The OKLAHOMA BAPTIST

Serving Churches of the Baptist Missionary Association of Oklahoma

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"Here Am I...Send Me"

By Chris Gonthier BMAO Moral Action

Isaiah 6:8 "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."

I listen to people that I come into contact with and never have I seen our country in such a state of overwhelming hopelessness.

People do not want to vote, because it does no good. People don't want to work hard because it makes no difference. Sadly, people even think it to be pointless to go to church or take stands on moral issues.

I believe this is because of a lack of understanding of what the bible teaches. Never, and I mean NEVER, are we responsible for results. As a Christian our responsibility is to live the biblical principles and leave the results up to God.

Ephesians 6:13 tells us, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

It is our job as Christians to stand up and always do the right thing. Be gone with the idea that we have failed because we did not get the desired results, that is God's job. Quit trying to do his job because we do not even know what he is trying to accomplish in our situation. We could be the one who God uses to bring someone to salvation, or God may know someone is going to refuse and God may need our voice as a final warning before judgement.

The point is, we are only responsible for applying biblical principles.

Ezekeil 3:17-19, "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me."

"When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand."

"Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."

Clearly we are not responsible for results, but we are responsible for our actions or inactions. God has placed us here for a purpose.

"Judgment is coming to all people, and we must ensure that all know the truth so they can make their own decisions." I know it is not comfortable to be confrontational, but what happens when our voices are silent.

I am a Christian because of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ and Him saving my soul.

I am Baptist by conviction. I believe true Baptist doctrine is most closely aligned with scripture. Sadly, many churches with the label of Baptist have drifted from the tenets of the faith.

We can save the discussion of "Baptist" churches who are not really doctrinally Baptist for another time. What I wish to look at is how some churches are doctrinally correct, but do not apply biblical principles.

We should not be "encyclopedia" Christians. By this I mean that we are not here just to be a reference source for if or when someone wishes to fact check something. We need to get off our passive shelves and become more "proactive", with emphasis on "active".

This world does not realize the hopeless state that it is really in. People are dying and going to hell because there is silence.

So what if there is a voice in the pulpit speaking the truth, the pews are not in danger of going to hell. Yes, the people in church need to hear it, but most of them, provided they go to a biblical church, have heard the gospel message.

The people outside of those four walls are the ones teetering on the precipice of disaster. Imagine if you will a blind person standing unknowingly on the edge of a cliff.

Most of us would without hesitation try to warn such a person and attempt to bring him or her back to safety. Where is our concern for the spiritual condition of people?

We must also remember that there is some conditioning that can be helpful for the gospel message's sake.

Mark 1:1-3 says, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,

("Here Am I, Send Me" cont on pg 5)

From the Pastor's Pen

By Wearthy Shank

"...Press Toward the Mark, continued"

"Brethren. I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 3:13-14

Paul, here is saying that he doesn't consider that his accomplishments have been achieved by himself. But this one thing he is willing to do, forgetting the past.

I confess that there have been times in my ministry that I would be trying to relive the past.

God has blessed me with a wonderful ministry with many positive accomplishments. But I have learned that I must put those accomplishments behind me.

How about you? Are you hanging on to some past successes hoping that

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somehow, you can relive some of them? We must acknowledge that what we did in 1980 [figuratively] just isn't going to work in 2024.

It's good to remember our good ole days but as Paul said, we need to forget those things behind and "reach forth to what is ahead of us".

God has a new adventure for us

today. And the only way we will experience it is to purpose in our hearts that we will reach forth for what God has prepared for us.

> To "press toward the mark" is to set the goal in our sights and focused it. on is the joyful, "prize" personal satisfaction of having attained it, as well divine the

commendation and reward to be granted in heaven for having reached the goal on earth.

Think about it!!

405-794-6646



"I Was Just Thinkin"

By Narita Roady

"Find a Penny and Pick It Up..."

A couple was invited to spend the weekend with the husband's very wealthy boss. His home was unbelievable, and he drove cars that cost as much as most people's homes.

The couple knew it was a once in a lifetime experience see how the extraordinarily rich live. Their host proved to be a very generous man. They dined in four star restaurants, and he treated them to the very best.

Needless to say the husband and wife enjoyed themselves exceedingly, drinking in every moment.

One night they were walking into a fashionable restaurant. Suddenly the boss stopped, bent down, and picked up an old tarnished penny. Before slipping it into to his suit pocket, he looked at it and smiled as if he had found some wonderful treasure.

The woman was almost offended. How ridiculous! What on earth did he need a penny for? The incident continued to plague her to the point that she couldn't even enjoy the sumptuous dinner set before her.

Why would he even stop and take the time to pick up a penny? How absurd! What need did this millionaire have for a single penny?

Why would he even take the time to stop and pick it up? After all, even in their state of scrimping and saving, she knew she would not have stopped for it.

Throughout dinner, the entire scene disturbed at her. She could contain herself no longer, so as not to seem rude as to his motives, she nonchalantly asked him if the coin was a valuable collector's item

Smiling, the boss pulled the penny from his pocket and handed it to her. Seeing the bewildered look on her face he said, Look closely, what does it say?

United States of America, she read slowing, thinking all along this man must be a nut case.

Not that, he said, continue reading, he urged her.

One cent? She half read and half asked.

LIBERTY

No, keep reading.

In God we Trust? she read in a bewildered voice.

Yes! he almost shouted.

He continued, each time I find just a penny on the side walk and pick it up I see those words. How odd it is embossed on every U.S. coin without fail, but people never seem to notice it. With every coin I come across or handle, there is a message from God reminding me to trust Him.

How then can I possibly pass it by? I have made a habit of each time I retrieve a dropped coin, I stop, pray, and asked myself if I am truly putting all my confidence in God at that instant.

It brings me joy because I view it as God's way of reminding me that all my trust and faith should be in Him and nothing else.

Fortunately there are many pennies and God is longsuffering with me.

Yes, we will spend a penny we find in full faith that it will help us obtain exactly what we need at that moment, yet we fail to trust the One whose name is upon it. When life spins out of control and the unexpected splatters on our windshield of life, we have three choices to make.

- 1. Become fearful of what is happening and just give up any hope of making it through. In other words, belly up and give up.
- 2. Toughen up, psyche ourselves up and dive in feet first, and try to handle the problem ourselves. Or...

3. Turn it all over to God, trusting Him to do what is best for us, guide us through and protect us.

2009

There's no question which choice is the best, then why do we consistently choose one of the other two when faced with crisis's in our lives? Why do we find it so hard to trust God when He is the ONLY one that has the solution we need?

In His Word we find God promises to care for us if we only trust Him are a sure thing, yet we choose the odds that are billion to one – our own way. What could possibly tempt us to believe the remote and farfetched idea that anyone or anything could help us other than God?

I am sure many ideas are running through your head right now, possibly even reasons you have not trusted God in the past, but I can think of only one – LACK OF COMMITMENT. Probably not what you were expecting is it?

Commitment is the fly in the ointment of a Christian's walk. Lack of commitment destroys marriages, closes the doors of churches, and renders the Christian's walk useless and lukewarm.

Why is true, unwavering commitment so hard to come by? Simply because true commitment requires sacrifice and

("Find a penny," cont on pg 8)

Central Baptist College Announces New Trustees

The Baptist Missionary Association of Arkansas, in their November 2023 annual meeting, elected four new members to serve five-year terms on the Central Baptist College Board of Trustees beginning in 2023.

They are Bro. Doug Brewer of Moore, Okla., Mrs. Michele Corder of Plumerville, Ark.; Bro. Chris Vines of Hope, Ark., and Mr. Bobby Stoner of Conway, Ark. In addition, Mrs. Kelly Williams of McNeil, Ark. was elected to serve a three-year term to complete the term of the late Mrs. Jenny Lindsey.

Doug Brewer is senior pastor of Southgate Baptist Church of Moore, OK. where he has served for thirty-seven years. Brewer attended Oklahoma City Community College and served on the Daniel Springs Encampment and BMA Missions Advisory Committees.

Doug and his wife Deanna have three children (Sarah, Nathan, and Rachel) and eleven grandchildren. This will be Brewer's third board term having previously served 2005-2009 and 2017-2021.

Michele Corder served over 20 years as a Mortgage Loan Specialist at Citywide Professional Lending in Conway where she was part owner.

Along with attending the University of Central Arkansas she obtained a travel degree from South Central Career College in Little Rock.

She and her husband Neil have one son (Derek) and one daughter (Raegan). They attend Mt. Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church in Plumerville where Michele serves on the worship team and plays the keyboard.

Her father, Wayne Smith of Wayne Smith Trucking in Morrilton, served three terms on the CBC board and Michele is proud to continue his legacy. This is Michele's second board term, having served 2018-2022.

Chris Vines has served as family pastor of Garrett Memorial Baptist Church in Hope for nine years. Vines received a Bachelor of Arts in Bible from Central Baptist College and a Master of Arts in Theological Studies from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

He currently serves on the board of the Baptist Publishing House and formerly served

on the Arkansas State Publications (Baptist Trumpet) board.

He and his wife Sidney have two children, Carson and Elliot.

Bobby Stoner has served as the strategic account manager at A-Tech, Inc., in Tulsa, OK, for

the past 34 years where he manages products and projects sold to accounts such as Tyson Foods.

He earned his BS of Political Science from the University of Central Arkansas and is on the board of the Arkansas Poultry Federation. He serves on the Budget and Finance and Personnel Committees at Antioch Baptist Church in Conway.

He and his wife Kathy have two daughters (Haley and Sydney) and one grandson. This is Stoner's second board term, having served 2018-2022.

Kelly Williams is a retired teacher who served six years as an adjunct faculty member, teaching business information systems at Southern Arkansas University of Magnolia.

Williams earned her BBA and MBA from Southern Arkansas University. She and her husband Ken are active members of First Baptist Church of McNeil where she is a teacher of children and women.

Williams has also served as worship leader and church secretary. She served twice as WMA State President and also

served as District WMA President, and as National WMA 2nd and 3rd Vice President. Kelly and her husband Ken have three children (Aaron, Jessica, and Jennifer) and four grandchildren.

This is Williams' first board term. She will complete Jenny Lindsay's term and serve 2024-2026.

"I have been extremely blessed with strong leadership on the Board of Trustees" said CBC President Terry Kimbrow.

"I'm looking forward to adding these men and women to the twenty-member board and drawing on their expertise."

CBC Board Officers for 2024 include: Chairman Bro. Kirk Shelton of Fayetteville, AR.; Vice Chairman Bro. Chris Vines of Hope, AR.; Secretary Mrs. Kellie Harper of Sarepta, LS.; and Assistant Secretary Mrs. Lisa Speer of Conway, AR.

Central Baptist College is committed to transforming lives through education that integrates Christian faith and academic excellence in a Christ-centered environment, and is a four-year, private, liberal arts college owned and operated by the Baptist Missionary Association of Arkansas.

CBC offers approximately 40 baccalaureate degree programs, 16 athletic teams that compete in the AMC conference of the NAIA, and six fine arts performance groups.

For more information about CBC visit cbc.edu.

Sunray Baptist Church is celebrating the 77th anniversary of its founding March 23-24, 2024

Saturday, 6:00pm
Homecoming sing with The Williamsons and Mark Bishop.

A love offering will be taken to help with expenses.

Sunday morning worship service

Mark Bishop will be singing & former pastor Dennis Clark will be preaching

A lunch will follow morning worship.

Join pastor John Wylie and the Sunray church family for this celebration.

Sunray is located at 2223 North 9th Street in Purcell.

For additional information call 405-527-6808.

"Here Am I, Send Me" cont from pg 1

which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

John the Baptist preached that judgment is coming and that people needed to repent. We need to be warning others about the coming of Christ. People need to know that they are facing a serious situation.

We are not doing anyone, including ourselves, a favor by not warning others of the truth.

We see that the Old Testament prophets spent much time warning the people.

Judgment is coming to all people, and we must ensure that all know the truth so they can make their own decisions. Imagine, if you will, that no one ever shared the truth with vou. How likely would you have been able to choose Christ over the other choices available?

Many people know that they are empty and that there is a void. They often do not know what they need, and

they try to fill themselves with the wrong thing. Imagine, if you will, that your car is on empty, so you stretch the garden hose to the tank.

Or maybe an inexperienced driver chooses the green pump over the red pump and puts diesel in a gas vehicle. People are empty and we need to offer to them that which can properly satisfy their

Part of growing a garden is creating good conditions for plants to grow. We must add fertilizer to the soil to make it nutrient rich. We must till the ground so that the new plants can put down roots and grow properly. We must remove the weeds so that the new plants are not choked out and proper growth can take

People must also be tended to. We need to create the right environment so that the opportunity for growth exists.

Sins can do to people the same thing weeds do to plants. They will choke them down.

This is why we must stand in the gap and be the watcher on the walls. Lovingly point out sins and the dangers they place upon other people. We need to help create the right environment.

As parents we must do this.

As church members we must do this.

As members of society we must do this. We are ambassadors of Christ, binging his message to a lost and dying world.

Remember to do the work, but leave the results to God.

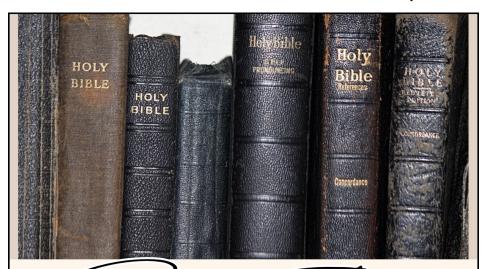
PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENTS

First Baptist Church of Carthage, TX, a Baptist Missionary Association Church, dually aligned with the Southern Baptist of Texas Convention, is seeking a fulltime Senior Pastor.

Please submit resume to:

pastor@firstbaptistcarthage.com.

Resume deadline is April 5, 2024.



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"That Reminds Me"

By Jesse Spurlock

"The Clock Battery"

Not long ago the electricity went off in the middle of the night. We sleep with a fan on for the noise. I didn't wake when the fan stopped, but woke suddenly when it came back on.

I looked at the clock to see what time it was. The clock was flashing "12:00." Being that I just woke, I didn't remember the clock had a battery that was supposed to retain the time when the clock radio lost power.

I sat up to reset the clock and the alarm. I lay back down and had just dropped off to sleep when the power went off and came back on again. I sat up again to reset the clock and the alarm.

I lay back down and started to go back to sleep. That's when I remembered the battery in the clock and realized it was apparently dead since the clock had not retained the time when the power went off

Realizing the power might go off again, I decided to put a fresh battery in the clock right then.

I got up, got a new battery from the kitchen, and returned to the bedroom. Then I realized if I turned on the light Lelia was going to wake up and want to know what I was doing and why I didn't just wait until morning to change the battery. I don't like trying to explain something why I do something even I don't fully understand, especially at 2:30am.

Very carefully, so as not to wake up Lelia, I changed the battery in the dark.

I returned to the kitchen and put everything away, thus eliminating the evidence of my nighttime venture. I returned to bed. Back in bed I congratulated myself on doing all this without waking Lelia.

Lelia, obviously wide awake startled me

by asking, "Are you back in bed for good this time?"

Well, so much for my not waking her, I thought. Naturally, I explained, but my changing the batter in the dark was about the only thing that impressed her.

Today we have computers, cameras and many

electronic items that record the time. It is needful those not have to have the time reset after a power loss. Most of us never give thought to those batteries until they stop working.

In the case of the clock radio in our bedroom I don't remember the last time I had to change the battery. We've lost power many times, but the battery faithfully kept the time accurate until the power was restored.

How much like life that story of the

clock radio! It's function is very important, yet it is out of the limelight.

The visible features receive the attention yet without the battery those

features couldn't operate. Many people are like that!

Today is (was) the fourth anniversary of the terrible terrorist attack that brought down the twin towers in New York City, resulting in the loss of many lives.

I'm reminded of my feelings at that time. How helpless I felt as I watched the heroic rescue efforts going on so far away.

Most of us were forced to "stand and wait." We could only pray and send financial support.

However, we were much like the clock battery and kept everything locked in place while others were on the front lines doing the actual battle.

With the war in Iraq raging most of us are having a hard time of being a part of those who also serve.

Just as with the clock battery, our part is vital. Our prayers to God will bring victory, not our military might. Pray for and support our troops.



We have had several folks visit and remain with us through the first two months of the year, and we have opened two new Community Groups that keep in homes just since November due to this growth. We are very excited to see this, and many of these folks are brand new to the OKC area and prayed to find a church home.

Our folks have done very well at welcoming all who enter, and we are thinking two additional groups will be necessary by Summer time.

The work that began among our Afghan neighbors with just a couple of folks is increasing, and more and more folks are getting involved with ministering, sharing the Gospel, and welcoming these neighbors.

Along with this, a few of those who have visited and are connected in some way to try church are neighbors and friends of those in our church, and are connected as a result of the love and boldness of our people in sharing the Gospel with them and inviting them to Grace Harbor.



Central Baptist College Scholarship Finalized In Tribute to Opie Hefner's 100th Birthday

The Opie and Ruby Hefner Endowed Scholarship is now fully funded. The scholarship was established at Central Baptist College by Jay and Jana Hefner, the Hefner's son and daughter-in-law, to pay tribute to Jay's parents for their service and contributions to CBC.

Jay and Jana presented the final \$1,000 check to CBC's President Terry Kimbrow on what would have been Opie Hefner's 100th birthday.

Opie and Ruby Hefner were important members of the CBC community during the early years of the institution's founding.

They were also faithful members of both Antioch and Eastside Baptist Churches for more than 70 years, with Opie serving as a deacon and Sunday school teacher and Ruby serving as the beginner department superintendent for a number of years.

The Hefners were born and raised in Rupert, AR, grew up together and began to date in school.

Opie eventually went with his brother to Lawrence, KS, to help at the Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant during World War II.

While there began to miss Ruby, so he sent her a bus ticket so they could be married, which happened at the Douglas County courthouse in Lawrence on August 10, 1943.

They celebrated 60 years of marriage in 2003 just prior to Opie's death in 2004.

After the war ended, the Hefners returned to Arkansas, eventually settling in Conway to give their children a chance to attend one of the three colleges in town.

When CBC started in 1952, Opie and Ruby volunteered to clean up Old Main so that classes could be held there. Ruby worked in the kitchen and helped prepare meals for the students and would later provide after church meals for CBC students in their home.

Ruby was known for her sewing and crochet work. She loved to make items to give away and many family members and friends benefitted from her craft.

She was co-owner of H & S Daycare in the late 60's to early 70's. Many Conway children started their early learning years with her.

She was also an excellent cook and loved sharing meals with others. Everyone looked forward to eating her homemade rolls on all occasions.

She was an extremely giving person who always put others' needs before her own.

Opie worked as the CBC maintenance supervisor from 1968-1980 under four presidents: the late Drs. Gerald Kellar, Wassell Burgess, Harold Cooper, and R. B. Hoshaw and was known during that time period as Bro.

Jay said, "They supported CBC every day after that until their deaths, Opie's in 2004 and Ruby's in 2016."

Their three children, Janice Stephens, the late Ron Hefner and Jay Hefner, are all graduates of CBC.

As stated in the agreement, the scholarship award is to be given to a CBC athlete with first priority to an active member of a Baptist Missionary Association (BMA) of Arkansas, and second priority to an active member of at BMA of America church.

"I can't think of a better way to honor the life of two of the finest servants of God," said CBC President Terry Kimbrow.

Central Baptist College has over ninety endowed scholarships representing over \$4 million in contributions.

Endowed scholarships serve as a lasting tribute, as contributions are placed in the permanent endowment and only a portion of the interest is awarded as scholarships.

According to Kimbrow, "Endowed scholarships can be started with as little as \$1,000 and must reach the \$10,000 level within seven years to be considered fully funded."

Jay and Jana Hefner established the Opie and Ruby Hefner Endowed Scholarship on August 4, 2017, with an initial contribution of \$2,000.

Additional contributions to the Opie and Ruby Hefner Endowed Scholarship can be sent to:

Central Baptist College 1501 College Avenue Conway, AR 72034.

Checks should be made payable to Central Baptist College with "Hefner Endowed Scholarship" indicated on the memo line.

Gifts can also be made securely online at cbc.edu/endowed. Include "Hefner Endowed Scholarship" in the comments box on the online donation form.



CBC President Terry Kimbrow receives a check from Jay and Jana Hefner to complete the funding of the Opie and Ruby Hefner Endowed Scholarship.

"Find a Penny," cont from pg 3

consistency, two things the flesh loathes and detests.

Commitment requires us to walk by faith and not by sight.

This is frightening for our fleshly nature that wants to see something before believing in it.

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

Commitment necessitates we relinquish all rights to our life and anything that happens in it; acknowledging that God is in full control.

That means things might not turn out quite as we had planned. 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.

In His Word we find God promises to care for us
if we only trust Him are a sure thing,
yet we choose the odds that are billion to one, our own way.
What could possibly tempt us to believe
the remote and farfetched idea
that anyone or anything could help us other than God?

"His Intent was Unmistakable"

I Kings 19:14-21

Dr. John M. Adams Executive Director, Moral Action

There is a time to make a firm commitment of our lives to a great cause and to decide once and for all that come what may we are not turning back.

There is a time to let go of the past. There is a time to fix our eyes on the future.

Elisha went to his team of oxen after Elijah had cloaked him, killed the oxen, then cooked the meat using the yoke that had harnessed the oxen as fuel for the fire.

His intent was unmistakable. He was never going back to his old life or world.

God never calls an idle man to work. Once putting his hand to the plow you dare not look back.

Elisha, though a great man with substance, could handle a plow. There is no disgrace in honest labor. So work. Elisha listened to the voice of God through his man Elijah. Your work and occupation should not prevent you and me from hearing the voice of God. So listen!

Elisha returned to kiss his parents and make a farewell feast. Natural family endearments are respected by God.

Elisha's parents did not want to hinder him. Those parents incur fearful responsibilities who hinder their children from responding to God's call. So love!

Elisha's past was broken, his own yoke of oxen was slain and the instruments of toil (plow, stock, reins) were consumed by fire. So burn!

Elisha's intent was unmistakable! He was never going back to the old.

Be not wise in thine own eyes:. . . . Proverbs 3:5-7a

Commitment requires us to wait patiently on God rather than impulsively rushing ahead to relieve ourselves of the anxiety and suspense of not knowing the immediate out come of our predicament.

Usually with the motivation of trying to tip the scales in favor of how we want things to turn out.

And lastly, commitment calls for total surrender of all we hold near and dear, every possession, every loved one, every plan, and every moment of everyday.

Yes, there is a high price to be paid, but it is nothing compared to the one He paid for us, and the life He has prepared for us in eternity.

You see God uses the valleys and chug holes of life to test OUR trust and faith in HIS ability, NOT HIS trust and faith in OUR ability.

What kind of life would you be living right now if you fully trusted God? The very help you so desperately need is yours by only trusting Him. If you can trust Him with your eternal security, can't you trust Him with your life?

"And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him." Psalms 37:40

UPCOMING EVENTS

BMA of OK Midyear Meeting Bethany, Tulsa April 6, 2024

BMA of America Annual Meeting April 16-18, 2024 Chateau on the Lake Branson, MO