

New prayer room dedicated at the Baptist Building in Jackson

*By Tony Martin
Associate Editor*

A special room exclusively set aside for prayer was dedicated August 23 at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) in downtown Jackson.

“The room serves as an encouragement to those at the Baptist Building to seek the Lord, whatever they may be facing in their personal or professional life,” said Rick Blythe, director of the MBCB Stewardship/Prayer Ministries Department.

“The wonderful people at the Baptist Building are just like those in our churches; they have hurts, needs, and burdens they carry on their heart. Now, there is a dedicated place they can go and in private seek the Lord for help.

“The Baptist Building is a resource center for the churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention,” he added. “Those who visit the Baptist Building are also welcome to take advantage of the prayer room if they would like. A visit to the prayer room might serve as the motivation for them to return to their church and become an advocate for a prayer room in their church.”

During the dedication, Blythe offered thanks for those responsible for the creation of the room.

MBCB Executive Director/Treasurer Shawn Parker said at the standing room only ceremony, “Rick has recognized several people, and he’s helped us focus on prayer. Use this room. It does us no good to have a prayer room if people aren’t

utilizing it.

“That goes for everyone in this building, but it also goes for every Mississippi Baptist. Let others know this is here, and encourage them that if they’re in Jackson and want to lift some general prayers, to come by here and take advantage of that opportunity,” he said.

The Baptist Building had always had a room set aside for prayer on the ground level of the four-story building since it was originally occupied in 1968, but that room was repurposed and another space was needed. MBCB employees donated the funds to furnish the new prayer room.

“When the idea for a new prayer room came up, one of the first concerns was its location,” Blythe said. “Originally, we thought a location on the fourth floor would be best but that presented some obstacles. The prayer room is now located on the second floor in what once was the office for the executive director-treasurer emeritus, Jim Futral.



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FUTRAL PRAYER ROOM – Present at the August 23 dedication of the new Futral Prayer Room at the Mississippi Baptist of Convention Board (MBCB) in downtown Jackson were (from left) Rick Blythe, MBCB stewardship/prayer ministry director, Jim Futral, MBCB executive director-treasurer emeritus, and Shawn Parker, MBCB executive director-treasurer. (Photo credit: Bart Lambright)

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"Because of the magnanimous gesture on Dr. Futral's part in giving up his office space, and because he led Mississippi Baptists with stellar integrity for 22 years, and because the Futral family has so faithfully served our Lord and His kingdom for many years going back to Dr. Futral's father who also pastored for many years in Mississippi, Dr. Parker and Mr. Shirley agreed it would be very apropos to dedicate the prayer room as 'The Futral Prayer Room,'" Blythe said.

"We were all hesitant because we recognized this room as an honorary spot," Parker said, "but we approached him and asked him if we could make this a prayer room, and he very graciously obliged us in that."

Directly addressing Futral, Parker said, "So in honor of that, we've named this the Futral Prayer Room so that when people walk in here, they are reminded of that legacy of faithfulness here at the Baptist Building and your commitment to prayer."

Before leading in the prayer of dedication, Futral said, "This week I'm in revival at one of the great churches in Mississippi, the Phoebe Baptist Church," he said. "Phoebe is up in Clay County, in the middle of nowhere but this week 70 years ago a little nine-year-old boy during a revival at Phoebe Baptist Church came to know Jesus. It was me.

"What happened to me in a revival has happened to some people

there this week because they called on Jesus, and this prayer moment now is that kind of moment," he said.

"A prayer-less church is a power-less church," Blythe said. "A church may be organized and all the committees might be in place and functioning – and well they should – but if the leadership of the church is not calling the people in the church to be a praying people then that church will never reach its full potential for the Lord.

"Organization and committees alone will never do what only the Lord can do through the power of prayer. I have preached in churches that once had a prayer room and in some instances the sign, 'Prayer Room,' was still on the door marking the spot, only to open the door and discover the prayer room had become a junk room.

"Clean it up and rid the room of the junk," Blythe said, "and make the prayer room important again in the church. Acts 4:31 says, 'And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.'

"We need revival in our churches across Mississippi and across our nation," Blythe stressed. "We're in a spiritual battle, and the battle is fought on our knees. Jesus has already won the war by what He did at the cross and through the power of His resurrection, but Satan is still actively blinding people to the truth of what has done.

"In and of ourselves we are no match for Satan," Blythe said, "but Satan is no match for God. If we're going to stand against the forces of darkness, we must stand on our knees asking our Heavenly Father for His enablement and His power.

"A church can have all the resources imaginable but apart from the power of God, the church will never be effective," Blythe pointed out. "The power of God comes to those willing to spend

time in prayer.

“Adoniram Judson Gordon said, ‘There is more you can do after you pray, but there is nothing you can do until you pray.’”

The ministries of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board are supported by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program. For more information, Blythe may be contacted at rblythe@mccb.org.

