

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

Week of January 10, 2021

Sunday Morning Service -----	25
Sunday Evening Service -----	20
Wed. Evening Service, 01/13/21 -----	5

AND THE PEOPLE "TUNED IN"...

Week of January 2, 2021

- Number of people who connected with our services on Facebook -

Sunday Morning Service:		
68 Views	140 Engagements	86 People Reached
Sunday Evening Service:		
55 Views	49 Engagements	49 People Reached
Wednesday Evening Service:		
66 Views	59 Engagements	114 People Reached

AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

- Week of January 10, 2021 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 879.02
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 01/10/21:	\$ 879.02

- Week of January 3, 2021 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 1,455.12
Church Insurance Fund -----	\$ 10.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 01/03/21:	\$ 1,465.12

- Week of December 27, 2020 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 2,038.10
Church Insurance Fund -----	\$ 20.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 12/27/20:	\$ 2,058.10

- Week of December 20, 2020 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 811.50
Church Insurance Fund -----	\$ 20.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 12/20/20:	\$ 831.50

- Week of December 13, 2020 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 20.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 12/13/20:	\$ 20.00

- Week of December 6, 2020 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 868.52
Church Insurance Fund -----	\$ 506.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 12/06/20:	\$ 1,374.52

Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed to operate the church EACH WEEK, as a minimum = \$ 1,400.00

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED

1. Admit that you are a sinner.
2. Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.
3. Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.
4. You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).
5. By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.



THANK YOU For Your Continued Faithfulness In Giving!

During the early part this pandemic, we were unable to meet in the church-house. But - that did not mean that the expenses of having a church-house were suspended. We still had bills to pay - electricity, gas, water, trash pickup, phone, internet, facility insurance, copier lease, office supplies, etc., and, praise the Lord, His people kept praying, watching online, & supporting their church with their giving.

Some people only give when they are in attendance at church - sort of like paying for "services rendered" - but the truth is that they are robbing THEMSELVES of God's blessings when they withhold their tithes and offerings and only give when they are here (see Malachi 3:10). Thankfully, our people have remained faithful, in so many ways, during this crisis, including financially.

WE HAVE 3 WAYS YOU CAN GIVE DURING THIS CRISIS:

1. **By mail** - 23 East Wells Blvd., Sapulpa, OK 74066
2. **Drop it off** - call the Church Office to arrange it. 224-1924
3. **Online** - Go to the link below and give electronically:

<https://tithe.ly/give?c=433047>

WE ARE GLAD WE CAN NOW GATHER TOGETHER TO PRAISE GOD & STUDY HIS WORD TOGETHER IN THE CHURCH-HOUSE! YOUR GENEROUS GIFTS WILL HELP US KEEP UP WITH THE BILLS AND CONTINUE OUR OUTREACH EFFORTS!

Church Directory

Todd W. White -----	Pastor
Lois Mae Floyd -----	Pianist/ Organist
Mickie Shatwell -----	Evening Pianist
VOLUNTEER NEEDED! -----	
Larry Byars -----	S.S. Teacher
Larry & Mary Byars, Susan Strain -----	Outreach
Bertha Segebarr -----	Custodian
Flowers -----	Shirley & Brenda White
Sound/Video -----	Seth White



CHURCH INSURANCE FUND

Monthly Premium, Due 02/05/21 -----	\$ 506.00
Amount Received To Date -----	\$ 0.00

TOTAL STILL NEEDED BY 02/05/21 ----- \$ 506.00

Thank You For Your Faithful Help With This Need!

SOUTH HEIGHTS BAPTIST'S WEEKLY REMINDER

Volume XXVII

January 17, 2021

Number 3



AMERICA: A LOT OF CHANGE AND NO CHANGE

by Evangelist David Cloud

NOTE: The following was published four years ago, in Friday News, Feb. 3, 2017, not long after President Trump's inauguration:

Donald Trump's actions in his first days as U.S. President are breathtaking. He has filled his cabinet with capable and largely conservative people. He is blessing Jacob's seed. He has signed multiple orders to strengthen border security and immigration, including denying federal money to sanctuary cities, hiring 5,000 more Border Patrol agents, ending "catch-and-release" policies for illegal immigrants, and building a wall on America's southern border to protect the nation from scofflaws. He has issued an order to rebuild the U.S. military, which has been devastated by eight years of the Obama administration. He has issued an order to deny federal funds to international organizations that perform or even lobby for the legalization of abortion. He has halted the nation's refugee program for 120 days so that it can be re-evaluated and potentially dangerous refugees can be properly vetted. His short list of nominees to the vacant U.S. Supreme Court seat are constitutionalists. He has issued an order to defeat ISIS. There is much to applaud.

Of course, the courts and opposition politics have only begun to fight the Trump agenda, and the fight will be exceedingly fierce. *All of this aside, our biblical worldview does not allow us to see things as secular or even religious conservatives do. We can't join Judge Jeanine or Hannity or Rush, et al, in proclaiming this a new day for America. It's not a new day or a good day, and a Trump presidency is probably not going to turn out well (remember - this was written in 2017).*

Spiritually and morally, which are the most important principles by far, absolutely nothing changed with the November election. Nothing has changed in the public schools and the universities, which continue to indoctrinate the minds and hearts of American citizens with godless humanism, moral relativism, socialism, and globalism. Nothing has changed with the Muslim agenda to establish sharia law, and it doesn't appear that Trump even understands the plan. Nothing has changed with the LGBT agenda which is already firmly embedded throughout society, industry, and government. In fact, Trump refuses to overturn Obama's 2014 executive order protecting federal workers from "anti-LGBTQ discrimination," saying that he "is determined to protect the rights of all Americans, including the LGBTQ community" and "continues to be respectful and supportive of LGBTQ rights" ("Trump leaves intact," Fox News, Jan. 31, 2017).

Nothing has changed in the pop culture, which continues to morally pollute the nation's very heart and soul. It is pop culture moral relativism that has given us a Donald Trump, with his adulteries, narcissism, boastings, pomposity, lyings, and petty vindictiveness. The fearful destruction of the black family, for example, is not only the result of the welfare state; it is the product of a vile pop culture. Nothing has changed with the global culture, as indicated by the incredible outrage expressed by world leaders and the world media at the Trump presidency. The nonsensical outrage at such perfectly reasonable acts as trying to keep scofflaws and terrorists out of America is clear evidence of demonic blindness.

And above all, nothing has changed in the churches. America was only great when it was good (and it was never truly good, nor truly great by God's standards), and it can never be great again unless it is good by biblical standards which can issue only from God-fearing churches. *What we have said all along is that Bible-believing churches need to focus like a laser on "first love for Christ" revival, serious education in God's Word, serious obedience to God's Word, serious prayer, serious building of godly homes, serious discipleship, serious separation from the world, and serious zeal in fulfilling Christ's Great Commission. This will do more to help America than flag-waving conservative political zeal. Most of the best churches are shockingly weak, shallow, biblically ignorant, worldly, and unfruitful. ■*



Qanon: the Alternative Religion That's Coming to Your Church

Teaching susceptible Christians media literacy won't counteract their sudden, widespread adherence to conspiracy theories because these Christians thrive on a narrative of media cover-up.

(RNS) — It's a rough time to be a pastor. An election year, national racial unrest and a global pandemic each challenged the usual methods of ministry. Taken together, many church leaders are facing the traditional post-vacation ingathering season with a serious case of burnout.

But there's another challenge that pastors I spoke with say is on the rise in their flocks. It is taking on the power of a new religion that's dividing churches and hurting Christian witness.

Mark Fugitt, senior pastor of Round Grove Baptist Church in Miller, Missouri, recently sat down to count the conspiracy theories that people in his church are sharing on Facebook. The list was long. It included claims that 5G radio waves are used for mind control; that George Floyd's murder is a hoax; that Bill Gates is related to the devil; that masks can kill you; that the germ theory isn't real; and that there might be something to Pizzagate after all.

"You don't just see it once," said Fugitt. "If there's ever anything posted, you'll see it five to 10 times. It's escalating for sure."

Conspiracy theories — grand narratives that seek to prove that powerful actors are secretly controlling events and institutions for evil purposes — are nothing new in the U.S. But since 2017, a sort of ur-conspiracy theory, *QAnon*, has coalesced in online forums and created millions of believers. "To look at QAnon is to see not just a conspiracy theory but the birth of a new religion," wrote Adrienne LaFrance in *The Atlantic* in June.

Named after "Q," who posts anonymously on the online bulletin board 4chan, QAnon alleges that President Donald Trump and military officials are working to expose a "deep state" pedophile ring with links to Hollywood, the media and the Democratic Party. Since its first mention some three years ago, the theory has drawn adherents looking for a clear way to explain recent disorienting global events.

Once the fascination of far-right commentators and their followers, QAnon is no longer fringe. With support from Trump and other elected officials, it has gained credibility both on the web and in the offline world: In Georgia, a candidate for Congress has praised Q as "a mythical hero," and at least five other congressional hopefuls from Illinois to Oregon have voiced support.

One scholar found a 71% increase in QAnon content on Twitter and a 651% increase on Facebook since March.

Jon Thorngate is the pastor at LifeBridge, a nondenominational church of about 300 in a Milwaukee suburb. In recent months, he said, his members have shared "Plandemic," a half-hour film that presents COVID-19 as a moneymaking scheme by government officials and others, on Facebook. Members have also passed around a now-banned Breitbart video that promotes hydroxychloroquine as a cure for the virus.

Thorngate, one of the few pastors who would go on the record among those who called QAnon a real problem in their churches, said that only five to 10 members are actually posting the videos online. But in conversations with other members, he's realized many more are open to conspiracy theories than those who post.

Thorngate attributes the phenomenon in part to the "death of expertise" — a distrust of authority figures that leads some Americans to undervalue long-established measures of competency and wisdom. Among some church members, he said, the attitude is, "I'm going to use church for the things I like, ignore it for the things I don't and find my own truth."

"That part for us is concerning, that nothing feels authoritative right now."

For years in the 1980s and '90s, U.S. evangelicals, above nearly any other group, warned what will happen when people abandon absolute truth (which they located in the Bible), saying the idea of *relative truth* would lead to people believing whatever confirms their own inward hunches. But suspicion of big government, questioning of scientific consensus (on evolution, for example) and a rejection of the morals of Hollywood and liberal elites took hold among millennial Christians, many of whom feel politically alienated and beat up by mainstream media. ***They are natural targets for QAnon.***

There's no hard data on how many Christians espouse QAnon. But Ed Stetzer, executive director of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, noted that distrust of mainstream news sources "can feed a penchant for conspiracy theories."

A 2018 poll from BGC found that 46% of self-identified evangelicals and 52% of those whose beliefs tagged them as evangelical "strongly agreed that the mainstream media produced fake news." It also found that regular church attendance (at least once a month) correlated to believing that mainstream media promulgates fake news (77% compared with 68% of those who attend less regularly).

Jared Stacy said the spread of conspiracy theories in his church is particularly affecting young members. The college and young adult pastor of Spotswood Baptist Church in Fredericksburg, Virginia, Stacy said some older members are sharing Facebook content that links the coronavirus to Jeffrey Epstein and secret pedophile rings. He says his and other pastors' job is to teach that conspiracy theories are not where Christians should find a basis for reality.

"My fear ... is that Jesus would not be co-opted by conspiracy theories in a way that leads the next generation to throw Jesus out with the bathwater," Stacy said, "that we're not able to separate

the narrative of taking back our country from Jesus' kingdom narrative."

Others are concerned the theories will become grounds for more mistrust. "Young people are exiting the church because they see their parents and mentors and pastors and Sunday school teachers spreading things that even at a young age they can see through," said Jeb Barr, the senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Elm Mott outside Waco, Texas. He said conspiracy theories are "extremely widespread and getting worse" among his online church networks.

"Why would we listen to my friend Joe ... who's telling me about Jesus who also thinks that Communists are taking over America and operating a pedophile ring out of a pizza restaurant? ... Why would we be believed?"

But Barr and other pastors I spoke with are reticent to police church members' social media conduct. Instead, they try to teach broader principles. "Christians are meant to be agents of hope, to be peacemakers; the Bible says we're not to be quarrelsome," said Barr. "We're not to be the ones spreading fear and division and anger."

Barr also teaches critical thinking skills and encourages his members to read "boring news." He will recommend news sources that are credible.

But teaching media literacy isn't enough, precisely because QAnon thrives on a narrative of media cover-up.

Fugitt said it's not effective to tell conspiracy spreaders that what they are sharing online is false. "Nobody joins a cult. I don't think anybody shares a conspiracy theory either because they believe it's truth." Rather, he tries to address the dehumanizing language of QAnon theories that equate certain people with evil. History is replete with examples of where such language can lead.

"I can't hate another person, but boy if I can make them less than human, that's the Crusades, that's Jewish persecution throughout history, that's racial issues hand over fist there."

In a fraught political moment, the pastors I spoke with worried that taking on QAnon, by addressing politics directly, would divide the church.

But QAnon is more than a political ideology. It's a spiritual worldview that co-opts many Christian-sounding ideas to promote verifiably false claims about actual human beings.

QAnon has features akin to *syncretism* — the practice of blending traditional Christian beliefs with other spiritual systems, such as Santeria. Q explicitly uses Bible verses to urge adherents to stand firm against evil elites. One charismatic church based in Indiana hosts two-hour Sunday services showing how Bible prophecies confirm Q's messages. Its leaders tell the congregation to stop watching mainstream media (even conservative media) in



favor of QAnon YouTube channels and the Qmap website.

And it's having life-and-death effects: It's hampering the work of anti-sex trafficking organizations. The FBI has linked it to violence and threats of violence. And its adherents are downplaying the threat of COVID and thus putting others' lives at risk.

The earliest Christians contended with syncretism in the form of *Gnosticism*, which blended elements of Greek philosophy and Zoroastrianism with Christianity, emphasizing the good-evil spirit-flesh divide as well as secret divine knowledge (Greek: gnosis is "knowledge"). Early church fathers such as Irenaeus and Tertullian battled Gnostic ideas, rejecting them as heresy.

At a time when church leaders are having to host digital church and try to meet members' needs virtually, the idea of adding "fight heresy" to their to-do list might sound exhausting. But a core calling of church leaders is to speak the truth in love. It's not loving to allow impressionable people to be taken in by falsehood. Nor is it loving to allow them to spread falsehood and slander to others.

"Conspiracy theories thrive on a sort of cynicism that says, 'We see a different reality that no one else sees,'" said Stacy. "Paul says to take every thought captive — addressing conspiracy theories is part of that work."

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From Our Friend Dr. Phil Stringer -

There is a religious cult known as Q'Anon that is flourishing over the internet right now. Their draw is that they pretend to have lots of top secret information about the struggle of good versus evil. They constantly predict that top secret plans are in place to overturn evil. They tell people what they want to hear. People long for a moment when evil is defeated and righteousness prevails. ***However, they make everything up and none (I mean none) of their predictions come true.*** They make fools out of the people who trust them. Through the magic of the internet their reports are picked up far and wide past their own circles. They are often spread by Baptist preachers.

There are also many posts and messages from people who still believe that there will be a military coup before Wednesday that will keep President Trump in office. It is a meaningless pipe dream. No such thing is happening!

There are a number of people who believe that a civil war will keep President Trump in office. They seem to believe that a civil war would be between the vast majority of conservatives and the socialist progressives. Conservatives would win that war easily. However, that is not what a civil war in 2021 would look like. It would be a small number of conservatives against the US military, the 50 state police forces and local police. It would be the most one sided massacre in human history. It would not keep President Trump in office one extra hour. It would not win one more moment of freedom for anyone. It would make it ridiculously easy for the leftists to carry out the rest of their agenda. May God help cooler heads to prevail. ■