

## **DOES GOD HAVE A PLAN FOR EVERYTHING?**

People of faith frequently say they want to make their decisions, especially important ones, according to God's will and plan. They believe that for the big things, and maybe everything, God has a best choice. Where does God want them to live? What does God want them to do for a profession? Who does God want them to marry? But immediately two things become apparent: #1: While we have faith that God is working His purposes out, we can't see what He is doing. And #2: We continue to believe that God does have a plan for everything because we really need to believe that.

Really, when we think about it, God is the one who, more often, disrupts our plan, or works within our plan, rather than the one who gives us a plan. That always brings to mind the John Lennon quote, "Life happens while we're making other plans."

Now, on the one hand, I do believe the Bible tells us that God has purposes which are being worked out among us. Many stories describe how the unseen hand of God moved to create circum-

stances, or to block them, or to enhance them. In Genesis, Joseph reassured his brothers that he didn't want revenge against them. He told them that what they had intended for harm, God meant for good. In fact, numerous stories indicate that human sins and misdeeds are not the end of the story at all, but that ultimately God works good through them. The greatest of all of them is the story of the crucifixion and the resurrection.

And sometimes God seemingly even disrupts God's own plans. In the story of the prophet Jonah, God sends Jonah to preach God's judgment against the evil Ninevites - and that is a calling Jonah can sink his teeth into because he hates them. But then he realizes that if they repent, God will forgive them. . .and he wants no part of that, so he runs away. Ultimately, they do repent, God does forgive them, and Jonah pouts.

**So, in the words of Will Willimon, "This sort of thing suggests to me that if we're going to use the word *plan* applied to God, we must somehow leave some room for God to be God. In stating that God has a plan for our lives or anything else, we have got to allow for God's freedom and sovereignty."**

Still, to say that God has a plan for our lives does express two important truths: ***Our lives are not our own - we belong to God. . .and therefore, our lives are not simply or only a quest for personal satisfaction or fulfillment.***

So where do we go from here? I think we let go of our desire to know "the plan" and strive to be faithful to the Lord day by day. We abide in Him. We keep our eyes and ears open. We look at the big picture, asking to see as the Lord sees. We also see what the Lord does in our personal lives as part of that.

And we remember that the Bible shows us God's plan is flexible and adaptable. God doesn't just come up with a plan and then tell people to do it. No, God is like a potter at the wheel, forming us and reforming us according to His great purposes. . .and the most important thing is not adherence to a plan, but that we remain in the Potter's hands. *It's the relationship.*

One time a man in his 60s told his pastor that while he had been an accountant his whole life, he believed that God's plan for him was really to be a pastor. "Still," he said, "I am amazed at how God has used what I have been. If I'd gone to seminary, I would never have become a lay leader and contributed in that way." So I ask, did he really miss his calling?

I share these thoughts with you as we will soon gather for one or two Dream Again sessions. We will pray and invite the Spirit to lead us. We'll listen for the Lord in each other. And I trust we'll form some plans. However, I imagine those plans will not ultimately materialize into the ones with which we began. I remember how, a few years ago, we discussed the community's need for a daycare and at the same time, our inability to staff one. This led us to think that a daycare ministry wasn't God's plan for us. But a couple years later, we saw that God did want us to join Him in providing that ministry – just not in the way we had thought. So let's remember that and give God room, and ourselves as well. Let's also remember that apparent "mistakes" and "detours" may actually be necessary steps and/or learning experiences for us.

***"Like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel."* Jeremiah 18: 6**

Keep praying! I love you! Susan

## WEEKLY CHURCH EVENTS

### AA MEETINGS

Mondays, July 7, 14, 21 and 28 at 7 p.m. in the fellowship hall.

### WEEKLY COMMUNITY BIBLE STUDY

Wednesdays, July 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30 from 11:00 a.m. to noon in our PBBC fellowship hall.

Come join us! We are studying the gospel of Luke. Invite your friends! There's always room for more!

### WEEKLY CHOIR REHEARSAL

Wednesdays, July 2, 9, 16, and 23 at 5:30 p.m. in the choir room.

Mary Helen and our choir have room for you! Show up this Wednesday and check it out! (There will not be a choir rehearsal on the 30<sup>th</sup> because Mary Helen will be a leader at the Music & Arts Camp at Eagle Eyrie that week.)

## REGULAR MONTHLY EVENTS

### PICKER'S & FIDDLER'S MUSIC FEST

Saturday, July 12 from 10:00 to noon in the fellowship hall (and every 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month). Every second Saturday of the month you can come experience the Grand Ole' Opry right here in Bassett! You'll enjoy the musical talents of true professionals as they share the best in gospel and bluegrass music - free of charge! Invite your friends and neighbors, and feel free to bring your instrument and play/sing too! We'll have some donuts or muffins and coffee for you – also free of charge. It's a great time!

### DEACONS' MEETING

Tuesday, July 15 at 7 p.m. in the conference room

### COMMUNITY MEAL

Thursday, July 17 at 5:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall (and every 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month). All are welcome to come and help serve, eat, and get to know our neighbors of Henry County and Bassett. Workers should arrive at 5:15. If you would like to contribute a dessert, contact Lindy Koger at 276-734-2096.

### STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, July 21 at 5:30 p.m. in the conference room

### FEED AMERICA FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Tuesday, July 29 at the Light Electric Building, 24A Governor Stanley Hwy, 12:30 – 1:30.

There is also a worship service beforehand, at 9:00 a.m. and a lunch, free of charge, is offered at 11:30 a.m. at the same place. All are welcome!

## SPECIAL EVENTS THIS MONTH

### INDEPENDENCE DAY: HAPPY BIRTHDAY USA!

Friday, July 4

Enjoy celebrating our nation's 249<sup>th</sup> birthday! Have some watermelon, see some fireworks, and thank God for a country in which we are still free to choose those who will govern us and to pursue our goals and dreams. Pray for all of our governmental leaders. Most of all, thank God for the freedom we know in Christ, which can never be taken away from us. **Don't forget that our church office will be closed for the holiday.**

### DREAM AGAIN!

Sunday, July 6 after the worship service in the fellowship hall. Please make your attendance at this meeting, *and possibly a follow-up one on July 13*, your priority. We will be praying and listening to the Lord as we look at our ministries, programs, outreach efforts and worship services, and consider where the Lord may be leading us from here. Lunch and childcare will be provided.

### QUARTERLY PBBC BUSINESS MEETING on July 27, after the worship service, in the fellowship hall.

All are welcome and encouraged to come hear the latest reports from our committees on what God has been doing in our church's many areas of ministry. There may also be some matters for vote, and as always, we will share a wonderful meal together.

### MEMORIAL SERVICE: KEN RICHARDSON on Saturday, August 2, at 11:00 a.m. at Thrasher Memorial United Methodist Church in Vinton, VA

Ken Richardson was the Minister of Music here at PBBC for many years. He was also the band director at Bassett High School for several years. Ken's wife Deborah has said how glad she will be to see any of their PBBC family at the service.

### STAFF ABSENCES: PLEASE NOTE

Freda - vacation: July 14 - 19

Mary Helen - Music & Arts Camp in Lynchburg, VA: July 28 – Aug 1

Pastor Susan - vacation: July 28 – Aug 4

### NEW PBBC WEBSITE!

Check it out at [www.pocahontasbaptist.com](http://www.pocahontasbaptist.com).

## What Kind of Baptists are We?

*In June, the General Assembly of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship had their annual meeting. Our church has had a long-time affiliation with the CBF, so in light of that, I provided a brief review of its history and core beliefs in our June Messenger. I am again including a brief version in this Messenger, as the differences between the CBF and the SBC are seeming to become even more important.*

*Pocahontas Bassett BC left the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in the 1990s to become affiliated with the CBF. We are one of 4 CBF churches in our Henry County Baptist Association of Churches. The other CBF churches are: Chatham Heights BC, FBC Martinsville, and Starling Ave. BC. (Oak Level BC may also be jointly aligned with the CBF and the SBC.)*

### The Core Beliefs of the CBF are:

#### “THE FOUR FRAGILE FREEDOMS”

**Bible Freedom** is the historic Baptist affirmation that **the Bible, under the Lordship of Christ, must be central** in the life of the church and individual, and that Christians, with the best and most scholarly tools of inquiry, are both free and obligated to study and obey the Scriptures.

**Soul Freedom** is the historic affirmation of the inalienable **right and responsibility of every person to deal with God without the imposition of creed, the interference of clergy, or the intervention of civil government.**

**Church Freedom** is the historic Baptist affirmation that **local churches are free, under the Lordship of Christ, to determine their membership and leadership**, to order their worship and work, **to ordain whom they perceive as gifted for ministry, male or female**, and to participate in the larger Body of Christ, of

whose unity and mission Baptists are proudly a part.

**Religious Freedom** is the historic Baptist affirmation of **freedom OF religion, freedom FOR religion, and freedom FROM religion**, insisting that Caesar is not Christ and Christ is not Caesar.” (also known as “The Separation of Church and State.”) (Walter Shurden, The Baptist Identity: Four Fragile Freedoms, 1993)

### CBF POSITIONS VS. SBC

1. **Who May Lead:** The SBC statement (Baptist Faith and Message 2000) states that only men are called to the offices of pastor, elder, overseer, or deacon. CBF supports the full participation of women in all aspects of church leadership and Christian ministry.

2. **The Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper:** The SBC only recognizes and performs baptism **by immersion** unless medically prohibitive. Regarding the Lord's Supper, the SBC's position is that **only those who have been baptized by immersion** may become church members and receive the Lord's Supper. CBF churches vary on the kinds of baptisms they recognize, their requirements for church membership, and who may receive the Lord's Supper. ***PBBC's positions are that we accept baptisms in whatever manner they have been performed (sprinkling or immersion) by any Christian denomination, and we receive folks into our church on the basis of their statement of faith. They need not be re-baptized or have a church letter of membership from another Baptist church.***

3. **Doctrinal Position Statements:** The CBF doesn't issue position statements to which their churches must adhere, so CBF churches cannot be excluded from the CBF due to differences. On the other hand, SBC churches must adhere to SBC doctrinal positions, as stated in the most recent Baptist Faith and Message, or be disfellowshipped.

## FROM THE DIRECTOR OF LITTLE ANGELS EARLY LEARNING CENTER

## A NOTE FROM THE MUSIC MINISTRY