

# Unwanted Guests

*By Shawn Parker*

*Executive Director-Treasurer, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board*



Parker

As many of you know, we've been in the process of settling into a new home over the last six months. We discovered a couple of weeks ago that we weren't the only ones attempting to settle into the house we purchased. For some reason, a family of raccoons decided they really liked our attic and adopted it as their new address. When I say family, I mean a mother and several little kits (that's what you call a baby raccoon, by the way).

□The process of dealing with this issue gave me an education in raccoonology! First of all, they ate a hole through wood to get into the attic, which seems to me to be an unnecessary ingestion of fiber. I learned they'll do anything to get to a place they think will be safe and secure. They'll claw, chew, scratch, whittle, chomp, and do whatever they need to get there. Many of us could stand to learn this lesson in our own lives. If we really want to have the peace of God, we need to pursue it relentlessly (Jer. 29.13) just like that mother raccoon.

□I also learned that when they find a place they like, they stick around. When I first heard those noisy critters, I wanted to believe it was my imagination. The second time I heard it, I hoped whatever it was would go away. The third

time I heard it, I resorted to prayer and fasting. I knew we had a problem! My raccoon guy said they never just go away. When they find a good home, they settle in. Once again, what a good reminder of the virtue and wisdom in staying faithful to the place where God has positioned us. We are so prone to think the grass is greener over there, but the best place we can be is where God has put us.

□The story goes on that our raccoon guy came and used a chemical to flush the family out of the house and then sealed the hole they had used as their front door. The only problem was that he unintentionally sealed in one of those juvenile raccoons, imprisoning him in our attic. You wouldn't believe the hysteria that ensued that night when that hungry little raccoon realized he was stuck. In fact, I thought at one point in the middle of night that I might have to settle the whole ordeal with my shotgun because it sounded like he was about to come through the wall into the main floor of the house. As Elizabeth (my wife) and I nervously watched the corner where his panic unleashed, I couldn't help but think about the problems we make for ourselves when we end up someplace God never intended us to be.

□Well, I'm thankful to share that the raccoons are now gone, but my raccoon guy told me they'll be back. So, we're braced and ready for them. Who knows what we may learn next!

*Parker may be contacted at [simpletruth@mbcb.org](mailto:simpletruth@mbcb.org).*