



We must adhere to the judicial principle “Innocent until proven guilty.” I don’t want to appear naïve, but I believe we should give our neighbor, and especially our brother or sister, the benefit of the doubt. According to the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12 KJV, “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets”), we are supposed to treat others the way we would like to be treated. I would expect the “benefit of the doubt” from my friends, if not from my enemies.

James 4:11-12 says, “Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.” We should not repeat gos-

## On the other hand

sip, but we also should not believe it or listen to it. In fact, if we love the person accused, we will confront in love the messenger of the gossip.

Too many believers hold to the idea that “if there’s enough smoke, there is definitely fire.” Dry ice produces plenty of smoke, but there is no fire.

Matthew 7:1 is misused often — “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” It does not say to the local church “discipline not, that you be not disciplined.” Go read Matthew 18:15-19. In the same chapter (strong cross reference) 7:20, “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” One’s fruit

is obvious and needs no speculation or reading between the lines — which is the idea of “judge” in verse 1. “Fruit” is objective; “judging” is subjective.

To be prejudiced is to pre-judge a situation without the facts. Only God has all the facts. Thus, “Innocent till proven guilty.”

ON THE OTHER HAND, having said all this, we must take any complaint or charge seriously. Sexual harassment, spousal abuse, or any other misconduct does terrible damage to the individual, but also to the Kingdom.

If a complaint or charge is frivolous, we bring it into the “SONLIGHT”

to expose the accuser and give the accused the opportunity to defend themselves. If the complaint or charge is legitimate, it deserves to be brought into the “SONLIGHT.” “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth will make you free,” John 8:32.

Proper protocols must be established and followed in any ministry, business, or any setting in order to protect the vulnerable and the innocent. To fail to do this is irresponsible and merits consequences. ON THE OTHER HAND, we must practice “Innocent till proven guilty.”

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## AWAKENING

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Because of his reputation for being intentional in his ministry, many have come to hear Rondon share the Gospel on Sundays.

“We have seen 1,459 soldiers come to Christ since March of this year. God is doing great things at Fort Leonard Wood among the hundreds of soldiers who have come to know Christ personally.”



CARVER

Retired Major General Douglas L. Carver, retired U.S. Army chief of chaplains and currently executive director of chaplaincy for the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board in Alpharetta, Ga., says what is happening at Fort Leonard Wood is not an exception. “Our troops, who are increasingly hungry for truth and relevancy in their lives, are finding a faith that works through a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

“The current spiritual awakening at Fort Leonard Wood is indicative of a great move of God taking place within the Armed Services today.” Carver says:

■ More than 2,000 troops gathered in Doughboy Stadium at Fort Benning, Ga., this past Easter to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

■ Army chaplains are currently baptizing an average of 70 soldiers during every basic combat training cycle at Fort Jackson, S.C.



**WELL-ATTENDED** — Soldiers gather for a July 29 chapel service at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri, where U.S. Army Chaplain (Capt.) Jose Rondon serves as a chaplain at the facility. Rondon has seen more than 1,400 soldiers come to faith at Fort Leonard Wood since March. (BP photo)

■ The U.S. Air Force Chaplaincy recently rolled out a new program called Faith-Works, which is a collection of evidence-based programs and materials promoting spiritual resilience for airmen and their families.

■ The military has built more chapels since 9/11 than any other period of American history except World War II.

In the past two years, Southern Baptist military chaplains have reported there have been tens of thousands of professions of faith and

thousands of baptisms, Carver says.

“Historically, God has often used the military as a catalyst for revival,” he notes. “Many attribute the spread of Christianity in the first century to Roman soldiers deployed throughout the Roman Empire. The Lord is answering our prayers for revival within our military communities.

“I’ve prayed for over 40 years for our troops and their families to experience the reality of Jesus Christ in a new and fresh way.”

## Submission Guidelines



The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

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Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person’s address and telephone number.

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