

NEWS AND VIEWS
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*“Southern Baptists with the Full
Gospel for the Whole World”*

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*Where have all the flowers gone, long time passing? Where have all the flowers gone, long time ago?
Where have all the flowers gone? Young girls picked them, ev'ry one.
When will they ever learn? Oh, when will they ever learn?*

As you read the words of this popular song of a bygone era, I may have already been on this earth for sixty years. I say “may have already been” because I may die before you read this newsletter...I may not. Only the Good Lord, the Author of Life knows for sure. The person who is given credit for writing this song died in January of 2014 at the age of 94. I remember the song and it was sung a lot in the 1960's. Since I am potentially turning sixty I think a lot about the sixties. There was a lot going on in our culture in those days. It was like a simmering pot that boiled over with civil unrest at home and the carnage of war abroad.

The song *Where Have All The Flowers Gone* became one of the themes of that era as boys became men and girls became women. Myriad voices of singers asked a series of rhetorical questions in which the song provided answers. The flowers are gone because young girls picked them. The young girls are gone because husbands took them. The husbands are gone because they became soldiers. The soldiers are gone because the graves claimed them. And the graves are gone because the flowers covered them. The song comes full circle when the last verse is same as the first...and the young girls pick the flowers. As I think through this progression I wonder who the young girls picking flowers are more likely to be...widowed wives of the fallen soldiers, or the children who were rendered fatherless as a casualty of warfare. All the rhetorical questions in each verse were adequately answered except a different question common to all. It was echoed for effect: *Oh, when will they ever learn? Oh, when will they ever learn?*

I am entering the last season of a man's life and thinking about flowers and fruit, cause and effect, things that grow and things that don't. The conditions of sowing will govern the principle of reaping. Consider the following passage from a prophet to a group of people that God cared a lot about:

*For they sow the wind and they reap the whirlwind. The standing grain has no heads; It yields no grain.
Should it yield, strangers would swallow it up. (Hosea 8:7)*

I hear people in the construction industry ask a question while they are seeking to employ able-bodied men and women. *Where have all the people gone?* Let me try to answer this rhetorical question as it has played out in our culture in my time. Being a child of the sixties, I graduated high school in 1973. In January of that year a Supreme Court decision became the law of the land concerning the calculated and planned extermination of a live human being in the womb of its mother. Words communicate. *Abortion*. The rationale for such extreme action to destroy human life was couched in language of women's choice and issues concerning health. Pro-abortion (the word *Abort* means to immediately terminate) positions became the ground that grew pro-choice labeling. The words became a little less offensive as people became a little more desensitized to the reality. Abortion advocates celebrated in those days and take their stand in the present day. I awoke to the news this morning that there will be a public hearing by the state Department of Health and Human Services to hear comments on changes in legislation concerning abortion. What will the people hear from this hearing? Will they hear the question, *Where have all our people gone?* Will they hear about life's choices or death's results? Or will they bring flowers to cover the graves? Will the language and rhetoric cover up the reality?

At the beginning of 2014, multiple sources reported over 56 million abortions had occurred since 1973. One was more specific as of the end of 2013. The number quoted was given as 56,662,169...it seems a little more poignant if you get a little more specific. In some of these reports it was heralded as positive news that there seems to be a decline in abortions in recent years. Several reasons were given for the downward trend. But none of the reasons that I read revealed what seems to be the most obvious to me. I think we're running out of people to kill and flowers to pick. *Oh, when will we ever learn?* So, are we reaping the whirlwind yet because people have sown to the wind? Yes. The next question...*So what now?* How do we live in our day?

It makes a difference what you sow. I want to be a Mark 4 kind of man. A different kind of man that is sowing a different kind of seed in a different kind of ground that bears fruit, more fruit, the best kind of fruit. *The sower went out to sow...* Our business in our day is to sow the Word of God. Sow good seed...the Seed of Life...And live it as we give it! This is our season to share...share the life God has given to those who live in a culture of death. Those that embrace death need to see someone living and giving Life. Be a blessing.

Blessings to you,
Pastor Sam