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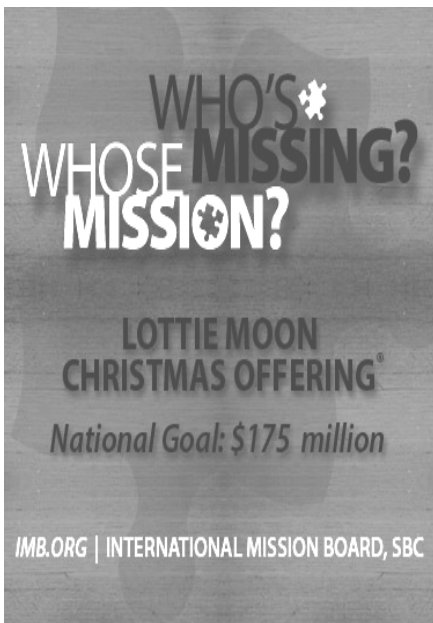
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Inside this edition

- pg. 1 – On Mission Celebration
- Lottie Moon Christmas Offering & Other News – pg. 2
- Stewardship – pg. 3
- Contact Information & Additional News – pg. 4



“... On Earth Peace, Good Will Toward Men”

Luke 2:14, KJV

As 21st century believers, and Americans, we live in very different times than any generation preceding us. Thirty-five years ago, in turning our televisions on, the best most of us could hope for would be a maximum of two channels with limited programming. Now the news channels number more than the total programming package of early cable subscribers; however, the great majority of the news is quite depressing, is it not?

Just today the highlighted articles on my computer homepage included: the massacre of 13 American soldiers and the wounding of 29 others, not in Iraq or Afghanistan, but at Ft. Hood, Texas by an Islamic extremist, who was supposed to be “pursuing his career in psychiatry ... specializing in preventative psychiatry”; the heated debate concerning an overhaul of America’s healthcare that was topped off by the Rev. Jesse Jackson trying to turn the whole mess into a racial issue; the attempted hijacking of an American ship by Somali pirates for the second time; the explosion of a homicide bomb in western Afghanistan; and another article that read: “World Powers Meet to Discuss Measures Against Iran.”

If you’re like me, most of us feel as if there is no escape from such reporting because we are globally connected to the latest breaking news – in our homes, workplaces, and even our automobiles as we travel. Is it any wonder that an ever growing number of Americans suffer with bouts of depression?

Before we go off our deep ends, let me share some good news with you. Good news that will hopefully instill some Christmas cheer in each of us even though we’re surrounded with doom and gloom.

Believe it or not, Christianity is growing at an unprecedented pace. In fact, the Gospel is spreading so quickly that representatives from a good number of international missions societies now say that Christianity is growing so quickly that the world could be “characterized as Christian” by as early as the middle of the 21st century.

In a recent interview with the Carnegie Council, Philip Jenkins, author of the book *“The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity”* cited the explosive growth of Christianity in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, as an expansion that “has barely registered on Western consciousness ... even though that in just 20 years, two-thirds of all Christians will live elsewhere – in Africa, Latin America or Asia.” The places that Christianity is not experiencing record growth are confined to North America, Europe, Japan, and Australia. One missions website reports that Christianity is growing in Africa by about 50,000 baptisms a week. In addition, the Christian Post website says that “Christian growth in China is too fast to keep up with” and estimates the numbers to be well above 100 million, a figure that could quadruple in size by the middle of the century.

In the midst of doom and gloom we, as God’s people, should rejoice. In the back of our minds we, with Job of old, “know that our Redeemer is alive and well.” And, we know that He is soon coming again to receive us unto Himself. So what is our Christmas message?

Perhaps the Anglican theologian, J.I. Packer, said it best in his book *Knowing God*, “The Christmas message is that there is hope for a ruined humanity – hope of pardon, hope of peace with God, hope of glory – because at the Father’s will Jesus Christ became poor and was born in a stable so that thirty years later he might hang on a cross.”

This Christmas season let’s make sure we share the peace, the joy, and love of Christ with everyone we meet!

Steve J. Collins, Pastor, Nickelsville, First

Pastors, Write an Article and Send it to Me for Future Issues

The Campus Comes to You!

Partnering with the John Leland Center for Theological Studies, the Southwest Virginia Christian Leadership Network offers college-credit Bible classes in Southwest Virginia. These classes are ideal for ministers, those exploring a call to ministry, volunteer church leaders, or those who simply desire growth in their Christian walk.

SPRING 2010 COLLEGE/DIPLOMA CLASSES

Classes begin the week of January 25
and conclude the week of May 10

Baptist Student Center, UVA-Wise

PH 245 – Philosophy of Religion An introduction to the philosophical foundations of religious beliefs, including traditional arguments for God's existence, the immortality of the soul and life after death. **Instructor:** Steve Collins, pastor of Nickelsville Baptist Church. Monday, 6:30-9:20pm

TP 202 – Christian Theology II A study of the foundations of systematic theology of the Christian church, with a historical and philosophical emphasis on Classical Christian doctrines. **Instructor:** Michael Moore, pastor of St. Paul Baptist Church. Tuesday, 6:30-9:20pm

Bonsack Baptist Church, Roanoke

BS 170 – Johannine Literature A study of the Gospel of John, the Epistles of John and the Revelation. **Instructor:** Scot Finley, senior adult minister of Bonsack Baptist Church. Tuesday, 1:30-4:20pm

MS 430 – Christian Education A study of the philosophical, theological and psychological foundations of Christian Education as the mission of the Church. **Instructor:** Judy Hetherington, Roanoke Valley Baptist Association. Thursday, 9:30am-12:20pm or 6:30-9:20pm

Lebanon Association Building, Glade Spring

MS 415 – Preaching and Communication A practical introduction to sermon preparation, delivery and communication. **Instructor:** Chad Johnson, pastor of Fellowship Baptist Church. Monday, 6:00-8:50pm

HC 301 – Church History A study of the history of the Christian religion and Church from the first century to the beginnings of the modern period. The course highlights the theological and sociological developments in the Early Church, the Middle Ages, the Reformation and post-Reformation periods. **Instructor:** Jack Garland, pastor of Riverside Baptist Church, Chillhowie. Tuesday, 6:00-8:50pm

First Baptist Church, Nickelsville

PH 245 – Philosophy of Religion An introduction to the philosophical foundations of religious beliefs, including traditional arguments for God's existence, the immortality of the soul and life after death. **Instructor:** Steve Collins, pastor of Nickelsville Baptist Church. Thursday, 6:30-9:20pm

For more information contact: Dr. Gary Chapman
866.223.9344 (toll free)

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Tuition for college-level classes

Credit: \$375/class Audit: \$188

How Missions is Funded



Lottie Moon Christmas Offering®

Every penny given to Lottie Moon is used to support Southern Baptist missionaries as they share the Gospel overseas. The offering represents 54 percent of the International Mission Board's total income.

Cooperative Program

Thirty-five percent of the IMB's income is received from the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program. Each state convention gives between 14 percent and 57 percent of its CP collection to the SBC. The SBC gives 50 percent of that amount to the IMB and 50 percent to other SBC entities, including the North American Mission Board.

Other Income

Southern Baptists' gifts to the IMB's World Hunger and General Relief ministries comprise 3 percent of the IMB's income. Field-generated funds, investment returns and other income constitute the remaining 8 percent.

How much does it cost to support a missionary?

- \$40,931.64 a year
- \$3,410.97 a month
- \$787.15 a week
- \$112.14 a day
- \$4.67 an hour
- \$.08 a minute

Reported June 2009. Support includes housing, food, children's education, medical expenses, retirement and more.

Finding Financial Peace in Uncertain Times

Do you look at others possessions in awe and wonder how in the world they can afford such expensive items such as new cars, a big house or a flat screen TV? Have you ever wondered at what cost? According to Crown Financial Ministries the average American family spends 110% of their income (www.crown.org/moneymapcoaching), this means that they spend 10% more than they make. You ask how they do it, it's called credit.

When I was first married my wife, Amanda, and I didn't own a credit card. We used the Visa Check Card system which allowed us to purchase items just like a credit card but only if the money was in the bank. A friend asked me how many credit cards I had. I simply replied that we had none and he could not believe it. He spent the next 30 minutes trying to convince me that I needed a credit card, if for nothing else but emergencies. Is this what we are supposed to do I thought? Prepare for the future by spending money we don't have to impress people we don't like? I think scripture tells us otherwise.

There was a man in the book of Genesis named Joseph who had a rough life. He was his father's favorite child, he had a special coat and was a big dreamer but he was the envy of his siblings. After being taken hostage by his brothers their first thought was to kill him but decided it would be best to sell him into slavery, which is exactly what they did. They made money off someone they didn't like and convinced their dad (Jacob) that Joseph had been killed by a wild beast. It looked like this was the end of road for Joseph but God had other plans.

After being sold into slavery Joseph soon became the leader of the household of Potiphar and everything was good. It seemed that God was positioning Joseph to use him. But Potiphar's wife desired to lay with Joseph but he would not give in. So she lied about the situation and told her husband that Joseph tried to seduce her. Believing his wife, he had Joseph put in to prison where he stayed for many years. While there he began to interpret dreams for many of the prisoners.

One dream however changed the course of Joseph's life. The king of Egypt had a dream that no one could interpret except Joseph. He told the king how there was going to be seven years of abundance followed by seven years of famine. The king, being so amazed of Joseph, said the following, "Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you.⁴⁰ You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you." (Genesis 41:39-40 NIV),

Although Joseph's path had changed he did not let the past hinder or make him greedy to obtain worth in this land. He did, however, prepare Egypt for hard economic times. For seven years there was abundance in Egypt and the land produced plentifully. It was during this time that Joseph led Egypt into a "saving account". He collected all the food produced and stored it in the cities surrounding the fields. He collected so much that he stopped keeping record. After seven years the abundance stopped just as Joseph had predicted but Egypt didn't suffer. They were prepared for hard economic times. Even though there was a terrible famine in the land, the preparation of the Egyptians under Joseph's leadership provided plenty of food for everyone. In fact their supply was so great they even fed the countries surrounding them. Genesis 41:57 says that all the countries came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph because the famine was severe in all of the world.

How does this story affect us during times of economic crisis? None of us are guaranteed a job for life. We should know by the examples provided in the scriptures that hard times always come. We will always face unexpected expenses and uncertain times. But how do we handle and prepare for these times? Will we survive unexpected debt simply by putting it on credit cards or will we be like Joseph and prepare for tough times? I believe Joseph had the right idea.

Our culture has brain washed us into believing that living in debt is just a way of life but God has called us out to be a peculiar people, we are to be different than those who have no faith. I want to encourage each of you to start a savings account and prepare for the time when the refrigerator needs replacing and the tires on the car are worn out. Make a commitment to get out of debt regardless of your past and start saving. According to Dave Ramsey and Crown Financial, starting a \$1,000.00 (one thousand dollar) emergency savings fund is the first step to true financial freedom.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if each of us were in a financial position where we could save and use those savings to help those in need? Joseph's savings impacted all the world! Imagine, if you will, what God could do with us if everyone saved? Let's start now, before the holidays, to make a difference with our finances. Let's work toward being people who are more concerned about the Kingdom of God rather than the size of our TV or the year of our car. Let's be mission-minded and make a difference in the world. If God can use a man who was sold into slavery, wrongfully put into prison, and forgotten about by others he had helped, then how much more can He use us?

Through the upcoming CVBA Newsletters we will be covering steps that will set everyone in the right direction to get out of debt. This is the first step, ***baby step no 1***: Start a \$1,000.00 emergency savings fund. During the meantime if you would like more information on finances, budgeting or any area concerning your money, please tell your pastor you are interested in being debt free and need the tools to do it. Also, feel free to contact me at pjandamanda@mounet.com or 276-479-1271.

Patrick "PJ" Johnson
Chairman, CVBA Stewardship Team



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**MOVING OR NEW 911 ADDRESSES?
 PLEASE share your new addresses with us**



Contact Information & Additional News

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Consider Your Call Testimony

Have you ever considered your call? We did and it was amazing how God blessed. We used the promotional material provided from Virginia Baptist and used it as a guide to create our own “Consider Your Call” celebration.

The promotional CD comes with sample sermons, publicity items, Sunday School Lessons, preparation timeline and other resources for you to create a worship experience that best suits your church. Instead of celebrating “Consider Your Call” on one Sunday, we celebrated the entire month of October with the final emphasis on October 25th.

We had a different speaker each Sunday who spoke on the calling of God in your life and the church responded. Almost half of the adults in the church recognized Gods call in their life.

We are currently maturing, supporting and praying for the calls made this month so they can begin serving God as He sees fit. This makes our second year using the “Consider Your Call” and we plan to continue using this material and we try to seek and make Christian Disciples.

If you have never used the “Consider Your Call” material I encourage you do to so. God has deeply blessed Moore’s Memorial through “Consider Your Call” and I am confident He will bless your church as well.

Patrick “PJ” Johnson
 Pastor, Moore’s Memorial