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Merry Christmas



May you have a wonderful Christmas!
from

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How should Christians respond to the “War on Christmas”?

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Many people perceive a modern-day “war on Christmas” being waged in the public square. Those who believe in the reality of a war on Christmas see a concerted effort to eliminate the word *Christmas* from public discourse. Stories confirming a war on Christmas seem to be coming more frequently: a grade-school choir sings “We Wish You a Happy Holiday” instead of “We Wish You a Merry Christmas” for their “Winter Concert.” A library invites “holiday displays” from the community provided the displays have no religious connotation—the stable may have animals in it, but no people. And major shopping chains forbid their employees from wishing anyone a “Merry Christmas.” It is possible to do all one’s Christmas shopping and never see or hear the word *Christmas* in the stores.

Of course, there’s nothing wrong with saying “Happy Holidays” or “Season’s Greetings.” But if someone says “Happy Holidays” for the sole purpose of *not* saying “Merry Christmas,” then we are right to question what’s going on. Is there truly be a cultural “war on Christmas?” “Why is the word *Christmas* censored?” we wonder as we wander through the malls. Why do some public schools celebrate everything from Kwanzaa to Labafana the Christmas witch, and ban the Nativity, all in the name of “inclusion” and “tolerance”?

One reason put forward by those seeking to avoid the word *Christmas* is that it offends non-Christians. But, according to a recent Gallup poll, only 3 percent of adults in America say it bothers them when a store makes specific reference to Christmas. This fact gives the “war on Christmas” a more sinister twist. The exclusion of Christmas is less about sensitivity and more about censorship. Expunging all mention of Christmas from society is not really a way to “adapt” to a more diverse culture but a way to engineer a more secular culture.

Many times, the arguments against Christmas programs and displays are couched in political terms, but the bias against Christmas goes much deeper than that. The war on Christmas is primarily a spiritual battle, not a political one.

How should Christians respond to the war on Christmas and the ubiquitous use of “Happy Holidays” to the exclusion of “Merry Christmas”? Here are some suggestions:

1. Celebrate Christmas! War on Christmas or not, let the joy of the season show in your life. Teach your family the significance of Jesus’ birth and make the Christmas traditions meaningful in your home.
2. Wish others a Merry Christmas. When confronted with a “Happy Holidays,” get specific and wish the greeter a “Merry Christmas!” You may be surprised at how many respond in kind. Even if you’re met with resistance, don’t let it dampen your cheer. In Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*, Ebenezer Scrooge wages a personal war on Christmas, and his nephew feels the brunt of his uncle’s attacks year after year, but it doesn’t stop him from wishing his humbug of an uncle a Merry Christmas and inviting Scrooge to Christmas dinner.
3. Speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). The Christmas season is a wonderful opportunity to share Christ’s love and the gospel message. He is the reason for the season!
4. Pray for those in positions of power (1 Timothy 2:1–3). Pray for wisdom. Pray for revival so that Christmas, instead of being “offensive,” would be honored by all. May we each be a peaceful warrior in the cultural war on Christmas.



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How will you outlive your life? We each want to leave a lasting legacy; one that impacts people in years to come. This World Missions Day, BMA Missions will focus on believers who leave a *A Legacy of Hope*. As an association, we will honor missionaries, pastors, and church members who have left a lasting legacy, while investing in future ministries so they, too, can leave a legacy for Christ.

2 Timothy 2:2 says, “*And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*” This verse demonstrates that a lasting legacy requires a person to live for things that they are willing to die for, “otherness,” and that a person accepts the fact that they will probably not see the full effect of their efforts in their lifetime. Finally, a lasting legacy requires that the believer has been a faithful disciple for many years.

On Feb. 24, 2019, we will celebrate those who began ministries long ago that continue in growth and maturity today. Many of those ministries seemed small and insignificant at their inception, yet today they have grown to include dozens of churches, countless disciples and leaders, and an impactful legacy.

Leaving a lasting legacy doesn’t happen by accident, yet it is attainable for every believer. Every believer can outlive their life. This World Missions Day, join us in honoring believers in your life who have left a lasting legacy, while also investing in future ministries so that they can also leave *A Legacy of Hope* for future generations.

When you register your church for World Missions Day, your pastor will receive a complimentary BMA Missions fleece vest, and your congregation will receive free World Missions Day promotional resources such as *A Legacy of Hope* posters and bulletin inserts. Register your church online at bmamissions.org/worldmissionsday, by emailing Paige West at paige@bmamissions.org, or over the phone by calling the Missions office at 501-455-4977.

Lifeworld Profile: Clif Johnson

By **HOLLY MERIWEATHER**

Lifeworld Media Ministries

“When Donny approached me about doing *Day by Day*, I was intrigued certainly with being able to speak to BMA people, but what interested me even more was what he said about Lifeworld’s strong presence worldwide versus a lesser one in the States. It’s an opportunity to minister to people across America that I would never see, crafting something that would appeal to believers and non-believers.”

If you’ve followed Lifeworld’s daily devotional on Facebook, you’ve no doubt noticed that Clif Johnson, pastor of Garrett Memorial in Hope, Arkansas, has been the occasional broadcaster on *Day by Day*. The popular Facebook show receives an average of more than 10,000 views per day. Beginning in January, Clif will be recording all *Day by Day* broadcasts, and the set will have a completely new look.

As the grandson of BMA Pastor and Publications Editor C.O. Strong, Clif was born into a legacy of ministry. In addition to his family and mentors like his former pastor Richard Walters, he credits his home church, the former Temple Baptist (now South City) in Little Rock, with encouraging a love for people and building relationships with them.

He recalls that the church’s well-used family life center/gym was where all kinds of sports were used for outreach and ministry. Clif’s sport was baseball, and although he wanted to use baseball to reach others for Christ, he desired to do so as a professional player.

But God had a different idea...

After two years of baseball at Eastern Oklahoma State College, Clif says “my desire for ministry increased and my desire for baseball decreased. The desire to be with teammates and share the love of Christ became more important. It was like in Jeremiah (20:9), ‘a fire shut up in my bones’: The love of baseball was gone and a spirit-filled love for Christ had replaced it.”

He returned to Little Rock and told his family that God was calling him into full-time ministry.

He had been a history major at EOSC with the intention of coaching, but in 1999 he transferred to Central Baptist College in Conway, Arkansas. During his time there, he worked with the youth at Temple and was hired at First Baptist in Perryville, Arkansas, as their youth pastor.

While attending CBC, he met Kristi Martin, a counseling major, and the two married in 2001. The next

year they moved to Memphis so he could attend Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary. In 2005 he earned a masters in divinity degree (MDiv) with an emphasis in church history.

That same year he joined the staff of Garrett Memorial. Another mentor to Clif, Bro. Larry Silvey was senior pastor at GMBC at the time and had kept up with him throughout his life. He asked him to serve as associate pastor and principal of Garrett Memorial Christian School.

The Johnsons welcomed their first son Jack in 2006, and three years later twins Sam and Sophia were born. In 2008 Bro. Silvey resigned as pastor and Clif succeeded him. Then, while his twins were toddlers, he began working on his doctorate in ministry from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Three-and-a-half years later, he completed his degree.

In the summer of 2018, Lifeworld’s Executive Director Donny Parrish began talking to Clif about initially filling in for him on the *Day by Day* broadcast. After much prayer, working out logistics, and writing scripts, Clif’s shows began the first week in October and will continue sporadically until the end of the year.

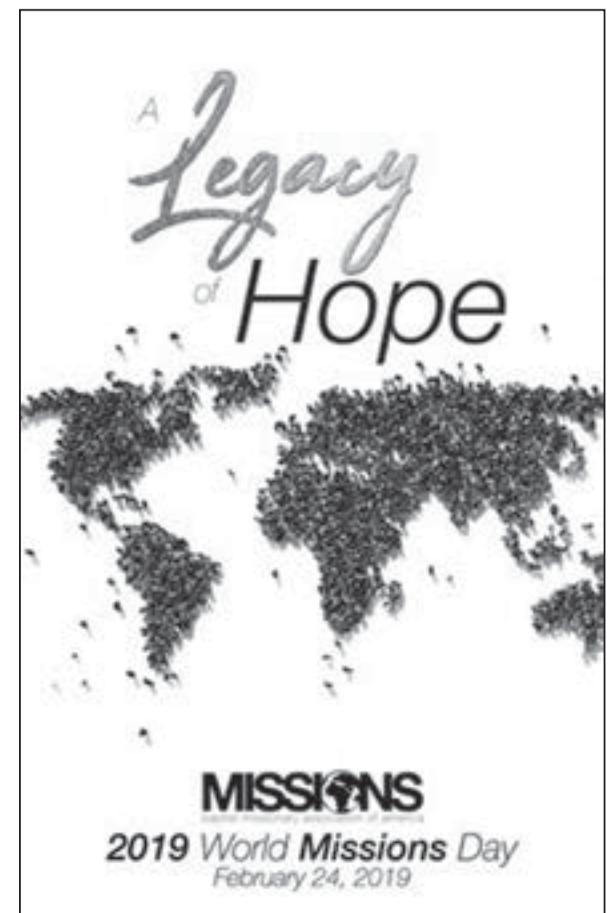
Donny says, “I love Clif and his heart for people, his heart for the nations and his insight into Scripture. I can’t wait to hear what he has to say. This is my opportunity to look at new venues and new ways of sharing the love of Christ. You’ll continue to see me on broadcasts, but in new avenues and venues.”

Excitement continues to build for the Lifeworld team. Cloud technology has brought the ministry’s reach to an unprecedented level, and Clif Johnson is one of many reasons to praise God and thank him for talented people who are willing to be used through media.

Clif has already mapped out devotionals for the coming year, and his enthusiasm for the Bible is contagious. He says, “There’s more treasure in the Word of God than we realize and an endless well of nourishment for people. When your gaze is on God through His Word, then you have perseverance, joy and peace.”



▲ Clif Johnson



An expression of everlasting love

Many of our friends choose to honor or remember a family member, a friend or an associate with a gift for the children of the Baptist Home. Texas Baptist Home for Children, in turn, notifies the appropriate person. Listed in capital letters are those honored or remembered from Nov. 1, 2018 – Nov. 30, 2018.

ENDOWMENTS

MYRA STOKES: Bill Stokes
E ANN PACE: Karl & Martha Pace

HONORARIUMS

PEGGY AMEN: Travis & Allene Meador
MAXINE CAVENESS: Larry & Ann Garner
BOSS & MINNIE COCKERELL: Danny Cockerell
ROBERT & MARGARET COCKERELL: Danny Cockerell
BETTY GRACIE: Travis & Allene Meador
HANNA, BROOKE & CHLOE LOUDERMAN: Brenda Mewborn
HAZEL MILLIKEN: Sharon Anderson
XANDER & CHRISTOPHER REYNOLDS: Brenda Mewborn
POLLY TOWNLEY: HV & Betty Minter

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WALTER BECKER: Dennis & Ilona Myrice
MARSHALL & VIOLA BOOTH: Eddie & Joyce Booth
SANDRA SUE BRAY: LC & Jennetta Whitehead
VIRGIE BROWN: Dwane & Shirley Douthitt; Blanche Lasiter; BJ & Trudy Huffman; Harold & Linda Dean; Judy Plant
JOYCE BURGESS: Johnny & Phyllis Howell
ALVIN CALDWELL: Charles & Charlotte Johnson; Tommy & Virginia Gipson; Jed & Glenice Whitaker; Rosewood Baptist Church
GRADY CHAPMAN: Brenda Bull
JAMIE COMER: Raymond & Claynell Dennis
RANDY COMER: Raymond & Claynell Dennis
CECIL DOWNEY: Carlie Downey
MARK GARMON: Caleb Davidson;
LAVERNE RHODES GRESHAM: Westside Baptist Church; Rosemarie Stroud
BRO. GAYLAN HENRY: Charles & Charlotte Johnson; Eunice Class @ South Park Baptist Church
B.W. KEELING: Ida Keeling
LAWRENCE KELLY: Charles & Charlotte Johnson; Rosewood Baptist Church
ADAM LANDRUM: Gary & Jean Landrum
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ROBERT SANFORD: Charles & Charlotte Johnson
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JERRY STEGER: Charles & Charlotte Johnson; Jed & Glenice Whitaker; Rosewood Baptist Church
CEELY STOUT: Charles & Charlotte Johnson; Norma Lyle
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DONALD TUCKER: Charles & Charlotte Johnson
FRED TURNER: Amanda Turner
REBECCA WARD: Westside Baptist Church
EDDIE JO WHITE: Mary Gilbert Hunt
MARIE WHITELEY: Community Baptist Church, Killeen;
WOODINE WILEY: Charles & Charlotte Johnson; Rosewood Baptist Church
JACKIE WOOD: Johnny & Phyllis Howell
JOSHUA ZESCH: Travis & Brenda Floyd



By JASON CURRY

First Baptist Church in Claremont, New Hampshire had a sign that once read “God’s Math – 1 Cross + 3 Nails = 4 Given”. What a great reminder this season as we gather to remember Christ’s birth. He came for a purpose. The “sweet little baby Jesus” would not simply stay in this condition. His birth, though epic, always pointed to His coming sacrifice on the cross, so that all people who believe would be forgiven and have an eternal home in heaven. I said this at many of our associational meetings this past season, yet I think it bears saying again. Thank you all for standing for TBHC kids. Our children only have the foster parents and adoptive parents they have because of your generosity. Myself included. Because you gave, there are children in forever homes this year. Because you gave, there are children in safe foster homes this year. And because you gave, there are children that found their eternal home this year. When you stand for TBHC kids you’re doing something incredible... you’re making a difference. Standing for our kids financially can look like a gift of \$32 or more a month. Our math shows that it is around \$1000 a month to care for one of our kids. So thank you for helping stand for them by your continued blessings of any amount. Let me share a wonderful story that I feel illustrates standing for our kids in an incredible way.

My sister is a foster parent with another agency and has been living out caring for those who can’t care for themselves for over three years. Over the summer one of her foster daughters accepted Jesus as her Savior! It was incredible. And because of the brief connection, she asked me to do the baptism. I remember the day before the baptism, I was praying about something that had been weighing on my mind. I prayed and felt that God had revealed His words to me. As we stepped into the water, I began by asking her “Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God?” She said with a loud voice “Yes”. I remember smiling, knowing that no matter what life’s road she would walk, that Jesus had forever become a part of her story. When all others would let her down, He would never forsake her. After her declaration of faith, I then turned to the church members and invited Bible Study leaders to stand. A few people stood with smiles of pride and joy. The next question I knew I could not ask “if you’re a member of her family would you stand?” She, of course, had no biological family present. This is what had caused me so much

contemplation and prayer. What could be said in this moment? Some of the options I had were simply omitting the invitation to family or inviting the foster family to stand, but God gave me the words. I said “if you feel like family would you stand?” after a moment of confusion and “does he mean me?” every member of the church stood. I remember swallowing the lump in my throat, thanking God for His direction and I managed to complete the baptism. Remembering Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection embodied in this sweet child’s statement of faith. Her smile and wet hug was a wonderful thing that I will never forget. She had champions in that church and every one of them stood for her!

Are you a part of the champions that stand for TBHC kids? It’s quite simple to become a child champion. You can start by going to our website (www.tbhc.org) or give us a call (972-937-1321) to find out more. This Christmas as you and I remember Christ’s birth, death and resurrection, remember your first ministry is to family. If one of them doesn’t know Jesus then we need to share our hope in Christ’s coming. Remember TBHC kids. The presents they get are fun, and are an important part of their healing process. But it’s the message of salvation and the eternal destination that truly brings hope and healing for anyone. Merry Christmas and may God bless you as you continue to help bring kids home!

**TBHC will begin mailing out receipts quarterly instead of daily. The new mailing schedule will be the first week of April, July, October, and January 2020. Please email cbarber@tbhc.org or call 972-937-1321 if you have any questions.



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CHURCH HEALTH

Quit digging

By LARRY BARKER

It has been said, “If you are in a hole, rule number one is to stop digging.” That certainly sums up many other statements that could be made about a church that is no longer healthy. Yet, all too often, that church continues to do the very things that made her unhealthy. In *The Unstuck Church*, Tony Morgan says, “What got the church on life support will not make it healthy again.” There is such a need to consider prayerful evaluation of where your church is (healthy versus unhealthy), why it is unhealthy, and what needs to be done to make it healthy again.

There is another saying that goes like this, “Hope springs eternal.” The problem is that biblical godly hope is not just a pie in the sky dream. It is more than just wishful thinking. Romans 5:5 says, “This hope will not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” You see the hope of God will not disappoint because He acted on that hope and came to provide us a way to have a relationship with Him. It is not enough to think that hoping things will change will actually produce healthy change.

We constantly say things like; “I sure hope someone fixes that”, “I sure hope someone shares the gospel with them”, or “I sure hope things get better.” Hope by itself alone will not win people to Jesus, disciple new converts, plant a church, keep a church healthy or get a dying church off life support. The reality is that hope is not a strategy and you need a plan to quit digging and know what to do after the digging stops. God had a strategy to deliver hope, “When the time came to completion, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law.” (Gal 4:4)

How do you stop digging deeper? Begin by evaluating where you are and if you are healthy. **First, will you develop a clear and compelling vision that all of your people can clearly articulate.** A lack of vision is one characteristic that shows up in churches that begin to drift from their mission and begin to decline. Your vision needs to specifically describe the next steps your church will take to begin getting healthy by developing healthy steps and practices for your people to take. Mission is why you exist and is where you are headed.

Second, how will you make disciples and what does discipleship look like in your church? Jim Putman in *Real Life Discipleship* describes discipleship as an intentional leader, with a relational environment and a reproducible process. Discipleship that is complicated and confusing will



not produce healthy disciples. Chances are they will not produce disciples at all. Do you have a reproducible process with clear steps that moves people from where they are to where God wants them to be? These steps lead from spiritual birth to spiritual parenthood.

Third, how will you lead your church to remain outwardly focused with a heart of generosity? The church does not exist only for those who are already there. Tony Morgan in *The Unstuck Church* says, “It’s impossible for any church to be healthy and experience growth if nothing they do is designed to reach people who are outside the faith and outside the church.” You must prioritize people who are outside your church by showing them the love of Christ in practical ways. You have to quit digging the hole of only focusing on who is already there.

The second part of this is by being a generous church. Ask yourself whether or not your church leans toward being generous or protecting and holding on to what you have? When we lean toward being a generous church then we lean more toward being like Christ. When we lean toward being stingy then we lean further away from Him. Romans 5:5 says, “This hope will not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” His love was poured out to us so that we would pour that love out to others.

This principle of generosity is stressed in Galatians 6 by telling us we should not get tired of doing good and with every opportunity we have we should labor for the good of everyone. This biblical principle of practicing generosity should always characterize how we treat those outside the church. We should remain generous regardless of how many

times we think that people have taken advantage of our generosity. Resist the temptation to focus on maintenance and preservation of what you already have. God gave you what you have to invest it into His kingdom work!

Fourth, lead your church in these areas with strength and courage. You must do whatever is necessary to get your church healthy and reach new people with the gospel. Some will want to continue digging the hole deeper and deeper but you must lead them to lay down their shovels and crawl out of the hole. There will be opposition but you cannot wait for everyone to get on board. Pray hard and then begin to develop a plan of attack on how you will get healthy, your church leaders will be healthy and then so your church will be healthier.

Lead your people with a vision of making disciples who make disciples. The time is now to become a strong leader. Until you begin to make the necessary changes to become healthy the plan has only been a conversation. Once you begin to take the actual steps toward becoming healthy there will be opposition. Not everyone will be happy that you have decided to stop digging the hole deeper and deeper. Lead anyway toward biblical church health!

Larry Barker is the pastor of Cornerstone, Jacksonville. He also serves as the operations director for North American Missions. For more information or to contact him, visit www.bmamissions.org.



LEAVE IT TO CLEAVER



Random thoughts from Titus

By **DR. TONY CLEAVER**

Paul wrote to Titus and also to all ministers living today:
Titus 1:4 “To Titus, my true son in our common faith.”

Titus was one of the disciples of Paul. In fact Titus was so close to Paul that he was regarded as his son. That is a close relationship among Christians. What a worthy goal for modern Christians! This close fellowship is based on the previous verses which has to do with the faith of God’s elect, their knowledge of the truth, their godliness in behavior, and with their hope in eternal life. There is still a common Christian faith. Today sometimes Christians classify their Christianity only as Baptist, Methodist, Catholic, or many other denominations. That is a constricted view of Christianity in the narrow confines of denominationalism. Christianity has a common faith based on the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord. It is expressed fully in the New Testament through Christ’s teachings and the words of Apostolic authority. It is amplified by historic documents such as the Nicene and Apostle’s Creeds. It is still a common faith of Christianity even in our day of competing churches in our cities. Let us be true sons and daughters of a common faith in our day and in our time!

Titus 1:6 “An elder must be...”

Wow this is straightforward and definitive as to what an overseer, pastor, minister, bishop, elder, chaplain, missionary, evangelist, or superintendent in the Lord’s church must be! This minister must be socially and legally blameless. Personal habits must be under control of the Holy Spirit. The spouse and children must also be Christian in their deportment. The pastor must love what is good in the faith of Christianity—and there is so much good to love! When all of the social, moral, and personal habits are listed as “must be” Paul gets to the “therefore” of the listing. The pastor must be able to hold the faithful message as taught so that Christians will be encouraged and those who are at opposition to the faith can be refuted. We don’t hear the word “must” in many lists of qualifications for jobs in commerce or industry. It is sometimes “preferred” or words other than “must.” Dear Pastor, the musts of your life are found in focus on His presence in prayerful solitude, and by going in and out among your people to speak the treasured words of the Scriptures to meet their needs of daily living. Be that elder who must be...!

Titus 2:1”...you are to proclaim things consistent with sound teaching.”

Good Preacher, what are the subjects of your sermons and teachings? Are your sermons about social theory, psychological self-help, politics, or some other current news hot button? Sermons and teaching according to this Scripture

must deal with sound teaching concerning the historic principles of the Christian Church. This passage goes on to include all categories of humanity: older men, older women, younger women, younger men, and slaves. The teaching for all these groups centers in reverence, love, purity, diligence, integrity, dignity, submissiveness, and faithfulness. When is the last time you preached on subjects like these mentioned here? This kind of preaching and teaching purposes Christian lives to adorn Christ. When those outside the congregation see the lives of those inside the congregation, they know a Christian. Those outside have no bad things to say of those in the Church because they magnify the Lord. May our pulpits be filled with speakers who do this kind of proclamation! May our Churches be filled with these kinds of Christians so the land will see our Risen Christ and be drawn to Him.

Titus 2:12 “...instructing us to deny godlessness and worldly lusts and to live in a sensible, righteous, and godly way in the present age...”

God’s grace has appeared to Christians. That grace maps our route in several ways. We are instructed to deny ungodliness. Ungodliness means impiety or wickedness. We are coached to deny worldly lusts. John 2:16 tells us the same thing: “For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one’s possessions—is not from the Father, but is from the world.” This Titus verse teaches us to live in a sensible way. Sensible has the sense of practicality and level-headedness. We are to live a righteous life. Righteous does not mean perfect, but it means a person who seeks to emulate the way of Christ as He lived His life. Living in a godly way does not mean those high up on a mountain in a monastery or retreat house tucked away from society. No, it means the young man or woman who is a student in everyday situations. It means a man or woman who goes to work in an office or job filled with real people who might be a little rough in word and deed. Why are Christians to behave like this? Christians look for the blessed hope—that is the appearing of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Titus 3:1 “Remind them to...”

Parents often remind children as they go for an outing with friends: “Remember who you are.” That simply reminds the child to behave like he or she has been taught. The Apostle instructs Titus to remind Christians of certain kinds of behavior. They are to submit to rulers and authorities. In other words we are to be good citizens. (Romans 13:1 “Let everyone submit to the governing authorities...”) Christians are to be the very best citizens of the land—whether Democrats or Republicans are in majority power. Christian people are to

be ready for every good work. Our land is thirsty for good works—just look around your neighborhood much less your downtown. Christians are not to slander. Slander is to insult or smear someone else. Christ’s followers are to avoid fighting. A belligerent, aggressive, and pugnacious person cannot be in the group who lives for Christ. The opposite in instruction follows: be kind and show gentleness to all people. As children get older, they remember the parental instructions “Remember who you are.” They remember because it got them in a good place. Christians, remember who you are!

Titus 3:9 “But avoid foolish debates, genealogies, quarrels, and disputes about the law, because they are unprofitable and worthless.”

Yes, indeed, the Apostle urges Titus to speak to fellow church members about quarrels. Certainly it is evident in some churches today this admonition is not followed. (1 Corinthians 1:10 “Now I urge you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, that there be no divisions among you...”) What would cause a fight over something that is worthless? Worthless has the idea of valueless, insignificant, and rubbish. Worthless arguments in congregations center on “who is in control” of the congregation. Disputes focus on music. Some say, “This kind of music is best.” while others say “No, that kind of music is best.” Debate happens over versions of English Bible translations, orders of service, bulletin announcements, who is to read the Scriptures, and on and on. Christian Churches are to avoid such things. They are foolish-unwise, imprudent, thoughtless, and even crazy or goofy. Some Christian history books record a quarrel with some of the “learned” regarding the question: “How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?” Now that is a debate worth avoiding. It is not unlike some in modern congregations as they decide which side of the building to put the piano, where to put the new water fountain, whether to sing from a hymnal or projections of words on a screen, and even better the width of the stripes in the parking lot.

Tony Cleaver is the director of distance learning and a professor of Biblical studies at Baptist Missionary Association Theological Seminary in Jacksonville, Tex. He is an author and writer of the popular newspaper column, Leave It to Cleaver. He may be contacted at tony.cleaver@bmat.edu.





INSIGHTS *for* PASTORS

Have it your way?

By **DR. ALLEN TILLEY**

In 1974, Burger King made a bold move to take market share from McDonald's. At the time, McDonald's made burgers en masse. Burger King announced that each order would be cooked at the time of the order the way the customer wanted. Their new slogan was "Have It Your Way." Burger King, at least at the time, understood the consumer entitlement mentality.

What does this story have to do with churches? It provides a brief historical backdrop of the mentality that has crept into our churches, where many members think church is a place where I can always "have it my way." Here are some key reasons our congregations have become more like country clubs than churches, a place where some members demand their way instead of serving and self-sacrificing.

No clear expectation of church membership. Up front, we must do a better job of letting prospective members know they cannot join unless they clearly understand the

costs and responsibilities of membership. Membership may have its privileges, but it also comes with obligations.

Growth at all costs. While we should always practice the Great Commission, numbers alone are not our goal. We should seek to grow our churches out of obedience to God, not to create our own kingdoms.

No consistent reminder to the congregation as to what it means to be part of the body of Christ. All of us church members have the potential to lapse into self-serving, entitlement members. We all need to be reminded that church membership is not about perks and privileges but serving and sacrifice.

Allowing entitled members into positions of leadership. Entitled members like having control so they can have their own way. We yield to them often because they might be big givers or because we don't have the fortitude to resist their bullying behavior.

Avoiding conflict at all costs. While we shouldn't

pick a fight over every issue, neither should we allow a pervasive culture of entitlement. A problem not handled now is a larger problem later.

The biblical mandate for local congregations is counter-cultural. In many passages of the Bible, such as 1 Corinthians 12, we are clearly taught that members are to be sacrificial, giving, and serving. Church is not about having it our way. It's about bringing glory to God by having it His way.

Dr. Allen Tilley is pastor of First Baptist Church of Carthage, Texas. He has over 30 years of pastoral experience, and God has continually blessed his ministry with dynamic spiritual and numerical growth. Contact him at allen@firstbaptistcarthage.com.



It's Time to Make Your Reservations BMAA Committee on Arrangements

The 2019 session of the Baptist Missionary Association of America will meet May 6-8 at the Northwest Arkansas Convention Center in Rogers, Arkansas. The facilities and hotels are looking forward to our meeting there. Rogers' accommodations offer plenty of space for all of our meetings and lodging. We hope that you will make your reservations early. Most of the hotels can make your reservations either by phone or online, **but you must identify that you are with the Baptist Missionary Association of America.**

The Embassy Suites Hotel, 3303 Pinnacle Hills Parkway, Rogers, Arkansas, will serve as our headquarters hotel for the annual meeting in Rogers. The Embassy Suites adjoins the convention center to provide the easiest access to all of the association meetings and activities. Here is the contact information for the hotel.

• **Embassy Suites Northwest Arkansas (Headquarters Hotel), 3303 Pinnacle Hills Parkway, Rogers, AR:** (Single/Double, \$149 per night; Triple, \$159.00; Quad, \$169)

(Standard Double or King room). Telephone reservations: 479-254-8400. Complimentary self-parking for all guests (Valet parking is available). Full breakfast included. Reservation cutoff date is April 14, 2019.

In addition to the headquarters hotel, additional overflow facilities are available in the area. Following is a list of properties that have blocked rooms for the BMA meeting.

• **Candlewood Suites, 4601 West Rozell, Rogers, AR:** (Studio suite, 2 full-size beds: \$99.00). Telephone reservations: 479-636-2783. Reservation cutoff date is April 19, 2019.

• **Country Inns & Suites, 4304 West Walnut, Rogers, AR:** (Standard two queen or one king suite: \$129.00). Telephone reservations: 479-633-0055. Use Group Code: 0505BMAOFA. Reservation cutoff date is April 5, 2019.

• **Hyatt Place, 4610 West Walnut, Rogers, AR:** (\$116.00). Telephone reservations: 479-633-8555. Reservation cutoff date is April 1, 2019.

• **Fairfield Inn & Suites, 4611 Rozell Road, Rogers, AR:** (Single: \$99.00; Double/Double: \$99.00; Executive King: \$109.00). Telephone reservations: 479-936-5900. Use Group Code: SMERF. Reservation cutoff date is April 20, 2019.

• **Hampton Inn, 4501 West Walnut, Rogers, AR:** (Double Queen: \$144.00). Telephone reservations: 479-986-0500. Reservation cutoff date is April 6, 2019.

• **Aloft Rogers-Bentonville, 1103 S 52nd Street, Rogers, AR:** (King: \$119.00). Telephone reservations: 479-268-6799. Reservation cutoff date is April 5, 2019.

The association has incurred penalty payments in some years because we did not use our full block of rooms. Please help us avoid a situation like that this year. We appreciate your help.

— *Jerome Cooper, Bill Thornton, and Daniel Williams*



A word from your mission office

By HEITH MITCHELL

On behalf of everyone who serves alongside you through your Texas Missions movement, let me say:

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

It is our joy to serve God, each of you, and the 25 missionaries God has placed in our care! We look forward to all that God has in store in 2019!

I would love to come and share Texas Missions with your church. I have open dates and look forward to hearing from you.

A WORD FROM YOUR MISSIONARIES

JAIME GARCIA—

IGLESIA BAUTISTA NUEVA VIDA MISSION, GILMER/MESQUITE
JAIME.GARCIA2911@GMAIL.COM

The unity of the people of God is of importance and through the Association, God can help us to be more successful in our ministry, and taking into account that the work is “BIG” you need the largest number of workers to achieve better results, in something that all the Church must emphasize. Let’s get on with the work. Blessings to you all.

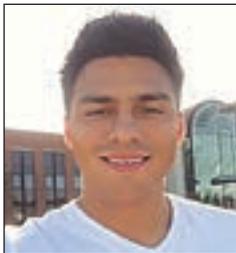


▲ Jaime Garcia

CHRISTIAN MARTINEZ—

GRACE HARVEST BAPTIST MISSION, LUBBOCK
CRISTIAN.LMBC@GMAIL.COM

Some of you have asked me if the new church will be a Hispanic church. The answer is yes but more than that. Here in Lubbock there is a special need to reach Hispanics because a large number of them do not have a clear understanding of the gospel of Jesus and have not been exposed to a healthy church that is sound in doctrine and display the holiness, love and unity of God as a community. Because of that, reaching Hispanics requires more intentionality.



▲ Christian Martinez

However, we are not reaching Hispanics only. We desire to align ourselves with God’s heart to make disciples of every nation and God’s zeal to be worshipped by all people groups. By God’s grace we have been able to disciple people of different backgrounds and ethnicities. Please pray for our church plant to be centered on the person and mission of Jesus Christ where different people groups are drawn to worship the only true God.

MATTHEW PRATHER—

THE BRIDGE MISSION,
MIDLOTHIAN/WAXAHACHIE
MATTHEW@DISCOVERTHEBRIDGE.COM

The Christmas holiday season is here!! At The Bridge we are excited about this time of year. It provides more opportunities to

share the love of Christ with people. During this time our church has really stepped up with serving. We participated with Operation Christmas Child and are adopting a family for Christmas. It is great to see our church step up and meet needs of those around us during this time of year. Please continue to pray that the seeds we are planting around us will lead to more people coming to know Christ as their Savior. Also, we are looking for our next meeting location. Meeting in a portable location means that we are always seeking God and looking for the next location that He would provide for us to use. Please join us in praying for God to provide us our next location. Thank you for your continued prayers and support.



▲ Matthew Prather

NEPTALY MOLINA—

IGLESIA BAUTISTA MISSION,
NACOGDOCHES
NRMOLINA23@GMAIL.COM

We have contacted four new Hispanic families visiting in different communities and different places such as Walmart, Dollar Tree, Michuacana, among others.



▲ Neptaly Molina

CLIFF ROBERTSON—

CARPENTER’S HOUSE MISSION—
LAKE JACKSON/CLUTE
DRCLIFFROBERTSONJR@GMAIL.COM

God is moving in our mission and we are seeing people come to Christ and lives change. We are looking at needing to expand our space again. Pray for the resources and capacity to do that.



▲ Cliff Robertson

RONNIE MILLS—

KINGDOM CHAPEL MISSION,
SAGINAW/NORTH FORT WORTH
RONNIE@KCHAPEL.ORG

We’ve had a great few months here in North Fort Worth! We’ve seen the Lord really move in some awesome ways, and I’m so excited to share that with all of you. We start with the most exciting news of seeing two people coming to Christ in salvation. We are so excited that we are already getting the privilege to baptize, and disciple this new brother and sister in Christ! We have also been blessed in seeing several new families come alongside us to journey and be apart of the



▲ Ronnie Mills

mission. We are super excited to tell you that we’ve also had churches ask us how they can help us, and we’re thrilled to say that Journey Community Church, in Allen, this past Sunday donated a trailer to Kingdom Chapel. We know that this will be a vital tool for us to do our work, and we are beyond grateful! God has been doing many good things through and those around us, and we’re so thankful for all of your prayers and support!

LEE (NICKNAME)—BMA TEXAS MISSIONARY AMONG ARABIC REFUGEES, RICHARDSON

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.² TIMOTHY 1:7

In the beginning of this month I said to myself, will the Lord give us a fish in this rainy month?

I remembered the verse I wrote at the beginning. In November we’re invited to a thanksgiving party for Arab refugees in Dallas. There we met a Shia Muslim family (wife, son, daughter and her mother) and the father was not there. My wife took her phone number so she kept in touch with the family.

Two weeks later they welcomed us to visit them, and we went to visit them and she introduced us to her husband, A very humble man, handsome, educated. All this on the door entrance and after we enter the house they surprise us as they were serving a special dinner for us. There were three types of Iraqi food, fruits and different types of sweets.

I said to them, “We usually thank our God for every meal we eat, and I pray, thanking the Lord, and blessing the food, also the hands that made the food. From there, we began to witness to them the work of the Lord in our lives. And they responded to us and heard every word we spoke, and the wife and her mom sat with us, and I told them the story of Mary and Martha, how Martha cared about many things but her sister Mary chose the good share to her the voice of God. After two and a half hours, we asked them to pray with us before we left them. They agreed so I prayed that God would bless them and their home.

I welcomed them to visit me at home and they liked the idea. Now we are waiting for them. Some time in this month, my wife Muna has contacted them.

In November we were buying some Arabic spices from a small Arab shop, and there was a blind man led by his wife and his son buying some candy. At that moment my wife saw the position and told me to pay them for candy.

I paid them a small amount, but this made us talk to them and get to know them more, so we knew he was a Syrian refugee from three years, and is working in a mosque on the same street I live on. I took his phone number and I talked to him several times sharing in his suffering. We talked about the love of the Lord and the extent of his interest in us, and asked me to meet him again.

God gave me what I asked for, a big fish.

BMA TEXAS MISSIONS continued on p.12

Has God forgotten about the small places?

By **BRYAN ROSE**

Sitting in the Orlando mega-church auditorium that afternoon, Pastor Chris Driver wrestled with that thought. It felt like a legitimate question in context of his surroundings. After all, one year of attendance at his small West Texas Plains church would not even fill this room for one service. His question was not one of theology, but of methodology. Should small churches merely try to stay alive, or is there something more significant for which to strive?



The opening session of Exponential 2017 just leveled every leader in the room... in a good way. The challenge to assign a name to the vision for Fifth Street Baptist Church, Levelland growing in his heart was resonating and producing a double-time cadence of hopes and fears all at once. Was it possible that God could have a big vision for his church of 80 attendees? Could it be possible that the gospel could have an epicenter of global impact from Levelland, Texas? Or was vision just for the big churches with huge buildings like this one?

Instead of being overwhelmed, and discouraged yet again, by thoughts of smallness and insignificance, Chris instead leaned into the workshop content. He refused to accept that a vision for biblical discipleship requires big numbers and bigger budgets. Within six months, it became clear in the families of small “6-man” towns across west Texas, that God does have a big vision for small places.

HAVING A “NEHEMIAH MOMENT”

Chris did not grow up in the church but learned the value of Christ-centered community and disciple-making relationships soon after his conversion at age 14. However, it would not be until a mentor asked Chris to step into a youth ministry position that he began to learn how to disciple another younger believer. Chris learned quickly that very few church leaders, including him, were adequately equipped to transfer a growing faith from generation to generation.

Chris, like other young seminarians his age, assumed that

discipleship is a matter of making the programs work better, and the church grow bigger. The real problem was that he has seen churches grow numerically but remain shallow, bigoted and immature spiritually. Chris had experienced lasting transformation, an ongoing renewal of the inner man, not in a program, but only through purposeful and biblical discipleship. To him, it seemed that the most consistent examples of this one-on-one relationship-driven work always seemed to be happening on the mission field.

Chris and his family wrestled with a calling to the mission fields of Ecuador and soon learned that their resulting “all-in” commitment to follow God would not be to go to the fields of South America, but to the plains of west Texas. Chris obeyed God’s call to go back to his hometown of Levelland. The city’s name said it all. And, the congregation of 50 at Fifth Street Baptist Church would prove to be the setting for what Chris calls his “Nehemiah 1:4 Moment.”

HOLY DISCONTENT FINDS A HOME

The moment happened just as Chris’ son had started playing high school football in Levelland. The schools his son played each week contained student populations so small that their football teams could only field six players at a time. Many schools didn’t even have more than a dozen players total. These “6-Man Football” towns proved to be small places with even smaller, aging churches. Few of the leaders in these towns, if any at all, had any vision beyond just keeping the lights on and the doors unlocked for one more Sunday. It seemed to Chris that doing any so-called “real” ministry, having any significant impact or influence outside the church walls, remained a commodity reserved only for the larger churches in bigger cities that were hundreds of miles away.

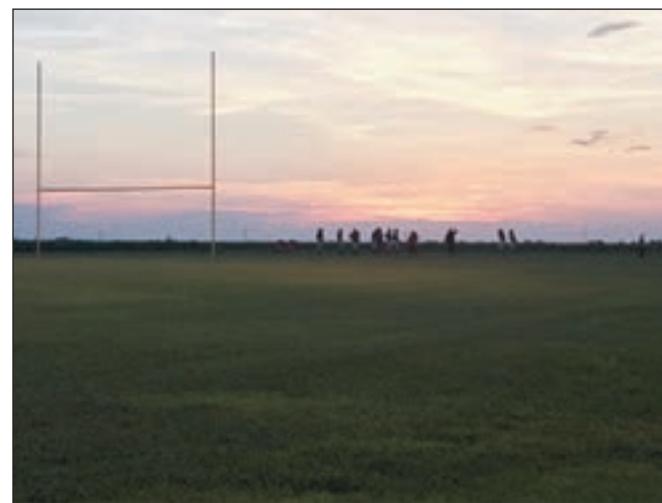
With each 6-Man game in the next town, Chris could not escape the comfort-robbing voice of God asking him, “Who will reach these small places?” To compound frustrations, every denominational revitalization effort Chris explored seemed to focus on starting or renewing churches in places that looked different from these wind-swept South Plains towns. There just didn’t seem to be a plan or a model to reach the people in the small places where he watched football each week.

God showed Chris, in those first moments of Exponential 2017, that He had a big dream for those small places across west Texas. It was in that first workshop where Chris found a framework to illustrate and articulate this picture of gospel transformation in these 6-Man towns. Auxano’s visionary planning tool, the Horizon Storyline, finally gave his holy discontent a home. Here he found a model that allowed him to plan and dream but didn’t require thousands of people or dollars.

THE POWER OF A PICTURE

Returning to Levelland, Chris worked with a few key leaders to develop a long-range vision for their church. The team named God’s big vision for this small place as their “100 by One Hundred” calling. By the Fifth Street Baptist Church’s 100th birthday they desire to see the families in 100 small 6-Man communities revitalized and transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Every time Chris would go on to share this 100 by One



Hundred picture, he saw leaders grow in excitement, and even more important, take steps of personal engagement. In those moments he discovered a vital church leadership lesson applicable no matter a congregation’s size: Transformation requires clear and compelling vision.

Despite all of his sermon planning and program managing, Chris never realized that people were starving to be about something more significant than week-to-week ministry. Until this 100 by One Hundred vision took shape, he never realized how important a clear picture of God’s better future was to the daily obedience to every person in the pew. It was in this season of discovery that Chris became convinced that disciples could not be made in yet-another

HAS GOD FORGOTTEN continued on p.14

Make this year’s Christmas gift a long-lasting gift

This year instead of purchasing a Christmas gift or gift certificate that will be a short-term blessing, purchase an engraved brick from BMA Seminary Alumni and Friends Association that will be a long-term blessing. Your engraved brick will be there for all to see each time they walk down “The Heritage Walk” at BMA Seminary.

You or the person you honor do not have to be a graduate of BMA Seminary. This “walk” is designed as a place to remember those who are special to us or have made an impact on our lives.

An engraved brick can be purchased for a special pastor, professor, friend, or family member. A brick could also be created for a church, Sunday School class, or business.

To order an engraved brick go to bmats.edu/heritage. For additional information email alumni@bmats.edu or call 903-721-0622 before the deadline of June 1, 2019.

If your gift is in honor of someone, after submitting your completed order, furnish a valid email address of the person or persons you wish to be notified to alumni@bmats.edu and we will send an email notifying them of your special gift.

REGULAR BRICKS ARE \$100 AND SQUARE BRICKS ARE \$250.





Year in retrospect

By **GLENDA CHAMBERLAIN**

The Texas WMA theme for this past year was “In the Potter’s Hands” based on Isaiah 64:8, “*We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.*” This was the theme of the Ladies Retreat hosted by Union Hill, Brownsboro. Guest speakers for the event were Patti Foster, Rose Ng and Nafisa Morris. Each of these ladies shared how God had or was shaping her into a vessel of His choosing for His purpose. Also speaking were Angelyn McMurray representing the National WMA project “We Are Free”; Holly Meriweather of Lifeword Media Ministries; Bro. Charles Johnson spoke about the Texas Baptist Home for Children; and Jayna Williams shared her heart for missions and reaching the lost for Christ. There were also breakout sessions led by Kristi Key, Johnnie Ross, Ava Pool, Elizabeth Midkiff, Sherry Decker, Vera Koonce, Betty Gibbs, Mellissa Henry and Michelle Ayres. Charlotte Johnson issued the challenge. Each attendee was blessed to be part of the retreat.

The WMA project for this past year was the purchase of a trailer for the Texas Missions Department. Project promoter, Diana Morris, challenged the ladies to raise money for this worthy project that will be used by church planters for community outreach events. Over \$11,000 was raised for the project.

The Sunbeams and GMAs also had a successful year. The GMAs met at Daniel Springs Encampment in March for their annual Houseparty. The theme for the weekend was “Diamonds in the Rough”. The girls raised over \$8,000 for their project, the kitchen at Daniel Springs. Jenna Schmidt, of Ellis-Hill District was selected as Miss GMA. The Sunbeam Houseparty took place in July at Jacksonville College. The Sunbeams were CIA agents (Children in Action). They enjoyed a weekend of secret messages and hidden treasures. The Sunbeams raised over \$1,500 for LifeWord Community Radio.

The Texas WMA officers hosted a GMA weekend in August at Rosewood Baptist Church in Gilmer. The weekend was well attended by many girls throughout Texas. They had a wonderful time studying God’s Word and spending time together.

The year closed out with the WMA state meeting at Round Prairie Baptist Church in Fairfield and was hosted by Central Texas District. 78 ladies were in attendance for the meeting. Speakers for the meeting were Ronnie Mills and Arnulfo Maldonado. Both

of these men, and Bro. Heith Mitchell, director of BMAT Missions Department, shared their heart for church planting and missions work, as well as their appreciation for the ladies of the WMA. They expressed appreciation for not only the financial support from the ladies but the spiritual support as well.

During the business meeting a new project was selected. WMA ladies will be raising money for much needed renovations on the pool at Texas Baptist Home for Children.

RESOLUTIONS FOR THE NEW YEAR

The Resolution Committee, consisting of Cindy Allen and Kendra Verhelle, set the WMA resolutions for the coming year.

- Be it resolved that the WMA of Texas will practice what is set out in II Chronicles 7:14 *If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

- Do what Paul ask of believers in I Timothy 2:1-2 *I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.*

- Study God’s word because II Timothy 3:16-17 tells us *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

- Live out Hebrews 10:25 *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching.*

- Follow Jesus’ command in Matthew 28:18-20 *Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*

- Demonstrate our love for God by living out what Jesus proclaimed as the two greatest commandments Matthew 22:37-40 *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your*

mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.

KEEP CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS

Many times, we see Christmas with “Christ” taken out and replaced with an “X”. It’s almost as if it is a nameless celebration. We as Christians know how far from the truth that is. We read in the Bible of angels appearing to the shepherds and declaring the birth of Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of David. It is in no way a nameless event, but a wonderful celebration of the greatest event—the birth of Christ and the reconciliation to God He brought to the world. So, let’s keep “Christ” in Christmas, for He has brought salvation to us all and changed our lives forever.

Merry Christmas!

Glenda Chamberlain is the Texas Women’s Missionary Auxiliary (WMA) editor. Contact her at gcham33@yahoo.com. For more information about the Texas WMA, visit www.texaswma.com.





Contact BMA Foundation Executive Director Charles Attebery for more information. charles@bmaamerica.org or call 501-472-2183

A Gift That Keeps Giving

Gifts to the BMA Foundation are never spent. They are invested and the earnings benefit BMA departments annually until the Lord returns.

Some Ways to Give

- Cash
- Stocks and bonds
- Life insurance policies
- IRA Rollovers
- Bequests

Are you a missionary?

By **JACKIE RICKS**

National WMA Editor

Many times we focus on elected missionaries and miss seeing that ordinary people who seemingly never have a “call” to the mission field also play an important part in mission work. Let’s look at one particular life that’s a result of mission work. Just as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:6-7, *“I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.”* Many believers who were saved and then disciplined as a result of mission work in one form or another, can often look to several different missionaries who had a part along the way, but they know that ultimately, it was God who put those people in their paths and worked everything out in their lives.

Rose Ng is just such a person. This native of Vietnam became an adult without really knowing much about God or Jesus, other than through a friend as she grew up. Later, she felt the stress of life and decided to put an end to all of it. However, God intervened through a tree. Her clothes caught on a tree branch as she attempted to jump into the river. God had a reason for stopping Rose and she realized that there was something, or Someone, greater than she.

Rose calls Genesis 1:1 her salvation verse. Through reading the Bible on her own, she was saved. However, a mission of another Baptist group helped to disciple her. They also pointed her to a Christian institution where she could learn more. Although Rose didn’t really intend to go to a Bible college, Bro. Doyle Moore convinced her that she needed to go there. That’s how Rose became a student at the BMA Bible College in the Philippines when she had been a Christian only about three years. With only one month to prepare to go, Rose had to make many adjustments.

Doyle and Linda Moore took Rose under their wings and taught her through example what true missionaries are. She considers them her spiritual “Mom and Dad.” She spent four years at the Bible College on scholarship and received her BA in religious education in spite of the fact that she already had a degree from Vietnam and a career making good money.

The decision was not an easy one for Rose because her career was established and she had no intention of becoming anything different. However, God had other plans. She had heard a missionary talk about the children in Cambodia who needed so much, both regular education as well as spiritual. That became a burden on Rose’s heart.

While in the Philippines, others also influenced Rose along the way. Pat Quesenbury arrived in the islands twice for women’s conferences. As usual, her dynamic Christian presentation and charming personality fused with Rose’s enthusiasm and they became instant friends. Rose now considers Mrs. Quesenbury a mentor in her life. However, there are probably many more because Rose never really meets a stranger and she seems to learn something from everyone she meets.

For years, Bro. James Speer traveled to the Philippines to help them with their youth camp. That’s how he and Rose became acquainted. Now Rose lives in the United States and considers James and Barbara Speer her family. Although Rose is a student at the BMA Theological Seminary working on her MA in ministry, she returns to Carthage to attend First Baptist Church with the Speers every chance she gets. In fact, the whole church has taken her in, as one member or another comes to pick her up and then returns her to Jacksonville when she goes, because Rose does not have a vehicle.

Stan and Donna Scroggins, also missionaries to the Philippines, helped Rose before she came to the United States. By that time, the Moores had retired and returned to the states. The Scroggins helped Rose get her visa. Then they helped raise the necessary funds that she would need in her endeavor.

Since Rose wants to return to Cambodia and began a K-12 school for the children of the boat people, she plans to remain in the United States to complete her PhD in education. As part of that, she wants to research how to set up a Christian school and how to be an administrator. While in Jacksonville, she has become friends with Stephanie Attebery, wife of the dean at BMATS. Because she teaches in a Christian school, Mrs. Attebery gives Rose insights into the world of educating students.

These are only a few of the Christians who have impacted Rose during her short life as a Christian. Notice that many of these were not what most of us would consider actual missionaries. Many more people have sent money and prayed for the work all over the world. You may think you don’t have a part in anything like this; however, the Bible tells us all to go and teach. We can all disciple if we do what we should. Are you a missionary?

Rose loves to speak about her plans to become a missionary through education. She can be contacted through BMATS.



In this busy, wonderful season of potluck dinners, office parties and family gatherings, the main focus is on food and gifts. I love both, but often struggle more with choosing the right gift. Today I’m excited! In my storehouse of memories, I recalled an event which reminded me of the perfect gift for everyone on my list!

It all started when I was invited to speak to a group of ladies in another state a long way from home. At first, I was honored but almost immediately doubts and feelings of insecurity flooded my mind. A loud “voice” inside my head chimed in reminding me that I was too young and should wait until I was better prepared with more experience. I quickly agreed but it was too late to back out. So, I studied. I prayed. And repeated that process again and again until it was time to leave for the airport. Even then the loud, accusing “voice” traveled with me and never stopped shouting.

To my surprise the Friday evening sessions went well but as I was leaving the platform, I noticed a lady marching toward me—on mission with a frown on her face and a message to deliver. With arms crossed and a stern voice, she blurted out: “Pat when I was young, I thought I had all the answers too.” What? I knew I didn’t have the answers—except what was in God’s Word! And I was pretty sure I would forget those. How should I respond? Dying on the spot or disappearing through the floor came to mind, but since neither happened, I offered some feeble explanation and weak apology. As I headed to my room for the evening, the unwelcomed “voice” returned with a persistent “I told you so.” Even though I was tired and feeling defeated, I was sick of the struggle and refused to listen. That night the One who can replace fear with faith, brought peace and comfort to my heart and won the victory. Rest came, and it was His voice I heard during all four sessions of our retreat on Saturday.

I confess. I have spent too much time reliving that painful event wondering why such a defiant attitude and hateful attack had been hurled in my direction. The “why” is not important; what I learned from that experience is what matters. It was a defining moment and the beginning of a journey I can’t seem to complete. The study began in Eph. 4 with the challenge to “walk worthy of the calling . . .” The “how to” list is long—each verse a lesson in itself. Paul adds in verse 29, that we are not to say bad words, only good words that build other people up, giving grace to all who hear. And in Col. 4:6 he said our words should be given with grace and “seasoned with salt.” (my paraphrase). It’s no secret what salt does for food. It’s also an important ingredient in the words we speak . . . adding the sweet flavor we call “grace.” This undeserved, unmerited favor we receive from God can be shared through our love, acceptance, kindness, forgiveness and so much more. In this world of uncertainty, loneliness, and hostility, this is a CHRISTMAS GIFT everyone can use, and it’s free! No shopping malls and no credit card required. During this special holiday season, let’s give out lots of “Good Words Seasoned With Grace.” And don’t forget to add some extra salt! Christmas Blessings to you and your family!

Pat Quesenbury has been active in ladies’ ministry for years. She is a pastor’s wife, mother and active member of the Women’s Missionary Auxiliary. Contact her at pquesenbury@gmail.com.



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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

The Discipling One

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: January 6, 2019

TEXT: Mark 6:30-44

THE HOOK

When I accepted my first church as minister of youth, many years ago, I had no clue as to what discipleship was all about. I thought my job was to lure kids into the church through activities, socials, trips and choir. But my close friend, Dick Sisk, who was the director of the Department of Youth for the BMA of Texas, inspired me to embark upon what youth ministry was. He reminded me that a deep, lasting youth ministry was not activity driven, but lifestyle driven.

“You’ll do your best youth ministry hanging out with one or two at a time at the Dairy Queen,” pouring your life into them,” he said.

THE BOOK

Jesus was not interested in getting a crowd—His focus was on discipleship. He knew that His deepest, most effective work was done with that small band of disciples. And in order to launch the New Testament Church, he also knew that he had 3 1/2 years to prepare them for the work.

1. He taught them about the need to rest (verse 31). The disciples had been out preaching and ministering (verse 13) and Jesus knew the urgency of rest and refreshment for the body. The work of ministry demanded it. They were driving themselves to the point they had no time to eat and could not find a stopping place in their ministry. But even as they boarded a vessel to depart to a place of solitude, people followed them.

2. He taught them what it meant to have a heart for people (verse 34). He was moved with compassion when He saw the masses and view them as sheep without a shepherd.

This is a vital component to evangelism and discipleship—that is to have a compassionate heart for people.

3. He taught them about the provisions of God (verse 36). There were thousands of people who gathered in that desert place to hear the teachings of Jesus. The disciples saw that the people were hungry, they told Jesus, “send them away to find food.” Jesus’ reply was, “You feed them.” Human reasoning dictated that there was no food available. But Jesus took the little lad’s meager lunch (verse 38) and multiplied it to the point the throng of people had enough to eat with a surplus remaining. To quote a well-known BMA minister, Don Collins, “The supply came from heaven—the little lad just set the menu.”

THE LOOK

When God calls one into service, and gives them the place of ministry, He also provides for and sustains those whom He calls to service.

When Jesus seems far away

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: January 13, 2019

TEXT: Mark 6:45-52

THE HOOK

Does Jesus sometimes seem far away? If so, why? There can be many reasons, but probably the top reason is because we find ourselves in one of life’s storms, and the fear of it hampers our faith. It seems He is silent, as was the case with the disciples in today’s lesson. Perhaps He seems far away because of our indifference—or neglect to study His Word. Perhaps He seems far away because we have forsaken the assembly of believers. Perhaps He seems far away because we have forgotten about past victories He has given us.

THE BOOK

The trip was planned. The disciples were never out of the watchful eye of the Master. After the huge crowd enjoyed a sumptuous meal of fish and bread, and began to scatter, Jesus instructed the disciples to board a boat and go to Bethsaida. He planned to go atop a mountain and spend time alone with God. Verse 48 verifies the fact Jesus was absolutely cognizant of their struggles navigating the boat against the strong winds. After all, He possessed all the deity of God the Father.

The lesson was presented. Just before morning, they saw what appeared to be a ghost walking on the water. They were terrified. Matthew records that they were overcome with fear, especially because they did not recognize him. Peter cried out, “Lord if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water” (Matthew 14:28).

Peter got out of the boat, and began walking on the water,

toward Jesus. But he became distracted by the storm, and sank into the water. Why did Peter sink? Because he took his eyes off of Jesus.

Their memory was short. Notice verse 52: “For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.” I almost titled point 2 “The Lesson was learned.” But the disciples had trouble recalling the miracle of His feeding the 5,000.

The same held true with the Israelites. God miraculously stood the waters of the Red Sea up, permitting them to go through on dry ground, and escape Pharaoh’s army. Soon afterward, they were encamped on the other side of the sea in Exodus 15 singing about how the Lord was their strength — how glorious the power of the Lord is — and asked, “Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?”

But the Israelites could never learn the meaning of faith because they always forgot God’s provisions.

It’s easy to experience a miracle and momentarily become a people of faith, only later to wring our hands in desperation because of the next storm in life.

When young David confronted Goliath, his memory was crystal clear of the past victories he had over the lion and the bear. Hence, he was assured the God which gave him those victories, would give him the victory over the giant Philistine.

THE LOOK

If Jesus seems far away to you, recall those past experiences when He delivered you—when He gave you strength—when He gave you victory. If He could do it then, He can do it now.

BMA Texas Missions cont.

PRAYER REQUESTS FROM THE FIELD

Pray for God to provide people to fill specific ministry needs in several mission points.

Pray for each missionary and their family. Our adversary doesn’t like what these families are up to.

Pray for your missionary’s and their spouses Gloria Garcia, Manuela Molina, Chris Driver and Jaime Driver as they face health issues.

Pray for several men and women waiting on immigration documents.

Pray for intern Kingsley Nduka, for God to reunite his family. They are currently stuck in the UK.

Pray that God provides the funds and the laborers for more evangelistic disciple-making churches.

Pray for souls saved, disciples made, leaders equipped and sent out to start again.

PRAISE REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

God is using your missionaries to reach into the lives of truly struggling people. We are hearing stories of real conversion!

Souls are being saved! Disciples are being made! Leaders are being equipped! Missions are starting churches!

God continues to answer your prayers on behalf of your mission effort! Keep praying and encouraging.

Heith Mitchell is the director of BMA of Texas Missions. Contact him at P.O. Box 73, Waxahachie, TX 75168, 972-923-0757 or hmittell@bmatexas.org. For more information, visit www.bmatexasmissions.org.



SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

The suffering one

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: January 20, 2019

TEXT: Mark 8:22-38

THE HOOK

It is ironic that the greatest Person who ever lived on this earth—Who was perfect—Who did all things well—Who has had more books and song written about him than any other person in history—Who fed thousands, healed blind people, calmed raging seas, was also known as the Man of Sorrows—the suffering One—the rejected One—the despised One—the persecuted One—the misunderstood One—the poverty-stricken One—the homeless One—yet, He was the God of the universe in the form of man.

THE BOOK

1. The misunderstood One. Jesus healed the blind man simply by spitting on his eyes and placing his hands on them. The man's sight was miraculously restored. But why did He not want the miracle to be broadcast in the town? After all it would appear that the publicity would attract more people to Him. But Jesus also knew the phenomenon of the miracle

would hinder the message. In Mark 1, when Jesus healed the leper, this is exactly what happened. In the man's excitement, he disobeyed, which prohibited Jesus from entering into the town openly.

This same problem exists today. This has been one of the problems with the charismatic movement—emphasis on the magnanimous detracts from the message.

2. The suffering One. He was rejected by the formal religionists of the day (verse 31). It was not that He taught anything which was contrary to the teachings of their historic Old Testament faith. But they accused Him of blasphemy when He declared that He is the Son of God. Even well-meaning Peter, rebuked Jesus for advocating His death, stating that he (Peter) would not permit that to come to pass. Little did Peter realize Jesus was stating that His suffering and death was the only way to provide eternal life.

3. The Only Way to Heaven. He declared that the only way to everlasting life was to deny self and follow Him. Wherever He went, He explained the principle of giving up in order to receive (verses 34-35). The only way one can gain eternal life is by forsaking one's own life. Solomon said

in Ecclesiastes 11:1—"Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days." Queen Esther knew that if she was to be the means of redemption for her people, she had to relinquish her own life by appearing before the king. Her great declaration of surrender was, ". . . and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law, and if I perish, I perish." It was like the time Abraham was willing to give up his beloved son, Isaac, on the altar of wood upon Mount Moriah, at the command of God. He said, "The Lord will provide."

THE LOOK

God made the greatest sacrifice anyone could ever make—giving up his only begotten Son to a lost and dying world. And yet, look at the heart of our Almighty God in Isaiah 53:10: "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; (Jesus) he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."

And it pleased the Father to do so. I cannot fathom it, but I accept it.

The transfigured one

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: January 27, 2019

TEXT: Mark 9:1-13

THE HOOK

We recently said a temporary goodbye to a beloved member of our church, "Snoopy" Campbell. The nickname was possibly because he was a retired airline pilot. Snoopy loved the Lord—loved people, and never failed to stop total strangers in restaurants and hospital waiting rooms and do magic tricks for them. He loved to laugh, and loved to bring joy to others. Although he and Susan drove 45 minutes from Arlington to attend our church, they were actively involved in any place or position in which they could serve. One of his favorite things to say was, "I don't want to die—I want to be 'twinkled'" (obviously referring to being changed in the moment in the twinkling of an eye). Although Snoopy went to glory without that particular "twinkle," someday a multitude of believers from all over the world will not taste death, but will be caught up "in the twinkling of an eye" (Mark 9:1; 1 Corinthians 15:51-58).

THE BOOK

1. The foretaste of glory (Mark 9:2). Jesus gave Peter, James and John a vivid preview of that grand and glorious day by being transfigured. The Amplified Bible renders it "resplendent with divine brightness."

His garments glistened to the point no launderer on earth

could bleach them nearly as white and shimmering. This is a foretaste of what glory will be like.

2. The recognition of the saints (Mark 9:4). Moses and Elijah, who also appeared with Christ on this Mount of Transfiguration, were holding a "protracted" conversation with Christ. All three were in a glorified state. Moses and Elijah were known by name, and they were recognizable. No one had to tell Peter, James and John who they were. Will you know your loved ones and friends in glory? Absolutely (1 Corinthians 13:12).

3. The longing for home (Mark 9:5). Peter's reaction to the glorious image was that he did not want to return from that mount—he wanted to build tents, and just remain there. How many times have you attended the funeral of a dearly departed saint, and to hear the preacher say, "We wouldn't call them back to this place of suffering for anything." Such a statement is likely influenced by Peter's desire to remain in that heavenly state.

4. The command to remain faithful until that day (Mark 9:9-10). God told Peter, James and John to keep quiet about the experience. Why was Jesus so adamant about Peter, James and John not divulging the incident to others? Possibly for the same reason Paul was prohibited from seeing things in the third Heaven, which were "...not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Corinthians 12:4-7). Evangelist Ron Dunn said God did it in order to keep Paul useable in this life. Perhaps Paul's witness would have been impeded by spiritual pride. Dunn said "There

is nothing that will so soon disqualify you for God's using you and glorifying Himself than your spiritual pride and presumption."

Something doesn't measure up today when a person who claims to have been "transfigured" into glory, returns and writes a New York Times best seller about the experience.

THE LOOK

Heaven is a glorious place. Songwriters tell us it will be "A Glad Reunion Day." It will be a place where one's treasures will be "laid up somewhere beyond the blue." Jim Hill penned the words "What a day, glorious day that will be." Eliza E. Hewitt wrote, "When we all see Jesus, we'll sing and shout the victory" (#281-Broadman Hymnal).

God has left so much of heaven a mystery, yet He has graciously given us small glimpses, enough to whet our appetites for it. But meanwhile, we are left here in this "vale of tears" to be a light in a world of darkness.

Paul Gauntt is the pastor of First, Palmer. He served for a number of years as the BMA of Texas Department of Church Ministries director. He has served several churches as pastor, and is a correspondent and featured article writer for Baptist Progress Contact him at pop.gauntt@gmail.com.



Has God forgotten about the small places cont.

class, but only through visionary one-another moments.

BIG VISION FOR SMALL PLACES

Almost immediately God began opening doors and stories of life change started happening. A house church in a town of 100 people just north of Levelland quickly drew more than 40 people each week. Another farmer, who for more than four years had hosted teens – and eventually their parents – in a weekly Bible study found connection and resourcing beyond his town of 120 residents. It did not take long for small gatherings of people in nearby “6-Man” towns to catch the 100 by One Hundred vision and commit to partner in the 100 by One Hundred calling. All across the hot, dry South Plains of west Texas, God’s big vision sprung up green and lush in small places.

Fifth Street Church also now feels a fresh wind of purpose. People are not just looking to neighboring towns but to neighborhoods right next door to the church. A new burden to reach Levelland drives the engine of gospel passion in her people. Sunday morning worship now fuels disciple-making, sending people out into every-day difference making, rather than merely drawing them into a weekly moment. Fifth Street’s leadership are growing in their commitment to only do ministry that can be reproduced in small places without the need for big facilities or big finances.

Pastor Chris knows that Fifth Street is not “there” yet, but remains confident that his church grows each day committed to head in the right direction. He knows, with unwavering confidence, that “small matters.” Chris is leading dozens of other leaders to see that seemingly insignificant 6-Man West

Texas towns are capable of seeing a significant impact.

God has not forgotten about the small church, He just desires big obedience more than big attendance. He waits for humble servant leaders like Pastor Chris Driver to submit their ways to the Lord. And God longs for more congregations like Fifth Street, willing to sacrifice personal comforts, in pursuit of His big vision for small places.

As a Lead Navigator and multi-site specialist for Auxano, Bryan enjoys connecting with the diverse staff and lay leader perspectives on the teams he consults. Bryan has a Master of Arts in Christian Education from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a B.A. in Architecture from Mississippi State University. He served as Youth Pastor at First Baptist Red Oak while in seminary. Bryan blogs regularly at launchclarity.com and recently released a podcast featuring pastors sharing moments of missional success at myministrybreakthrough.com.

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GOD'S GIFT

HEAVEN IS A FREE GIFT!

It is not earned or deserved. No amount of effort or good works can earn a place for you in heaven. Why? Because . . .

MAN IS A SINNER.

“For all have sinned . . .” (Rom. 3:23) Because of this, man cannot save himself. GOD. On the one hand, God is merciful and does not want to punish us. Yet God is just and must punish sin. God solved this problem for us in the Person of . . .

JESUS CHRIST.

He died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins and rose from the grave to purchase a place for us in heaven—*“the Lord has laid on Him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all”* (Isa. 53:6).

THE GIFT IS RECEIVED BY FAITH.

Saving faith is trusting in Jesus Christ alone for eternal life. It means resting on Christ alone and what He has done, rather than what you or I have done to get us into heaven. *“Believe on (or trust in) the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved”* (Acts 16:31).

SO MAY WE ASK . . .

Have you received God’s free gift of eternal life? The Bible assures us in 1 John 5:13 that we can know we have eternal life.

Do you know for sure that you are going to heaven when you die? The Bible says, *“Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* If you are willing to repent (turn away from your sin and to the Lord Jesus) you can receive the free gift of eternal life by simply praying: *Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner and do not deserve eternal life. But I believe You died and rose from the grave to purchase a place in heaven for me. Jesus, come into my life, take control of my life, forgive my sins, and save me. I am now placing my trust in You alone for my salvation, and I accept your free gift of eternal life.*

OBITUARIES

JURL NORRIS MITCHELL

Jurl Norris Mitchell, 84, of Conway, went to be with the Lord on Nov. 15, 2018. He was born July 1, 1934 in Elsimore, Missouri to the late R.P. Mitchell and Joanna Mitchell. Jurl is also preceded in death by his brother, Ronald V. Mitchell and an infant brother.



Left to cherish his memory is his wife of 67 years, Mary Ann Mitchell of Greenbrier; a son, Dwight (Cherri) Mitchell of Greenbrier; sisters, Arlyn (Gene) Gambill of Greenbrier, Karen (Tom) Mitchell of Little Rock; granddaughters, Devin (Bo) Wright of North Little Rock, Jordan and (Jesse) Harding of Hope; and three great-grandchildren, Gage Wright, Jaycee Harding, and Jaxon Harding.

Jurl was a graduate of Central Baptist College and the University of Central Arkansas and taught briefly at Vilonia High School. He was a Baptist minister for 66 years, pastoring a number of churches in Arkansas. The last 20 years prior to retirement, he directed Plain Path Ministries as a full-time evangelist preaching revivals mostly in the central states, but held many meetings in the Pacific northwest and in the northern U.S. At one point during these years he served on the board of directors

of Central Baptist College. In the early 70’s he and his wife served as missionaries to Bolivia and taught in Santa Cruz at the American School for Gulf Oil corporation. Having acquired a private pilot’s license, Jurl assisted in flying supplies into remote jungle mission areas of Bolivia and later he and his family lived and worked among the Chiquitano Indians of eastern Bolivia establishing a church in the village of San Simon. Giving an account of the years in Bolivia, Jurl authored two books. “En La Manana” and “Chiquitano”. He was an avid outdoorsman and loved to travel. He and Mary Ann traveled and camped over most of the continental U.S. and canoed many of the streams in Arkansas and Missouri, his most favorite being Current river which they floated a week at a time. Another one of his favorite pastimes was four wheeling in the Ozark mountains of Arkansas. In later years, Jurl and Mary Ann bicycled and continued this activity into their eighties cycling and camping all over Arkansas and Missouri.

Funeral services were Nov. 19 at Immanuel, Greenbrier, with Pastor Anthony Crocker, Bro. Gaylon King, and Bro. Troy Vaughn officiating.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Central Baptist College Ronald V. and Micki Mitchell Endowed Scholarship Fund, 1501 College Ave., Conway, AR 72034. Online guest book: www.rollerfuneralhomes.com/greenbrier

VIRGIE BROWN

Services for Virgie Brown, age 93, of Palestine were held Oct. 27, 2018 at Bailey and Foster Chapel in Palestine with Bro. Terry Skinner and Bro. Jacob Richardson officiating.



Mrs. Brown passed away at Palestine Regional Medical Center. She was born August 19, 1925, in Jacksonville, to Alvin Warren and Tennie DeMoss Warren. Mrs. Brown graduated from Jacksonville High School. She married Lee Brown, a Baptist minister on June 30, 1945. She played the piano for years for area churches including Sheridan Terrace Baptist Church where she was a member. She worked for Presley Crook Pharmacy and East Texas National Bank in Palestine.

Mrs. Brown was preceded in death by her parents, her husband Lee Brown, stepfather Jess Campbell and brother Gene Warren. She is survived by her daughters, Barbara Brown, Carolyn Platt and husband Ed, Sarah Waller and husband George, grandchildren Carrie Ryan and husband Robb, Bill Platt, and Jeff Platt, a brother David Warren and several nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to Jacksonville College, 105 B.J. Albritton, Jacksonville, TX., 75766 or to Texas Baptist Home for Children, P.O. Box 309, Waxahachie, TX. 75168.

EVENTS

CHURCH LEADERS CRUISE

DATE: January 19-24, 2019

REGISTER: discipleguide.org/cruise/

Upcoming Events

SPRING TERM 2019

January 14-May 8

Registration is ongoing.

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

December 21-January 4

(Offices will be closed)

HOMECOMING 2019

February 1-2



PERSONNEL & POSITIONS

AVAILABLE POSITIONS

PASTOR—First, Beckville is seeking a bivocational pastor. We are located at 209 East Grand Bluff, Beckville Texas. Send resume to Jerry Phillips at pycno1@windstream.net, cell 903-265-2338. ^{2/19}

PASTOR—New Bethlehem, Cut and Shoot is seeking a bivocational pastor. Send resume to 14630 Millmac Road, Conroe, Texas 77303 or nbbc2112@consolidated.net. ^{1/19}

PASTOR—Nat, Cushing is seeking a pastor. Send resume to P.O. Box 630884, Nacogdoches, Texas 75963.

PASTOR—Cross Roads, Winnsboro is seeking a pastor. Send resume to the church at 1314 County Road 4870, Winnsboro, Texas 75494. ^{1/19}

PASTOR—Antioch, Palestine (located 7 miles outside of Palestine on Highway 84 E.), is in search of a new pastor. Anyone interested should contact Lindy Nichols at 903-729-5249. ^{TEN}

MUSIC—First, DeSoto is seeking a part-time music minister. Must be a Christian. Must be able to play a musical instrument to lead the congregation in worship and provide lyrics for the congregation to participate in worship or use the material available. Time frame is Sunday (2 Services 10:45 a.m./6 p.m.) Wednesday (1 Service 6 pm). Send résumé to fbcdesototx@gmail.com to schedule an appointment. Call 972-223-7448 for more information. ^{TEN}

PASTOR—Hill Creek, Whitehouse is seeking a pastor. Send resume and recorded sermon to Hill Creek Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 1287, Whitehouse, Texas 75791. ^{TEN}

ORDINATION

SCOTT P. SCHULLE—An ordination service was held Sunday, December 2, at First Baptist Church, Maydelle to ordain Bro. Scott P. Schulle to the Gospel Ministry. Bro. Scott is the new pastor of Mount Cove, Rusk. Dr. Ronnie Johnson served as moderator of the presbytery and Dr. James Blaylock, clerk. Scott was introduced by his former pastor: Matthew Timmons. Dr. Philip Attebery questioned the candidate and his pastor, Bro. Rusty Sherman, brought the message. The ordination prayer was led by Bro. Gary Murph and the Bible was presented to Bro. Scott by Bro. William Vaught. Others who served on the presbytery were: Bro. Darren Vaught, Bro. David Roach, Bro. Carl Daniels and Bro. Robert Greenlee.

PASTOR & STAFF CHANGES

SCOTT P. SCHULLE is the new pastor of Mount Cove, Rusk.

PAT SHANNON is the new pastor of Simmons Hill, Diana.

CHURCHES in REVIEW

November 18, 2018

CHURCH	SS	WORSHIP	ADDITIONS
Anthony Drive, Ennis	53	113	
First, Omen		83	
First, Palmer	40	57	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	13	24	
Jackson, Joaquin	73	145	
Little Flock, Jewett	7	18	
New Hope, Mineola	74	105	3 by baptism
Olde Tyme, White Oak		44	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	44	54	
Rosewood, Gilmer	111	214	2 by baptism
Sand Flat, Grand Saline	45	74	
Sand Prairie, Normangee		48	4 by letter, 1 by baptism
Security Calvary, Cleveland	25	44	
Simmons Hill, Diana	18	26	

November 25, 2018

CHURCH	SS	WORSHIP	ADDITIONS
Anthony Drive, Ennis	43	83	
First, Omen	31	55	
First, Palmer	48	65	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	19	35	
Jackson, Joaquin	76	132	
Little Flock, Jewett	5	18	
New Hope, Mineola	90	128	1 by baptism
Olde Tyme, White Oak		42	
Rosewood, Gilmer	116	218	
Sand Flat, Grand Saline	41	65	
Sand Prairie, Normangee		45	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	28	40	
Simmons Hill, Diana	15	25	
Yellowpine Macedonia, Hemphill	15	20	

December 2, 2018

CHURCH	SS	WORSHIP	ADDITIONS
Anthony Drive, Ennis	43	98	
First, Omen	40	72	
First, Palmer	53	80	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	17	28	
Jackson, Joaquin	84	114	
New Hope, Mineola	91	159	1 by baptism
Olde Tyme, White Oak		47	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	39	57	
Rosewood, Gilmer	132	226	
Sand Flat, Grand Saline	41	65	
Sand Prairie, Normangee		48	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	17	40	
Simmons Hill, Diana	15	25	
Yellowpine Macedonia, Hemphill	15	25	

December 9, 2018

CHURCH	SS	WORSHIP	ADDITIONS
First, Omen	35	71	1 profession of faith, 1 by baptism
First, Palmer	43	127	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	16	40	
Jackson, Joaquin	78	118	
New Hope, Mineola	81	139	
Olde Tyme, White Oak		45	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	39	54	
Rosewood, Gilmer	119	205	
Sand Prairie, Normangee		45	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	16	35	
Yellowpine Macedonia, Hemphill	22	30	



JACKSONVILLE COLLEGE

The gift

By DR. MIKE SMITH

A gift is special. A box wrapped with seasonal paper and tied by a bow brings such excitement. At 10, I was eager to open the gift, and today, I still get the thrill of anticipation when a gift is given. I still find myself asking the same questions: "What's this? Is it for me?"

In a few short days on or around Dec. 25, families will gather and exchange gifts. I hope you have such a joyous time and do not have to be alone. However, circumstances may dictate that you are alone. Circumstances may even dictate that you may not receive a gift—but you can give a gift. There are numerous blessings in giving a gift. Consider giving an end of year financial gift to Jacksonville College.

Jacksonville College is the only faith-based two-year college left in Texas. We need your gifts to keep this college challenging minds and transforming lives. We recently had 33 salvation decisions in chapel. What other

college or ministry have you heard presenting the gospel with such results? We have at least 10 students who graduated last year and are now serving in local church ministry positions. Jacksonville College is currently in the process of reaccreditation, and finishing 2018 and 2019 financially strong is imperative. Recently, two donors have given large gifts, for which we are most appreciative. However, we still need more. Whatever amount you as an individual or as a church could give would be an added blessing.

Ways to give:

By mail:

Write a check to Jacksonville College.

Mail the check to 105 B.J. Albritton Drive, Jacksonville, Texas 75766.

Online:

Visit [www.jacksonville-college.edu/donate-support-](http://www.jacksonville-college.edu/donate-support-invest)

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God gave the greatest gift. As Matthew 1:21 states, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins."

Thank you for your gifts to Jacksonville College.

Merry Christmas!

Dr. Mike Smith is the president of Jacksonville College. Contact him at 105 B.J. Albritton Drive, Jacksonville, TX 75766, 903-586-2518 or msmith@jacksonville-college.edu.



MERRY
Christmas

We thank you for your support and wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

LOVE, *THE Jacksonville College Family*

"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE AMONG THOSE WITH WHOM HE IS PLEASED!"
(LUKE 2:14)

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