

The Baptist Record ceases printing, moves to free digital service

JACKSON, Miss. (Special) – The Baptist Record will cease printing after 143 years, going fully digital and free of charge on its own website, according to editor William H. Perkins Jr.



Perkins

“There came a time when the last buggy repair shop in Mississippi had to close, because the need for horse-drawn carriages had passed,” Perkins said. “As automobiles were to horse-drawn carriages in another era, the Internet has brought tremendous change to the news industry both religious and secular.”

Perkins cited the newspaper’s declining print subscription base as another factor that led to the decision to cease printing, along with hard-to-predict future costs of newsprint and postage.

“Too, the ongoing COVID-19 coronavirus crisis, with no end in sight, has meant that advertising – an important part of balancing the Record’s budget each year – has dropped off severely as companies prepare for more potentially bad economic news,” he added.

The new website will feature a modern, Internet-based look and

feel while striving to retain the same level of quality news reporting, opinion, and local church news, Perkins said.

The features of the new WordPress software are so numerous and powerful that the newspaper's staff is still on a learning curve, he said, adding that it will take several more months to adjust to all the software can do for users and readers.

In the meantime, "We have no plans to reduce the content of the Record in any way. As a matter of fact, we want to expand the content to include items we have not been able to print because of the physical limitations of a small-format, weekly newspaper," said Perkins, in his 24th year as editor after serving four years as associate editor.

"Now that we're not constrained to twelve printed pages each week, we want to open up the Record for even more reports and features for and about Mississippi Baptist's commitment to our Lord's Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)," he said.

MBCB executive director-treasurer Shawn Parker said in a written statement, "The Baptist Record has a celebrated heritage of keeping Mississippi Baptists informed, and this move to a digital format is another visionary decision in its rich story.



Parker

"I applaud William Perkins and the entire team for working to keep the Record on the frontline of Baptist news. I also appreciate the faithful readers of the Baptist Record and hope this will serve to keep you even better informed on the latest in Baptist life!"

The Baptist Record was founded in 1877 by J.B. Gambrell, a native of Pontotoc known today throughout the Southern Baptist Convention as one of the most prominent convention leaders of his time.

In addition to starting The Baptist Record, he was a pastor in Mississippi; editor of The Baptist Standard, the official news journal of the Baptist General Convention of Texas; president of Mercer University in Georgia; one of the founders of Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth; and a four-term president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

“The legacy of strong leadership at The Baptist Record runs deep,” Perkins said. “The spiritual character of each of the ten editors who preceded me is reflected in a study of their writings on the pages of the newspaper. The efforts are obvious for each one of them in meeting the challenges of their times and leaving The Baptist Record in a better position than when they arrived.

“My passion and my dream are to be considered the eleventh editor to do that.”