the pandemic appeared equal between the two genders.

While industry leaders didn't reveal the percentage increase in sales, they were up at both Lifeway, which sold 2.5 million Bibles in 2020, and at Thomas Nelson, which said it saw its best sales in 8 to 10 years. Lifeway's Bible sales remained strong as the pandemic began, indicating a "significant increase" in online sales April through June.

The Tony Evans Study Bible and the She Reads Truth Bible drove sales with the *Holy Land Illustrated Bible*, the *Ancient Faith Study Bible* and the *CSB Scripture Notebooks* seeing strong showings. The *Heroes Bible* did well during the pandemic, with editions specifically designed for doctors, nurses, emergency medical personnel, military members, firefighters and law enforcement personnel.

Thomas Nelson is focusing on Bible engagement through its *Abide Bible* and complementary *Abide Bible* book journals, Nation said. "Now we see a greater need in the marketplace for people to have editions of the Bible that focus on personal engagement with the Scripture and not just simply informing them of the scholarship," Nation said.

ABS conducted its initial 2020 State of the Bible study in January and early February, including 2,010 interviews with adults in all states and Washington, D.C. ABS followed the initial research with a special COVID-19 study May 28-June 10, surveying 3,020 adults from across the nation. (baptistpress.com)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Hot Dogs and Hot Rods, May 22, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; proceeds benefit Water for Christ; LifeSong, Greenbrier.

CBC Scholarship Gala, June 5, 6 p.m., Conway Expo Center. Contact Amy Reed for more info at areed@cbc.edu.

BMA Camp, June 21-24; Chis Vines, camp speaker, Doug Mickan, worship leader; Budd Creek Camp, Greers Ferry.

National Galilean Camp, June 25-28; Stoneridge Baptist Camp, Smithville, Arkansas.

SOAR 2021, July 6-8; Hilton Anatole, Dallas, Texas; visit soar-conference.com for more info.

Fresh Grounded Faith Women's Event, Aug. 6-7, 7 p.m. Fri., 12:30 p.m. Sat.; Antioch, Conway.

Ark. Ladies Retreat, Sept. 18, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

DISTRICT CALENDAR

Jonesboro District WMA, April 10, 10 a.m.; Yalanda Young Merrell, guest speaker; Prospect, Jonesboro.

Mt. Vernon District WMA, April 10, 10 a.m.; Rondo, Lexa.

Greenbrier District WMA, April 15; 10am meeting, program & lunch; LifeSong, Greenbrier.

Revivals

Victory, Hampton, April 19-21, 7 p.m.; Ruben Weaver, evangelist; Robbie Duncan, pastor.

Temple, Fordyce, May 9-12, 7 p.m.; Jim Moss, evangelist; Lance Hollis, pastor.

Liberty, Stamps, June 6-9, 7 p.m.; Donnie Edward, evangelist; Adam Rogers, pastor.

Warning from BMAA President Jeff Swart

I have been made aware that someone has created a fake email address (BMAA-President@gmail.com) and is using my name to make contact with BMA pastors. I have reported the fraudulent use to gmail, but there is nothing more that can be done. Please disregard any email that seems suspicious.



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