

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

Staff Updates

Pastor Anniversaries

Freddie Williford	2006	Ford Park
Billy Sutton	2008	Redeemer Community
Steve Pettey	2014	Pineroft
Doug Graham	2017	New Bethel
Bill Stewart	2017	Caddo Prairie
Randy Zeigler	2021	South Bossier

New Staff

Belcher: Rick Daniels, Interim Pastor
Elm Grove: Kurt Zortman, Interim Pastor
South Bossier: Zeke Touts, Music

5875 W. 70th St
 Shreveport LA 71129
 318-686-5736 FAX: 687-9701
 Return Service Requested
 E-mail: carlene@nwlba.org
 Website: www.nwlba.org
www.Facebook.com/NWLBA
 Hours: 8:30 am - 5:00 pm/Mon-Thur.
 8:30 am - 12:00 noon/Friday
 Lane Moore, Director of Missions

Non-Profit Org
 US Postage Paid
 Shreveport LA
 Permit 37

Christmas Event: Christmas, As It Should Be.
 Emmett Hook Theater, Dec. 9, 7 pm, Dec. 10, 4 pm & 7 pm. Tickets can be purchased at:
<https://www.tix.com/ticket-sales/philipandfriends/7107>.
Brookwood: Shreveport Chapter of *Reasons To Believe* & Brookwood Baptist will host an apologetic Zoom event, "An Evening With Hugh Ross," Dec.6, 6:30pm. For further info contact Mark Riser, markriser1@comcast.net
Eastwood: Brian Free and Assurance in concert Jan. 27, 2023, 7pm. Public invited. Love offering.
North Shreve: Trevor Thomas LIVE! Dec. 18, 11 am. Love offering.
Woodridge: Southern Plainsmen in concert, Dec. 10, 6pm. Public invited. Love offering.

MASADA TRANSITIONAL LIVING CENTER is in need of:

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Pine Sol | Comet |
| Bleach | Lysol Spray |
| Toilet Cleaner | Dawn Dish Liquid |

NLBA CALL TO PRAYER VIII
SUNDAY NIGHT February 5, 2023
6 PM FIRST BAPTIST BLANCHARD

KIDZ WKND
TRANSIT WORSHIP BAND
 A Kids Winter Camp Experience
JAN 27-29
\$85 Per Person
 For More Info... Email - lynn@airlinebaptist.com
 Register @ BethanyC3.com

2023 JANUARY 20-22
 DEREK GRIFFON
\$85 REGISTER @BETHANYC3.COM
 A YOUTH WINTER CAMP EXPERIENCE @ CAMP BETHANY
 FOR MORE INFO TEXT CODIE SMITH 318-230-3033 OR JERRAD EDMONDS 318 423-2046

Staff Opportunities

PASTOR	MUSIC	YOUTH	CHILDREN	OTHER
Belcher - Bi-Vo Elm Grove - Bi-Vo Emmanuel North Keithville - Bi-Vo Shreve City - Bi-Vo	Lakeview - PT Trees - FT Westwood - PT Woodridge - FT	Barksdale - PT Blanchard - FT Mooringport - PT North Keithville - PT Plain Dealing - FT Princeton FBC - PT Westwood - PT	Belcher - PT Ferry Lake - PT	Bethany - Nursery Coordinator - PT Blanchard - Hourly Nursery Workers Norris Ferry - Administrative Assistant - PT New Birth - Children's Church - Volunteer

Northwest Louisiana Baptist Association



Churches, Missions & Ministries Working Together To Be More Effective

Baptist News

VOLUME 52, NUMBER 12
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OLD SCHOOL HERESIES ARE MAKING A COMEBACK IN THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH

More and more adults in the United States are moving away from an accurate understanding of scripture. That shouldn't be a shock. What is shocking is that American evangelicals' grasp on theology is slipping badly, and more than half affirmed heretical views of God. That is from this year's STATE OF THEOLOGY survey, released by Ligonier Ministries and LifeWay Research.

More than half of the country (53%) now believe Scripture "is not literally true," up from 41 percent in the last eight years. Researchers called the rejection of the divine authorship of the Bible the "clearest and most consistent trend" of all their data. Sadly in the survey (26%) of evangelicals said the Bible is not literally true, up from 15 percent in 2020. Evangelicals today are also more likely to consider one's religious belief "a matter of personal opinion" and "not about objective truth." That's a 16 percent jump in only two years.

Here are the top 5 heretical beliefs held by evangelicals in the 2022 survey:

1. Jesus isn't the only way to God.

More than half, 56 percent, of evangelicals affirmed that "God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism and Islam." That's up from 42 percent in 2020. This is a strong bent toward universalism, which is believing there are many ways to bypass Jesus as the only way to the Father. *John 14:6*



2. Jesus was created by God.

A surprising 73 percent agreed with the statement that "Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God." This was a popular heresy that arose in the early fourth century. This teaching caused such a stir that it led to the gathering of the very first council of church leaders in AD 325 to correct this heresy. *John 3:16* and *John 14:9*.

3. Jesus is not God.

Given the above beliefs on Jesus as a created being, it's not surprising that 43 percent of evangelicals affirmed that "Jesus was a great teacher, but he was not God," which is another form of Arian heresy, and destroys the deity of Christ. *John 10:30*

(Arianism was known as the first of the great heresies. Arian was a priest and a false teacher in the fourth century in Alexandria, Egypt. Arian's primary claim to the early church was that Christ was created and finite, not of equal divinity with the Father.)

4. The Holy Spirit is not a personal being.

Concerning the Trinity, 60 percent of evangelicals said they had some confusion about its third member, believing that "The Holy Spirit is a force but not a personal being." Granted scripture does speak many times of the Spirit of God using metaphors. However, the scriptures clearly affirm that the Spirit is fully God, just like Jesus and the Father. *Acts 5:3-4*

5. Humans aren't sinful by nature.

Interestingly, 57 percent also agreed to the statement that "Everyone sins a little, but most people are good by nature." In other words, we do not have sinful natures, which is also known as the heresy of Pelagianism, which denies the doctrine of "original sin." *Romans 5:12* and *Psalms 51:5*.

(Pelagius was a British monk who moved to Jerusalem in the 5th century. He was known for teaching that Adam's sin did not have a direct impact on us. Instead, we were born neutral.)

It appears some of the early church heresies are back in vogue as they find new homes in weak and anemic North American churches. Northwest Baptists, let's continue to hold high the inerrant, infallible Word of God in our Sunday Schools and Pulpits.



Lane

You can see the full 2022 survey at thestateoftheology.com

Shreveport Metro BCM
Baptist Collegiate Ministry
 Stephen Craver, Director



A student sitting at our GOLA Coffee Shop recently said she and her discipleship group – made up of all BCM students – might be looking at the book of Joshua in the near future. As an “Old Testament guy” hearing a student say this immediately got me excited. It also brought to mind one of my favorite passages from Joshua chapter 23, “You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed.” Certainly, we at the Shreveport BCM saw plenty of promises fulfilled over the course of the Fall 2022 semester.

The first promise we saw fulfilled comes from Isaiah 55, where God himself declared, “my Word that goes out from my mouth shall not return to me empty.” Indeed, the Shreveport BCM spent every opportunity this semester sowing the good news of Gospel. Each Free Lunch program we would have either a student leader or member of the local church providing lunch give their personal testimony. This allowed for multiple gospel conversations across the semester. And how did God’s word bear fruit? We had the joy of seeing a young man named Kaleb give his life to Christ in a conversation with another BCM student! The partnership of the BCM – state, local association, and local churches – changed an eternity.

Another truth found in scripture is that “the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.” However, there’s a hope with this promise that we can pray for God to send workers into the harvest field. For the BCM, our prayers were answered when the Lord provided two excellent Campus Missionaries to help us reach a harvest field of multiple campuses and thousands of students. In fact, you did more than pray for the workers, you gave to support them. In just six months, faithful and generous individuals gave to support the campus missionary program, and already the BCM has received more than half its annual goal!

God certainly has been faithful, and many of you have helped partner with us as well. **Nothing the BCM does would be possible without the prayers and support of our local churches and individual partners.** Let me say for all our staff and students, **“Thank you!”**

If you or your church group would like to come join us in this fun and fruitful ministry, reach out to us at the BCM. We’d love to have you come join in all the good things God is doing.



Disability Doesn’t Slow Down This Masada Transitional Living Resident



Christian Benit (*pronounced Be-Neet*) is a Lafayette native. Christian has been in and out of trouble most of his fifty years of life. Being raised in a good, stable home was not enough to keep him from making some very poor life choices in his twenties. A jail cell for drug abuse was a regular occurrence. To add to his struggles, Christian lost his left leg in a tragic roadside accident ten years ago, but the drug abuse still continued. His last jail stay in Jackson, MS, took another five and a half years of his life.



Thankfully, some maturity, along with drug rehabilitation in Baton Rouge, got Christian clean for the first time in over twenty years. He wanted to get away from south Louisiana and his counselors arranged for him to move to Shreveport. He got connected with one of our Association churches and their Men’s Bible Study which recommended him to John Anderson, Director of Masada. Christian says, “I’m in the best place spiritually and emotionally that I’ve ever been in since I moved into Masada, along with the accountability of the men in my life.” He now has his Peer Support Certification and is working toward counseling others. Missing a leg doesn’t slow Christian down. He will do anything set before him, from painting rooms at Masada, to working flower beds, or cutting grass on a riding mower for church members. Christian is now serving as a manager at Masada.

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CULTURE WATCH & NATIONAL NEWS



Americans Believe Suicide Is Now An Epidemic

According to recent LifeWay Research, most Americans (77%) believe suicide has become an epidemic in the United States, with 34% strongly agreeing and 44% somewhat agreeing. This number has jumped 22% since 2014.

8 Out Of 10 Teens Expect To Live Together Before Marriage



A recent study from the Marriage Strengthening Research & Dissemination Center has released a report stating that 80% of teenagers, ages 15-19, expect to cohabit before marriage, with 95% saying they do expect to marry one day. Researchers believe a loss of a Christian understanding of marriage has been key to the increase of the acceptance of cohabitation before marriage. Researchers stated, “despite how profoundly our society has cheapened marriage, our souls still yearn for God’s design at the deepest level.”

Leatherwood Voted In As New President Of The ERLC



Brent Leatherwood, interim President of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the SBC, has been elected the new President. Leatherwood had served as interim since September 2021, and served in a variety of other roles at ERLC since 2017.

67 Louisiana Churches Have Left The United Methodist Church



Louisiana has 400 Methodist churches and 140,000 members statewide. The fundamental issue is the inclusion of LGBTQ individuals in the full life and ministry of the church through marriage and ordination. The Global Methodist Church, a newly formed organization, is becoming the home for many of the fellowships that have left the UMC.

SBC Pastor Pay Remains “Flat” During Tough Economy



LifeWay Research, Guidestone and Baptist State Conventions surveyed a broad section of churches last summer and found that pastors salaries have remained flat since 2018, and total pay packages have decreased over that same time. While the Consumer Price Index has jumped 17.6% from 2018 to 2022, compensation, which includes salary and housing, decreased 0.2% for full-time SBC pastors. However, their retirement and insurance benefits decreased 2.1%. In a previous LifeWay Research study, 1 in 5 Protestant pastors say financial stress is one of the greatest concerns they have in ministry.

PASTOR’S PERSPECTIVE



*A Celebration!
 A Baby Being Born!*

*“Over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity”
 Colossians 3:4*

Jesse Colston, Pastor,
 Oil City Baptist Church,
 Oil City, LA

At this time of the year, it all begins! We start seeing the familiar ornaments, candy, and the Christmas music starts to play. We go to the stores and there are toys everywhere and the traffic begins to be unbearable.

It’s officially Christmas! The kids are getting their ultimate list of everything they want. Some tend to lose focus on what Christmas is about. At times we just want to hurry through the holidays.

Let me remind you of a story of an unconventional family long ago. God sent His angels to Mary and Joseph to tell them of the upcoming birth of a very special baby. I couldn’t even imagine what was going through their minds; especially during the times in which they lived.

Many can get caught up in the business of Christmas and don’t take the time to share what the real reason for the season is! God sent His Son into this crazy world to show us His redemptive plan for mankind. Christ’s sacrifice for our sins showed how much He loved us, and it’s unconditional.

Are people too eager to get through the holidays? Could it be because we’ve taken the focus off the Father’s gift to us?

God gave us His Son without hesitation. God knew that we needed a savior, and the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ would deliver us from our sins.

Many years ago a baby changed everything. Christ showed us that He is the way, the truth, and the life.

So, slow down and enjoy the celebration of Christ’s birth and share it with others.

Enjoy your family this Christmas, and show them the love that only Christ can give. Your family is a blessing and an important part of your life. We are celebrating our son’s first Christmas with Our Savior. Even though it’s a difficult time, we are keeping our eyes on Christ and knowing that He gave us the greatest gift of all. The last time we ever saw our son, he told us both that he loved us. Show the love of Christ to everyone this season, especially your family.

Jesse Colston has been the pastor of Oil City Baptist Church since 2012. Jesse and his wife, Melissa, have two children and two grandchildren.