



# Church Newsletter

First Baptist Church of  
Niles

Volume 2/Issue 21

WHAT WE ARE DOING? AND WHAT WE SHOULD DO?

IN THIS ISSUE

## WELCOME

Welcome to Volume 2 of the FBCN Newsletter or the “current new normal” editions.

This week’s reading will be Psalm 97, titled The LORD reigns.

<sup>1</sup>The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!<sup>2</sup> Clouds and thick darkness are all around him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.<sup>3</sup> Fire goes before him and burns up his adversaries all around.<sup>4</sup> His lightnings light up the world; the earth sees and trembles.<sup>5</sup> The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the Lord of all the earth.

<sup>6</sup>The heavens proclaim his righteousness, and all the peoples see his glory. <sup>7</sup>All worshipers of images are put to shame, who make their boast in worthless idols; worship him, all you gods!

<sup>8</sup>Zion hears and is glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoice, because of your judgments, O LORD.<sup>9</sup> For you, O LORD, are most high over all the

earth; you are exalted far above all gods.<sup>10</sup> O you who love the LORD, hate evil! He preserves the lives of his saints; he delivers them from the hand of the wicked.

<sup>11</sup>Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.

<sup>12</sup>Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!

This Pastor Brandon Myers will continue his series on the “Gospel” from the book of Galatians.

We invite you to Join us for a virtual prayer meeting on Wednesdays at 7:00pm.

**Wednesday Bible Study ([Click Here](#))**

Meeting ID: 899 2251 1230

Password: 409807

One tap mobile

+13126266799

Meeting ID: 899 2251 1230

Password: 409807

Make sure you view the updated prayer list. There are so many needs. And don’t forget the 30-day prayer challenge as we bring Pastor

Myers and his family before God’s throne.

Pastor Myers posed a question as he began his series from the book of Galatians that was meant to challenge our basic understanding of what the "Gospel" is. Where are we getting our basic understanding of the Gospel? Are we carefully listening and researching what we hear preached or are we taking the easy route and basing our understanding because of one's notoriety?

**"Apart from God's word, we will judge the right to be wrong and evil people as good." Donovan Riley**

*"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the suffering and afflicted. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted, to announce liberty to captives, and to open the eyes of the blind. He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of God's favor to them has come, and the day of his wrath to their enemies. To all who mourn in Israel, he will give beauty for ashes; joy instead of mourning; praise instead of heaviness" (Isaiah 61:1-3).*

What we learned during this election cycle is that we have been bombarded by both print and electronic media regarding the candidates running for government positions. And we can't escape it even if we never open our computers or turn on our radios, tv's or our mobile devices. If that is not enough, our mailboxes and door knobs become the latest transmission vehicle for misinformation. This is not a political treatise or one on extolling the power of the press. This is a Christian call to action.

Quoting the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network which is the world's largest online community and repository of electoral

knowledge. Whose foremost aim is to foster the integrity of elections and to promote credible, sustainable, professional and inclusive electoral processes throughout the globe., "The media are not the sole source of information for voters, but in a world dominated by mass communications, it is increasingly the media that determine the political agenda, even in less technologically developed countries." A report by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies wrote in Media and Parliamentary Elections in Egypt: Evaluation of Media Performance in the Parliamentary Elections" Human Rights Movement Issues 26, (Cairo, Egypt: Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, 2011): 27.

The media plays a major role in keeping the citizenry abreast of current events and raising awareness of various issues in any society. It also has an extremely significant impact on the public's views and way of thinking. The media is the primary means through which public opinion is shaped and at times manipulated. If this is the media's role then in normal course of events, it becomes even more vital in exceptional periods, one of which is electoral junctures, when the media becomes a primary player. Elections constitute a basic challenge to the media, putting its impartiality and objectivity to the test. The task of the media, especially national media outlets, is not and should not be to function as a mouthpiece for any government body or particular candidate. Its basic role is to enlighten and educate the public and act as a neutral, objective platform for the free debate of all points of view.

We are now at a crucial time when we have an opportunity to change the course of history. What do we want our Christian impact on society to be in the future? We need to be looking beyond today and begin influencing society for the future.

**"The gospel is the lifeblood of Christianity, and it provides the foundation for countering culture. For when we truly believe the gospel, we begin to realize that the gospel not only compels Christians to confront social issues in the culture around us. The gospel actually creates confrontation with the culture around-and within-us." David Platt, "A Compassionate Call To Counter Culture" p.1**

The Country Support Unit Network of the World Health Organization published in their Cairo Report about the impact that the media has in in making an extremely significant impact on the public's views and way of thinking and how public opinion is shaped and at times manipulated. Media bias may be in the eye of the beholder, but the ability of journalists to slant the news can be demonstrated in ways that are both obvious and subtle. Case in point, the Associated Press has published talking points for their reporting staff and advised journalists to stop calling them "riots" and to use the more neutral "protests" instead — even if they were violent. When writing about people burning neighborhoods, looting stores and attacking police, they should not talk about what they were actually doing. Instead press outlets should focus their coverage on the "underlying grievance" of those engaging in "rioting and property destruction."

What we have, according to Lumen Learning, an organization that works with over 350 colleges and universities across the U.S. to provide sustainable, effective course materials that improve learning are, “Two basic assumptions that underlie most research on agenda-setting: One, that the press and the media do not reflect reality, they filter and shape it; and two, that media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues.” Mass media coverage in general and agenda-setting in particular have a powerful impact on what individuals think other people are thinking as well.

According to “New Media and the Reshaping of Religious Practice,” “New media tools support networked forms of community, encourage experimentation with religious identity construction and self-presentation and promote drawing from multiple and divergent religious sources and encounters simultaneously.” This encourages an open, fluid and individualized form of religious engagement because the media is being used to redefine religious practice in contemporary life.

The futurist and author Adam Toffler has argued that the pace of change was racing faster than our psyches were able to digest, and he predicted that we would all burn out if the world did not find a way to alter its course. “Unless man quickly learns to control the rate of change in his personal affairs as well as society at large, we are doomed to massive adaptational breakdown.” Adam Toffler, “Future Shock”

In general, media is basically 50/50 in helping or hurting the public. Since everything is online now, it is very hard to hide information because people can just look up anything. Media has a huge impact on how people view things, especially religion and education. Religion and education will always be controversial in public opinion, especially because they have been since the creation of both.

This is the Christians clarion call to proclaim the Gospel not to sit back and watch the spiritual landscape around us change. We have a Gospel that never changes and never gives a *sentimental treatment that sugarc oats the harsh reality of sin*. Christ, as our protector and sovereign judge, does not mince the message of wrath with phrases like ‘love the sinner’. Too much is at stake. God doesn’t need our approval, and he doesn’t suffer non-believers.

“If a commission by an earthly king is considered an honor, how can a commission by a Heavenly King be considered a sacrifice?”  
— David Livingstone

For Paul says, “*In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you.*” *Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.* 2 Corinthians 6:2

“*Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.*” Romans 13:11

“Evil for evil” means exactly what it says it means. Don’t sin in order to repay wickedness done against you. It doesn’t mean don’t seek lawful justice against someone who has broken the law. Pray for those who sin against you, but don’t let them get away with murder.

M. Rex Miller describes these seemingly small changes like a leak in society’s dike and if we don’t attempt to hold back the waters what will the floodwaters of change wash away? Quoting him, “Declining morality is not the cause of a war of worldviews but evidence of it. During times of titanic cultural upheaval, central moral battles rise to the surface. As the old order passes and a new order rises up, the old moral restraints begin to fall away before the new boundaries have stabilized. Paul dealt with this issue in the Corinthian church. As the restraints of the old Jewish law collapsed under the new freedom in Christ, many took license and were rebuked or excommunicated.”

“Society (and the church), therefore, is out of control because we are systematically destroying all of the authority and all control that our institutions once had.” Peter Senge, Rethinking the Future.

Our culture could be compared to a large truck going downhill without brakes. Every mile doubles the rate of speed. How we approach Christian ministry amid such rapid change is the compelling issue. Some prefer to ignore change, hoping it will just go away. Others hope tomorrow will turn out to be yesterday and tragically continue to minister as if nothing else is changing. Obviously pretending no changes exist will not stop change. We all need to “understand the times, know what to do and most importantly depend on discernment from the Holy Spirit. Our culture is not the problem, but how we handle it is. As the currents of society are becoming more powerful and the waves of change are crashing closer. As our political

divisions grow, and social and racial issues are fueled by the media at the same time we are also witnessing an increase in biblical illiteracy. We also face for the first time the challenge of ministering to six or seven different generations sitting in our pews, with some more likely to think deductively and systematically and having a delayed gratification ethic, and others more typically thinking inductively and eclectically with an instant gratification ethic. However, there is perhaps no greater challenge and opportunity facing the church than the shift we are seeing in worldviews fostered by the media. What is meant by worldview?

James Sire defines a worldview as “a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic make up of our world.” In other words a worldview is a system of belief held by each person that enables her/him to live in this world and by which she/he attempts to make sense of the universe at a very personal level. It is what shapes a person’s values by informing her/him about what is important in life. A worldview must of necessity include one’s beliefs about the world, God, humanity, life and death. “It is what enables one to understand the relatedness within the diversity of creation and therefore make sense of and assign meaning to individual events and/or intelligible data.”

Michael Palmer, in his book “Elements of a Christian Worldview”, states “...worldview refers to a set of beliefs and practices that shape a person’s approach to the most important issues in life. One of the most

common features of the term’s use is that of a view, outlook or perspective in life and the world that characterizes a people or a culture. All of this tells us a worldview relates to our way-of-being-in-the-world, our foundation for socio-cultural action. It is always a vision for the world. It tells us both what is the case (vision of the world) and what ought to be the case (vision for the world).” Therefore, worldviews are both descriptive and normative. A vision of life is always a vision for life. Finally, worldviews are religious in character and rooted in beliefs that are answers to what could be termed questions that are simply constitutive to human life.

- 1) Where am I, or what is the nature of the reality in which I find myself?
- 2) Who am I, or what is the nature of being human?
- 3) How do we relate to each other and what is our relation to God?
- 4) What is wrong?

Since we all recognize that something is out of balance, disordered and broken in life, that there is evil, we are all forced to find some way to account for and understand this brokenness. We live in a time period where we are seeing major transitions occurring in the way we view life and religion and, more importantly, how we think (our epistemology).

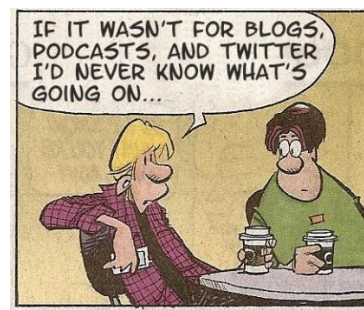
What then are we to do? Because we have been saved by God’s grace we now have a duty to proclaim the Gospel to others. We need to act with compassion and conviction and stand in loving confrontation to engage our culture. We need to spread the truth of the Gospel while selfishly exhibiting the love of God.

**“The gospel is only good news if it gets there in time.”**

— Carl F.H. Henry

In an article, “The Gospel of Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:1-19), D.A. Carson observes the ethical directives of 1 Corinthians, “This book... repeatedly shows how the Gospel rightly works out in the massive transformation of attitudes, morals, relationships, and cultural interactions... Just as Paul found it necessary to hammer away at the outworking of the Gospel in every domain of the lives of the Corinthians, so we must do the same today...”

This generation is no different from the churches Paul addressed in his New Testament letters. We all need to learn how to work out the Gospel for everyday life and service in the Kingdom of God.



**“The gospel is only good news if it gets there in time.”**  
— Carl F.H. Henry



## PRAYER LIST

- ✓ Continuing Prayers for loss: All the families that have lost loved ones this past year. Remember those who continue to lose loved ones due to COVID 19.
- ✓ Continuing Prayers for physical needs: Rita McManus, Maria Hatfield, Gloria-Lynn Fernandez, Betty Matson, Ronaldo Claveria, Alex Figueroa, Kurt Pazdra II, Pastoral Intern at The Orchard.
- ✓ Continuing Prayers for our Ministry Needs: Pastor Brandon Myers, Our Deacons, Financial support.
- ✓ Continuing Prayers for our Sister Ministries: BIEM Ministries, Orchard Church, Pastors Davis, Billow, Eddy, Vitel, Ebi and Esther Perinbaraj, Gaetano and Krista Paolino
- ✓ Continuing Prayers for Spiritual Needs: Leonard Hatfield, Carol Pelfrey's family, Daniel Ruehlman, George Bizadellis
- ✓ Continuing Prayers for: The spread of the Gospel, Our Government, Our Nation, Our Community, Our Neighbors, Our Families, Pray for our members that have lost employment and for those who still have jobs and need to interact with others on a daily basis. Pray for those still working that God will protect. Lift up all our health professionals and their families who are on the front line of this pandemic especially Mylin and Errol Lardizabal and Liza Mitchell. Erwin Lickmann pray for wisdom regarding future living arrangements for Elizabeth and himself. Mikaelle (Mikey) at Olivet Nazarene College. George Sargis

**Remember our 30 days of Prayer for Pastor Myers his wife Kaiti their daughters Eva and Audrey and son Patrick.**

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