

The Mississippi Baptist

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WORLD MISSIONS DAY 75 YEARS OF GLOBAL MISSIONS

BMA Global is excited to announce that World Missions Day is Sunday, February 23, 2025! This year is especially significant as it is the 75th anniversary of both the BMA and when the BMA sent its first missionaries!

In 1950 the Baptist Missionary Association was formed, uniting around a common purpose: "We believe in Missions for all the World." That year we sent our first missionaries, and we've never stopped. Who could have imagined we would send over 300 missionaries and partner with thousands of ChangeMakers who have planted churches in over 70 countries?

As an association, we have so much to celebrate. Over the past 75 years, God has blessed the BMA and its work across the globe as many have

proclaimed, "Send me!" We are so thankful for those who have gone before us and laid the foundation that we are still building upon today.

We invite and urge our BMA churches to join us in this celebration by registering for World Missions Day. More information is available on our website, including ideas for how to celebrate, links for requesting materials such as posters and bulletin inserts, videos to share with your church, information about our missionaries, and t-shirts are available for purchase.

Also available this year is a special 75th-anniversary edition Gleaner magazine, which honors all our past BMA missionaries and looks to the future of BMA Global missions. Access these resources and information at bmaglobal.org/worldmissionsday.

DON'T LOSE HOPE

By Scott Kirkland

As I observe the world around me, I cannot help but feel overwhelmed by the level of hopelessness. Given the state of the world, it is easy to understand why so many feel hopeless. Job losses, rampant inflation, social unrest, moral instability, and the failure of almost every system designed to protect us have all contributed to this sentiment. If your hope is based solely in this world, hopelessness is inevitable!

However, as children of God, it is irrational for us to fall into hopelessness. We too often become too absorbed in a worldly outlook on life and have our sight too much on temporary things when it should be on eternal things. We often feel hopeless in the work wherein we are called. But we have great assurance in God's word that our work is not hopeless "my wordshall not return unto me void" "ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord". Yet often as we see empty pews, fewer conversions, and more work for fewer workers, it is discouraging.

In reality, as we see the state of things in the world, we should be

grateful that we know the true source of hope, and we should be prepared to share that hope with others. As so many in this world put their hope in things that prove to be hopeless, more and more people are searching for something better. Let us rise ("then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh") and show our hope that we may point a searching world to the only one who can fill the hopelessness in their life "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you".

The purpose of The Mississippi Baptist Paper is to share the news of the great work God is doing throughout our churches, departments, commissions, and auxiliaries to the members of every participating church, so that we may all glorify God for what He is doing "For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God." I hope that this paper may help to encourage every reader, that we amplify our reason to give glory to the name of our great God.

Senior Adult Ministry

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

CASTING IN SUPPORT

By Don Brown

What a joy to work with the senior adults in our churches and provide a little encouragement to them through our conferences. We look forward to each of these events each year. As you know the conference expense is far above the fee that we charge those attending. While sufficient funds have been provided for this ministry over the years, our current income falls short of our operating needs.

In the 12th chapter of the Gospel of Mark, Jesus uses the example of the widow who gave her last two mites, a very small amount, to the treasury of the Temple to encourage His followers to provide what is needed and to show the blessings of giving. It seems in the widow's case that she knew the blessing of giving. She gave all she had. Others gave out of their abundance, but she gave out of her love and support of her faith in God.

The needs of this ministry are indeed real, but small when compared to other

ministries. We are asking each of our churches to give their own mite by putting this work in their regular church budget for a minimum of \$25.00 per month. Many give more and many have rallied to this call and put the Senior Adult Commission in their budget for the \$25.00 mite!

Would you do the same? Know that your gift will be used to minister to our senior adults.

God bless you all and be sure to plan for our two conferences in 2025. The South Conference will be at Big Creek Baptist Church, Soso, on March 11, 2025 and the North Conference will be held at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, Fulton, on May 13, 2025. We have great programs planned for each meeting.

See our ad in this issue and pray for and minister to the senior adults in your local church.

\$25



Don Brown
Director

PrimeTimers

One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. Psalm 145:4

The Legacy of A Dedicated Believer



Message by
Josh Daniels



Music Guests - Harper Collective

2025 South Senior Adult Conference

March 11, 2025

Big Creek Baptist Church, Soso, Mississippi

The Mississippi Baptist

Journal of the Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi



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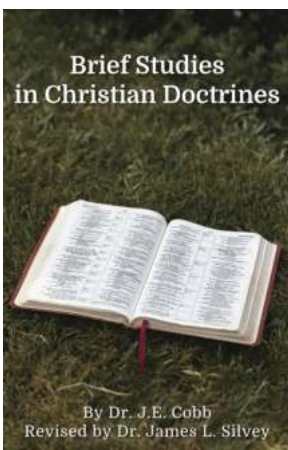
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BRO. JASON HOWARD AVAILABLE FOR SERVICE

I was saved in 2002, baptized and became a member of Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church. Surrendered to the call to preach in 2003 and ordained in 2004. I served for 10 years at my first church and 11 and my second. I graduated from Southeastern Baptist College with a Bachelor degree in Church Ministries. I am the founder of Antioch Christian Academy, a ministry of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church in Lucedale, Mississippi. I have served as the Director of the Commission on History and Archives, Church planter and Missions Coach with the BMA of Mississippi. I have been married for 25 years, have 3 children and 2 grandchildren. If I can possibly be a blessing to your church please feel free to contact me!

My contact information is as follows: Phone 601-689-1491 – Email Jasonowenshoward@gmail.com

NOW AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD!



Brief Studies in Christian Doctrines is, perhaps, the most helpful and thorough theology book ever produced by the BMA. The book consists of over 200 pages of doctrinal teachings over topics such as the doctrines of God, Scripture, Salvation, Church, etc.

It was last printed in 2003. Today, we are pleased to offer a new, high quality digital copy of this book for only \$5.

We will be bringing this book back into print soon, but we wanted to make the digital version available to as soon as possible. Be on the lookout for the hardcopy of this book in the coming months!

Here's What We Believe was written by the well-known Bible teacher, E. Harold Henderson. This

brief study covers the doctrinal statement of the BMA of America. We have created a new, high quality document based on the original book. It is available for free on the Library page of our website.

We are working hard to preserve doctrinal books of the BMA of America and provide them for new and upcoming generations. I hope these efforts are a blessing and encouragement to you.

In Christ Alone, Jordan M. Tew
Executive Director



Leave It To Cleaver

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

SOME NEW YEAR PREDICTIONS FOR CHURCHES

As the New Year is the time for all prognosticators to weigh in on important subjects, I feel compelled to make some observations about church people I have known. I might easily predict some events for congregations this coming year whether they be Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, Catholic, or other:

- Ms Retilla Rinkins, church matriarch, will be one hour late when the time changes in the spring and one hour early when it changes in the fall.

- Dr. Dryas Dust, denominational director, will appeal to churches to adopt his new and improved celestial church plan.

- Billy Ray Goins and Mary Sue Comings will have their lovely wedding in the church sanctuary, and they will never be seen there again.

- Pastor Beatum Up, minister of record, will preach on tithing the first Sunday of each quarter using the title: "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."

- Allen Apostate, member of long standing, will again rededicate his life after another embarrassing episode with local law enforcement.

- Sammy Sharp, choir leader, will have to apologize for not having the correct names in the bulletin on Easter.

- Ms Nelda Notable, chairperson of the women's auxiliary, will stay way too long at the podium at the annual membership banquet.

- The Reverend Lanny Lad, youth minister, will have to apologize to all parents for the poison ivy outbreak at summer camp.

- Brother Not Known, a missionary from a country no congregant can identify on a map, will be guest speaker at a little attended service.

- Mr. Cash Flow, chair of finance committee, will recommend the pastor's salary remain at the same level it was last year.

- Deacon Bill Backward will not be in favor of the outreach program that aims at local neighborhood families.

- Ms Thelda Trauma and Ms Denise Drauma, co-chairs of the flower committee, will not be able to agree on anything.

There will be other notable names well known in the congregation who have human flaws and will commit human foibles. Yet it is the work of Christ and His Church that will remain the most important work in the world. He has promised to be with us in spite of all our silliness, senselessness, and stubbornness. The Holy Spirit will give us unction to work in His power to do His will. Let us smile at our mistakes, ask the Lord to forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, and refocus on the work to be done.



Dr. Tony Cleaver



CHURCHES SEEKING PASTORS

Oakland Baptist Church In Vicksburg, Mississippi, is seeking a full-time pastor. Inquiries should be made to Joshua Webb of the church's pulpit committee. He can be reached by phone at: (479)-747-9132 or by email at josh.webb15@gmail.com.

First Baptist Church of Calhoun of Laurel, Mississippi, is seeking a pastor. Anyone interested please contact them at 601-426-9721.

First Baptist Church of Bay Springs, Mississippi, is in prayerful search of a full-time pastor. For more information contact Tommy Boyd at tsboyd007t@yahoo.com or (601) 670-5142.

Calvary Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas, is seeking a bi-vocational pastor. Email resumes to psc@calvarybaptistarlington.org.

Wilderness Baptist Church, 5415-C Gibson Road, Vicksburg, Ms 39183 is seeking a pastor. Those interested should contact Dewayne Trest at 601-415-1103 or via email at darwin.trest@outlook.com.



ANDERS LEE
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HAPPY NEW YEAR

It is truly hard to believe that we have begun a New Year. I pray that the Lord will prosper our work this year and give us many souls in the field of labor. We are all co-workers together, planting seeds, reaping the harvest, and discipling as we go. Even though the years seem to come and go so quickly it is a great blessing to serve you here in

the Youth Department. Happy New Year from the Lee Family and all the Trustees of the Youth Department!!!

RENEW

At the writing of this article, RENEW has not even happened yet. So, I cannot report about it in this issue of the paper. Look for all the facts on our social media, it should be posted there by now. Currently, we have around 250

registered for the conference, more on it in our next issue.

I certainly appreciate MIDWAY FIRST BAPTIST! I already know what they are planning to do for the conference in the way of accommodating us and rolling out the red carpet. I am so thankful for their willingness to open their doors during the busiest holiday season!

WELCOME EDITOR & PRESIDENT

I am looking forward to working with Bro. Scott Kirkland and Dr. George Martinez. WELCOME to your respective roles as directors in your departments! There are new leaders in many places in our state work. It is an exciting time, but it is also an important time to work hard to sustain what has been and push forward and be faithful to the Lord and the ministry of our work for the future. Please join me in praying for them as they begin their critical roles and serve the BMA of Mississippi.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Dr. Carson and Bro. Don. I will miss them being in the mix and the fellowship we all had. I extend to both of you my best wishes and I hope your retirement days are truly a blessing!

GET REGISTERED

In the blink of an eye, our camps will be here. It is time NOW to start getting your kids & teens signed up for camp. January is the best time to communicate to your parents the dates of camp, put out a sign-up sheet, and get it rolling!

Registration has already begun on our website. You may now register your kids or teens for either camp! Teen Camp is June 9-12, 2025, at Lake Tiak O'Khata and Kids Camp is June 22-25, 2025 at Waukaway Springs.

Not all the information about camps is currently posted on the website, but we will add more as the year progresses.

The Mississippi Baptist

Dear Churches of the BMA of Mississippi

As we enter a new year there are changes happening at the Mississippi Baptist, but our primary goal remains the same. We bring the news of the great work God is doing throughout our churches, departments, commissions and auxiliaries to the members of every participating church, so that we may all glorify God for what He is doing.

For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

2 Corinthians 4:15

The Mississippi Baptist Paper thrives because of the support from our churches! As we enter our special emphasis season, I would like to ask you to please remember this department. Your financial support is essential to sustain this ministry as we face rising costs and declining subscriptions. This is YOUR department, and we need your support. More importantly, I ask for your prayers during this pivotal time. I seek God's guidance in this new endeavor and aim to preserve the rich legacy of this vital work while discovering ways to enhance its impact. With your help, I am seeking ways to make The Mississippi Baptist a greater blessing to our churches and the mission of the BMA of Mississippi. Your involvement makes a difference!

Thank You!

Scott Kirkland: Editor

The Mississippi Baptist

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Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.
Isaiah 6:8



SOUTHEASTERN BAPTIST COLLEGE

4229 Highway 15 North, Laurel, Mississippi 39440 - 601.426.6346

Serving Christ With A Biblical World View In A Christian Atmosphere

A CALL TO MINISTRY

BY DR. GEORGE MARTINEZ, PRESIDENT: SOUTHEASTERN BAPTIST COLLEGE

Season's greetings from Southeastern Baptist College! We hope that your Christmas was filled with joy and happiness. We at SBC wish you and your family peace, health, and prosperity for the coming new year.

Recently, I was asked the following question: How does a person know if they are being called into gospel ministry? Upon hearing this, I was eager to give a response in hopes of leading young men to discover God's will for their lives. Throughout our work, there has been a shortage of individuals answering the call to ministry. The pulpit vacancies within our denominational work evidence this. I have heard some ask these questions. Is God still calling people into the ministry? Most certainly, he is! God's desire is to redeem a fallen world back into a proper relationship with himself. He has chosen as his instrumentality the willing hearts of men to preach the gospel's good news to a dying world. He faithfully accomplishes this task as he continues sending out the call to the masses. The deficit occurs not in Him but within the willingness of the heart of men to answer the call.

Let's begin by answering, "Am I being called into ministry?" Everyone who has accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior is called to ministry, that is, service to the Creator of the cosmos. However, not everyone is called to a preaching ministry, as defined in Ephesians 4, to lead, preach, and teach God's people for works of service for edifying the body of Christ. Nevertheless, every believer is expected to serve God according to the needs, time, circumstances, and the spiritual enabling given to them by the Holy Spirit. That translates to serving in various ways, including but not limited to mentoring, leading worship, feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, and evangelism. Out of this generalized service of obligations, God calls individuals into the preaching ministry of the church. Many

confuse their call to service with the call into the gospel ministry. This is often due to an individual having an overly ambitious spirit rather than a true call of God. How are the two distinguished? Simply put, the one called has a daily discipline of prayer, loves to study God's word, has a burden for lost souls, and is eager to serve no matter the job. The daily disciplines of spiritual growth draw them. These are often indicators that God is calling a person into gospel ministry. The overly ambitious person desires the pulpit while eagerly neglecting the temple sweeping of the church. That is why it is a good practice to withhold the pulpit for a period of time from those who claim they have a call from God to be a pastor. It provides the opportunity to see how they behave in the withholding of a heart's desire. This desire is a little different from the internal desire that Paul speaks about when he writes to his protégé in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." Internal desire to serve God and his people is good; internal desire to serve self is not so much. True, there have been times when God has raised up an individual who has had no desire for the work of the ministry. This reluctance of desire often gradually changes when the individual grows deeper in his relationship with the Lord. God, who is the shaper of hearts, carefully guides the desires of men as they delight in Him.

Moving forward, a second indicator that confirms a man's calling is a definite call by God into ministry. This often comes in various ways and is often unique to each individual. Take Moses, for instance; he was called by God out of a burning bush to lead his people out of Egyptian bondage. Several

years later, Samuel, who was called by God through an audible voice to be a prophet and judge of the nation of Israel, was unable to discern God's voice until Eli, the high priest, guided him in what to say. Further down the historical timeline, Isaiah was also chosen by God to prophesy the coming destruction of Israel. He answered God's query with the famous words, "Here am I. Send me!" Within the examples of these men, a third indicator can be extracted. The reconciliation of the inner voice that says God wants me to lead, preach, and teach his people. It requires giving up one's will for the will of God no matter where he might be sent.

Further indicators confirming God's call are clearly obtaining the qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Along with these external qualifications is the validation of the church—the recognition of the hand of God upon the man of God. God calls men into the gospel ministry. He endows them with spiritual gifts, provides service opportunities, and molds their character. The church's responsibility is to recognize God's call upon the individual and partner with Him in forming and validating that call through the licensing and ordination process of the church. I believe it is here that we often fail as a church. We, unlike Eli, may be unable to discern God's call upon a young man's life and, therefore, fail to give proper guidance. Let's face it: Young men today have many distractions around them, not to mention the lucrative secular occupations competing with gospel vocations. These distractions have clearly derailed many from answering the call to ministry. Some individuals have shown themselves moldable by answering the call later in life after time has given its lessons and maturity has peaked that renders one receptive to the voice of God. Many, on the other hand, never answer. Some are oblivious to the fact that God is calling



Dr. Martinez
President

them. The church needs to recognize God's call upon a young man's life, even if the lad cannot recognize it within himself. These individuals need to be made aware of God's call upon them. Those who are reluctant to answer the call need to be assisted with removing barriers that hinder their response to the will of God. To partner with God in raising new ministers for the gospel, we must promote answering the call in our pulpits and publications. God is faithful and he will continue to send out his call. We, as the church, need to do likewise.

Southeastern Baptist College is committed to the formation of gospel ministers. We want to partner with you in raising the next generation for kingdom work. The Board of Trustees recently approved a new initiative for our online degree programs. This initiative targets nontraditional students and now offers them a price reduction on their tuition rate. The current tuition rate is set at \$475 per semester hour. With the new initiative, nontraditional students in our online program now pay \$300 per semester hour. That's a savings of \$175 per credit hour. That is a big saving for our ministerial students and those seeking non-ministerial degrees.

In order to take advantage of these savings a student needs

to meet the following criteria:

- Does not live on campus or in off-campus housing.
- Files taxes independently.
- 100% of classes are online.
- Does not participate in any extracurricular school activities.

Certain tech and book fees still apply. Remember that the Department of Biblical Studies at Southeastern Baptist College is designed to equip individuals for gospel ministry. We have a highly experienced faculty that can help provide both theory and practicum to one's educational experience. This affordable program can be done without relocating to Laurel, MS. What a great opportunity! Affordable, great instruction, and in the comfort of your own home. Since I have been here in this beautiful state, I have heard many say that they came to SBC because their pastor or ministry leader encouraged them to step out in faith and pursue preparation for their calling. Not one of them has ever shared a regret for doing so. If you have a future ministry leader in your midst, I encourage you to refer them to our college so that we can partner with you in providing theological education to those whom God has called. Remember that Southeastern is still a college for ministers.

A FOND FAREWELL

By Scott Kirkland

Southeastern Baptist College recently hosted a retirement reception honoring Dr. Scott Carson. The faculty and staff, along with some students, did a fantastic job of creating an event that I'm sure will be a cherished memory for Dr. Carson.

I had the privilege of serving on the board at Southeastern when Bro. Carson became President, and again when he retired. I remember clearly Bro. Danny Pitts calling me over at an association meeting and introducing me to "the new dean" who I have since come to know as a brother in Christ and a friend. Southeastern has come a long way in the time Bro. Carson has been there. From the time we feared



we may have to close the school, and renting out part of the property, to searching for more space to contain the growth. God has blessed! I thank God for his guidance and the vision he gave for the school, and I thank God for sending a selfless servant to stand in the gap and lead the college to great things.

As Dr. Carson moves on I pray God's continued blessing and guidance. I also look forward to more great things to come at Southeastern. I pray that God will continue his guidance with Dr. Martinez. I'm sure there are still many challenges ahead, and I ask that each of you continually pray for the efforts at Southeastern.



BAPTIST MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION MISSIONS OF MISSISSIPPI

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Chris Yager, Director



Chris Yager

Happy New Year!!

It is crazy to know that we are embarking on the year 2025!! As a boy in the 1980's, 2025 seemed so far away and so futuristic; expecting there to be flying cars and amazing technological advancements. With all the technological advancements, 2025 doesn't feel as futuristic as I thought it would be as a boy. Conversely, one aspect that I never expected as a young boy is the intense moral decay that we are experiencing entering into 2025. My wildest imaginations as a kid never brought me to the conception that our world would be wrestling with topics like gender confusion, transgender acceptance, boys in girls sports, Christianity on the decline, and church attendance wavering amidst so many other things. Spiritually, 2025 begins with the glaring reality of our world's need for Jesus, revival, and repentance. When I focus on the disparaging reality, I get discouraged and disappointed. In that moment, the Holy Spirit reminds me of the truth: that the darker the night is, the brighter our lights can be. This reality changes my discouragement from

defeat to opportunity! This is an open door to reach my world with the gospel. 2025 has its challenges, but it also has its opportunities. Let us, as God's people, seize the opportunities to shine forth Jesus Christ in a world that is lost, disillusioned, and desperately seeking truth. We have that truth! May God use us to see many souls transformed by the good news of Salvation in Jesus!

Please Pray with us!

As we launch 2025, we have some big goals for this year!

Our goals are:

1. Begin the new Hispanic Church plant with Bro. Oscar from Guatemala. We are making headway in the Immigration process, and we are praying that we will be bringing him to Mississippi soon. We are also praying for at least 1 more state missionary to begin a church plant in Mississippi. God is stirring men; please pray that they will answer the call!
2. To add on our second Timothy to be trained in the gospel ministry. (That will give us two men in the 2 year apprenticeship program or Timothy Ministries program). Please pray for these young men as they train for ministry.
3. Meet with as many of our state BMA pastors as possible to connect the missions office with our pastors and churches in a deeper way.
4. To continue to see revitalization gain traction in our association and churches. The Revitalize ministry is piloting our BMA of Mississippi Revitalization program with 1st Baptist of Shady Grove, and God is doing a mighty and miraculous work!
5. In the Revolving Loan Fund: to facilitate its continued growth, so that we can more effectively aid our churches and missions in building and construction loans.

These 2025 goals are gleaned from our 5 year vision for our missions department. Please pray for us as we set out on an intensive 5 year plan. We are praying that God will do big things through us!

1. We are praying that we will see in the BMA of Mississippi... at least 100 healthy churches that are partnering together planting at least 1 church per year while we are training "Timothys", missionaries, and pastors within our state.
2. So by 2030, we are praying for 5 new churches planted throughout our state
 - a. 10 new Timothys trained and equipped for the ministry
 - b. 100 pastors/churches experiencing some phase of Revitalization... whether it be in the level 1, 2, or 3 of the Revitalize ministry.

I believe a big God can accomplish big goals. Will you pray specifically with me about these goals for the new year and through 2030? God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we could ever ask or think. Because of this, I am confident that He, by His grace, can accomplish these goals.

May the Lord bless you with a wonderful new year! May He transform your church and our association to be a beacon of His grace and ability, so that all who see the BMA of Mississippi cannot help but give God the glory of the great things He is doing.

Thank you again for allowing me to serve you!
May God bless the work in 2025!

Bro. Chris Yager

Hispanic Missions

Bro. Estuardo Marroquin

Last November there were great activities in the Hispanic missions in Mississippi. Way Truth and Life Baptist Church in the city of Ripley celebrated its 21st anniversary service. It was two days of many blessings and the participation of a good number of attendees who joined in to thank God for the work of the church. People from Tupelo and Oxford missions joined in this special service. New Hope Hispanic Association celebrated the first revival and evangelism service. El Camino Baptist Church in the city of Laurel hosted the service, our Hispanic ministers preached God's Word and many people from Hispanic churches were encouraged to continue serving God. The next revival and evangelism service will be held in January at the Hispanic church in Ripley, Mississippi, where Hispanic pastors from churches in the southern part of the state will bring the powerful message of God's Word. We continue to ask for your prayers for the BMA of Mississippi Hispanic missions.



Jail Ministry Report

By Bro. Paul Spurlin

On November 22, Bro. Ken Riley and I visited the Jones County jail and Bro. Ken brought a man with him who wanted to help for the night. We ministered to five prisoners as Ken delivered a powerful message from Luke 13:22-30, encouraging the men to "strive to enter the narrow gate," emphasizing the need for salvation through Christ. Our time of worship also included singing "Trust and Obey," which seemed to resonate with the men.



Paul Spurlin

The response to the sermon from the inmates seemed heartfelt and humbling. One man asked for a Bible and prayer for guidance as he looks forward to reuniting with his family and finding a church home after his expected release in early December. His Bible was delivered the next week, and he brought it with him to our worship service in the jail on December 6. Another prisoner, who prayed aloud for our ministry team at the end of service (a first for me), asked us to pray for peace in his life and relationships. Another requested prayer for deliverance from sin, strength to lead his family spiritually, and for his family's protection. Please continue to generally pray for the prisoners we have met and join in praying for their specific requests mentioned here.

We are grateful for the churches, associations, and individuals who support our work in the jail with prayer and donations. Through your help in this ministry, you are sowing seeds of faith and hope that will bear fruit for eternity. To those who recently gave to provide Bibles, we say a special thanks as we delivered the Bible to the man mentioned here, and I have just purchased one for another prisoner's request that I plan to deliver today after writing this update.

Missions reports continue on the next page

Salt Light Baptist Mission

Doyle Moore

As we step into a new season filled with hope and renewal, Salt Light Baptist Mission has been at the forefront of meaningful outreach and community support. Our congregation has been blessed with opportunities to serve, uplift, and share the love of Christ in numerous ways. Let's reflect on some of the recent happenings that showcase our commitment to making a positive impact in our community and beyond.



Doyle Moore

Our mission recently sent an offering and gifts to the Mississippi Children's Home. These donations are a testament to our belief in the power of giving and the importance of caring for those in need. The children at the home are deserving of love, support, and the assurance that they are not alone in this world. Our prayers are with them, and we are incredibly grateful for the wonderful family that dedicates their lives to nurturing and caring for these young ones. We trust that our small contributions will bring joy and hope to their hearts.

In our ongoing efforts to serve those in need, Salt Light Baptist Church actively participates in the King's Kitchen, a vital program that provides meals to individuals and families facing food insecurity in the Bay St. Louis/Waveland area. Our church has rallied together with generous donations and the commitment of volunteers to ensure that no one in our community goes hungry. Each meal served is not just food; it is a reminder of God's love and provision. We believe that our collective efforts, no matter how small, can create significant ripples of goodness in the lives of those we serve.

As we continue to reach out to our community, we are witnessing the transformative power of faith.

Several individuals have come to know the Lord recently, and we are dedicated to guiding them on their spiritual journey. We have two ready for baptism. Our church family is praying fervently for these new believers, helping them recognize the beauty and importance of following the Lord's example through baptism. This sacred act symbolizes a new beginning, and we are excited to walk alongside them as they deepen their relationship with Christ.

Recognizing the importance of strong relationships, we are thrilled to announce that we are launching a new class for couples. Our prayer is that this initiative will empower couples to grow spiritually, fostering a deeper connection with one another and with God. We firmly believe that the secret to a thriving marriage lies in placing Christ at the center of our lives and homes. Through this class, we hope to equip couples with the tools they need to navigate life's challenges together, strengthening their bond and enriching their spiritual journeys.

As we approach the Christmas season and the New Year, our hearts are filled with gratitude for the opportunities we have to serve and to love. We pray that the peace found in having Christ in our lives will abound in the coming year. May the Lord provide for every need, comfort our hearts, and encourage us as we continue to spread His love.

Let us come together as a church family to celebrate the goodness of God and the blessings that flow from serving one another and our community. We invite you to join us in prayer, asking that our humble efforts create lasting impacts and inspire others to be a light in their communities. Together, we can make a difference, one act of love at a time.

May the joy of the season fill your hearts and homes, and may you experience the richness of God's love as we embark on another year of service, growth, and fellowship at Salt Light Baptist Mission.

Refuge Mission, Kiln

By Bro. Josh Daniels

As we wrap up 2024 and head into 2025, the life of Refuge takes a new step. We want to thank all of the churches and associations for all the support along the way for the last 5 years! It has been an incredible journey, to say the least. We have learned many valuable lessons along the way that we believe will strengthen us for the long run. Lamentations 3:21-26 says that we have hope in the Lord because His mercy and compassion does not fail, and it is new every morning. Verse 23 ends with "GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS"! I echo that statement today as I write this article. God has proven time and time again that HE IS FAITHFUL, HIS MERCY IS NEW EACH DAY, & HE IS GOOD TO THOSE WHO WAIT ON HIM! Our challenge is to not forget these truths when times are not so good or situations arise that are challenging.



Josh Daniels

Our theme for 2025 at Refuge will be "EVEN IF". Instead of asking "WHAT IF?" we will proclaim "EVEN IF!". One is a question of fear, doubt, worry, and uncertainty. The other is a statement of faith, courage, trust, and a settled heart. We ask the Lord to lead us forward and trust Him for whatever comes our way. Pray for us as we enter a new season of life at Refuge as well as for me personally as to what the end of this chapter means for myself and my family.

I want to challenge any minister or pastor out there praying about mission work or supporting missions. DO IT! If God is calling you to something beyond yourself or to support something beyond yourself, GO FOR IT!

We look forward to petitioning into the state work, local association, and national work of the BMA of MS, Hobolochitto Association, & the BMAA. We hope we can support and bless the work as much as the work has supported and blessed us.

Living Hope Baptist

Bro. Samuel Yager

Christmas Outreach

Each year, we work to find opportunities to connect to our community through the holiday season. This year, we have partnered with the Center for Pregnancy Choices to provide Christmas gifts for moms and children in need through an angel tree. In addition, we hosted three drive-in movie nights at the mission. By simply projecting the movies onto the side of our building, we were able to offer a unique event for our community. Our people made this event come alive by providing a canvas to serve as the movie screen, bringing fire pits for s'mores, and connecting with the people that came. The first two nights were cold, and the crowd was small because of that. However, the third night proved that this type of event can work in our community, for people came out from our community that we had not yet got to connect with. This gave us the opportunity to build relationships with those that we are working to reach with the Gospel. Although this type of outreach event is not the end goal of reaching our community with the Gospel, it serves the key purpose of connecting with people with whom we can share the Gospel.



Sam Yager

God is continuing to grow and mature this mission, and we are truly blessed to be a part of His work. Please continue to pray for us as we strive to do the work of the ministry in Meridian.

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Serving as a Family

Serving others teaches kids to think beyond themselves and their own needs.

A few nights ago, I read my three kids a bedtime story about a missionary who spent 30 years of his life serving in Nepal. I realized it wasn't much of a lull-them-to-sleep story, though, as I fielded excited questions and enthusiastic interest.

How will God use my children to build His kingdom? I wondered. Will they serve Him overseas, immersed in a foreign culture? Will they remain in North America, shining as lights in a secular workplace? Whatever their futures hold, how can I help mold them into world changers?

As I pondered the latter question, one thought came swift and clear: Teach them to think beyond themselves and their own needs. World changers, like the storyteller, follow Christ's example through service. They practice kindness and are willing to sacrifice convenience and comfort for another's sake.

Serving right where we were

I soon discovered that countless service opportunities surrounded our family, albeit on a simple scale:

When missionary families on furlough stayed with us, our kids

shared their bedrooms with the children.

We provided transportation to Sunday school and midweek kids' club for children who wanted to attend but whose parents couldn't take them.

We invited friends to invade our lakefront home, on scorching summer days.

We delivered meals and drove one pregnant woman's children to school when she was ordered to bed rest.

When an acquaintance's husband deserted her, we invited her family for dinners and table games.

We purchased fabric and sewed a dress for a girl whose single mom couldn't afford to buy her one.

Bringing it to the Father

Serving others helped our kids see beyond themselves. Still, we could do something more: pray for our children's spiritual well being.

Frankly, sometimes I felt like a parrot with a limited vocabulary: "Lord, please bless my kids." My sentiments seemed so generic.

Things improved when we began praying God's Word. Specific Scriptures addressed our concerns.

Because we wanted our children to exemplify Christ,

Philippians 2:3-8 became a favorite prayer guide:

"God, teach our children to humbly consider others better than themselves. May they look not only to their own interests, but also to the interests of others."

We also asked the Lord to bless our kids, not necessarily with wealth or fame or an easy life, but that through them, His way would be known on Earth and His salvation among all nations (Psalm 67:1-2).

Seeing that it sank in

God honored our efforts and answered our prayers. More than a decade after that unforgettable bedtime story, our eldest boarded a ministry ship to participate in God's work around the world. As I write this, the ship sits in hurricane-devastated Grenada, its crew building shelters for the homeless.

The second, a Bible college sophomore, hopes to teach English overseas after graduation.

The third, now 18, spent three weeks teaching Bible clubs in Mexico last summer. She plans to return in July.

Raising world changers begins at home. From there, only God knows — and that's exciting!



Mississippi Baptist Children's Home



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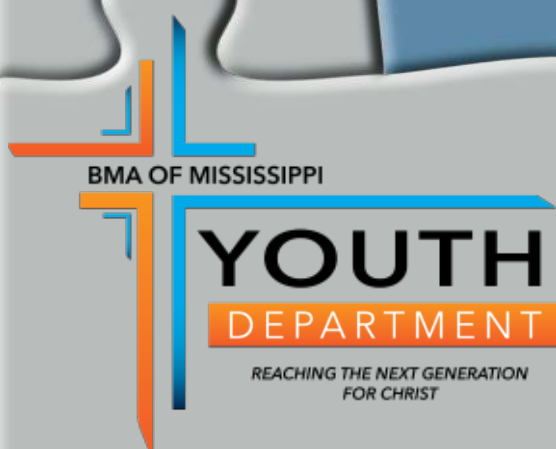
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The Mississippi Baptist is YOUR Paper and cannot continue without your support. We humbly ask you to consider us during this special emphasis time so that we may meet the needs in the coming year, and continue to connect all the work of our association.

Scott Kirkland, Editor

Thank You



WHY DOES GOD IGNORE WICKEDNESS? WHEN GOD SEEMS TO “HIDE HIS FACE” PSALM 10:1-18

BY DR. GREG W. PARSONS

Introduction

When wickedness runs rampant in a society, it may challenge believers' faith concerning the Lord's character—especially His sovereignty or omnipresence.

The psalmist asks: “why standest thou afar off” and “why hidest thyself” “when trouble (wickedness) is rampant” (v. 1). This is similar to questions the prophet Habakkuk would ask later on when the Lord revealed His plans to bring the wicked Babylonians to punish the wicked in Judah (Habakkuk 1:3, 13-14). In times of faith, the psalmist taught and believed that God was a strong refuge in times of trouble (Ps. 9:9) —a very present help in trouble (Ps. 46:1); however, experiencing the chaos caused by the wicked sometimes resulted in frustration, disappointment and doubts (see Psalms 37 and 73). This was certainly reinforced by the blasphemous allegations of the wicked who claimed that there was essentially no God (10:4); if He existed, He had deliberately forgotten His people and permanently “hidden His face” so as not to see what supposed wickedness was occurring (v. 11).

Psalm 10 is a prayer for God to destroy the wicked with their scorn and haughtiness. As Allen P. Ross observes, verses 1-10 provide “an extensive description of the wicked in their prosperity (v. 5), security (v. 6), insolence (vv. 4, 11), deceit (v. 7), and violence (vv. 8-10).” [Then] “the psalmist appeals to the LORD, the sovereign King, to deliver the oppressed by destroying the wicked (vv. 12-18).”

Reading this Psalm is much like a commentary on our modern world! It could be a depressing reminder of our own difficulties and faith challenges. The wicked suppress the truth they have of God, believing lies while worshiping and serving the creature rather than the Creator (Romans 1:18-25). God's “judgments” or standards and those who espouse them are mocked as irrelevant and impotent as “god” himself. Philip Eveson writes: “Any who felt strong enough to counterattack the wicked are treated with disdain— ‘he sneers at them’ (verse 5), and he rests secure in his positive thinking—‘I shall not be moved ...’ (verse 6). His speech gives expression to his whole attitude (verse 7).”



Dr. Greg Parsons

However, let's not forget to consider the whole Psalm (especially vv. 12-18) and other key verses, including prophecies of Messiah's coming rule to subdue all wickedness (Psalm 72:8-14).

I. Lament (or complaint) over God ignoring rampant wickedness (vv. 1-11)

Comments: v.1: Here the psalmist asks the Lord not to hide Himself or be afar off, i.e. not ignore his plight in the face of unbridled wickedness. In Ps. 55:1 the psalmist David, betrayed by a friend, appealed to the Lord not to hide His face by ignoring his prayers. In Messianic Psalm 22, David protested why God had forsaken him (v.1) and asked Him not to be afar off (vv. 11, 19). Yet in faith as he

foreshadowed Jesus who would quote Ps. 22:1 during his crucifixion, the psalmist believed that God had not hidden His face from him (v. 24). However in Ps. 10, a pandemic of wickedness had brought confusion.

Do you sometimes struggle when prayers are seemingly not answered? Are you discouraged by how much wickedness has taken over our country and the world? If so, pay attention to the inspired writer in Psalm 10.

Some root issues are the pride or haughtiness of the wicked (vv. 2, 4) which originate in a depraved heart (vv. 3, 4); their wicked hearts spew forth blasphemy, spurning or showing utter contempt for the Lord—vv. 3, 13. Such a blasphemous mindset produces a mouth full of cursing and deceit (lies) v.7a and oppression of others (vv. 7-10). Since he/she does not believe in God (v.4), such fools (Psalms 14:1; 53:1) claim that if god exists, he has ignored any alleged wickedness, hiding his face in unconcern, v. 11. Can you identify with this scenario?

II. Prayer and confidence for God's intervention (vv. 12-18)

One characteristic of lament psalms is honest questioning: “Why?” or “how long, O Lord?” Also, there may be prayer for God to wake up, arise into action and deal with the wicked (Psalm 44:23-24; also 74:1, 10-11, 22; cf. 9:19). Similarly, note 10:12 the urgent cry for God to “arise” and do something and not to forget the afflicted (10:12). Verse 13 is a reaffirming question “why?” do the wicked blaspheme and mock God, denying His existence or omnipresence or ability to act. Then perhaps recollecting his own teachings (Psalm 9:12, 16-18), a spark of faith ignites renewed confidence in God so that he asserts that the Lord is indeed sovereign King (v. 16). The Lord

has certainly observed injustice and will require judgment (v. 14). So, the psalmist urges the Lord to break the oppressor's arm (v. 15). Thank the Lord that the psalmist's confidence in God to hear the prayers of the oppressed was not in vain. Indeed, He will vindicate them by executing judgment (vv 17-18; also 9:8, 16).

Applications:

1) Because of Christ's death on the cross and powerful resurrection, “the enemy's power was broken . . . but we must wait till the end-time judgment day for the eradication of all evil. . . Christians in many countries are being tortured and killed because of their Christian profession. Why does God not act to stop such cruelty to his defenseless people? This psalm encourages us to trust the Lord and to remember there is a day of reckoning.”[Eveson] In the future time of Great Tribulation, when the Lord opens the 5th seal, martyred believers will cry out under the altar in heaven (Revelation 6:10): “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” Then the very next opened seal answers that prayer in the great Day of God's wrath upon the wicked oppressors of the earth (6:12-17).

2) Apparently, by their actions and deceptive words, some blasphemous commentators and political leaders today believe that even if a god exists, he “hides his face” in unconcern, impotence and/or senility. Let's pray for them to repent and trust the Lord Jesus as sovereign King! Furthermore, let's vote for leaders who trust in the Lord or at least promote biblical and pro-family values. Certainly, let's pray for our country and participate in the political process, while recognizing that the only ultimate solution is trusting in the Lord as we await His return!

THE LORD'S SUPPER

(MARK 14:22-23)

BY JORDAN M. TEW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
BAPTIST PUBLISHING HOUSE

The Last Supper (14:22-23)

After Jesus predicted Judas' betrayal, He turned the disciples' attention to the cross. After blessing and breaking the bread, Jesus gave it to His disciples and said, “Take, eat: this is my body” (14:22). These words are powerful and point directly to Christ's sacrifice. The breaking of bread represented the fact that Jesus' body would soon be beaten and nailed to a cross.

Next, Jesus shared a cup with the disciples. After they all drank from it, Jesus said, “This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many” (14:23-24). The cup represented the blood that Christ would pour out during the crucifixion. This cup would have been filled with “the fruit of the vine,” which refers to juice from a grapevine (14:25).

Just as the bread did not literally become the body of Christ, the cup did not literally become Christ's blood.

Jesus used these things to serve as physical reminders of spiritual truths. Just as baptism serves as a visible symbol of a person's death to sin and new life in Christ, the Lord's Supper serves as a visible reminder of Christ's death.

Implications of the Lord's Supper (14:24-26)

First, Jesus predicted His death. The breaking of a body and the pouring out of blood are unmistakable references to the brutal death He would experience on the cross. Jesus, being fully God and fully man, would experience a literal and physical death (14:22-24).

Second, Jesus stated His blood was of the “new testament” or new covenant (14:24a). While the Passover reminded the Israelites of God's grace in sparing their firstborn from death, the Last Supper reminds us of God's grace in sparing whoever believes upon Him for salvation. The salvation story that had

taken root in the Old Testament would be fulfilled as Christ's body was broken and His blood shed. All the covenants, laws, prophecies, and sacrifices of the old covenant find their fulfillment in Christ. His death and resurrection initiated a new covenant.

Third, Jesus identified the people for whom He would die. He used the key word many when referring to His people (14:24b). He poured out His blood to save many people from all over the world. While not all people in the world will be saved, it is not because Christ's blood is unable to save them. Christ knew that His sacrifice would bring salvation to many people. What a victory that was secured on the cross!

Finally, Jesus anticipated victory. While Mark did not record the famous phrase, “This do in remembrance of me,” it was recorded in the related passages of Luke 22:29 and 1 Corinthians 11:24. Christ knew that He would die and rise again for His people, which would certainly give believers something to remember and celebrate. Every time the Lord's Supper is observed, local churches remember their victorious Savior.

Important Notes Concerning the Lord's Supper

The Last Supper served as the institution of the Lord's Supper or Communion. This practice or “ordinance” was to be continued by local churches so that Christ's sacrifice would be remembered (Luke 22:19). Observance of the Lord's Supper is evident in the New Testament church in Corinth, as the Apostle Paul said that Jesus gave him the same instructions concerning the observance of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-25).

The Lord's Supper serves as a memorial to the sacrificial death of Jesus. Today, churches must continue to obey Christ's command to observe the Lord's Supper. Believers should not take this ordinance lightly, nor consider it to be a man-made tradition. The Lord's Supper, along with Baptism, are the two things that Jesus Himself instituted for His churches. Praise God for providing a way for believers to remember Christ's death.

This article is an excerpt from a lesson in the Fall 2024 BMA Sunday School Quarterly, “The Baptist Expositor: Mark 11—16 Christ's Passion and Beyond”