

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

Staff Updates

Pastor Anniversaries

Robert Green	1994	Colquitt
Ed Gonzalez	2003	Linwood
Jessie Colston	2012	Oil City
Daniel Hernandez	2015	Broadmoor Hispanic
Ivory Jackson	2015	North Star
John McCatherty	2021	Ferry Lake
Rick Daniels	2023	Belcher

Staff Changes

Calvary: Zeke Touns, Music, from South Bossier
Westlake: Mike Anderson, Interim Pastor

Sympathy

Linda Griffin
1948-2024

Linda served for many years as an administrative assistant for the Northwest Association with former Directors Bruce Parrish and Eddie DeHondt.

WEEK OF PRAYER
MARCH 3-10
MAKE JESUS KNOWN

LOUISIANA CHILDREN'S BIBLE DRILL
District Bible Drill
Sunday, April 7, 2024
Woodridge Baptist Church
2:30 pm

Church Drill information should be sent to Teresa Small (teresa@fbchaughton.org) by Wednesday, March 20, 2024. For any questions, call Teresa at 318-773-1661

Fellowship Trips

Cypress: Savannah, Charleston, Jekyll Island, Callaway Gardens, Georgia Sea Turtle Center, Magnolia Plantation & Gardens and much more. April 13-20, 2024. \$2,225 plus trip insurance. Contact Stephanie at Cypress Baptist Church, 318-965-2296.

Staff Opportunities

PASTOR	MUSIC	YOUTH	CHILDREN	OTHER
Ford Park - Bi-Vo Pilgrim Home - Bi-Vo Shreve City - Bi-Vo	Ferry Lake - PT Greenwood - PT Mooringsport - PT South Bossier - PT Trees - FT/PT Westwood - PT	Belle Park - PT Mooringsport - PT North Keithville - PT Plain Dealing - PT/FT Princeton FBC - PT Westwood - PT Vivian FBC - FT	Belcher - PT Ferry Lake - PT	FBC Blanchard - Hourly Nursery Workers New Birth - Children's Church - Volunteer

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 - 4:30 pm/Mon-Thur.
8:30 am - 12:00 noon/Friday
Lane Moore, Director of Missions

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WK1 - JUNE 17-21
WK2 - FULL
BIG CAMP EXPERIENCE. SMALL CAMP PRICE

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WALK A DIFFERENT PATH
\$240 PER PERSON
GERALD FADAYOMI
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BETHANY STUDENT CAMP 2024
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JUNE 10-14
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Northwest Louisiana Baptist Association

Baptist News

Churches, Missions & Ministries Working Together To Be More Effective

VOLUME 53, NUMBER 3
MARCH 2024



CHURCH REALITIES

You Should Be Concerned About in 2024

Church life is changing fast, even in the Bible Belt. Below are some leading reasons why difficult days could be ahead.

- 1. Cultural Christianity is disappearing.** Those two words are a misnomer. A person should never be Christian based on their culture. In fact, in some of the worst cultures of persecution around the world, Christianity is flourishing. However, in the American church, even the *individual who drops in occasionally, gives God a tip, and is a good person*, is fading fast. Attending church is not on most peoples' radar. This is a post-Covid reality.
- 2. The passing of the Builder generation.** The builder generation has kept and continues to keep many churches alive. This generation was born before 1946. I call them "institutional givers." They would write their tithe check from a hospital bed if needed, and then call someone to come pick it up! They were loyal and committed workers and stuck with the church through good times and bad. Research tells us roughly 13,000 Builders die in the United States every week. That has to impact the Church.
- 3. Migration from rural areas and small towns to the cities.** In 1790, only 5% of Americans lived in the cities. Today it's over 80% and climbing. Small towns are slowly dying all over the country and taking churches with them.
- 4. People change churches faster.** Those transferring church membership are concentrating into fewer churches. Simply stated, a few churches are getting bigger at the expense of everyone else. Commitment, loyalty or denomination that once held people in place, no longer works. This is greatly impacting churches geographically close together within cities. Today, people shop churches like shopping stores.
- 5. Slow to change in an accelerating world.** Changing for the sake of change or because the church down the street changed, is never wise. Nor am I referring to changes in doctrine or biblical truths. We should never waver on those principles like other denominations have done. But, when a church dies on the hill of preferences, style or methodology because "that's the way we've always done it," the world may view the church as increasingly irrelevant and miss the life-changing message of Jesus Christ.

Celebration of Prayer IX Review

Dozens of Association churches gathered last month at Eastwood in Haughton for our annual Prayer Event. Nearly 30 pastors prayed, preached and read Scripture as hundreds joined their hearts together asking God for His cleansing and provision. Unable to attend, Speaker of the House, Congressman Mike Johnson joined us by way of video from New York city as those present were able to pray for him. Special thanks to the Eastwood choir and praise team for leading us in worship.

Bethany Camp & Conference Center
Trey Miller, Director



January is an amazing time at Bethany. For the second year in a row, we are seeing close to a thousand students attend our winter camps, 1Wknd and KidzWknd. What a great way to begin the new year.

Along with great blessings January threw obstacles in our path. Due to the winter weather, we saw pipes freeze, the Camp flood, and a tree fall through the roof of one of our staff houses. As First Peter reminds us not to be surprised when opposition comes, we rejoice that our Camp Community rallies quickly to prepare our place where God continues to do His work.

Summer is only a few months away and we anticipate 2,500 students on campus. Week two of KidzKamp is already full, and week one is filling up quickly. With full camps, beds are at a premium. Building additional cabins is on the long-range Association Camp Committee's radar. We never want to turn church groups away.



Summer staff hiring is happening now. If you know of a high school or college student looking for a great summer of work and ministry, fill out an application at Bethanyc3.com. It's a fast-paced 10 weeks, but so rewarding to see God change lives. Connect with us today!

Give us a call at Bethany Camp & Conference Center. 318-938-1221

Compassion Ministries
John Anderson



Pickle Ball used for evangelism?

Yes it can be! It

started after the great response Haynes Avenue experienced on the first night of Pickle Ball. Jill Zimmer is the tennis pro at Southern Hills Tennis Center, and wife of Eric Zimmer, the new bi-vocational pastor at Haynes Avenue. The demand for Pickle Ball is sweeping the country and Jill decided to convert two of their tennis courts into Pickle Ball courts. Their business is flourishing, and for the last couple of years Eric has stepped aside from the his teaching job and is now assisting Jill at the tennis center.

Haynes Avenue is now using their gym for Pickle Ball and on opening night had over 30 adults and youth. This is a great tool that allows the Haynes Avenue church family to share the message of Christ with guests. Eric says an average start up cost for a church to begin Pickle Ball is around \$1,200. A smooth parking lot is adequate for a court if no gymnasium is available.



Reach out to Eric Zimmer for more information on how your church can start a Pickle Ball league at your church. 318-751-5736.

Persecution of Christians Worsens Around the Globe

Open Doors International has released their 2024 World Watch List. Each year, the report brings vital attention to brave Christians around the world who suffer because of their faith. This year's report found that more than 360 million Christians worldwide faced severe persecution and discrimination for their faith.

The 2024 report records a significant increase in the number of attacks on churches and Christian property last year. According to Open Doors: "Worldwide, more than 14,700 churches or Christian properties including schools and hospitals were targeted in 2023. It marked a sevenfold increase compared with attacks recorded the previous year."

Additionally, in 2023 the total number of Christians who were forced to leave their homes for various reasons, including political instability, war, and extremism, more than doubled from 2022.

In the report North Korea is "the most dangerous place in the world for Christians." If a person of faith is discovered, he or she is killed on the spot or shipped to labor camps where survival is slim. In Asia as a whole, 2 in 5 Christians are persecuted for their faith. Believers in India face violent attacks from Hindu extremists and are punished for violating anti-conversion laws. In Africa, 1 in 5 Christians are persecuted. Nigeria and Somalia ranked right behind North Korea as the worst place for Christians. In 2023, 5,000 Christians were killed in Nigeria.

In our own country, persecution continues to rise, according to the Center for Religious Liberty. Examples are seen regularly in cities and towns throughout America. We are seeing state and local governments across the country targeting Christians to be silenced, restricted, or fined for living out their faith. The report states, "As the mainstream culture moves further away from a Christian worldview, Christian beliefs that contradict with secular values are increasingly denounced by the culture and wrongly portrayed as being hateful or bigoted."

Scripture tells us these days would come. There won't be any turning back at this point until the Lord returns for His Bride!



THE BAPTIST FAITH & MESSAGE

What We Believe
as Southern Baptists

The following is another in our series on the Baptist Faith & Message 2000, with this month's column.

Article V: God's Purpose of Grace

"Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility."

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgements on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

As the BF&M statement above implies, election is God's choice of certain individuals to salvation before the foundation of the world. The Reformed position on election is that it is unconditional. That is, God selected persons for everlasting life based solely on His divine will and good pleasure, not on foreseen faith. In other words, God foreknows all future events, including responses to the gospel message, because He first ordained them.

The non-Reformed (Arminian) position is that God's election is conditional. That is, God selected persons for salvation based on foreseeing their response in belief and repentance to the gospel message. As taught by Jacobus Arminius, after whom Arminianism is named. God's election to salvation is the election of believers, which means that election is conditioned on faith. Arminius also insisted that God's foreknowledge of people's choices did not cause those choices or make them necessary.

There is a third view and it's called Molinism. This view argues that God perfectly accomplishes His will in free creatures through the use of His omniscience. Molinism seeks to reconcile two biblical truths: God exercises sovereign control over the creation, and human beings make free choices for which they must give an account.

Molinism teaches that God exercises His sovereignty primarily through His omniscience, and that He infallibly knows what free creatures would do in any given situation. In this way, the Lord sovereignly controls all things, while humans also are genuinely free. Put another way, God is entirely responsible for salvation. We are responsible for our sin.

Next month:
Article VII of the BF&M: Baptism & Lord's Supper

Culture Watch National & World News



Data Shows Children Living With Two Parents Increasing

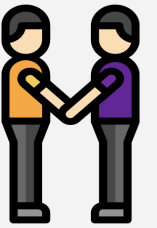
Newly published data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that the proportion of American children living in two-parent families increased to 71.1% in 2023, continuing a slightly upward trajectory since 2015.

Researchers see two trends as reasons for the numbers. Women and men are waiting longer to have children and are more likely to be married by that time, and the increase in immigrants coming into the country have shown a propensity to marry before having kids and then remain married.

Source: Washington Stand

Franklin Graham: "The Pope Can't Save You From Judgement"

The President of Samaritan's Purse is warning same-sex couples that even "so-called blessings" from religious leaders like Pope Francis will not save them "from the judgement of God." The evangelist's comments came in response to the Pope's document released several weeks ago in which he formally approved allowing priests to bless same-sex couples.



Source: Newsmax

Baptisms Up In Recent SBC Annual Church Profiles (ACP's)



In 2022-2023 ACP's showed baptisms increased 16% across the Convention, showing back to back reporting years of growth. Despite the recent growth, the overall baptismal trend since the early 2000's has been down, according to a Lifeway Research

report. Notably, 43% of SBC churches reported no baptisms in their last ACP.

Source: Lifeway Research

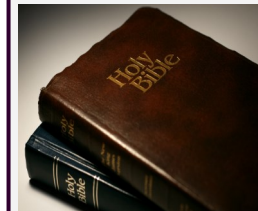
Longtime Evangelist, Junior Hill Passes Away at 87

The beloved Alabama evangelist's ministry spanned seven decades. Hill began preaching at age 19 and pastored for 11 years before becoming a full-time evangelist in 1967. A fixture at pastor conferences and conventions, Junior Hill preached nearly 2,000 revival meetings.



Source: The Alabama Baptist

Bible Viewed as "Hate Speech." Young Adults in U.K. Open To Banning It



A recent poll conducted by Whitestone Insights showed that 23% of 18-34 year old Britains favored banning books like the Bible if offending parts couldn't be edited out or it contained perceived hate speech. 17% of adults aged 35-54 also agreed.

Source: Washington Stand