

Baptist Progress

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Recommendations to be presented to BMA of America in Little Rock

By **JERRY FULTON**
Baptist Progress Editor

The BMA of America will conduct annual business at the Statehouse Convention Center in Little Rock, Ark. April 28-30, 2014. On the agenda for the meeting are the considerations of numerous recommendations offered by trustees and committees of the national association. A summary of what will be recommend is listed below:

Proposed Amendments Statement of Principles of Cooperation

Article VII — Officers

Section 3: Amend as follows:

D. Department of Missions: Annually, this association shall elect an Executive Director of Missions, who *may* recommend Directors of Operations to be approved by the Advisory Committee and the Association or Missionary Committee, who will work together in the promotion of missions and in the distribution, according to the will of the churches, of all funds submitted to them.

Section 3: Amend by adding the following:

G. BMAA Foundation: Annually, this association shall elect an Executive Director of the BMAA Foundation to supervise and promote the work of this agency.

Article XV — BMAA Foundation

Section 1. Purpose: The BMAA Foundation exists to

endow participating departments and agencies of the Baptist Missionary Association of America with supplemental funding by investing gifts to the Foundation and distributing the earnings annually. It is a repository for the endowment of funds invested to produce ongoing support for those ministries.

Section 2. Governance: This association shall elect a BMAA Foundation board of directors consisting of nine (9) members with one (1) board seat reserved for a representative, nominated by the executive director, of each of the BMA departments/agencies participating in the association's estate planning program. Five (5) members shall constitute a quorum.

Section 3. Board of Directors Duties: The duties of the board of directors are:

A. To act in its field as an executive of the association between annual sessions, performing all duties entrusted to it by the association.

B. To utilize sound business principles in maintaining professional management of Foundation investments.

C. To fill any vacancy between sessions that may occur in the office of executive director.

D. To evaluate the performance of the executive director and recommend annually to the association a compensation schedule based on tenure, merit, and cost of living increases



for the executive director.

Article XVI: Amend to include the BMAA Foundation as a standing committee.

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Liberty Baptist Association hosts Texas Baptist Home Rally

By CHARLES JOHNSON
Pastor, Rosewood, Gilmer

Liberty Baptist Association held a rally for Texas Baptist Home on March 13, 2014, at Brumley Baptist Church in northern Upshur County. There were 16 churches and a total audience of 70 present for the meeting.

Host pastor Michael Phillips welcomed the messengers and turned the business meeting over to Bro. Michael Heuermann, association vice-moderator.

During the business session, the association voted to sponsor Vacation Bible School materials for Joe and Belinda Caudle to use when they visit missions in Mexico in April.

Texas Baptist Home President Eddie Marsh, a native of Liberty Association, presented the ministry work of the Home. He thanked the churches for their generous support of the Home. An offering of \$6,262 was received at the meeting for the Home.

Bro. Marsh also preached a message from John 2:13-17 concerning Jesus cleansing the temple in Jerusalem. He encouraged the churches and pastors to keep our places of worship pure by declaring the whole counsel of God.

The messengers enjoyed a delicious buffet snacking meal and fellowship provided by the host church after the meeting.

Liberty Association's next meeting will be a rally for Baptist Medical Missions International at Willow Oak Baptist Church at 7 p.m., May 15.



Missionary Care - Sarah (Hebert) Hamilton

By DR. JOHN DAVID SMITH
BMAA Missions Executive Director

Sarah (Hebert) Hamilton served as a BMAA missionary in the Philippines from 2010-2013. Her role on the missionary team there consisted of teaching classes at the BMA Bible College, discipling young ladies and serving as a counselor to the Bible college students. Sarah returned from the mission field in 2013 and was married to Chris Hamilton. Chris recently completed his undergraduate degree at Central Baptist College and plans to attend seminary later this year.

When Sarah transitioned back to the US, BMAA Missions' leadership felt this would be a golden opportunity to invite Sarah to be a part of our Missionary Care Team and serve alongside Bro. Jerry Kidd in this ministry. Missionary Care is the arm of BMAA Missions that invests in the spiritual, emotional, physical and family lives of our missionaries before they go to the field, while they are there and as they are readjusting to their home culture when they return. They minister to those who are on the front lines of missions all over the world.

Sarah has adapted well to her new part-time role with BMAA Missions. Even though she is part-time, her support structure is "65/35" where she is responsible to raise 65 percent of her salary. We would like to recommend Sarah to speak at your church concerning Missionary Care and her role in this ministry. She grew up in GMA, and she would make an excellent speaker in those contexts as well.

What a great opportunity to have someone serving with us in this vital ministry who has a missions degree, has served on the field, and has a heart for missionaries and their specific challenges. If you feel led to partner with Sarah or invite her to speak at your church, you may contact her at 662-401-5673 or sarah@bmaam.com.



▲ Sarah and Chris Hamilton

DiscipleGuide making changes in challenging times



By SCOTT ATTEBERY

The challenges facing printing companies and ministries continue to exist and are accelerating. Digital platforms are causing those who make their living by the printed page to examine every option available to remain competitive and viable. DiscipleGuide is no exception. As a result of decreasing sales in 2013 and because of our responsibility to be good stewards, we are examining all options to continue to bring you the finest Bible studies at a price that our churches can afford.

Because every church is important to us, we want you to fully understand any transitions we make. Please note the following changes as you are preparing to order for the Summer 2014 quarter:

Outside Publisher Ordering: In the past, we have served as a "middle man" for other publishers by offering their products to our churches. In many cases, this has caused longer wait times and higher shipping rates for our churches. To help your church enjoy faster service and lower shipping rates, we are passing along the direct ordering contacts for each publisher to you. A list of direct-ordering information per publisher is posted on discipleguide.org.

DiscipleKids: Starting with this summer quarter, our DiscipleKids Activity Sheets & Leader Guide will be bundled together as a download-and-print product. Instead of paying \$2.30 for the Activity Sheets and \$5.95 for the Leader Guide, you will get both for only \$2 per child. **The visual packs, DVD, and enhanced CD will still be available as physical products.**

Compass Point: We are discontinuing Compass Point due to low demand. Please consider asking your classes who use Compass Point to transition to Compass for this summer quarter.

Return Policy Changes: Effective May 1, all sales will be considered final. DiscipleGuide will gladly correct shipments and/or process exchanges for orders arriving with incorrect contents or quantities. All exchanges must include an authorization number from DiscipleGuide customer service (800-333-1442, info@discipleguide.org).

Thank you in advance for your understanding. Your continued investment into DiscipleGuide helps us continue investing in your church.

If you have questions, please contact us at info@discipleguide.org.

BMAA Missions offers short-term missions training



By DONNY PARRISH
BMAA Missions

Short-Term Mission Teams from all across the BMA landscape are gearing up for a busy summer. More and more churches are allowing their members to get first-hand missions experience by taking a team on a short-term mission trip. Whether they are traveling to a foreign country or right here in America, Short-Term Missions has gone from being a culture phenomena to a tremendous missions movement across the American Christian landscape, including the BMA. If done well, these trips can be a wonderful tool that God will use to enhance the ministry of the missionary on the field. If done poorly, it can become an albatross that can damage the missionary's long-term success and actually hurt the cause of Christ.

BMA Missions is committed to helping our churches get to the mission field and do a great job of ministry once they arrive. BMA Missions is offering free on-line training for short-term mission teams. At <http://bmamissions.org/shorttermtraining/> you will find great teaching on how to prepare and then carry out a short-term mission trip for your church. There are tremendous video lessons designed for your mission team to watch together and corresponding printed training materials for your team to download. A veteran Short-Term Team Leader with years of mission trip leadership experience teaches each video lesson. All of the videos and materials are offered free of charge.

Your BMA Missions team urges all Short-Term Missionaries going to take the time to watch these videos with their team and to download the corresponding printed materials. Mission Trips are only as effective as the time that is spent in training. Disastrous mistakes can be avoided if teams and team leaders will give themselves time to be trained by others. Tremendous blessings can be realized if teams are truly prepared before they leave for the field.

BMA Missions wants your church to experience the fulfillment of taking the Gospel of Christ to the nations. They are committed to providing each Short-Term Missions Team the highly quality training so that each trip can fulfill its ultimate purpose: To make the name of Jesus more famous around the world and to enhance the ministry of the local missionary on the field.

For any questions you might have concerning BMA Short-Term Missions contact Donny Parrish at 972-571-0357 or at donny@bmaamerica.org.

Recommendations to be presented to BMA of America in Little Rock cont.



2014 Annual Report to the BMA of America

Dr. John M. Adams, Executive Director

Recommendations

1. That our local associations, local and state WMA and Brotherhoods, and our local churches be encouraged to give a financial gift or budgeted monthly gifts to Moral Action. These funds will strengthen this ministry.
2. That our churches and pastors embrace and support our nation by participating in and promoting the National Day of Prayer (NDOP), Thursday, May 1, 2014. (nationaldayofprayer.org) Join other Americans in prayer for our nation. Meetings can be conducted at town halls, city halls, county courthouses, flag poles, states houses and churches.
3. That all our BMA churches schedule, June 29 or July 6, 2014, as the Moral Action "Freedom Offering" Sunday. This is an opportunity to honor or give memorials (if desired) for our soldiers, past and present.
4. That Dr. John M. Adams, Executive Director, represent the BMA of American in Washington, D.C., at the Watchmen on the Wall Conference, and by encouraging and contacting our United States Senators, Congressmen and Congresswomen, and other Christian moral/political organizations.
5. That our Baptist Missionary Association of America reaffirm and approve these five (5) Moral Action resolutions and that we sincerely pray for our nation and Christian homes.
6. That we humbly request that these resolutions be printed in our BMA state newspapers and local church bulletins.
7. That Dr. John M. Adams stand as a nominee for Executive Director of Moral Action.
8. That the proposed budget be approved.

Coordinating Council

Paul Bullock, Chairman

Recommendations

1. That the BMAA Foundation be established as an Agency of the Baptist Missionary Association of America. The purpose of this initiative is to provide one Foundation which any department or agency of the association can utilize for investing endowment funds. Although the foundation has been a subsidiary of Lifeword and functioned to serve only Lifeword since its inception in 1998, its purpose, as defined within its Articles of Incorporation, allows it to serve any department of the Baptist Missionary Association of America. Separate accounts will be maintained for each entity with no commingling of funds. Existing funds donated to the former Lifeword Foundation will become part of the Lifeword account in the BMAA Foundation. Distributions shall be declared from the previous year's earnings and/or undistributed earnings from earlier periods. In making distributions, the Board shall follow the stated direction of the donors

of restricted gifts. Unrestricted earnings shall be distributed based upon the calculation of a department or agency's percentage of investments compared to the total investments of the Foundation. In addition to separate accounts for each BMA department or agency, a general account for the BMA of America will be maintained to provide a repository for those with a desire to benefit the entire work of the association. Earnings from the BMA of America account will be distributed among the entities of the BMA of America on an annual basis according to the following formula. A department or agency's percentage of annual earnings shall be derived by dividing its total operating expenses by the total operating expenses of all BMAA departments and agencies for the given year (calculation excludes capital spending). Departments and agencies which participate in the association's estate planning program will equally share annual funding of the Foundation's budget.

2. That the current number of Foundation board members be reduced from fifteen (15) to nine (9) and that the terms of board members be changed from three (3) years to five (5) years to be consistent with the other agencies of the association.
3. That one (1) board position be reserved for a representative, nominated by the executive director, of each of the BMA departments/agencies participating in the association's estate planning program and that five (5) of the current board members be allowed to complete their terms of service for continuity.
4. That board member nominees be presented annually by the nominating committee and elected by the association.
5. That the current Foundation Executive, Charles Attebery, be elected to serve as Interim Executive Director of the BMAA Foundation on a part-time basis.
6. That Article XVI of the Statement of Principles of Cooperation be amended to include the BMAA Foundation as a standing committee.
7. That Article VII, Section 3 of the Statement of Principles of Cooperation be amended by adding the following:
G. BMAA Foundation: Annually, this association shall elect an Executive Director of the BMAA Foundation to supervise and promote the work of this agency.
8. That the following be added to the Statement of Principles of Cooperation as Article XV and that the remaining articles be renumbered sequentially.

Article XV — BMAA Foundation

Section 1. Purpose: The BMAA Foundation exists to endow participating departments and agencies of the Baptist Missionary Association of America with supplemental funding by investing gifts to the Foundation and distributing the earnings annually. It is a repository for the endowment of funds invested to produce ongoing support for those ministries.

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- B. To utilize sound business principles in maintaining professional management of Foundation investments.
- C. To fill any vacancy between sessions that may occur in the office of executive director.
- D. To evaluate the performance of the executive director and recommend annually to the association a compensation schedule based on tenure, merit, and cost of living increases for the executive director.

Lifeword Media Ministries

Steve Crawley, Executive Director

Recommendations

1. That we adopt the proposed operating budget for 2014.
2. That the 35th annual Walk for the World be held October 15, 2014 and for churches not participating in the Walk to set aside a Lifeword Sunday in the month of October.
3. That the housing allowance be set at \$2,000 per month for the executive director, \$2,000 per month for the broadcast officer, \$2,000 per month for the programming director.
4. That the Lifeword executive director's salary remain at the 2013 level of \$62,552, plus one-half of Social Security / Medicare, health & dental insurance, retirement deposit equaling 6 percent of salary and a car provided.
5. That Steve Crawley stand as a nominee for Executive Director.

Committee on Arrangements

Charles Attebery, Chairman

Recommendation

That the 2017 meeting of the Baptist Missionary Association of America be held May 1-3 at the Arlington Convention Center in Arlington, Texas and that the Sheraton Arlington be designated as the primary hotel.

Ministers Resource Services

Ron Chesser, Executive Director

Recommendations

1. That Ron Chesser stand as nominee for Executive Director of Ministers Resource Services.
2. That \$18,000.00 of the Executive Director's salary be

Recommendations continued on p. 8



www.bmatexas.org

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Clearing up a few things about the BMA

In my almost 10 years as editor, I have noticed some common confusion and misunderstandings about our association(s). Below, I have compiled a list that will hopefully be informative to our readers.

1. The Baptist Missionary Association of Texas and the Baptist Missionary Association of America are two separate associations. A church can be a member of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas, but choose not to be a member of the Baptist Missionary Association of America, or choose to be a member of both associations. Also, local associations, such as the Ellis-Hill Baptist Association, are separate associations from the BMA of Texas and the BMA of America. A church can be a member of a local association without being a member of the BMA of Texas or the BMA of America, or can choose to be a member of two or all three associations.
2. The Baptist Missionary Association of Texas has four departments:
 - a. Baptist Missionary Loan Association, located in Waxahachie
 - b. BMA of Texas Department of Missions (State Missions), located in Waxahachie
 - c. *Baptist Progress*, located in Waxahachie
 - d. Jacksonville College, located in Jacksonville
 - e. Texas Baptist Home for Children, located in Waxahachie
3. The Texas Baptist Home for Children hasn't been an orphanage in decades. Although TBHC does have children who live on campus, many of the children in their care live with foster parents in several different communities. The ministries of TBHC far exceed that of an orphanage. For more information, visit their website, www.tbhc.org.
4. The Baptist Missionary Association of America has four departments and two agencies:
 - a. BMA Theological Seminary, located in Jacksonville
 - b. BMA of America Department of Missions, located in Little

Rock, but relocating to Conway, Ark.

- c. DiscipleGuide Church Resources (includes publications ministry, conference ministry, camp ministries), located in three places—publications (Texarkana, but relocating to Conway, Ark., if approved by BMA of America), conference (Conway, Ark.), camp (Gary, Texas)
 - d. Lifeword Media Ministries, located in Conway, Ark.
 - e. Moral Action, an agency of the BMA of America, located in Mantachie, Miss.
 - f. Ministers Resource Services, an agency of the BMA of America, located in Texarkana
5. Jacksonville College and BMA Theological Seminary are two different educational institutions, belonging to two different associations that happen to be located in the same town—Jacksonville, Texas. Again, Jacksonville College belongs to the BMA of Texas and BMA Theological Seminary belongs to the BMA of America.
 6. Speaking of the seminary, the president's first name is spelled Charley, not Charlie (Dr. Charley Holmes).
 7. The BMA of Texas has a relational agreement with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, not the Southern Baptist of Texas Convention. There is an "s" at the end of the word "Baptists" in the Convention's name.



▲ Jerry Fulton

I will compile some other helpful lists for future issues. It should be fun.



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What's going on with your kids?

By DR. TRAVIS PLUMLEE

Parenting is the most important job you will ever have. It requires sacrifice, selflessness and the giving of your life to another. It is investing in someone else. God has placed His children into our care as a gift from Him and we are to be good stewards of these gifts. Psalm 127:3

If we are going to be effective as parents, then what areas of our child's life should we be involved in? All of it!

While most parents agree that they should be involved in every aspect of their child's life because that is what parenting is all about, when entering into a discussion with parents, I find many who are unaware of areas they should know about their child but do not know. There are some parents who are even apathetic towards certain issues not realizing the dangers associated for their children without direct parental guidance.

Know the home where they roam. You should be very aware of what goes on in the home that you allow your children to go visit. It impacts them greatly. Everything you do at home can be undone by negative imprinting from a home that is dysfunctional or sinful. They may be good neighbors, they may be Christian and even go to your church, but it doesn't mean that you don't need to be aware of the home life into which you are sending your impressionable child.

Just because parents are home does not mean there is parental supervision. Listen for your kids to tell you stories that they think are funny, but you see as a red flag warning of unsupervised children. Do the mom and dad fight? Are there live-ins in the house? What kind of movies do they watch? Your child may be playing in a back bedroom, but can still walk into a room and hear cursing. Are there older teens in the home? You don't have to do a full blown inquisition, but listening and even just visiting with the parents can help you get a fairly accurate picture of whether this is a safe home for your child to be in physically and spiritually.

Know every friend your children have. One of the

biggest ways good kids get messed up is when they start hanging with the wrong crowd. Read I Corinthians 15:33 and II Corinthians 6:14-17. You can tell they are being unwisely influenced when they come home with a new disrespectful attitude, or they come home with words that are not appropriate.

If they mention a name in conversation that you do not know, then follow up on that. If one of their friends refuses to come to your home, that is a red flag. If you listen to a friend when they are in your home, and you are uneasy with their morals or attitudes, that is a red flag. You should absolutely know every child that is in your child's contacts in their phone. This is not invasion of privacy; this is protecting your children. If they do not want you to do this, then they simply can relinquish their phone.

You should look at their pictures. Too many kids text messages and pictures that are inappropriate without sometimes realizing they are. This is why you have to have a talk with them about being responsible when in social media. They may not know, but you better explain about texting naked pictures of themselves. Have a frank discussion about pornography on the internet. Sadly, these talks are needing to be moved down to about age 10 or 11 depending upon the child's maturity level. About 90 percent of Christian boys have already looked at pornography before they reach the teen years. If you are uncomfortable with these discussions, then find a youth minister or pastor who can do this.

Single moms should find a godly male role model relative or pastor to discuss "the talk" with boys. A mom is not the best person to discuss sexuality with a boy. No child or teen should have any social media like Twitter or Facebook accounts that you do not have the access code number to and periodically check. What your child posts on social media websites is their testimony to the world. Plus, it can come back to haunt them. Are their social media

pages reflective of your Christian values? I have seen some teens that "friend" me on Facebook that I have to decline because their profile picture is vulgar or contains alcohol in it.

Do you know what video games they are buying? What are they like? The only way to know is to view them the first time or study on the internet about the content before they are purchased. Always stay very involved in their choice of music. Music stirs their heart. What is the music they are listening to stirring their heart toward, heaven or worldliness, purity or sensuality? Colossians 3:2

James 1:27 says that you are to keep your mind from being polluted by the ways of the world. I cannot ever express how the seeds of rebellion and sensuality and carnal thoughts are learned through today's secular music. Most music today is wicked and pushes one thing onto your children's mind.

So many of the problems that parents face with their children could be avoided if parents would just be more involved with their children. Everything that their eyes take in and their ears listen to must be monitored. A great deal of whom your children are becoming is determined by who they hang out with. This is not being nosy, this is being a responsible parent.

Children are a precious gift from God. The world is too wicked for us parents to allow them to have free reign. Our job is to be involved and help them make godly choices.

Dr. Travis Plumlee is a full-time professional speaker and leads Family Ark Ministries. He is national board certified as a therapist/specialist in various areas of human behavior. For more information or to contact him, visit www.travisplumlee.com.



Pastors, what is your value?

By SCOTT ATTEBERY

First chore. That's monumental in every child's life, right? For my son, Bryce, the moment came recently when I told him I would pay him a nickel for every time he made his bed.

A few weeks into his new chore, things have been going well (and Bryce is getting rich).

This morning, Bryce told me that I forgot to pay him for the day before. Oops.

I thought this would be a great learning moment, so I asked him, "What coin could I give you that would equal two nickels?"

His first guess was, "that big silver one." Then, he was certain it must be a penny.

After I pulled out a dime, he actually laughed and said, "Dad, that one's too small!"

I had forgotten about the mysterious way that the size of our coins doesn't necessarily match the size of their value. It's a good lesson for all of us, isn't it? (Especially for pastors).

Pastors, we all know that the size of our attendance, budget or facilities doesn't equate with our value as ministers of the gospel. We remind each other of this often (although we rarely act as if we

believe it).

But when was the last time someone reminded you of where your value as a pastor *does* come from?

It doesn't come from your achievements. It's not derived from your reputation. It has nothing to do with your gifts, talents or abilities.

Your value as a pastor is 100 percent in Christ.

While that sounds simple enough, let me elaborate on what that does and doesn't mean.

It doesn't mean:

- 1) The more you do to please Christ, the more valuable you are.
- 2) The more you pastor as He would pastor, the more valuable you are.

While pleasing Christ and conforming to His image are both vitally important, your value does not lie in becoming those things. It lies in the fact that 1) because of justification, you are already pleasing to Christ and, *therefore*, 2) because of sanctification you are becoming more like Christ.

It does mean:

1) Your value as a pastor is based upon Christ's righteousness. You please God because Jesus pleases the Father.

2) Your value as a pastor drives your ministry and is not a result of your ministry.

During the inevitable difficulties of ministry, we are all tempted to get this backwards. But remember, your value is not a product of what you've done, but of what Christ has done for you and is doing in you. And anything that He does through you is all to His glory.

Whether you feel like a "penny pastor," a "quarter pastor," a "nickel pastor" or a "dime pastor," consider *changing* your perspective. Trust me, it's *valuable*!

Scott Attebery is the executive director of DiscipleGuide Church Resources. Contact him by email at scott@discipleguide.org, on Facebook: Scott Attebery or Twitter @scottattebery. Visit www.DiscipleGuide.org.



He's the One That I Want

By SHARON COLE

Makaye Key, president of the Texas Girls Missionary Auxiliary welcomed approximately 96 girls and counselors to the annual houseparty of the Texas Girls Missionary Auxiliary on March 14-15, 2014. The houseparty was held at Daniel Springs Encampment in Gary. Bro. Eddie Marsh, president of Texas Baptist Home for Children and Bro. Mike Smith, president of Jacksonville College, added to everyone's enjoyment by strumming special (inflatable) guitars to the tune of the houseparty theme song, "He's the One That I Want."

Approximately \$2,800 was raised for this year's project, Trevor and Nafisa Morris, missionaries to Ecuador. New Harmony, Tyler was recognized for giving the most money to the project. The new project for 2014-2015 is Matthew and Amy Prather, North American missionaries to Celina. A goal of \$3,000 was set.

Mary Kate Key presented a song, "Lead Me." Special recognition was given to Mrs. Glenda Haynes and Mrs. Peggy Martin as writers of the GMA Forward Step lessons. A rising appreciation was given to these faithful, dedicated ladies who have been great examples of what God expects of girls in GMA. Tatum Wisdom blessed our hearts with singing "Don't Deserve You."

Bro. David Fortner, youth pastor of Tundra, Canton, was special speaker for the houseparty. He spoke to the girls about David. Even though David made some wrong choices, he still was called "a man after God's own heart." We can win some of life's battles if we wait on the Lord and trust in the Him to give us strength.

Friday night each participating church presented a talent where a '50's song was rewritten and performed. Gold records were given to each participating individual or church.

New officers were elected for the year including: President-McKenna Wilson; 1st Vice President-Kaitlyn Keel; 2nd Vice President-Courtney Rutledge; 3rd Vice President; Rebecca Holmes; Secretary/Historian-Holly Griffin; Adult Secretary/Historian-Jayna Williams; Project Promoter-Kim Cade; Song Leader-Patricia Hernandez; Adult Song Leader-Heather Pierce; Treasurer-Jeannie Walker; Assistant Treasurer-Nancy Cranney. Texas WMA President, Diana Morris, installed the officers making ice cream sundaes for each one to illustrate how we are to choose Jesus first in life.

Vanilla ice cream in the dish first represents Jesus washing our sins white as snow. Other flavors of ice cream, sprinkles, nuts, whipped cream and cherry represents friends that we can share Jesus with because Jesus had many different kinds of friends. Everyone was later treated to ice cream sundaes. Each girl participating was recognized for passing a Forward Step or Salvation. Diana Morris gave a charge and word of encouragement to reigning queens and all who were present to have the courage of David when he met Goliath to not let giants in their life stop them and depend on God. Mrs. ReNae Eyre led the Miss/Jr Miss Presentation. Given the honor of Miss GMA is Kaitlynn Keel of Wood County. Junior Miss GMA is Alyssa Rogers of Ellis Hill District. Gifts to the girls were presented by Texas WMA, Texas GMA and *Baptist Progress*. Representing Jacksonville College was Sandra Clay, who presented Miss GMA a scholarship of \$2,000.

The meeting closed with MaKaye Key passing the gavel to President McKenna Wilson. We are all looking forward to next year March 20-21, 2015.



▲ Officers 2013-14

Back row: Kaitlyn Keel, Project Promoter; Natalie Oates, 1st Vice President; Mary Kate Key, Alt. Jr. Miss GMA; Hayley Maynard, 2nd Vice President; Courtney Rutledge, Secretary; Makaye Key, President; McKenna Wilson, Song Leader
Front: Rebekah Holmes, 3rd Vice President/Miss GMA; Elizabeth Ricks, Jr. Miss GMA; Nancy Key, Historian



▲ Officers 2014-15

Standing: Rebekah Holmes, 3rd Vice President; Kaitlyn Keel, 1st Vice President/Miss GMA; Courtney Rutledge, 2nd Vice President
Sitting: Holly Griffin, Secretary/Historian; McKenna Wilson, President; Patricia Hernandez, Song Leader; Rikki Burch, Project Promoter

Sharon Cole is the editor for the Texas WMA. Contact her at S9Co@aol.com. For more information on the Texas WMA, visit www.texaswma.com.





World Vision

World Vision decision anti-Gospel, Moore says

By DIANA CHANDLER

NASHVILLE (BP) -- The decision of World Vision U.S. to extend hiring to legally married gay couples is no surprise, but empowers darkness and attacks the Gospel, Southern Baptist ethicist Russell D. Moore blogged Monday (March 24).

The Christian hunger relief group's U.S. board of directors has voted to allow the employment of those engaged in legal homosexual marriages, World Hunger U.S. President Richard Stearns announced in Monday's Christianity Today. World Vision had notified its staff of the change in a statement, citing a desire for cross-denominational unity.

But the hiring change is a mistake, Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, wrote at his blog russellmoore.com. The change should not be embraced as a show of unity, he wrote.

"This isn't, as the World Vision statement (incredibly!) puts it, the equivalent of a big tent on baptism, church polity, and so forth," Moore noted. "At stake is the gospel of Jesus Christ. If sexual activity outside of a biblical definition of marriage is morally neutral, then, yes, we should avoid making an issue of it. If, though, what the Bible clearly teaches and what the church has held for 2,000 years is true, then refusing to call for repentance is unspeakably cruel and, in fact, devilish."

"We empower darkness when we refuse to warn of judgment," Moore wrote. "We empower the darkness when we refuse to offer forgiveness through the blood of the cross."

World Vision is not endorsing same-sex marriage, but has chosen to defer to the authority of local churches on the issue, Stearns said in his statement to World Vision staff. The group will continue to require sexual abstinence among unmarried employees and sexual fidelity within marriage, he said.

"World Vision's mission is not the same as that of our local churches; nor are we a body of theologians whose responsibility is to render biblical advice and interpretations of theological matters," Stearns informed his staff.

"We are, as our mission statement so clearly expresses, 'an international partnership of Christians whose mission is to follow our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in working with the poor and oppressed to promote human transformation, seek justice, and bear witness to the good news of the Kingdom of God.'" Stearns stated. "And it is this mission that unites us—Baptist, Pentecostal, Seventh-day Adventist, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Orthodox,

nondenominational, etc.—more than 50 different expressions of the Christian faith represented within [World Vision U.S.] alone."

Jeff Iorg, president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, told Baptist Press in an email interview that the decision reveals World Vision's true character.

"World Vision's leaders have revealed what they really believe and where they really stand—and the truth about them is disheartening," Iorg wrote. "When any Christian organization denies the authority of Scripture—no matter their convoluted explanation—they have compromised their integrity and initiated their demise."

"World Vision's claims they are not making a theological decision or taking a position on these issues is incomprehensible," Iorg stated. "Every decision by Christian leaders is grounded in theological conviction and every position—including claiming not to take one—amounts to taking a position."

Moore wrote, "We're entering an era where we will see who the evangelicals really are, and by that I mean those who believe in the gospel itself, in all of its truth and all of its grace."

"There's an entire corps of people out there who make their living off of evangelicals but who are wanting to 'evolve' on the sexuality issue without alienating their base," Moore blogged. "I don't mind people switching sides and standing up for things that they believe in. But just be honest about what you want to do. Don't say 'Hath God said?' [as when Satan tempted Eve in Genesis 3:1] and then tell us you're doing it to advance the gospel and the unity of the church."

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President Albert Mohler blogged at albertmohler.com that World Vision's decision is misleading.

"The worst aspect of the World Vision U.S. policy shift is the fact that it will mislead the world about the reality of sin and the urgent need of salvation," Mohler wrote. "Willingly recognizing same-sex marriage and validating openly homosexual employees in their homosexuality is a grave and tragic act that confirms sinners in their sin -- and that is an act that violates the gospel of Christ."

World Vision identifies itself as a "Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice," working in nearly 100 countries.

Missionary Hales spends time in Nicaragua



▲ (r - l) Chris Huson, Tommy Rose, Oscar Gaitan, and me (Jesse Hales) in Nicaragua.

By JESSE HALES
BMAA Missionary

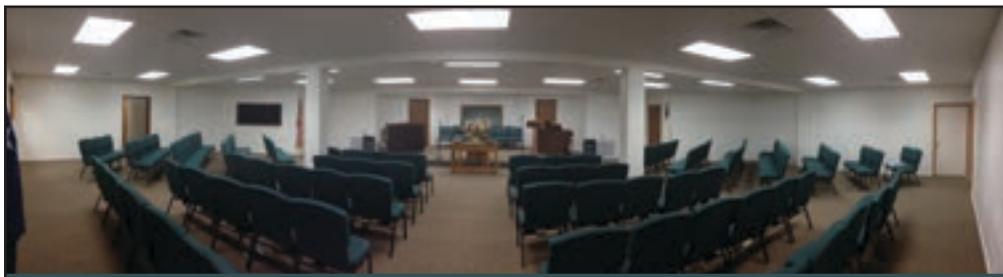
This past weekend, I was blessed with the opportunity to spend a few days in Nicaragua with two other BMA language students. We stayed in Catalina where Oscar Gaitan pastors, and we spent that Saturday getting to know him and his family while they allowed us to tag along with them and a group of veterinarians they were hosting from the states. It was a great opportunity to get to know a pastor friend and my fellow missionaries better.

Thank you so much for your time and your ministry. That's the main reason I was hoping to go on the trip in the first place. As you know though, God always seems to have more in

store for you than you anticipate.

I never expected to find myself in Nicaragua witnessing to a guy from Iowa about the importance of knowing you have placed your faith in Jesus to forgive you of your sins. Thankfully, that conversation was held in English and there wasn't any question of whether the point was received clearly. It's amazing how God sets up divine appointments, though, and I'm so very thankful for those opportunities.

Thank you for allowing God to use you in our lives through your prayers and support. May God continue to bless you abundantly.



SANCTUARY DEDICATION SUNDAY

April 13, 2014

CRAFT BAPTIST CHURCH

727 CR 1629 • Jacksonville, Texas

903-586-2616 church

903-570-9519 Pastor Wade Holman

Everyone is invited to join us for a worship dedication service to give thanks to God for His new sanctuary.

Morning service begins at 10:30, meal provided for everyone, Dedication service begins at 1:30 pm.

Recommendations to be presented to BMA of America in Little Rock cont.



designated as housing allowance.

3. That the budget of \$252,034.08 be approved.
4. That a moment of silence be observed and a special prayer be offered for the families and churches of the 22 members of the Ministers Benevolent Society and Auxiliary who passed away during 2013.
5. We urge each church to enroll her pastor and church staff in the BMA Retirement Plan at Ministers Resource Services.
6. We urge our pastors, their wives and each local church to enroll in the Ministers Benevolent Society and Auxiliary.
7. We urge each church to include Ministers Resource Services in her monthly budgeted offerings to the various departments of the BMA of America and that each church also receive a special offering on Sunday, October 26, 2014 for Ministers Resource Services as we celebrate Pastor Appreciation month throughout the BMAA.
8. We urge continued prayer for the Executive Director, Board of Trustees and Office Staff of Ministers Resource Services.

BMA Theological Seminary

Dr. Charley Holmes, President

Recommendations

1. Affirm the proposed budget
2. Reaffirm the appointment of Dr. Charley Holmes as president
3. Each church observe Sunday, May 18, 2014, as Graduation Sunday with
 - a. special prayer for our graduates
 - b. receive a special scholarship offering to support the training of future BMA pastors and missionaries on that Sunday

DiscipleGuide Church Resources

Scott Attebery, Executive Director

Recommendations

1. We recommend that Scott Attebery stand as a nominee for DCR Executive Director.
2. We recommend the adoption of the revised 2014 DCR budget.
3. We recommend the relocation of the DCR Texarkana offices to the Lifeword building in Conway, Arkansas, and the liquidation of the Texarkana properties.

Department of Missions

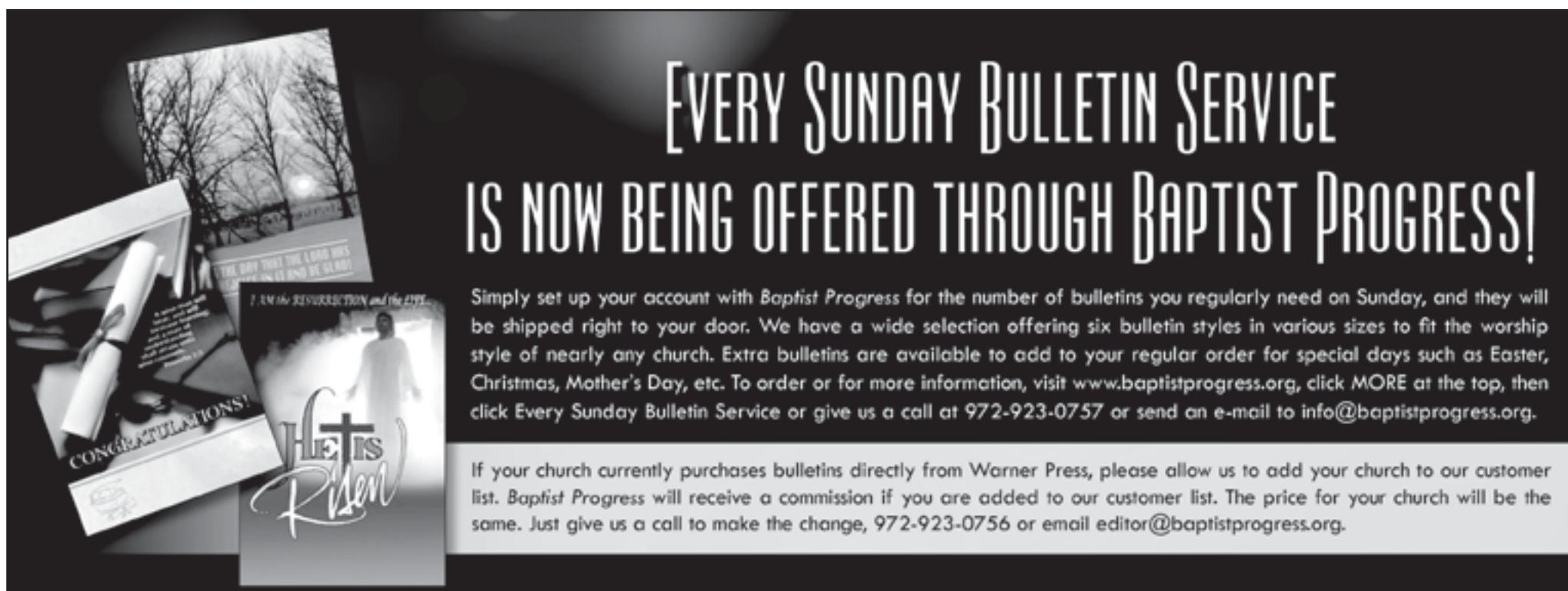
Dr. John David Smith, Executive Director

Recommendations

1. We recommend the election of Jamshed Hadyat as North American church planter in the greater Chicagoland area at a \$2,000 a month stipend.
2. We recommend the election of Trevor Dodson as an associate missionary to work with Ali Chambers in Memphis, TN., at a stipend of \$2,000 a month.
3. We recommend the election of B.J. Sanders as international missionary to Papua New Guinea.
4. We recommend that we endorse Anders Lee as North American church planter to DeSoto County, MS.
5. We recommend a change of roles for Buddy Johnson to become Training Coordinator for International Missions.
6. We recommend that Buddy Johnson move to a regularly funded missionary salary and that he will be allowed to use 40 percent of the finances he raises for the trips he takes.
7. We recommend that national Michel Poirer be allowed to make more frequent trips to Haiti to help with the new church plants and to do more fundraising for

Haiti.

8. We recommend the election of Justin Burdick as an Associate North American Church Planter to work with Anders Lee in Southaven, MS. at a stipend of \$1,000 a month
9. We recommend that the Missions Office become part of an LLC initiated for shared ownership of the Conway campus and for classifying shared employees.
10. We recommend a change of fields for international missionary Fil Kakilala from Hawaii to the Philippines.
11. We recommend a change of status for Prashant Prakash from National missionary to American missionary status
12. We recommend a status change for Sarah Hebert Hamilton from the Philippines to Missionary Care.
13. We recommend the approval of the 2014 budget.
14. We recommend that the salary of Ashraf Sara be the same instead of reducing his salary after three years, but this salary would be examined annually.
15. We recommend the pilot church planting program in Colorado.
16. We recommend a change in the BMAA Principles of Cooperation (Coordinating Council, 2005), Article VII, D. to say "Department of Missions: Annually, this association shall elect an Executive Director of Missions, who may recommend Directors of Operations to be approved by the Advisory Committee and the Association or Missionary Committee, who will work together in the promotion of missions and in the distribution, according to the will of the churches, of all funds submitted to them."
17. We recommend the housing allowance for all directors be set at \$24,000.00 for the year 2014.
18. We recommend that Dr. John David Smith stand as a nominee for the position of Executive Director of Missions.



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The advertisement features a collage of various bulletin covers on the left side. One cover prominently displays the text 'CONGRATULATIONS!' and another shows a person in a white robe with the text 'LET US RISE'. The background of the advertisement is dark with white text.

Mission Life

By **JERRY BURNAMAN**

Today I'm sharing some thoughts with you about the Baptist Missionary Loan Association. The BMLA cooperates with BMA churches of Texas to provide loans for new church plants and established churches for purchasing property, remodeling present facilities and building new buildings. The BMLA is a non-profit cooperation existing only for religious, missionary and benevolent ministries. On behalf of the trustees, we have a heart for helping churches and we want to help your church if you have a need.

Refinancing

If you have a mortgage and have been paying on it for several years, the rate may be higher than current rates and it is possible we can offer a lower rate. Or, your mortgage may have a "balloon" maturity where the entire loan comes due and the bank may not choose to renew it on the same terms. Banks are often bought up by a national chain, or have management changes that are not sensitive to making church loans. We can help you with a "full payout" loan and you do not have to worry about such changes.

Improvements to Existing Property

Periodically, churches need to repair the roof, replace air conditioners, resurface parking lots or remodel the sanctuary and educational space. It would be our joy to provide the funds to help you have a better looking church plant and therefore provide a more effective ministry.

Adjoining Property

Do you have the opportunity to purchase adjoining property? Don't even think about not acting on that opportunity! It may be years before it will return for sale. Many churches are landlocked and need to be ready to jump if adjoining property becomes available. BMLA provides such loans for BMA churches of Texas and we can help secure a

contract quickly.

New Location

Have you outgrown your present location and have no room to expand? Two choices: take a group and start another church or re-locate. If you need to purchase property in another location, it is best to purchase it ahead of time and pay it down or off before you build your dream church. What will you do with the old location? Is it possible for you to sponsor or host a new small church which could eventually take the property over when you get moved? If you can find another church to buy it from you, you will have a big down payment and need less financing for the new property. We can help you with financing the property.

New Building

Do you have plans to add to your existing building or build at a new location? We have resources to help you with site planning, architecture for new buildings and financial assistance.

As of the end of January, the BMLA has \$9.2 million in assets. We have money to loan to growing churches and we are actively pursuing ways to assist those churches. If you have a need, give us a call and we will work together to discover the best financial plan for your church.

Pray For Our Church Planters.

Jesus said, *"The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into the harvest"* (Matthew 9:37-38).

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Arnolfo Maldonado

Houston, Texas
elizabeth8815@sbcglobal.net

Arnolfo has seven groups in the Houston area: (1) Spring, (2) Katy, (3) South Houston, (4) Rosenberg, (5) East Houston, (6) Humble, and (7) Livingston. He is always praying and looking to start more groups

We also work with Israel Arendondo and about five other Hispanic pastors in the Dallas Area. Arnolfo is using the translated teaching materials to help them develop their leadership skills.

Thank you for your prayers.

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When you order through our website, Christian Book Distributors shares their sales profit with us. Get to shopping!

Jerry Burnaman is the executive director of State Missions and the Baptist Missionary Loan Association. Contact him at jerryburnaman@yahoo.com or 972-923-0757.



EVENTS

APRIL 6, 2014

Generations Workshop
@ Nacogdoches Community Church,
Nacogdoches

APRIL 7-11, 2014

Revival
@ Woodland, Gilmer 7 p.m. nightly Messages
by:
Monday: Jack Hoffpauir
Tuesday: Hugh Casey
Wednesday: Kenneth Montgomery
Thursday: Rily Pate (age 13)
Friday: Jim Crump
David Mayhan, Pastor

APRIL 12, 2014

Ladies Conference
@ Craft, Jacksonville

APRIL 13, 2014

Understanding Yourself Workshop
@ Northside, Garland

APRIL 13, 2014

Dedication Service of New Sanctuary
@ Craft, Jacksonville
Morning Worship: 10:30 a.m.
Dedication Service: 1:30 p.m.
Lunch following worship

APRIL 26, 2014

Eric Johnson Mexico Missions Golf Tournament
@ Lufkin Country Club
8:30 a.m.
For information,
call Jimmy Nunn at 936-465-1828

APRIL 28-30, 2014

Annual Meeting of the BMAA
@ Statehouse Convention Center,
Little Rock, Ark.

MAY 15, 2014

BMMI Rally
@ Willow Oak, Gilmer

JULY 22, 2014

Smith County District
Brotherhood & WMA Meeting
@ Omen, Arp
Jerry Fulton, editor of Baptist Progress,
guest singer & speaker Meal
@ 6 p.m. Meeting @ 7 p.m.

AUGUST 14, 2014

Lifeword Media Ministries Rally
@ Woodland, Gilmer

OCTOBER 13-14, 2014

Annual Liberty Baptist Association
@ Little Mound, Big Sandy

NOVEMBER 4-5, 2014

Annual Meeting of the BMA of Texas
@ Keltys First, Lufkin

PERSONNEL & POSITIONS

AVAILABLE POSITIONS

Youth—Calvary, Jacksonville is seeking a bivocational youth pastor. Contact Pastor Michael Mathis at mathi1314@gmail.com or 903-625-0776.

Music—Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden is seeking a bivocational music minister. Send resume to Attn: Pastor Craig Kearby, P.O. Box 99, Golden, Texas 75444 or pilgrimresttwo@gmail.com or call 903-768-2653.

Music or Music & Youth—First, New Caney is seeking a bivocational music or music & youth minister. Send resume to Pastor Jonathan Fitzgerald, P.O. Box 1027, New Caney, Texas 77357 or to fbcnewcaney@att.net, or call 281-399-9930.

Pastor—Piney Creek, Kennard, located at 7015 Farm Market Road 2781 in Kennard is seeking a bivocational pastor. Contact Billy Don Davis at 936-655-2938 or send resume to Billy Don Davis at 822 County Road 4615 Kennard, Texas 75847.

Youth—Soda, Livingston is seeking a full time youth pastor. Send resume to the church at 8135 US Highway 190 East, Livingston, Texas 77351 or to youthguywayne@yahoo.com.

OBITUARY

William Henry Holt

Graveside services for William Henry Holt, 81, of Gilmer, were March 22, 2014, at Coffeerville Cemetery in Ore City. He was born November 19, 1932, in Denton, and died March 20, 2014 in Longview. Holt, an ordained minister of the gospel, suffered a severe stroke many years ago and was never again able to pastor or preach. In the 1970's and 1980's, he pastored churches in the Liberty Association, including Rosewood, Gilmer.

STILL GOT A FEELING

Editor Jerry Fulton sings! Order his new CD, Still Got a Feeling, by calling the Baptist Progress office at 972-923-0756, emailing him at editor@baptistprogress.org, or directly from his website, www.jerryfulton.com. **ALL PROCEEDS GO TO THE BAPTIST PROGRESS.**



Songs included on the CD: When I Get Carried Away, Without a Valley, Ten Thousand Years, Just Ask, I Still Got a Feeling, He Saw It All, Who Am I, Try a Little Kindness, I Call It Home, Thinking About Home, The Other Side of Grace and I've Come Too Far.

Price: \$12

CHURCHES IN REVIEW

MARCH 16, 2014

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Anthony Drive, Ennis	71	124	
Cedar Creek, Teague	15	21	
Elwood, Wills Point	11	39	
Farley Street, Waxahachie	445	557	
Harvest, Lufkin	25	32	
Jackson, Joaquin	70	111	
Little Flock, Lufkin		25	
Little Mound, Big Sandy	36	53	
Long Creek, Sunnysvale	68	82	
New Harmony, Tyler	268	352	4 By Letter
Oak Hill, Gilmer	34	56	4 By Baptism
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	53	62	2 By Letter
Rosewood, Gilmer	100	180	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	17	37	
Temple, Mexia	37	33	1 By Letter
Tundra, Canton	89	110	
Woodland, Splendora	40	67	

MARCH 23, 2014

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Anthony Drive, Ennis	67	100	
Cedar Creek, Teague	14	18	
Farley Street, Waxahachie	462	536	2 By Letter
First, New Summerfield	35	49	
First, Palmer	46	67	
Harvest, Lufkin	12	20	
Little Flock, Lufkin		14	
Long Creek, Sunnysvale	65	78	
Merriman Hills, Sherman	14	17	
New Harmony, Tyler	260	325	1 By Baptism
Oak Hill, Gilmer	33	71	
Pine Brook, Tyler	37	93	1 By Baptism
Rosewood, Gilmer	123	182	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	20	120	
Temple, Mexia	41	50	
Woodland, Splendora	47	69	

For publication, statistics for Churches in Review must be received by Monday at 5 p.m.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

How to really worship

By PAUL GAUNTT

April 6, 2014

Bible Text: Ecclesiastes 5:1-5; 18-20

Central Truth: Mere religion, man's attempt to impress God, brings emptiness.

King Solomon, in his book of Ecclesiastes, takes a moment to address, what has become a volatile issue amid 21st Century Evangelical churches—worship. He masterfully summoned the reader to be prepared for worship, be in the place of worship, be in the right frame of mind as we worship, and most of all, don't use too many words.

Be in the right place for worship 5:1

Solomon was referring to a designated place—"the house of God." The place in question was the temple in Jerusalem. When the Israelites had a meeting with God, it was in the Tabernacle in the wilderness. God's presence hovered over the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. Today, for the born-again believer, that temple is our bodies, and we have the awesome privilege of communing with Him, wherever we may be. But still, it's imperative that we be in the right place. We can find ourselves outside God's will, and in a place, which does not bring glory to him—or else we can decide to "forsake the assembly" during a time we know the assembly is gathering. Worship God wherever you may be, but never neglect corporate worship. Just make sure that He is in the place where you seek to worship Him.

Prepare yourself 5:1

5:1 - The King James Version words it, "Keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of God." Most other versions say, "Walk prudently. . ." and yet another translation has an interesting slant on the statement—"As you enter the house of God, keep your ears open and your mouth shut."

For most of my Christian life, I've found myself equating power in prayer with a multiplicity of words. I always considered a dear old saint in church, who was always called on to pray, and who prayed lengthy, oratorical, homiletically astute prayers as being closer to God than anybody in the room.

Slowly but surely I'm becoming aware that God honors the prayer of the somewhat speechless. (i.e. the publican as opposed to the Pharisee) In fact, the Father has made provisions for His children who feel a desperate need to approach His throne in prayer, but have no verbiage to bring.

Rather than rehearse a litany of flowing words to the Father, prepare your heart to be able to hear Him when you enter the House of Worship. Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit will translate the groans of our souls to the Throne of God. Romans 8:26 "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

Don't talk too much. 5:3

Solomon said, "For a dream comes through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by

multitude of words."

The reason our worship often becomes stale and empty is because we bring to the Throne of Grace, a divided mind, still mulling over the business and issues of the day; still frustrated, still angry, still in any attitude but that of prayer. Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary notes, ". . . (S)o many words, uttered inconsiderately in prayer, give birth to and betray 'a fool's speech.'"

Ecclesiastes 5:2 notes the "why" of keeping our words brief—because "God is in Heaven, and thou upon the earth." That's good enough for me. In fact, it brings comfort to me to know that's the arrangement. Psalms 103:13-14 - "Like a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitied them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."

A symptom of a prayer derived from the "dreams" conjured up through a worrisome day of earthly stress and business, causes us to speak unkindly to God about associates, or ask for things to "consume it upon our own lust." That's why it's urgent that we address ourselves to the worship of God when we approach Him. Could it be James was thinking along these lines when he said, in James 4:3 "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." If we haven't properly prepared our hearts to approach God in prayer, then self-centered praying will always be the results.

Be careful when making a vow 5:4-5

Another dangerous result of using too many

words is the temptation to make empty, meaningless vows. Just ask Ananias and Sapphira in the early church. They made a vow to give a certain amount to the Lord's storehouse from the sale of a possession. Now just indulge me a little conjecture here; I can hear the conversation now;

"Wow, Ananias, I knew that set of clay pots was valuable, but I had no idea they'd bring that much," Sapphira might have said.

"Well Sapphira, I'm sure God wouldn't expect us to give that kind of money to the church.—let's keep back just a little."

Conclusion:

Did you notice in Solomon's admonition to worship, he didn't mention protocol, styles of music, liturgy or the position of our bodies. In Genesis 17:3, while God was making his covenant with Abraham, Abraham fell on his face before Him. When God confronted Moses in the midst of the burning bush, he told him "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."

I've had some experiences in my life and ministry when I was driven, in desperation, to God—on my belly in the floor, crumpled in fetal position at my bedside, standing, sitting, crying out to him while clutching the steering wheel of my car traveling down the road, and sometimes lying on my back in bed. Whatever it takes to get you into that place of worship, get there—with a prepared heart, an absence of a multiplicity of words, and with great care when you make a vow to God.

The poor rich man

By PAUL GAUNTT

April 13, 2014

Bible Text: Ecclesiastes 6:1-12

Central Truth: Put your confidence in spiritual things to experience the power and blessing of God

It seems to be such a contradiction in terms to describe a fabulously wealthy man as poor—but this is a principle of life that King Solomon has learned through experience.

In today's text, (Ecclesiastes 6:1-12, Solomon paints several scenarios which attest to the futility of a life of emptiness and chasing the wind.

Owning possessions without enjoying them. 6:2

Solomon affirms that it's possible to be given lavish wealth, but without the gift to enjoy it. In the preceding chapter, Solomon declares that in 5:19: "Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work—this is a gift of God." The scripture goes on to say "God keeps him occupied with gladness of heart." But a man who accumulates great wealth often comes to the end of life, and it is divided among ungrateful offspring, or doled out to the government.

Surrounding oneself with relationships at the expense of a close relationship with God. 6:3-6

Solomon uses a hypothetical situation of a

man having 100 children, and living a long life to illustrate how futile such a life is to the soul of a man, which was created to glorify God the Father. Yes, a happy family is an important component to a happy life, but it can't compare to a life totally given to walking with God. Solomon declares that such a man might be given a big funeral, but would be no better off than a stillborn baby. A stillborn baby is better off having avoided the treachery which is under the sun. He's better off than King Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 22:18-19) King of Judah, whose whole life was given to shedding innocent blood and oppressing people. His carcass was dragged out from the gates of Jerusalem and buried just like an animal.

Other examples of an empty life. 6:7-12

Verses 7 explains that a man living an empty, futile life, focuses on satisfying his flesh at the expense of nurturing his own soul.

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Mark 8:36

Verse 10 notes it is better to enjoy what is seen than to dream of what might be. Such a practice is emptiness, and trying to catch the wind.

Riches cannot make the wise better than a fool, nor can they lift man up to the level of God—all they do is add to the vanity and vexation of spirit, when wrongly regarded—and used.

The bottom line is this—man is useless—no good—with a futile, empty life, when God the Father is not preeminent.

An example of a perfectly full, rich, rewarding life:

This Person often departed into a desert place, or a high peak, and there, alone, communed with His God for extended periods. To commune with His Father was essential.

This Person was totally at rest wherever He was—whether in the hull of a ship tossed in a violent storm at sea, appearing before the courts of Roman magistrates, or confronted by a family who chided Him for not being there for them when their brother died. Incidentally, He summoned the dead brother to come forth.

This Person not only knew the letter of the law perfectly, but told His audiences that He was the means to be used to transfer the age of the Mosaic Law to the Age of Grace.

This Person, although, with a heavy schedule of people who needing His healing touch, found time to rest, to sit down in a meadow with a bunch of frolicking young children, and laugh and play with them—or to forgive a condemned woman who had broken the moral code of the Ten Commandments and was living in sin, saying, "go and sin no more."

This person never gave riches, or even sustenance a second thought. He had no roof over

His head, or any possessions to call His own, yet, whenever there was a need for food, it was always there. And when the devil offered riches to Him, He countered with scripture.

Even during his dying breaths as He hung on the cross, He was concerning for the forgiveness of those who sought to destroy Him, and He took great care to see to it that His own mother was cared for. Most of all, He was concerned for a lost and dying world, which He came to seek and to save.

I don't have to tell you Whose life this was —It was—and is today, a life, full of meaning. And He wants to impart His life to you—eternal life, which will enable you to live—not a life of futility and emptiness, but a life of meaning, joy and fulfillment, and ultimately eternally in glory with Him. That life is in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul Gauntt is the former 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 paul.gauntt@att.net.





JACKSONVILLE COLLEGE

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By **DR. MIKE SMITH**

Jacksonville College exists to provide a quality education from a biblical worldview that challenges minds, transforms lives, and equips students for servant leadership and lifelong learning.

The College has eight departments: fine arts, business, literature/languages, mathematics, science, religion, social science, and health and physical education. The chair of each of these departments will be featured over the course of the next several issues of the Baptist Progress

Fine Arts Department

The Department of Fine Arts offers instruction in music, art, and drama. A student at Jacksonville College may (1) prepare to enter a senior institution in the field of music, (2) prepare to enter a senior institution in the field of theater, (3) study music, theater, or art as a cultural enhancement. Scholarships are available to qualified students.

Chair of the Fine Arts Department and Instructor in theater is Mary Lewis. Mary was born in Detroit, Michigan. She has been married to James Allen Lewis for 49 years, and they have three children, eight grandchildren, and one great grandchild. She is a member of her church choir and serves as director of the bell choir.

Mary has a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Arts from the University of Texas in Tyler. She teaches history and government as well as theater. She also directs theater productions and a summer theater camp called Stars on Stage. She has served full-time at Jacksonville College since 2000. Mary says, "I enjoy the atmosphere on campus; it is so different than public colleges. It is heartwarming and a pleasure to come to work daily."

Mary and her students are currently renovating the theater at the recently acquired Joe Wright property and need \$30,000 to complete the project. Her goal is to be in the theater for the spring show, Murder's Bad But Monday Can Kill You, April 10-12.

Other instructors in the Department of Fine Arts are Tim Timmons and Gerald Orr, music and Alice Rooks, art.



▲ Chair of JC Fine Arts Department, Mary Lewis

Dr. Mike Smith is the president of Jacksonville College. Contact him at msmith@jacksonville-college.edu or 903-589-7106. You may also visit the Jacksonville College website, www.jacksonville-college.edu



UPCOMING EVENTS

Early Registration for Maymester and Summer 2014

Begins March 31

Online registration is available

Maymester and Summer Sessions

Maymester: May 14 - May 30

Summer I: June 2 - July 3

Summer II: July 7 - August 7

Theater Department's Spring Show

Murder's Bad But Monday Can Kill You!

April 10-12, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. in the new theater on the Joe Wright Campus

Spring Choir and Band Concert

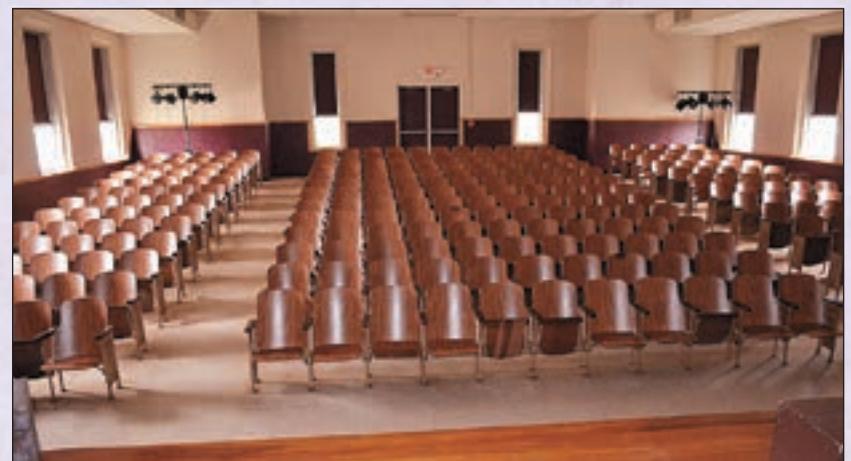
April 15 at 7:00 p.m. in Buckner Chapel

Donkey Basketball (JC Scholarship Fundraiser)

Saturday, May 3, at 8:00 p.m. in the Curtis Carroll Field House/Gymnasium

Tickets: \$10.00 preschool and under free

For more information, call 903-589-7144



▲ Joe Wright theater, future home of the JC Performing Arts Center



▲ The Jacksonville College Strategic Planning Committee tours the Joe Wright campus and discusses the future plans for the property to make sure they mirror the mission and values guiding the long term plan for the College.