The OKLAHOMA BAPTIST

Serving Churches of the Baptist Missionary Association of Oklahoma

Volume LVIII

DECEMBER 2023

Number 12

"Holiday or Holy Day?"

It's getting to be that time of year when the festivities are in full swing. Thanksgiving was full of cooking, family, and the ever-stressful shopping adventures.

Questions arise among some Christians every year as to what role holidays should play in a Christian's life. Are all holidays inherently evil? Or just some? Have some holy days become tainted with traditions that are steeped in Paganism? Where is the Christian to draw the line as to what is acceptable, and what is not?

This article may get cheers from some, and others may become angry. As with everything I write I ask that you do as the Bereans, if you don't know it to be true already, search the scriptures.

Romans 14:5-6a says, "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord doth he not regard it."

Also, I would like to consider Colossians 2:16. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:"

At first glance we see some flexibility about whether to observe certain days, or

whether to not observe them. With this in mind, I am not going to judge whether someone observes a particular holy day or does not. Remember, this applies to holy days, and not days that are outright Pagan.

An example should obvious when it comes to Halloween and people dressing as witches. Scripture is very clear regarding witches and that we should not condone such activity.

I want to look at Christmas, and some of the activities associated with it. Is it wrong to celebrate Christmas?

The first thing we need to know is that we do not know which day our Lord and Savior was born. The choice of December 25 is based on tradition. I have heard the arguments that the Catholic church picked this date, but I don't know if this is true. The winter solstice is not on December 25, but is actually on December 21, so I do not know that it is based on this.

Jesus possibly could have been born in the Spring or some other time. I am not against celebrating Christmas, but I emphasize who is the reason for the holiday. We can have a little bit of fun with the holiday, but chronologically there needs to be some understanding.

Many manger scenes may have the

wise men bearing gifts, but they did not go to the stable when Jesus was a baby.

Matthew 2:11 says, "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

Also, how many wise men were there? We assume there were three, and there were at least two, but we do not know beyond that.

The assumption is three because there were three gifts. I only point this out because people will swear there are three, but can it be proven?

I do celebrate Christmas, but I do it differently than many. Before we open presents Christmas morning, we actually read the Christmas story from the Bible.

The time of sharing with the family has always been enjoyable, though it can be difficult when some are no longer with us.

The having of a Christmas tree is a source of contention among believers.

Jeremiah 10:3-5 says, "For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good."

In my opinion this refers to the worshipping of trees. I have never in my life ever worshipped a tree, nor do I ever intend to do so. I have had trees and would do so again, but I am careful about what I put on them.

Right now I want to address some attributes and characteristics of God. He is omniscient, he knows everything. He is omnipresent, the Spirit is everywhere.

Also, God is the rewarder of good and evil. These are unique qualities that God possesses. I know there are others that

("Holiday or Holy Day," cont on pg 8)

"We need to put the focus where it belongs. We need to lift Jesus up so others see Him for who He is."

"From the Pastor's Pen'

By Wearthy Shank

"Trust in the Lord"

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths."

Proverbs 3: 5-6

Three commands are given here.

Trust

Here this means "rely on, depend on." This is sometimes a difficult thing to do. Oh, we trust Him when everything's going our way, but to trust Him with unseen answers is more difficult.

It is when we cannot see that we must garner trust. When we cannot see or understand the outcome somewhere in the future, we tend to wrestle with it rather than "trust" in the Lord. Faith in the Lord equals Trust in the Lord.

I recall when my son was about five years old, we took the family [the son and two older daughters] to the city swimming pool.

I would stand in water about chest deep to me and back from the edge of the pool

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Published by the Baptist Missionary Association of Oklahoma

Direct all correspondence, publication material and news items to the office of the editor

Direct all subscription payments to: Carl Barnes P.O. Box 5171 Ardmore, OK 73403

E-mail: Michael.mobly@yahoo.com

Subscription rates are, any church may pay ten dollars a month, or one hundred twenty dollars a year, to receive a digital copy of the paper emailed to one email address in your church.

a few feet and encourage my son to jump into the water.

His trust in his dad gave him the courage to jump without even giving it a thought. That is the kind of trust we need in Christ. He is there with outstretched hands to keep us from danger.

Lean not

By trusting in Christ, we need not depend on your own fleshly instincts. It is our natural instincts that tell us "danger is near".

We see it. We are consciously aware

of it and so, we put up our own defense. But God says, "Lean on me!" he tells us, in all our ways to...

Acknowledge Him

If we acknowledge Him, the passage says, "He will direct our paths". When we acknowledge Him, we experience His fellowship and intimacy in all of life.

The results of such devotion is that God will make the paths straight for you. In fact, when we are trusting in Him, many unseen dangers pass bye without us even noticing or experiencing them.

Only when we wain in our faith [trust] is when we see or anticipate the unexpected. We create problems that are not there.

I recall the lyrics to a gospel song, "keep your eyes on Jesus, he'll see you through."

Think about it!!

Central Baptist College Homecoming Schedule January 12-13, 2024

Friday, January 12

Annual Chili Cook-Off, 11:00am-1:00pm Childers Dining Hall

The annual Chili Cook-Off will take place in the Mabee Student Center. Students, alumni, and faculty/staff are encouraged to compete. The event will take place during lunch. Registration is FREE; all we ask is that you provide enough chili for our students to sample. CBC Dining Services will provide hot dogs to accompany the chili. Prizes will be given for the best chili and for overall presentation. To register a Chili Cook-Off team, email Peggy Pillow at ppillow@cbc.edu.

Harvest Party Throwback Night, 6:00pm Childers Dining Hall

Calling all alumni! Join us Friday night as we enjoy an evening of fun. This year we will be featuring a Harvest Party Reunion. The evening will consist of dinner, games, and entertainment provided by Dr. Zeb Balentine (2008). The cost for the event is \$5 per person. To register, visit cbc.edu/homecoming.

Saturday January 13

Mustang Pre-Game Tailgate, 11:00am

Join us on the lawn for tailgating, lunch, games, and inflatables. To reserve a space, contact Mallory Guyton at mguyton@cbc.edu.

Lady Mustangs vs. Harris-Stowe 1:00pm A.R. Reddin Fieldhouse

Homecoming Crowning

Join us in between the women's and men's basketball games for the announcement of our 2024 Central Baptist College Homecoming Queen.

Mustangs vs. Harris-Stowe 3:00pm A.R. Reddin Fieldhouse

"I Was Just Thinkin"

By Narita Roady

"Grouchy or Grateful?"

Have you heard about the very first man to become a billionaire? He had great ambition and persistence. With such astounding determination, he found himself a millionaire at the tender age of 23 years.

Twenty-seven years later, his dogged perseverance made him a bona fide billionaire at the age of 50 years. Up to this point, all his choices, every decision, thought, and every person he associated with was focused on reaching his goal.

Ahh, but we know money isn't everything and life has a way of altering our plans, even the best ones. Just three years after reaching his lifelong goal, he became seriously ill. He found himself in excruciating pain.

His carefully attired and groomed appearance became a thing of the past. He grew bald, haggard, and emaciated.

At that time, he was the world's only billionaire. At his fingertips was the power to buy anything he desired, travel anywhere he wanted to go and eat only the finest food, but all he could do lay in his bed.

Unable to sleep and only able to eat milk and crackers, he found no meaning to life. He had the best doctors money could buy, but each of them agreed he only had one year to live.

That year drug by gruelingly slow. Near death, he awoke one morning from a

dream. The details were foggy, but he did remember it had to do with the fact that when he died he would not

be able to take any of his earthly treasures with him.

Suddenly he understood that while he might have power and control in the world of business, he had entirely no control over his life. At that moment he made a decision.

Every lawyer, accountant, and executive in his employment was called to his bedside. He told them he wanted his wealth given to hospitals, research and mission work. His death bed pronouncement set the wheels into motion that ultimately led to the discovery of penicillin, cures for certain strains of malaria, tuberculosis, and diphtheria.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. His giving also has had far reaching influence in the areas of agriculture, science, and international relations. The benefits that grew from that one decision are too numerous to mention.

Yes, the result of his giving is quite astonishing, but even more remarkable is what happened next. His gratitude and willingness to share his fortune began to affect his health. Slowly he

began to improve.

The 53 year old man that was to die lived to the ripe old age of 98. His name

was John D. Rockefeller. Mr. Rockefeller unknowingly demonstrated one of the most important aspects of gratitude.

Gratitude is more than an attitude, it is an ACTION.

I believe the same holds true for ingratitude. It is an attitude of entitlement that expresses itself in many negative actions.

Some folks have the outlook that others owe them, life owes them, their spouse and family owe them, and God owes them.

This mindset comes straight from Satan. It dates all the way back to Cain and Abel, when Cain believed God "owed" him to let him worship the Lord in his own way and not suffer the consequences for his disobedience.

This only leads to a life of irritation, anger, and resentment toward the many people who ultimately do not "pay" us what we feel are our rightful dues. When we ingrain our minds with the truth that no one OWES us ANYTHING, and EVERYTHING GOOD we receive is a GIFT from God, then and only then will we be able to truly experience joy, peace, and happiness.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. James 1:17

Of course the most important one to show gratefulness to is God and second is others. Frequently these two overlap. Our gratitude to God will manifest itself toward others and our thankfulness to others will manifest itself to God.

Now because gratitude is an action that means it will require effort and discipline from us to carry out. Simply look at it as starting a new habit like reading your Bible daily, exercising, or eating right.

("Grouchy or Grateful," cont on pg 7)

"Gratitude and greed can never coexist,
because one cancels the other out.
Greed is a fire that is never quenched
and only leads to a life of discontentment.
Gratefulness is the will of God
that leads to peace and contentment,
allowing us to truly focus on and enjoy what matters."

"The African Call"

By Pastor Danny Bullock Antioch West Baptist Church Magnolia, AR

By now many of you pastors and churches have read the challenge from Johnmichael Poulin to heed the call from African pastors to come help them learn and better understand the Word of God.

Allow me to share with you my experience in Tanzania over the past nine years as an encouragement for you to accept this challenge and link hands with these men in Africa.

In 2014 Mike Goodwin, President of EIM (Evangelistic International Ministries), took me with him to Tanzania on an assessment trip to see if there truly was a legitimate need to begin a teaching ministry in that country similar to what Johnmichael is now proposing to be done in other areas.

After meeting most of the twenty-two Baptist pastors who had sent an appeal to EIM, Mike promised them that we would bring teams of three-to-four pastors three times annually for three and a half years.

He tasked me with executing that plan. God brought together close to twenty different men from four states to teach Biblical, theological, and practical courses. Leaders from BMA Seminary, Central Baptist College, BMA Global, LifeWord, and multiple churches went there to teach.

Was all the money spent and all the time invested worth it? We think so. The original twenty-two churches and pastors have now multiplied to almost fifty.

The pastors took our outlines and lessons back to their churches and taught those subjects to their congregations and used them to disciple young preachers who are now going out to plant more churches.

If you are wavering about whether or

not to have your church join this endeavor, allow me to share what a blessing this has been to me.

Pastors, I believe that you will benefit from doing this more than you realize. You will certainly benefit those that you will teach, but remember that the one who studies to teach and preach always learns more than those who listen

I cannot fully explain to you how much better I understand the Bible today than I did when we began in 2014. Feeling the weight of the responsibility of teaching pastors who would then in turn teach hundreds of others led me to study harder than I probably ever had before.

I did not want to teach anything incorrectly and have that error be repeated.

Consequently, I grew in my own knowledge and comprehension. Because of that not only did I benefit, but those who have sat under my

teaching and preaching over the past nine years have also told me that they have benefited.

One final blessing will be experienced by those who accept Johnmichael's challenge. Your time in Africa will probably result in your ministry having a far wider scope of influence than you have here in America.

Few pastors influence more than ten congregations in their lifetime of ministry. Those who go to Africa and spend three years to teach 20-30 pastors who will then duplicate that many times over can eventually leave a legacy of influence over hundreds of congregations and thousands of people.

I hope you will join other pastors and churches in helping BMA Global impact the African continent. If you would wish to speak with me directly about this, feel free to contact me at

danbull0550@gmail.com or 870-904-5032



Pictured above are Moses Adjekwei (Ghana), Phil Knott, and Danny Bullock after pastor training sessions in Tanzania in 2015

"Mistakes"

Dr. John M. Adams Moral Action Executive Director

John 20:24-28

The man who made the highest profession of faith in the Bible is mainly remembered as "Doubting Thomas". He was a doubter to be sure, but he defeated his doubts. His faith won out!

Why is it that most people are so quick to overlook the good things about a man, but recall in vivid, Technicolor detail his mistakes?

Shakespeare had Marc Antony to say "The evil that men do lives after them; the good is often interred with their bones." How we all have made Technicolor mistakes! Let's look at these pictures:

God would say to us, through the experience of Thomas, that doubts can be overcome, that faith, when assailed, can win; that it is possible for the same man who said "I will not believe" (vs. 25) to come to the point of saying "My Lord and my God!"

Thomas, A Daring Realist

John 11:7-16

Lazarus was critically ill and died. Christ had narrowly escaped mobs who demanded his death by stoning. Now Jesus was to return to Judea and the

disciples spoke of fear for his life. Thomas said "Let us also go!" He showed himself to be an unswerving loyalist. He had made his decision to follow Jesus.

Another picture Thomas, Absolutely Honest

John 14:4-5

We find Jesus giving his friends those wonderful instructions in chapters 13-17. The impulsive, honest voice of Thomas rings out in chapter 14. They did not know the destination, so how could they know the way. If Thomas had not asked the question, we may never have had these clarifying and comforting words of Jesus.

Next picture Thomas, Absent From His Place

Everything was changed now. The shadow of the cross had ceased to be a shadow. Jesus was dead and in the grave. By that death, the disciples had been scattered. But by the news of the resurrection they had been regathered.

We do criticize him for being absent from the meeting, but we look carefully and absolutely honest, for Thomas declined to profess a faith he did not have.

He was an honest doubter. He was not playing mental gymnastics, he was a serious seeker of the truth. He was more than doubting Thomas he was Seeking Thomas. This man wanted to know.

We admire Thomas for he was with the believers the next Sunday evening and there he cried out "My Lord and my God!"

Another picture Thomas, Present With the Saints

He missed the first blessing because he was not with the saints, but received certainty in his own faith because he was present with them the second time. When Thomas was alone, he was doubly alone. Nowhere is one more likely to find Christ than in the company of those who love Christ.

You don't have to doubt!



"That Reminds Me"

By Jesse Spurlock

"A Bunch of Kids"

I was watching the show "Wheel of Fortune" when one of the contestants revealed she was the youngest of 21 children. She had three brothers and seventeen sisters. With that, I lost all interest in the show and began thinking about what that must have been like.

Now 21 is a bunch of kids! There were three of us, and all boys. This lady had that many brothers, but then there were 18 more children, all of them girls.

When I was growing up, I thought it would have been nice had God given my mother and dad a girl in amongst my brothers and me. Mainly so they would know girls weren't all that perfect either. But I had no sisters, so I figured some other family got the girl we needed in our family.

I've known several families with somewhere around ten children in them. My wife's family had ten, eight boys and two girls. That seemed to me to be an ample number.

My mother's family had twelve in it, and so did my dad's.

One family in the small country church I pastored had ten. All of those were farmers and were raising their own workers.

I don't know what the father of the lady with 20 siblings did for a living. I asked the father with ten kids how he fed that many children on his limited income. He said, "After six or seven, one more didn't make any difference."

When my wife and I married we discussed the size family we wanted and settled on three as being a good number. After the pain of the birth of our first child, my wife declared ONE was a good number of children.

I thought of one of Bill Cosby's jokes on his show. When asked why he and his wife had four children he told them, "Because we godidn't want five!"

Lelia and I had two more children.

making the three we initially had decided upon. When they were all grown, we felt this was the right sized family for us.

When they were growing up and discussing their differences at the top of their lungs, when I was trying to study, I felt that Lelia's idea of only one child might have been a good choice.

However, even at that point I knew that would have meant two of the precious three would not be with us, and that would have been terrible. I can't imagine our family without all three of them.

When I talked to the man and his wife with the ten children about their large family, they both said their family wouldn't have been complete without all

ten. From the attitude of the lady on "Wheel of Fortune" I suspect her family would say the same thing about their 21

children.

Although, with that size of crowd, how long would it take for the parents to realize one or more of them were missing?

With three it was easy for us to

realize we were short one. With 21 kids three could be gone without them even realizing it. They would still have 18 children left to yell at.

In Psalm 127:3-5 the psalmist declared, "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is His reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them..."

Since the psalmist declared by the inspiration of God that children are an heritage of the Lord and they are His reward, it really doesn't matter whether the family has one, three or twenty-one, parents need to count their blessings for each of them.



"Grouchy or Grateful," cont from pg 3

Most of us have the "robot style" expressions ingrained in us. By this I mean automatic responses in appreciation we do without thinking. (It wouldn't hurt to take a close look at what yours are as they may be pretty lame and not communicate thankfulness at all!)

Making positive changes always requires us to see the truth, not only in what we should do, but also the reality of what we are doing. This enables us to begin to make right choices moment to moment and create the new behavior we desire.

Look at the following questions and ask yourself, which describes your habit of gratefulness.

Taken Granted or Grateful For?

What if you woke up one morning with ONLY the things you thanked God for yesterday, what would you have? What would you be left with, last night's meal you prayed over? Maybe it would be that parking place closest to the door at Wal-Mart you were so happy to get? Would you have your family, your spouse, your health, your home, your job or your salvation? That's some serious thinking isn't it?

To stop taking the Lord's blessings for granted we must aggressively seek to find them. Once you get started, it won't be hard.

Ask God to reveal them to you. He would love for you to see and acknowledge all His wonderful gifts to you.

Prayer and praise are keys to thanking God, but you can show Him your gratitude by what you do with those blessings.

Are you thankful for your salvation? Then share the gospel with others; tell them what God has done in your life.

Are you thankful for the Lord's unfailing forgiveness? Then forgive others when they hurt or disappoint you: forgive them even if they don't deserve it, just like God does you.

What other things or people in your day

to day life are you taking for granted?

"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." James 4:14

Greedy or Grateful?

Greed is blindness, it is only aware of what "self" wants, what "self" doesn't have, and no one else matters. It is also an insult to God, because we are telling Him that He doesn't know what we need and He isn't taking care of us.

Gratitude says, "I am a steward of the money God had given me. He owns it: I use it." Greed says "My money is mine. I earned it; I will do as I please with it."

Gratitude says, "Whatever possessions I have it is enough. I am content." Greed says, "I never have enough and I want more."

"And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Luke 12:15

Gratitude says, "I want to serve God and others." Greed says, "I want everyone to serve me."

Gratitude says "I want to give, what is the most I can offer? Greed says, "I don't want to give, what is the least I can offer?"

Gratitude and greed can never coexist, because one cancels the other out. Greed is a fire that is never quenched and only leads to a life of discontentment. Gratefulness is the will of God that leads to peace and contentment, allowing us to truly focus on and enjoy what matters.

And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.

But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, ..."

Deuteronomy 8:17-18a

Gripey or Grateful?

One of the biggest examples of grumbling and ingratitude is the Israelite children. From Exodus 16:2 through Numbers 21:5 they griped and whined.

There are actually 17 different complaints listed in those scriptures! Couldn't they see all the ways God had provided, cared for, and protected them?

Sadly we are no different than them. A complaining, angry, critical spirit extinguishes the light of God from shining in our lives to others. It is very easy to fall into the habit of being negative and irritable because it is part of our sin nature.

Of the three areas to work on thankfulness, I think this one may be the hardest for most people.

It is amazing how someone can be a great blessing over and over to a person but the minute they do something that aggravates them, the one offended forgets every good deed.

Next time someone upsets you, keep your mouth shut, breathe deeply and think of reasons you are thankful for them

"Do all things without murmurings and disputings:"
Philippians 2:14

There is no quick fix for an ungrateful heart, just hard work. It takes at least 21 day to form a new habit. Start a gratitude journal. Each night write down at least three things you are thankful for in your life or from that day. (More than three is perfectly fine!)

This is a small start to a big change. You have the Lord's support and blessing as it is His will for you!

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;" Ephesians 5:20

"Holiday or Holy Day," cont from pg 1

can reward behavior, but not in the realm this discussion.

Who is our main focus every Christmas? Well I see more Santa Claus than I do Jesus. This is even so in Christian homes. People are quick to say it is harmless fun, but I beg to differ. He knows when you are sleeping, (omniscience) he knows when you're awake, he knows when you've been bad or good, so be good for goodness sake....How about "be ye holy for I am

So Santa knows this about everyone? I guess he must be everywhere to know such things. He uses magic to go up the chimney and gave his reindeer magic corn to make them fly.

What we have effectively done is taken the focus away from Jesus and put it on a magical mythical being. So I choose not to do Santa nor put Santa decorations in my house and not on my

I do not do flying reindeer either, but I do celebrate Christmas. We just made sure that our children knew the blessings came from God, and not Santa's workshop.

Snowmen are seasonal, but a snowman that is alive because of a magic hat is a distraction. So we did not do the Frosty thing either.

My children did have fun, but not at the cost of the truth. We need to

emphasize Christ and what his birth meant to the world.

My point is this, and I hope taken in the spirit intended. We need to put the focus where it belongs. We need to lift Jesus up so see others Him for who He is.

Remember children will be fascinated by Magic Santa and his short-term blessings and will forget about the almighty Jesus because their minds cannot comprehend the difference.

Now remember this, I am not judging nor trying to attack what you do. I just want you to consider the potential consequences of what we are teaching our children. Is Santa a truth or a lie? Knowing such, is it ok to tell our children he exists?

Prayerfully consider what is being

examined and let the Spirit direct your paths.



Central Baptist College in Conway, Arkansas

invites applications for **Vice President for Finance**

Central Baptist College in Conway, AR seeks an innovative and experienced financial administrator and leader with a proven track record in the management of financial systems to serve as vice president for finance.

Reporting directly to the President, the Vice President for Finance (VPF) serves as chief financial officer of the college. The VPF will provide strategic leadership and oversight of the College's finance and accounting functions, business services and auxiliary enterprises, human resources facilities and physical plant operation and information technology.

As a member of the President's Executive Leadership Team (ELT), the VPF will support the President and will contribute to the strategic objectives and direction of the College by providing sound and ethical fiscal planning and financial management to ensure the long-term financial stability and growth of the College.

The successful candidate will have an MBA or master's degree in business management, accounting or a related field and a minimum of five years accounting/ finance related experience in a supervisory or managerial role.

The VPF is a 12-month full-time position with remuneration and benefits commensurate with experience. A review of applications will begin immediately. The search will continue until the position is filled.

To be considered for the position of Vice President for Finance, interested candidates must send a cover letter, resume (including references), and statement of faith as PDF attachments addressed to CBC President Terry Kimbrow at tkimbrow@cbc.edu. Electronic submissions only.

Background check required.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Oklahoma Outbreak Winter Youth Conference December 28-30 See pg 5

Central Oklahoma District Meeting Johnnies Moore, OK March 2, 2024

BMA of OK **Midyear Meeting** April 6, 2024