

# Baptist Progress

Baptist Progress, P.O. Box 2055, Waxahatchie, Texas 75168  
Postmaster: send change of address to:  
500125

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS | DECEMBER 2020 | VOL. 107 | NO. 12

## INSIDE



PAGE 4  
BMA TEXAS MISSIONS



PAGE 8  
REACHING A  
FORGOTTEN PEOPLE



PAGE 12  
WORLD MISSIONS DAY

*"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6*

*Merry Christmas,*

**HEITH MITCHELL**, BMA of Texas Missions director

**JERRY FULTON**, Baptist Missionary Loan Association director & Baptist Progress director/editor

**MIKE SMITH**, Jacksonville College president

**JASON CURRY**, Texas Baptist Home for Children president



WWW.BMATEXAS.ORG



**BAPTIST PROGRESS**

Jerry Fulton, Editor/Business Manager  
P.O. Box 2085, Waxahachie 75168  
972-923-0756 • www.baptistprogress.org

**BAPTIST MISSIONARY LOAN ASSOCIATION**

Jerry Burnaman, Manager  
PO Box 73, Waxahachie 75168  
972-923-0758

**BMA OF TEXAS MISSIONS**

Heith Mitchell, Director  
PO Box 73, Waxahachie 75168  
972-923-0757

**JACKSONVILLE COLLEGE**

Dr. Mike Smith, President  
105 B. J. Albritton Drive  
Jacksonville 75766  
903-586-2518  
www.jacksonville-college.edu

**TEXAS BAPTIST HOME**

Jason Curry, President  
PO Box 309, Waxahachie 75168  
972-937-1321 • www.tbhc.org

# Baptist Progress

USPS: 043120 • ISSN: 005-5751

Published every third week of the month by  
the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas

**Jerry Fulton, Editor/Business Manager**

editor@baptistprogress.org  
P.O. Box 2085 • Waxahachie, Texas 75168  
972-923-0756 (office) • 972-923-3534 (fax)

[www.baptistprogress.org](http://www.baptistprogress.org)

Periodical postage paid  
at Waxahachie, Texas 75165  
and at additional mailing offices

**SUBSCRIPTION RATE:**

**Mail Church Plan:** \$1.75 per month  
**E-Mail Church Plan:** \$1.25 per month  
**Mail Subscription:** \$24.00 per year  
**E-mail Subscription:** \$18.00 per year  
(Advertising Rates Available on Request)

Postmaster: Send address changes to  
Baptist Progress, P.O. Box 2085,  
Waxahachie, Texas 75168



# Merry Christmas

By **JERRY FULTON**

Christmas is just around the corner! I recall how much I looked forward to Christmas as a child. Over the years, the meaning of Christmas has changed for me. It used to be about getting toys from Santa Claus under the Christmas tree, but as years passed by, I came to learn that the true meaning of Christmas was the celebration of the birth of Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, given by God Himself for the salvation of all who would place their faith in Him.

I pray that you will stay focused on the true celebration of Christ's birth and God's great salvation this Christmas!

**THE NEWS, INFORMATION, EQUIPPING AND RESOURCE MINISTRY OF THE BMA OF TEXAS**

As I did in our last issue, I remind you that *Baptist Progress* is the news, information, equipping and resource ministry of the BMA of Texas. We hosted our first Ministry Connection Workshop of the associational year Dec. 1. Thank you to all who attended. I was encouraged by the comments made by participants during and after the workshop concerning the topics that were covered.

**Please remember and register for these upcoming Ministry Connection Workshops:**

**March 23, 2021:**

***Gospel Impact Through Community Involvement***

- Led by Jason Collins, lead pastor of CrossRoads Church in Rowlett, this workshop will show you how to connect your church with your community in a way that expands the Kingdom of God.
- TIME: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. with lunch provided for \$10
- PLACE: CrossRoads Church, 7900 Chiesa Road, Rowlett

**June 10, 2021:**

***Conflict: Causes and Cures***

- Led by Dr. Mike Smith, president of Jacksonville College, this workshop will show you how to better handle difficult situations and difficult people within the church.
- TIME: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. with lunch provided for \$10
- PLACE: Jacksonville College, 105 B.J. Albritton Drive, Jacksonville

**Sept. 16, 2021:**

***Reaching People Through Social Media and Websites***

- Led by Matthew Prather, lead pastor of The Bridge Church in Waxahachie, this will be a hands-on workshop! Matthew will tell you then show you how to use social media and your church's website to reach people.
- TIME: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. with lunch provided for \$10
- PLACE: BMA of Texas Building, 632 Farley Street, Waxahachie

Register for these workshops on the homepage of [baptistprogress.org](http://baptistprogress.org)

**Also, remember the other resources provided by *Baptist Progress*:**

**Every Sunday Bulletin Service**

If your church uses weekly bulletins, please order from us! Bulletins can be viewed and ordered through our website. If your church uses weekly bulletins with another provider, please consider switching to our service.

**Insurance for Churches**

We have entered into an advertising agreement with American Church Group Texas to promote their insurance to our churches and ministries that need affordable insurance. The insurance they offer is through Brotherhood Mutual. You can find out more about what they offer at [baptistprogress.org](http://baptistprogress.org).

**Intentional Interim Pastor Training**

We are currently putting together curriculum for intentional interim pastor training and hope to offer such training at some point in 2021.

**Website Design & Hosting and Social Media Marketing for Church and Ministries**

As you know, it is important these days that churches have a website and a strong social media presence. *Baptist Progress* wants to help churches in these areas, and we have entered into a partnership with Matthew Prather to offer website design and hosting and social media marketing to churches. You can find out more about this by visiting [baptistprogress.org](http://baptistprogress.org).

If there are other ministry resources you believe *Baptist Progress* could perhaps provide to pastors, church staff and churches in the future, please let us know by sending an email to [editor@baptistprogress.org](mailto:editor@baptistprogress.org) or calling us at 972-923-0756.

**CAN YOU HELP?**

Because we want to provide Ministry Connection Workshops and other resources to our pastors, church staff and churches in the future, we are asking that churches add at least \$25 per month to your budget in addition to subscription costs for *Baptist Progress*.

Doing so will enable us to cover the costs of the workshops and other resources in the future.

In exchange, *Baptist Progress* will give your church a 10 percent discount on all advertising.

If your church will be one of the churches to give *Baptist Progress* at least \$25 or more in addition to subscription costs each month, please let us know by sending me an email at [editor@baptistprogress.org](mailto:editor@baptistprogress.org).

God bless you, and again, have a Merry Christmas!



▲ Jerry Fulton



# TBHC

FOSTER CARE & ADOPTION

## I'm just sayin'

By JASON CURRY

As many know, TBHC is one in a million with our values and wonderful heritage of faith and caring for the fatherless! There are few places that represent the gospel more clearly than our ministry where caring for children and Christ conversations collide often. Some kids may never have been given the opportunity, until coming in contact with TBHC's families, to hear and understand that the God of the universe created them and that they matter! It is our hope that every child hears the story of a loving heavenly Father when most earthly fathers could care less.

Just like our children's identity matters, so does who TBHC is and has been. We are constantly changing to do and be the best we can in order to care for children. Our mandate is clear from our founding Articles. Article 2: The Objects:

*"The objects of this institution shall be: to find, take care of, feed, clothe, properly rear, educate and defend orphans and homeless children against all ancient and modern species of crime. 'Homeless' meaning those who have no home, having been deserted by their parents, or children of a mother who cannot support them."*

This ministry that so many BMA of Texas churches and individuals have loved and cared for, for so long, is constantly refining our organization

to deal with our world's attempt to care for kids. I say attempt because it is the churches' job to care for orphans and widows, not the government.

James 1:27 tells us what pure and undefiled religion is before God: "to visit orphans and widows in their trouble" and if that is all it said, anyone could do it. However, James continues to include a reequipping in order to accomplish that work, "and to keep oneself unspotted from the world".

I hope that this series of articles and others will communicate where we have been as an orphanage, where we are as a foster care and adoption agency, and where we are going as a ministry to children. Join me as we explore TBHC's current yet timeless imperatives that have been molded by our wonderful heritage!

I'm just sayin'.

Jason Curry is the president of the Texas Baptist Home for Children. Contact him 629 Farley St, Waxahachie, Texas 75165, 972-937-1321 or [jcurry@tbhc.org](mailto:jcurry@tbhc.org). For more information, visit [www.tbhc.org](http://www.tbhc.org).



# BAPTIST MISSIONARY BMLA LOAN ASSOCIATION

By JERRY FULTON

The Baptist Missionary Loan Association (BMLA) exists to promote harmony and concert of action among churches cooperating with the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas, and to assist churches by making loans for the purpose of purchasing property, erecting and equipping new buildings. The BMLA is operated only for religious, missionary and benevolent purposes, and on a non-profit basis.

Some frequently asked questions we receive about the BMLA include the following:

- 1. Who are you?** The BMLA is a department of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas that provides loans to churches within the Association.
- 2. What types of loans do you make?** We make loans for numerous purposes such as land and church building purchases; remodeling and renovation projects; construction of a church sanctuary, educational building, children's building, fellowship hall or family life center.
- 3. Who do you serve?** We serve the churches of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas.
- 4. How much can our church borrow?** The only way to get a true borrowing capacity amount for your church is to complete and send a church loan application to our office. Applications may be downloaded from our website, [bmla.org](http://bmla.org).
- 5. Do you take collateral on church loans?** Yes. We take first lien on all church property and improvements.
- 6. How does our church start the process?** Someone authorized by the church simply completes an application and emails it to [cassie@bmatexas.org](mailto:cassie@bmatexas.org), or mails it to BMLA, P.O. Box 73, Waxahachie, TX 75168.
- 7. How long does it take to get a response?** When we receive your church's completed loan application, we will contact your church either by email or phone within two to three days.

- 8. What are your current rates?** Please call 972-923-0758 for interest rates.
- 9. Do you make personal loans or auto loans?** No. We only make loans to incorporated churches for real-estate purposes.

### INVEST WITH US

Churches and individuals may also invest funds in the BMLA. Because our purpose is to offer financial assistance to mission churches and established churches for purchasing property, buildings and remodeling, we encourage you to invest with us.

**Investment certificates** (similar to Certificates of Deposit) are available and are presently paying 2.5 percent. A \$1,000 minimum is required, and the rate is locked in for one year. However, if you have a need to withdraw the funds before the year ends, there is no penalty.

**Share Accounts** (similar to Passbook Savings Accounts) are also available and are presently paying 2 percent. You can open a Share Account with only \$5.

Our accounts are backed by loans to churches. Additionally, we have funds in banks that are FDIC insured and funds with RBC Wealth Management. Funds with RBC are insured by the Securities Investor Protection Corporation (SIPC). The Baptist Missionary Loan Association has been in business since 1952, and has never had a default.

**For more information**, visit us at [bmla.org](http://bmla.org) or give us a call at 972-923-0758.

Jerry Fulton is the director of the Baptist Missionary Loan Association. Contact him P.O. Box 73, Waxahachie, Texas 75168, 972-923-0758 or [jerry@bmatexas.org](mailto:jerry@bmatexas.org). For more information, visit [www.bmla.org](http://www.bmla.org).



## 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. 1-30, 2020.

### ENDOWMENTS

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

### HONORARIUMS

**HOLLIN ANDERSON:** James & Susan Anderson  
**PALMER ANDERSON:** James & Susan Anderson  
**MR. & MRS. MICHAEL HARRELL ANNIVERSARY:** Leon & Johnnie Ross  
**PAULA & JOEY MCCLURE:** Earlene Crenshaw  
**FRED & CAROLYN MORROW:** Jerry Null  
**KARL PACE:** Kelly Penick  
**FINLEY KYLE SCHUFF:** Jennifer Paramore

### MEMORIALS

**JAMES AMERSON:** Travis & Brenda Floyd  
**CAROL BAKER:** Charles & Charlotte Johnson  
**DANIEL BAKER:** L.R. & Lou Sandel  
**WALTER BECKER:** Dennis & Ilona Myrice  
**BILL BEDDINGFIELD:** Busy B Ranch  
**BEN & IRENE BEENE:** Busy B Ranch  
**LARRY & ROSELEN BOBO:** James Bobo  
**ETHEL BOYKIN:** Tina & Kenneth McKnight  
**ALICE BRASHEAR:** Walter Stice  
**JAN FREEMAN BURLESON:** Randy & Vikki Odom  
**LORENE BURNS:** Jan Holcomb  
**RYDER CHANEY:** Mr. & Mrs. Glen Saxon  
**F.A. CORLEY:** Virginia Corley  
**REBECCA CRAWFORD:** Friendship Sunday School Class @ First Baptist Church, Carthage  
**ELMER EDGMON:** Leon & Katy Engle  
**TOMMY GIPSON:** Elizabeth Stokes; Antioch Baptist Church, Gilmer;  
**TILMON GOEBEL:** Judy Ann Goebel  
**MATASHA GOEBEL:** Judy Ann Goebel  
**JUNE HAAK:** Freda Haak  
**MELVIN & DARLENE HARRELL:** Charles & Charlotte Johnson  
**JIM HAYES:** Brenda Ray  
**TONY HOBERT:** Travis & Brenda Floyd  
**THELMA 'GIGI' HOGUE:** Great Grandkids- Ella Chilek, Jax Buttram, Selah Buttram, Benjamin Buttram  
**J.R. & FLORENCE JOHNSON:** Charles & Charlotte Johnson  
**AGNES JONES:** Bretton Wendel; Jeanette Kirksey; Tom & Tricia Hoewisch  
**J.R. KENMORE:** Joy Linton  
**BOB KERLICK:** Caleb & Jami Davidson; Mike & Becky Drennan; Teresa Kay Davidson  
**KEVIN LEWIS:** Sandra Lewis  
**RICKY LEE MCCOY:** Jimmy & Mary Lou McCoy  
**MARY MCMURTRAY:** Weldon & Lana Sparks  
**ROY MERRILL:** Leon & Johnnie Ross; Audrey Threadgill; Latch Missionary Baptist Church; Carolyn Hicks; Fay Hackler  
**CHARLES MITCHELL:** Gay Mitchell  
**PAUL & JEARLENE MIZE:** Jerry & Sheree Mize  
**WILLIAM MOLNAR:** Virginia Hopkins  
**CHERYL MORRIS:** Rose Moore  
**STEVE MURRAY:** Charles & Charlotte Johnson; JL & Reba Smith; Brenda Ray  
**MERLE PARKER:** Berenda Mewborn  
**CASEY PARRIS:** Charles & Charlotte Johnson  
**MRS. SAMMIE PATTERSON:** Glee Parker Hutson  
**BUCK & JO RAY:** Teresa Kay Davidson  
**LARRY ROGERS:** Berenda Mewborn  
**GEORGE SCHUMANN JR.:** Archie Estes  
**CARL TALBERT:** Charles & Charlotte Johnson  
**MR. & MRS. EDWARD TALBOT:** Roy & Elizabeth Talbot  
**SALLY TALLEY:** Mr. & Mrs. Donald Traywick  
**MATT TAYLOR:** Ineta Archer  
**TERRY THARP:** Charles & Charlotte Johnson; JL & Reba Smith  
**EULA "POLLY" TOWNLEY:** Robert & Linda Day; Clifford & Sondra Hugg  
**MONNIE EARL WEEMS:** Charles & Charlotte Johnson; Virginia Gipson  
**SAM & JO WHITE:** Jerry & Sheree Mize  
**JOHN WOLCOTT:** Gay Mitchell  
**PAT WOODS:** Central Baptist Church, Mineola  
**SHANNON WORTHY:** Tommie Worthy

memorials-honorariums

# BMA TEXAS

## MISSIONS

Your Church's Mission Movement in Texas



## A word from your Missions Office

By HEITH MITCHELL

We are heading into an unusual Christmas season. Usually, this season is ripe with outreach potential. That is not true this year thanks to COVID-19. Pray for your planters. In a new church November and December are months to survive as new members are distracted. We see light at the end of this tunnel with vaccines coming. For this, I praise the Lord!

COVID-19 is present in several of our missions currently. Donny Sadler and Elvis Garcia have recovered but Ronnie Mills and several in the leadership of Kingdom Chapel Mission are sick. Ronnie has a bad case and is struggling to breathe.

On behalf of your BMA of Texas Missions family, we want to wish you and yours a Merry Christmas. Let's celebrate the blessing of Christ Jesus!

BMAT family, we love you. It is a joy to serve you and serve beside you. If we can assist you, we want to. We have trainings you can come to or we can bring your way. We can partner with you or share with you. Let's partner for the Kingdom and pursue:

whitewash, and I will say to you, The wall is no more, nor those who smeared it, the prophets of Israel who prophesied concerning Jerusalem and saw visions of peace for her, when there was no peace, declares the Lord God."

Why are we so worried about what people think about us, allowing evil to come into God's holy ground and past His gates. The ego-self is a false self, a façade. It is our self-image, our social mask, the role we are playing—and it thrives on approval. That need for approval is driven by self-criticism and negative self-talk, which are fear-based. That fear derives from any number of sources. We are so occupied with pleasing others that we put God's ways aside to gain popularity.

### Prayer Needs:

I pray for the unity of the church in Christ Jesus and the recovery of those lost to drug and alcohol addiction..

**MATTHEW PRATHER—**  
**THE BRIDGE MISSION, MIDLOTHIAN/  
 WAXAHACHIE**  
**MATTHEW@DISCOVERTHEBRIDGE.COM**  
**DUAL SUPPORT BMAA/BMAT**



▲ Matthew Prather

Pray for us as we lead our church during this unique time.

**SPENCER SIMPSON—**  
**REDEEMER'S LOVE MISSION, HOUSTON**  
**SPNCRSMPSN@GMAIL.COM**



▲ Spencer Simpson

We are so grateful for your continued prayers and support which have enabled us to continue to fulfill one of our core desires to be a diverse church for a diverse city! We have begun holding bilingual services in Arabic and English, and it is important for you to know that even right here in Texas your prayers and support are now having a global impact.

### Prayer Needs:

Please pray for the Arabic speaking families and individuals that are now joining us! We are overjoyed that the Lord has connected us with them and we ask that you would pray that by the power of God those who do not know Him would be saved, and for those that do, that we would be able to be used by God to adequately shepherd, teach and disciple them in order to make a further impact for the gospel here in Southwest Houston.

**CESAR LEAL—**  
**NEW MISSION IN SAN ANTONIO**  
**CESARLEAL2002@YAHOO.COM**

Those sick with the virus is a constant concern, but we desire to become the voice of hope reaching the population

so that the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ will be a reality in every citizen who resides in this country. There is life in Jesus!

### Prayer Needs:

Pray for my family in Colombia. Pray also for my wife as she will be having an operation.



▲ Cesar Leal



**CHRIS DRIVER -**  
**WEST TEXAS MULTIPLICATION NETWORK/  
 TEXAS MISSIONARY CARE**  
**CJDRIVER316@GMAIL.COM**

Like many in the ministry during this crazy year, 2

**BMA TEXAS MISSIONS** continued on p. 5

## PROJECT 2029

100 New Churches/10 years

- That we see an aggressive multiplication movement of churches who make disciples, equip and release leaders and start churches for the glory of God and the advancement of his Kingdom mission
- That each new mission begins with a plan to begin three new churches in their first 10 years
- That pastors and churches of the association be encouraged and equipped to start new churches
- That we connect, evaluate, identify and train new prospective church planters

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

## A word from your missionaries

**CESAR CANTU—**  
**CARPENTER'S HOUSE CHURCH IN OYSTER CREEK**  
**CESARHCANTU42@GMAIL.COM**

Whitewashed Wall  
 Ezekiel 13:14-16, 22-23

"And I will break down the wall that you have smeared with whitewash, and bring it down to the ground, so that its foundation will be laid bare. When it falls, you shall perish in the midst of it, and you shall know that I am the Lord. Thus will I spend my wrath upon the wall and upon those who have smeared it with



▲ Cesar Cantu

Corinthians 15:58 has become my cornerstone verse over these last few months. Through trials and difficulties, disappointments and discouragements, we are pressing forward and trying to be steadfast and immovable in reaching west Texas because we truly know that our work will not be in vain. I am still working with five faithful men and our training is going well. I am praying we see at least two new groups started in the next few months by these men as we begin to make second generation disciples. I believe God has finally broken through to my stubborn heart to help me realize that there is no magic pill or shortcut to making disciples and seeing Him accomplish His plan for west Texas. This is going to take time. So I will be patient and persistent and I know I will see Him do far greater things than I could have ever asked or imagined.



▲ Chris Driver

**Prayer Needs:**

Ministry partner. Brockway family. Towns of Loop, Morton, Tahoka, Lamesa, Aspermont, Abilene, Sundown, Levelland, Meadow, Whitharral.

**CHRIS MINDI/JESSE HALES—  
ANCHOR AUSTIN MISSION IN LEANDER  
CHRIS.MINDI@BMATS.EDU | HALESJESSE@GMAIL.COM**

We had a good time with our Thanksgiving event for our small groups and had 100 percent attendance. Continue to pray for this season of Christmas and the new year as we look forward to making more connections, spreading God's Word and discipling people.



▲ Chris Mindi

**Prayer Needs:**

Pray that our small groups and core team members will continue to be passionate for God. Pray for this time as we look to make more connections and build healthier, stronger relationships.



▲ Jesse Hales

**JAIME HENRIQUEZ—  
FUENTE DE VIDA ETERNA MISSION, HOUSTON**

I want to thank every one of the churches at the BMA of Texas for the support you are giving to our mission. God is doing a wonderful work in our congregation, saving souls and transforming lives in our community. We are reaching the lost for Christ and making disciples of Jesus.



▲ Jamie Henriquez

**Prayer Needs:**

Please pray for a building for our mission. We are asking the Lord our own building.



**WESLEY BURKE—  
REDEMPTION BAPTIST MISSION, NACOGDOCHES  
WESLEYDAVIDBURKE@GMAIL.COM**

Jesus wept.

**Prayer Needs:**

Pray we can be faithful with the current counseling issues surrounding many of our new contacts being made.



▲ Wesley Burke

**ROBERT LEE—  
HARMONY BAPTIST CHURCH IN  
NORMANGEE REPLANT  
BRO.ROBERT.F.LEE@GMAIL.COM**

Even though the holidays this year have looked far different than they may have in the past, we still have so much for which to be thankful. God has continued to provide opportunities for us to reach our community by simply making ourselves available. We continue to give thanks for all that God has done so far and look forward to seeing what lies ahead.



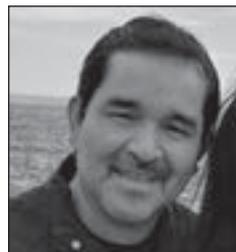
▲ Robert Lee

**Prayer Needs:**

Pray that God would send us some families who are ready and willing to work in carrying forth the gospel in our community.

**GAMALIER LUNA—  
NEW MISSION IN EL PASO  
GAMALUGA@HOTMAIL.COM**

Let's pray for each other and don't give up friends. I understand your struggles.



▲ Gamalier Luna

**Prayer Needs:**

Pray for strength, motivation and passion for the work. Pray for our projects for next year.

**NEPTALY MOLINA—  
IGLESIA BAUTISTA MISSION, NACOGDOCHES  
NRMOLINA23@GMAIL.COM**

Studying 2 Timothy 2: 1-13, I can observe in the biblical passage that the apostle Paul, being in an old dungeon city of Rome encouraged his disciple, Timothy, to continue the work that Paul started some 40 years before. The apostle was living the last days of his life and gave ministerial instruction to Timothy. Paul emphasized that Timothy was to strive in Christ Jesus to carry on the work of God. He gave Timothy three metaphors as an example to broaden his vision and fulfill his mission. The first metaphor was to be a soldier of Jesus Christ (see Ephesians 6: 13-18). Being such makes one see the faithfulness and obedience in God's work. The second metaphor was being a good athlete. The athlete has to have discipline and perseverance to reach the goal and achieve the prize (see 1 Corinthians 9:24-27). The third metaphor was to be a laborer. For the sower to participate in the fruits or to carry out the great harvest, it is necessary to work hard, plow the land and fertilize it. Select the best seeds that germinate large. Then sow, water and remove the weeds that can drown the sown plant. (Matthew 13:1-8). All of this



▲ Neptaly Molina

reminds me once again of my approach to church planting. Glory to God for this passage is very rich in the application of our ministries.

**Prayer Needs:**

1. Our spiritual family life
2. The culmination of my plan for 2020
3. Our Christmas dinner as we seek to evangelize those who attend
4. The culmination of my theological studies.
5. Our plans for 2021--Our goal is to win 50 new families
6. The goal of planting 100 churches in ten years
7. That we can start a cell group in the town of Cushing
8. That God would give us more planters, works and blessings

**ISAIAS ROJAS OSECHAS—  
CHURCH PLANT IN SPRING  
ISAIAS.ROJAS299@GMAIL.COM**

Thank you for the moral, economic and prayer support for us in achieving our goals as we minister in Spring, Katy and Conroe. We praise God for the people we are leading through doctrinal studies who were baptized at the end of November.



▲ Isaias Rojas Osechas

**MIKE WATT—  
CROSS-WORK MISSION, TAHOKA  
MIKE.WATT@CROSSWORKCHURCH.ORG**

We are challenging our people to invest and invite during this Christmas season. Pray that our people step up to the challenge and that our community is responsive.



▲ Mike Watt

**DONNY SADLER—  
IMPACT BETHEL CHURCH IN DALLAS  
CESARLEAL2002@YAHOO.COM**

Impact at Bethel is continuing to prepare for launch. Please pray for us as we work through Dallas County COVID-19 restrictions.



▲ Donny Sadler

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

**Prayer Needs:**

Please pray for Bro. Ronnie Mills as he battles a serious case of COVID-19. Pray for several others in the mission church with the illness. Pray that Bro. Ronnie's family will be spared this illness. Bro. Heith



▲ Ronnie Mills

Heith Mitchell is the director of BMA of Texas Missions. Contact him at P.O. Box 73, Waxahachie, Texas 75168, 972-923-0757 or hmitchell@bmatexas.org. For more information, visit [www.bmatexasmissions.org](http://www.bmatexasmissions.org).





## It's time to celebrate

"Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God." Reading this familiar story from Luke, chapter 1, I tried to imagine what this young teenage girl was thinking. Having a face-to-face dialogue with the angel Gabriel had to be startling; his message even more alarming. What did it mean? Was it possible that she would conceive and bear the one and only Son of God? It's no wonder she said, "how can this be?" What woman (any age) would NOT be "greatly troubled" at such a pronouncement? Even though Mary did not understand how it could happen, Gabriel's reassuring reminder that ". . . nothing will be impossible with God" moved her doubting heart to a place of quiet submission ending in a beautiful song of praise. Instead of fear and hesitation, Mary boldly confessed, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:37-38).

As we approach Christmas 2020, we too are asked to walk worthy of our calling. Even when it's not easy. We live in an angry world where selfishness and lawlessness are often on display. Accepting this as our "new normal" promotes fear, doubt and uncertainty, choking out the JOY we often expect during this season. More than 2,000 years ago, the Truth set Mary free and it can do the same for us today. In her case it was one of one of God's top angels who delivered the message. Today, we have the written Word filled with promises that address our problems. Reading them will help. However, a promise is only as good as the one who makes it. The more we know about the source of this Truth, the stronger our faith will be. Studying the names of God can be impactful. Learning WHO He is--His nature, His character, His position, His ability, His love (and much more) can be life-changing!

One of my favorite names is El Elyon (God Most High) because it establishes His permanent PRESENCE with us—His many PROMISES to us and His divine POWER through us. Opening the channel to receive what He has promised depends upon our belief (Matthew 9:29). The unshakable fact that God is sovereign and nothing happens outside of His plan or His permission brings peace and hope to my heart—even in the middle of our crazy, mixed up world (Isaiah 14:24, 27, Isaiah 46:9-11).

This Christmas holiday is a wonderful time to focus on God's greatest gift—His one and only Son, Jesus Christ. May His great love fill our hearts and minds spilling over onto everyone who crosses our path. Help us to respond like Mary: "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." (Luke 1:37-38). It's time to celebrate!

**Personal Note:** This will be my final message through *The Heart Connection*. I have been honored to share with you over the past four years and grateful to Editor Fulton for this privilege. Thank you for your kind words of support and encouragement. It's been a wonderful adventure! Merry Christmas!

*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.*



# CHURCH HEALTH

## Over functioning

By LARRY BARKER

When I first began working as the BMA of America Missions director of church planting, I remember being at the office one day overwhelmed with the amount of work that was on my desk. Many days, I felt like I ran from one fire to the next doing my best to extinguish them. The workday was over according to the clock, but wanting to get all the work accomplished on my to-do list that was staring me in the face. One of my heroes and mentors, Jerry Kidd, stepped into my office and told me to go home. He then gave me two great pieces of advice I have always remembered.

First, he told me that it would be there when I got there the next day and it could wait until then. Secondly, he informed me that it was not going to get any better. There would be many days ahead when this same overwhelming feeling would be present and I would need to accept that there would be times to just step away and begin afresh the next day. Yes, it is important to prioritize but you also need to accept that interruptions will occur. We must remember that people are always more important than the task.

If you are in full-time ministry you need to know that it is hard work and no one should work any harder than us. In 1 Corinthians 15:10 Paul says, "But by God's grace I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not ineffective. However, I worked more than any of them, yet not I, but God's grace that was with me." Wow, Paul declares that none of the Christian leaders of his day worked any harder than he did! A minister's work ethic should always be exemplary but also realistic. Being a workaholic does not mean we are spiritual or pleasing God.

Over-functioning is defined as "doing for others what they can and should do for themselves." This may make us feel good and give us a sense of accomplishment, but it is far better to train people to develop the leadership skills they need to meet their own needs. When they begin feeding, teaching, and learning themselves then they will be able to begin teaching and training others. The reality is that most projects do not require you to take care of all the details personally but instead delegate those items to your team.

Here are some things to think through as you build a team that can accomplish so much more working together.

**First, look for the right people to help you.** Two things that should be non-negotiable are that they have a teachable spirit and they will be loyal. That does not mean that they are a "yes-man/woman" but that they understand confidentiality and there is a good chemistry between everyone on the team. Everyone should enjoy working together and look forward to the time they focus on the project.

**Second, know what to delegate and what not to delegate.** All too often the leader is actually the bottleneck that keeps the project from becoming a reality. Spend some time deciding what cannot be delegated and then write it down. Then you should seek out a leader/mentor who could talk over that list with you. Is it realistic or are you being too controlling? After that, you should make a list of everything you can delegate on that project or responsibility. Once again, seek counsel from another leader or leaders and then tweak both lists.

**Third, realize that the best ideas will probably come from**



**the others on your team.** Embrace the truth and enjoy the fact that you do not have to be the sole producer of great ideas. Listen to them and give their ideas merit.

**Fourth, give them permission to risk and you must be willing to take a chance on them.** In a church planting training, I heard Rick Warren said, "If it does not require faith does that mean we have been unfaithful?" John Piper says it this way, "The Christian life is a call to risk. You either live with risk or waste your life."

According to Matthew 25:16-30 the servant who refused to risk was called "wicked" by his master.

J.D. Greear says, "Risking for God is dangerous; but not risking is more dangerous." Yes, you may get burned and someone may drop the ball, but we must risk by being willing to invest in raising up more leaders.

**Fifth, give them permission to fail.** Two things are very important here. First, if someone never fails that means they probably are not doing very much. Second, keep reminding yourself of those who took a chance on you. I personally am so thankful for those who believed in me enough to give me a chance and then when I did mess up (and the stories are plentiful) were supportive of my efforts but then were also helpful in showing me where and how I had messed up. Walk them through a W.I.N. What did they do well? Where do they need to improve? What will they do next after having evaluated?

Sometimes we are over-functioning because there is no one else available to help us but other times it is because we refuse to equip and empower others. If the second is true then we are hindering others from developing their leadership skills and utilizing their spiritual gifts to be a blessing to our ministry. God has put a lot of leadership capacity in other people around us. We do not serve our team well by leading in their place and not allowing them to step up and lead themselves. Do not allow the "if I want it done right, I must do it myself" to control your leadership style.

Dave Ferguson of Exponential says when we approach other people, we should remember these four letters and share what "ICNU!"

*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](http://www.bmamissions.org).*





## My anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock

By **GLENDA CHAMBERLAIN**

Johnnie Ross, Texas WMA president, shares a note of hope for the coming year.

“It is a blessing once again to be elected as Texas State WMA president. I am looking forward to serving a second year in this position alongside some wonderful WMA ladies from around our great state as we focus on the theme, *Shipwrecked*.

While considering our new theme, I was reminded of a dear fellow from one of my husband’s pastorates who had served in the Navy. When he passed away, his family brought to our attention how many of our hymns have maritime references within them.

One of the first refrains that came to mind was, *I’ve anchored my soul in the “Haven of Rest.” I’ll sail the wide seas no more.* And then there’s the phrase, *Chart and compass come from Thee; Jesus, Savior, pilot me.* From my childhood, I remember one of our local pastors singing “Master, the Tempest Is Raging,” and his beautiful baritone voice ringing out, *Whether the wrath of the storm-tossed sea, Or demons or men, or whatever it be No waters can swallow the ship where lies The Master of ocean, and earth, and skies; They all shall sweetly obey Thy will, Peace, be still! Peace, be still!*

What about “Mighty to Save? The second verse claims, *I have a Redeemer to pilot me o’er Life’s angry billows to Heaven’s fair shore; I know He will keep me, tho’ wild be the wave – ‘Tis Jesus my Savior, mighty to save.* Then there’s the verse of “Throw out the Lifeline” which says, *Soon will the season of rescue be o’er, Soon will they drift to eternity’s shore; Haste, then, my brother, no time for delay, But throw out the lifeline and save them today.*

Although there are literally hundreds of these songs, I’ll conclude my songs list with these words from “In Times Like These,” *In times like these, I have a Savior In times like these, I have an anchor I’m very sure, I’m very sure My anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock.*

The message I’d like to leave with you, hopefully, you’ve already found. The writers of these songs understood that Jesus is our Savior and Guide in every circumstance, and it is God’s will that we as His children, share the Good News with others, so that others will come to know the saving power we have received. I encourage you to read scripture, read hymn lyrics, understand the great truths that God has given us in His Word and through hymns. Know that you, and those you come in contact with have no need to be *Shipwrecked*.”

### DISTRICT NEWS

Liberty District WMA met Oct. 10, 2020 at Rosewood, Gilmer. The meeting was called to order by First Vice

President Glenda Chamberlain. She spoke of a story she had read titled, “Gracefully Broken,” where a toddler fussed until he got a glow stick that he wanted. Older brother promptly took the glow stick and broke it in several places, then handed it back to the toddler, saying, “I had to break it so you could see it glow.” God allows us to be broken so we can shine brighter for His purpose.

We were warmly welcomed by Rosewood WMA President Candance Jordan, the motto recited and the GMA’s in attendance led the singing while the project offering was taken.

Since we have not met since last January, we had some catching up to do. Normally, July is the month we recognize the Sunbeams, GMA and Galileans; elect new officers and installations; select/vote on new projects, etc. This year, most officers simply agreed to serve an extra year.

Ms. Tami Blackburn, from Antioch, introduced her GMA girls and their accomplishments and spoke of difficulties GMA has endured this year due to the pandemic, such as, not being able to meet regularly, unable to attend the GMA Houseparty or National Camp. Other sponsors, Denise Gaston of Rosewood and Mellissa Henry of Camille Acres, introduced their GMA and talked about the steps completed or currently in progress. The new GMA district theme chosen for 2021 is “Great Expectations.” Mellissa led a prayer of dedication and appreciation for these girls.

The Sunbeams sang during the collection for the General Fund. A video produced by Shirley Hoffpauir was shown of district Sunbeams and their accomplishments. She presented Sunbeams, graduating to GMA or Galileans, with a certificate and a scrapbook. The Sunbeam’s new theme is “The Incredibles” with theme verse Philippians 4:13. Bro. Michael Pool led a prayer of blessing for the Sunbeams.

Sandra Kizer, Second Vice President, introduced the new WMA theme for 2021 “God is our Chain Breaker”, theme verse is Psalm 68:6. A new project was selected, Daniel Spring’s swimming pool with a goal of \$2,500. Karen Harrell (Latch) was elected as new member on the Nominating Committee and Bro.’s Kizer and Ross were elected to fill the Advisory Committee.

Liberty District WMA 2020 project, Tommy & Sara Rose, surpassed the goal of \$2500 by raising \$2736. Praise the Lord.

Charlotte Johnson presented information and encouraged attendance to the state meeting in Waxahachie.

The 2021 National WMA Women’s Conference is scheduled for April 20, 2021 at Heritage, Waxahachie.

Triniti Mauk and Charlotte Johnson led in singing of the new WMA song “Called.”

Sandra Kizer conducted the officer installation and presented each of the ladies with a bracelet consisting of a chain holding a key to represent our new theme, Chain Breakers.

Bro. Jack Hoffpauir led the closing prayer. Next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 9, 2021 at Fellowship, Pittsburg.

### TEXAS SUNBEAMS LOOKING AHEAD

The Texas State Sunbeam Houseparty of 2020 was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, Elvera Koonce, state Sunbeam promoter, Shirley Hoffpauir, assistant state Sunbeam promoter and Sunbeam counselors met virtually to plan their upcoming year. Two districts were represented by five counselors along with the State Sunbeam President Miss Ellyssa Pool from Antioch, Gilmer in the Liberty District.

The counselors agreed to retain the slate of officers and advisory council members, the theme (Countdown), the project (Water for Christ - \$1,500 goal) and volunteer assignments. They chose to have a counselor meeting virtually on June 25, 2021 at 7:00 pm to complete the 2021 Houseparty preparations which will be held at Jacksonville College on July 16-17.

Texas State Officers for 2021: President Ellyssa Pool, Liberty; First Vice President Cayden Koonce, Harris; Second Vice Presidents Annabelle Aslin, Liberty and Jeffrey Hennesey, Liberty; Song Leaders Daelan Mathis, Cherokee, and Kornelius Moy, Harris; Project Promoters Eli Norris, Mt. Olive, and Max Hall, Mt. Olive; Reporter/Historian Kaleb Moy, Harris; Treasurer Kainan Moy, Harris.

For more information about Sunbeams, or if you are interested in starting a Sunbeam auxiliary at your church, contact Ms. Vera Koonce by email [djkeak55@yahoo.com](mailto:djkeak55@yahoo.com) or by phone: 281-642-5356.

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



# Reaching a forgotten people—Carpenters House of Oyster Creek

By **PAUL GAUNTT**

*Baptist Progress Correspondent*

The Carpenters House of Oyster Creek, in the Lake Jackson/Freeport area, is reaching their community in unique, innovative and effective ways.



▲ **The Carpenter's House**

"I guess you could say we are a church of recovery," said Pastor Cesar Cantu, alluding to the harvest of souls they have received who are recovering from various perils, not the least of which are those who were steeped in substance abuse.

"[Pastor] Cesar is nothing short of a revolutionary," said Mio "Maxie" Henry, who found the Lord as her Savior as a result of the outreach of The Carpenter's House. "We have been clean and saved, and were baptized four years ago."

She also praised the pastor and the church for the solid biblical teaching she has received since becoming a part of The Carpenter's House.

"We are learning to apply the truths of scripture to our lives," she said. "It is such a huge part of our lives now."

There were approximately 65 in attendance Sunday morning, Nov. 15, including a large group of children in children's church.



▲ **The Carpenter's House congregation worshipping**

"We are studying the book of Daniel in children's ministry," said Children's Ministry Director Kim Anderson. We have been studying about the faith of Daniel and how he overcame tremendous trials through God's provision."

Cantu, his wife, Haydee, and their 15-year-old daughter,



▲ **Pastor Cesar Cantu delivering the morning message**



also named Haydee, have been with The Carpenter's House where he has been the lead pastor for about four months, but he has been with the church from its beginning. His mission includes not only being the pastor of a recovery church, but he is also a state certified chemical dependency counselor. He is the chief operations officer for Warriors Refuge, a facility devoted to ministry to veterans, reaching approximately 200 veterans on a regular basis, with 18 in the facility population. Warriors Refuge is funded by the Veterans Administration.

Cantu is living proof that God can take a dark, turbulent past and effectively utilize it in preparation for ministry later. On April 28, 2005, he was arrested by the Drug Enforcement Administration for the illegal transportation of illicit drugs. He spent a year and a half in a county jail in Virginia, awaiting his trial.

"I was charged with money laundering in addition to transporting marijuana from state to state," Cantu said. My original plea agreement was for 35 years to life, but eventually, as I prayed and asked God for help, the government returned to me with a 10-year plea which I signed."

According to a written testimony, Cantu eventually realized God was answering his prayers for help.

"God's answer to me was that He was (already) helping me. My rescue was coming in the form of conviction for my sins," he said.

Ironically, Cesar found himself doing ministry while incarcerated. He began serving others by teaching other men how to read.

"I became so proficient that I also taught Spanish speaking men to read English and Spanish," he said, noting that over the

course of the next 8 years, he advanced from teaching Bible studies to writing sermons, and was teaching in Sunday services and would step in when the local pastor of the church at the prison camp was unable to attend. That church was a BMA church—Glenmore Baptist Church in Glenmore, Louisiana.

On April 15, 2014, Cantu had a phone conversation with a young woman who represented the office of the President of the United States.

"She stated that as of 8:50 that morning, then President Barack Obama had commuted my sentence and the office of the Pardon Attorney had signed my release," Cesar said. "Christ had returned for me; I had not been forgotten and I was going home."

Pastor Cantu believes strongly that his mission is to have a strong ministry of discipleship and outreach through The Carpenters House, emphasizing that his church is serving a community that has a lot of poverty.

"I also have a vision to either lease or purchase property here in the area and start up a boys home," he said.

The pastor's Sunday message on Nov. 15 centered on Malachi 4:6, "And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." The pastor dealt with issues dealing with the urgency of fathers having a strong presence in their children's lives and giving them guidance. He cited his own great relationship with his father and noted how his father put him to work on Saturday mornings getting his help to do maintenance on his father's big rig truck.

"I never got to roam the neighborhoods with my friends

**CARPENTERS HOUSE OF OYSTER CREEK** continued on p. 12

# Healthy Church Solutions debuted in Ministry Connection Workshop



**HEALTHY CHURCH**  
SOLUTIONS

By **JERRY FULTON**

*Baptist Progress Editor*

*Baptist Progress* hosted the department's first Ministry Connection Workshop of the 2020-2021 associational year presented by Larry Barker, BMA of America Missions director of church solutions and church planting. The workshop was conducted at the BMA of Texas Building in Waxahachie, Dec. 1, 2020.

During the workshop, Barker introduced the new church and pastor health ministry of BMA of America Missions called *Healthy Church Solutions*. The heart of the ministry is to start new churches and strengthen existing churches. The hope of Barker and his team is for *Healthy Church Solutions* to be the go-to partner of churches and pastors for prayer, tools and trainings. The ministry is for pastors, ministry leaders and churches of all sizes. *ACTIVATE*, a revitalization ministry of the BMA of America, will continue as the revitalization arm of *Healthy Church Solutions*.

The ministry offers free training and coaching in the areas of pastor health, family health, ministry health, revitalization and prayer initiatives. *The Healthy Church Podcast* is sponsored by *Healthy Church Solutions* and can be found at [thehealthychurchpodcast.com](http://thehealthychurchpodcast.com). Another opportunity for pastors is *Pastor Zooms* which meets twice a month to offer pastors a place to discuss issues, get feedback and pray for one another.

New trainings are available on discipleship, pandemic soul care, navigating COVID-19, dealing with difficult people and

building a culture of prayer. Those topics were covered in the Ministry Connection Workshop.

Coming in 2021 will be an interactive website at [healthychurchsolutions.org](http://healthychurchsolutions.org). The website should be up and running in January. A partnership with Right Now Media offering pastors free access to the Right Now Media library and *Healthy Church Solutions* archives is available. Also, new free in-house church, pastor and ministry assessments; family and marriage resources and help for churches searching for pastors are available.

The ministry is planning to host a *Re:Charge Leaders' Oasis*, a conference for pastors and churches in the fall of 2021 as well as a pastors' prayer retreat at some time during the upcoming year.

For more information about *Healthy Church Solutions*, contact [heidi@bmaam.com](mailto:heidi@bmaam.com).

Concerning the *Healthy Church Solutions* workshop, here is what some who attended had to say:

"I am so thankful that God allowed me the opportunity to attend this workshop. Bro. Larry Barker was very insightful and practical in his advice on how we should handle challenges facing us right now between balancing the interests of our congregations and still maintaining our personal soul care. I was refreshed by the fellowship and spiritual growth. Thank you, Bro. Jerry Fulton and *Baptist Progress*, for hosting. Our best days are not behind us, but lie ahead."

– *Billy W. Byrd, pastor of Oak Hill, Gilmer*

I enjoyed spending a day with pastors and church leaders to discuss church health, prayer initiatives and talking about our role as pastors as we continue to navigate the challenges of COVID-19. The resources and reminders that I received are valuable and needful for my ministry. I want to encourage all of our pastors and leaders to take advantage of these workshops.

– *Wes Pratt, pastor of Northside, Conroe*

I was blessed inspired, and encouraged by the recent *Healthy Church Solutions* workshop led by Pastor Larry Barker and sponsored by *Baptist Progress*. The practical helps he gave into personal pastor care, dealing with the COVID challenges and leading churches in prayer power were both insightful and reassuring. This is one of the best workshops I have attended.

– *Charles Johnson, pastor of Rosewood, Gilmer*

*Baptist Progress* will host the next Ministry Connection Workshop, *Gospel Impact Through Community Involvement*, at CrossRoads Church, Rowlett, March 23, 2021. To register, go to [baptistprogress.org](http://baptistprogress.org).

*Baptist Progress* is the news, information, equipping and training ministry of the BMA of Texas.

Please join us for an introduction to

## The Multiplication Workshop

**January 19, 2021**

Tuesday 9am-4pm (lunch provided)  
BMAT Missions Office  
(632 Farley Street, Waxahachie, Texas)



# Senior Saints—Truly a “Minister’s Resource”

By **STEVE CRAWLEY, Ph.D.**

Years ago, I recall hearing a student minister remind his congregation that youth are not just the church of tomorrow but a vital part of the church today. Likewise, a congregation’s senior saints are not the church of yesterday but a vital part of the church today. Further, they have the potential to be an incredible resource to pastors.



**MINISTERS  
RESOURCE  
SERVICES**

Yet it seems that our Western view of retirement now extends beyond the workplace and into the church house. Consequently, at times our senior saints seem to be relegated to a sideline role in the church. The church’s goal should instead be for them to thrive in the mission of the church rather than just to survive changes aimed at ministering to younger members.

Senior bus trips to destinations of enjoyment are well deserved by our older members and have their rightful place on our church calendar. Still, a thriving senior adult ministry extends far beyond field trips and fellowships. It creates an atmosphere where aged men and women are used in an intentional way to invest in the lives of younger members of the congregation to help in fulfilling the church’s mission.

## CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

**Senior saints have wisdom to counsel and mentor.** Their life experiences and trials provide invaluable capabilities that can be shared with younger generations. Perhaps rather than segmenting classes by age, we might consider the intergenerational dynamic made possible by having younger men meeting with older men and younger women meeting with older women.

**Senior saints have margin.** Every church member has a responsibility to employ his or her spiritual gift to edify the church body. Yet senior saints often have more margin in both time and finances to serve the church without the burden of raising a family and earning an income.

**Senior saints have talent and ability.** Many of our older members often retire from positions that required significant leadership abilities in the workforce that can now be leveraged and used for the kingdom. Many local churches are full of older members with untapped potential.

**Senior saints make great prayer warriors.** Some of the greatest prayer warriors I have witnessed were confined to a nursing home. As Adrian Rogers once noted, “prayer does not prepare us for battle; prayer is the battle.” Our senior saints serve invaluable by praying for their church and pastor, regardless of the physical challenges they may face.

**Senior saints are a vital part of the church today and a great resource for pastors.** By prioritizing our use of this congregational demographic, church leaders can leverage substantial wisdom, margin, intercessional capability, and talent that can help our churches thrive in fulfilling the Great Commission.

Dr. Steve Crawley is the executive director of Ministers Resource Services. Contact him at P.O. Box 995, Conway, Arkansas 72033, 844-262-8637 or [MRS@bmaamerica.org](mailto:MRS@bmaamerica.org).



# Annual BMA of America Meeting, April 19-21, 2021

By **JEFF SWART**

*BMA of America President*

We would all acknowledge that 2020 has been a year that we will never forget. Although we were not 100 percent positive at the time, cancelling the 2020 Baptist Missionary Association Meeting (BMA of America) turned out to be the correct decision. Now, it is time to consider the 2021 meeting and we are again facing a great unknown. So, after spending time praying and considering the various alternatives, we have decided to schedule the 2021 BMA of America Meeting practicing social distancing with no close contact of messengers.

Therefore, as of now, the 2021 BMA of America Meeting will be held Monday, Apr. 19 through Wednesday Apr. 21, 2021, at the Farley Street Baptist Church in Waxahachie. The meeting will be conducted with the same format as the 2019 national meeting with the exception of the breakout sessions normally held on Tuesday morning. We will not be having the breakout sessions so as to comply with social distancing requirements. And, should the health department regulations

change between now and the meeting, we will comply with all state and local regulations and may need to modify the format of the meeting.

On this page, a list of hotels available for the meeting can be found.

Please pray that we will be able to host the 2021 BMA of America Meeting as there is a great need for all of us to be together as we conduct the Lord’s business. Please pray for your officers and the national meeting production team as we plan a meeting that will glorify the Son and edify the messengers and guests of our churches.



▲ **Jeff Swart**

# Hotels for BMA of America Meeting, April 19-21, 2021

Please make your reservations early. Call the local hotels directly to make your reservations. Local telephone numbers are included below. **You must identify that you are with the Baptist Missionary Association of America.**

Also, when making your reservations, be sure to let them know you want rooms in the block for the BMAA that begins on Apr. 19. Your stay does not have to include the night of the 26<sup>th</sup>, but that will make sure you get the BMA block rate.

The Fairfield Inn and Suites will serve as our headquarters hotel for the annual meeting in Waxahachie.

## **FAIRFIELD INN & SUITES, 2020 CIVIC CENTER LANE:**

(Single/Double, \$135 per night, Rate Code: BMCQ; King, \$135, Rate Code: BMCK; King Suite, \$155, Rate Code: BMCX). Telephone reservations: 972-937-8886. Reservation cutoff date is March 15.

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

## • **BEST WESTERN PLUS, 1701 NORTH HIGHWAY 77:**

(Single/Double, \$119.99; Queen/King, \$129.99). Complimentary hot breakfast buffet daily. Telephone reservations: 972-938-1600. Reservation cutoff date is April 12.

## • **COMFORT SUITES, 131 RVG PLAZA:**

(Two queen suite, \$109; King suite, \$109; for more than two people in the room, not including children, there will be an additional \$15/person charge). Hot breakfast buffet daily. Telephone reservations: 469-517-1600. Use Group Code: BMAA. Reservation cutoff date is April 12.

## • **HAMPTON INN, 2010 CIVIC CENTER LANE:**

(Double Queen: \$139; King standard, \$129). Hot breakfast daily. Telephone reservations: 972-923-0666, EXT 0. Reservation cutoff date is April 1.

## • **HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS & SUITES, 984 NORTH US 287 BYPASS:**

(Single King, \$139.99; Two Queen, \$139.99; King Suite, \$169.99). Use Group Code: BMAA 2020. Telephone reservations: 972-938-3300. Reservation cutoff date is March 1.

## • **LA QUINTA INNS & SUITES, 311 STADIUM DRIVE:**

(Standard room, \$104). Hot breakfast buffet daily. Telephone reservations: 972-937-5525. Reservation cutoff date is April 12.

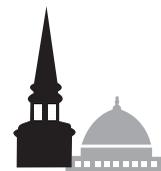
All room rates quoted above are subject to all local taxes.

**Note:** There are no RV hookups available at Farley Street Baptist Church. There should be ample parking space. Anyone interested in RV parking could contact the church directly or contact the Waxahachie Convention and Visitors Bureau at [www.waxahachiecvb.com](http://www.waxahachiecvb.com), 469-309-4040 or [info@waxahachiecvb.com](mailto:info@waxahachiecvb.com).

—Jerome Cooper, Bill Thornton and Daniel Williams  
BMA of America Arrangements Committee



# Christian Women



By JOHN M. ADAMS, D.Min.

*“If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself. Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (1 Timothy 2:12-15).*

Is the church behind the times in its attitudes toward women? A growing number answer, “yes.” They say we have restricted women. What should the Bible-believing Christian say about equal rights for women within the church? How should church leaders respond, and what should be the attitude of Christian women?

## THE WORLD AND WOMEN’S RIGHTS— A CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE.

The battle for women’s rights has touched virtually every aspect of our national life. Now it is touching the church, and it brings up a difficult question: Are women underprivileged in the New Testament church?

The tensions concerning the role of women in the church is great in some churches. As women remove the barriers to once-forbidden secular occupations, some liberal church leaders are upset because they believe the church is lagging far behind.

Critics argue that churches are steeped in prejudice and that it is high time they became enlightened. On the surface, arguments may seem convincing. Why should women not serve as pastors? Many church women equal or outstrip the men in spiritual gifts and abilities. The church, we are told, is missing out by not letting them use their talents.

Some theologians hold that the requirements for pastors outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, “This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

Some have been grossly misinterpreted 1 Timothy 3:1-7, arguing that the qualifications the apostle Paul listed are merely reflect cultural prejudices of Paul’s day. How should the Lord’s church respond to such pressure? What shall we say to sincere dedicated young women who truly want to serve the Lord?

## GOD’S WORD AND WOMEN’S RIGHTS— A CLEAR ANSWER.

The Bible answers several basic misunderstandings. First, there is a basic error in understanding the scope and nature of the differences between the sexes. The Bible nowhere teaches that men are superior to women, but it does teach that they are different. In creating woman,



God did not make a carbon copy of what He had already made. He fashioned a personality and spirit that would complement men and supply some qualities that man lacked.

Today’s tendency is to assume that except for physical differences, men and women come from the same mold. Therefore, they are to be competitive. That is not God’s intent. God created male and female to work together, not to compete.

We commit a basic error when we try to sweep the differences under the rug. It may appear to succeed for a time, but in the end, we violate something elemental in our inner structure. Let’s evaluate the Word of God on this subject. Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2:12, “But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.” The New Testament makes clear that administration is a man’s calling. Early church leaders were called elders and deacons. Qualifications spelled out for both offices to be made of men.

1 Timothy 2:13-15 says, “For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.” Paul gives two reasons why the woman cannot scripturally usurp authority over the man. First, woman was not created to be independent. Second, the woman had been first to give place to sin.

The man’s office on the church and home is not just a badge of honor; it is a mantle of responsibility. Men make a mistake to think that their headship makes them far superior and women inferior. But God has set the guidelines for men and woman. Women matter as much as men to God, but we are called to different tasks.

In a *His* magazine interview, Elizabeth Elliott made an interesting point. “Positions of leadership in the church are not rewards of competence alone. They are not earned or assigned purely on the basis of ability. They are assigned sovereignly by God. Those who take positions of authority

in the church must be ordained of God.” Do not be misled by secular arguments that the Scriptures are influenced by cultural bias—for God’s Word is inspired and adaptable to all ages.

## CHRISTIAN WOMEN AND WOMEN’S RIGHTS— A CONSECRATED ATTITUDE.

Christian satisfaction comes not from title or position but from faithfulness in service. Since apostolic times, women have found fulfillment in the church. We list such lovely Christian women as Phoebe mentioned in Romans 16:1, which says, “Commend unto you Phoebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea.” Other mentioned are Mary, Martha and the certain women of Luke 8. They found honor in faithful, effective service. Paul mentions Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persia, Eudias and Syntyche as “fellow workers in the Lord”.

God has planned for women to teach where authority over men is not involved, to pray powerfully during church discussions, to witness to family and neighbors. The gifts and insights of women can help and encourage the Christian men in leadership roles.

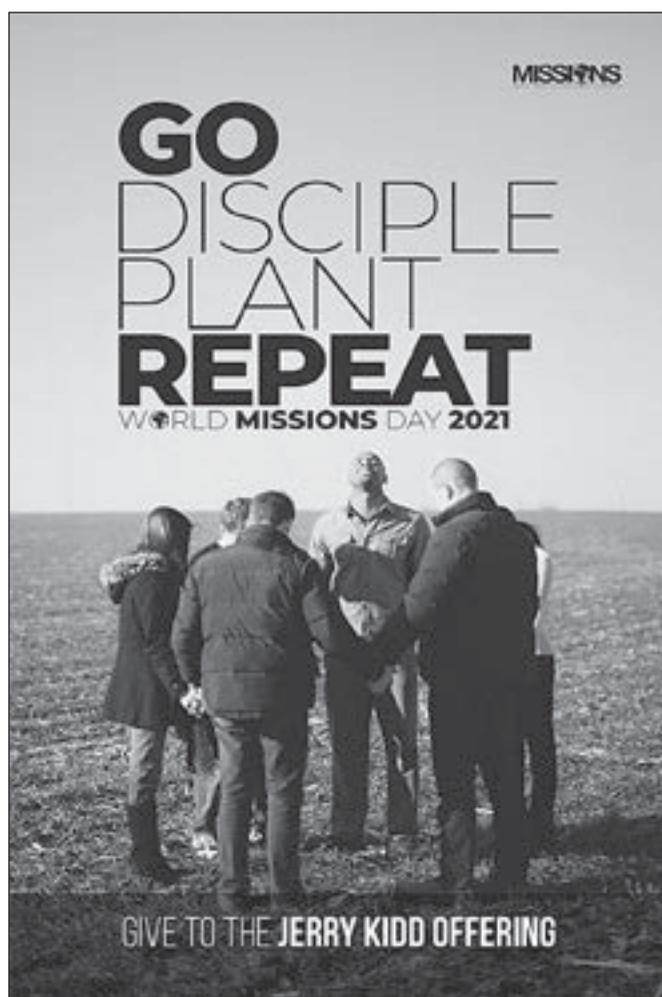
The world has its ideas of who should lead the church. Those who do not understand Bible teachings will wave banners of new equality. They will minimize and rationalize. But the true Christian understands and knows that God’s way is best.

*Dr. John M. Adams is the executive director of BMAA Moral Action. Contact him at Moral Action - BMA of America . P.O. Box 305 . Mantachie, Mississippi 38855 or visit [www.macbma.net](http://www.macbma.net) for more information.*



# World Missions Day, Sunday, Feb. 28

BMA of America Missions invites churches to join us for World Missions Day on Sunday Feb. 28, 2021. This year's theme represents the very essence of our global mandate to Go-Disciple-Plant-Repeat. It is the purpose for which we exist. We pray that each church will use this time not only as a reminder of our purpose but also as an opportunity to give to the Jerry Kidd Missions Offering. Funds given on World Missions Day are used to support over 500 national ChangeMaker missionaries who are making disciples and planting churches in over 71 countries. Register your church today at [www.bmamissions.org/worldmissionsday](http://www.bmamissions.org/worldmissionsday) and receive free promotional materials and a free polo for your pastor!



# MISSIONS

baptist missionary association of america

## World Missions Day 2021: Grateful for your giving

By **JOHN DAVID SMITH, D.Miss.**

*BMA of America Missions Executive Director*

I cannot recall a year like 2020. We have been thrust into uncharted waters but sustained by the simple truth that our God is in control. I have never been more thankful for your faithful partnership with BMA Missions.

The turbulence of 2020 has been a global experience, yet what an encouragement to hear how God has blessed in the midst of global chaos. Isn't that just like God? Here is a glimpse of what we have seen around the world:

Technology has allowed churches to share online, leading more people than ever to follow Christ.

People have come to better understand that the church is truly a community of people not a building or location.

Local congregations and communities have united to support one another, share in each other's financial burdens, and take on personal responsibility in discipleship and small groups.

Though travel has been stalled, virtual meeting capabilities are enabling us to connect with each other and with missionaries, church planters, and pastors.

I am personally excited to share that I have had more conversations with missionary candidates this year than any I can remember.

Certainly, the challenges are great yet we are seeing firsthand what we clearly see in Scripture: The gospel always advances in the midst of difficulty. For this reason, I am asking your church to join in celebrating **World Missions Day on Feb. 28, 2021**, our annual world missions giving campaign.

This year, we are excited to announce the annual World Missions Day offering is being renamed **The Jerry Kidd Offering**, honoring the indelible legacy of this pioneering

BMA missionary. When you give to The Jerry Kidd Offering on World Missions Day, your funds go to:

North America church planting—providing stipends to multi-ethnic church planters in Canada and the U.S.

U.S. missionaries—While most U.S. missionaries now raise their funds, others still receive stipends, and all U.S. missionaries benefit from support and training.

ChangeMakers—Many countries have formed church associations, and we work with them as they send missionaries and plant churches. In other countries we partner with key leaders or ministries through stipends to meet specific needs and goals related to training or church planting.

In all cases, needed funds are opportunities to expand the gospel, make disciples, and plant churches. We partner (do things WITH people not FOR people) to create self-sustaining church planting movements. The need for the gospel has never been greater, and that is why **our goal is to double the number of missionaries in the next 10 years.**

Whether on Feb. 28 or another Sunday, we ask that you lead your church to take up an offering. Last year on World Missions Day, our churches gave \$400,000. I am praying we will beat that number this year. With your help we can do it.

*Dr. John David Smith is the executive director of BMA of America Missions. Contact him at BMA of America Missions, P.O. Box 878, Conway, Arkansas 72033, 501-455-4977 or [john@bmaam.com](mailto:john@bmaam.com). For more information, visit [bmamissions.org](http://bmamissions.org).*



## Carpenters House of Oyster Creek cont.

because Saturday was when I worked," he said, noting how, although he did not appreciate it at the time, he became grateful later because of the oversight his father gave him during his childhood. "He taught me how to work, manage money, and how to write checks when I was just a 12-year-old boy."

In his message, he emphasized how children feel safer when they know their parents love each other, and also how children are most likely to turn violent later in life when violence is modeled to them at home.

BMA Texas Missions Director Heith Mitchell shared some of the back story of how the church came into existence.

"The sending church was Pinebrook Baptist Church of Tyler, where David Martin is the pastor, and Cliff Robertson was the associate pastor," he said. "Cliff had a real burden

for his hometown of Oyster Creek. He knows those people, and his vision was to reach a people that were considered 'forgotten people.' A large population of the Oyster Creek area consisted of people who were at one time employed by the oil refineries back in their heyday. So, Cliff was burdened for those broken people still living in the shadows of those abandoned refineries."

Mitchell said that in their assessment of the Oyster Creek area, they discovered that loneliness virtually consumed these people, and the loneliness would cause men to jam into the bars, especially on Monday nights. As a result, Robertson and Cantu began a Care Ministry Meal on Wednesday evenings in a rented community center. They reached crowds of 125-140 men during these meals.

"Rather than meet up at the bars, these men were given the opportunity to come eat a home-cooked meal, and have interaction with men of the church," Mitchell said, explaining that after the meal, Cliff would preach a brief message, resulting in many of them being funneled into the Sunday service at The Carpenter's House and many eventually received Christ.

"Cesar and Cliff worked side by side—they were an amazing team," Mitchell recalled.

For further information on The Carpenters House, visit [www.thecarpenters.house](http://www.thecarpenters.house). or e-mail Pastor Cantu at [cesarhcantu42@gmail.com](mailto:cesarhcantu42@gmail.com). He would also welcome opportunities to share his testimony with other churches, church groups and/or local associations.

# EVENTS

## 2021 BMA OF AMERICA ANNUAL MEETING

**DATE:** April 19-21, 2021

**PLACE:** Farley Street Baptist Church,  
Waxahachie, Texas

## 2021 BMA OF TEXAS ANNUAL MEETING

**DATE:** Nov. 1-2, 2021

**PLACE:** New Harmony, Tyler

## 2021 NATIONAL SENIOR ADULT CONFERENCE

**DATE:** Nov. 15-17, 2021

**PLACE:** Chateau on the Lakes, Branson, Missouri

# PASTOR & STAFF CHANGES

**BENJAMIN MORRELL** is the new pastor of Richland Heights, Grand Saline.

**JIMMY HENRY** has resigned as pastor of Caney, Pickton.

*\* If you are aware of pastor and staff changes, please let us know at Baptist Progress by emailing us at editor@baptistprogress.org.*

# PERSONNEL & POSITIONS

## AVAILABLE POSITIONS

**PASTOR**—Keltys First, Lufkin is seeking a full-time lead teaching pastor. Send resume, ministry philosophy, and any sermon links to jobs@keltys.org or to P.O. Box 3043, Lufkin, TX, 75903, Attn: Pastor Search. Visit keltys.org/pastorsearch for more information and a job description.

**PASTOR**—Antioch, Carthage is seeking a pastor. Send resume to Pulpit Committee, Scott Dyer, 442 County Road 1081, Carthage, Texas 75633, sedyer57@gmail.com or call 903-690-4819.

**PASTOR**—Walnut Street, Winnsboro is seeking a senior pastor. Submit resumes to P.O. Box 587 Winnsboro, Texas 75494. Website: walnutstreetbaptiststreet.org Email: wsbc75494@gmail.com. TFW

**PASTOR**—First Missionary, Morton is seeking a pastor. Send resume to jimmysealy@aol.com or to FMBC Box 981, Morton, Texas 79346. TFW

**PASTOR**—First, Jacksonville is seeking a pastor. Send resume to Pastor Search Committee, 210 Philip Street, Jacksonville, Texas 75766 or email to reception@firstjax.org. TFW

## AVAILABLE POSITIONS

**TOMMY JENKINS** is available for pulpit supply or revivals. Contact him in Rowlett at tommyjenkins1105@gmail.com or 469-223-8437. 1/21

# OBITUARIES

## MAGGIE CHANDLER

Maggie Chandler, longtime columnist for *Baptist Progress* and other publications, was called home to be with the Lord after being hospitalized with COVID-19 and undergoing an unrelated surgery, Dec. 1, 2020. At the request of her husband, Don Chandler, who serves as pastor of Central Baptist Church in Conway, Arkansas, those who were with her at the time of her passing were reading to her Psalm 23.

Bro. Don was recently hospitalized due to another health issue, and their daughter, Lori, is in ICU also having been hospitalized with COVID-19.

No memorial service had been scheduled at the time of this publication.



## JOE PENDLETON

In the early morning hours of Nov. 9, 2020, God called home Dr. Joe Pendleton, Jr. from a life that included over 50 years of ministry, teaching, and service to the Kingdom of God. Even following his retirement from full-time ministry, he continued to teach and preach fulfilling his calling to teach people the Bible at every opportunity.

Joe Charles Pendleton, Jr. was born in Lubbock May 6, 1942. He surrendered to preach in 1957 and felt that education was the key to developing his ministry calling. He was a graduate of Lubbock High School, Jacksonville College and Southwestern Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Carolyn, were married Aug. 17, 1962. Joe and Carolyn were happily married for nearly 40 years before her passing in 2002. They were blessed with three children, Jody, Kathryn, and Joshua. Joe and Carolyn were not only partners in marriage, but also in ministry throughout the years.

Bro. Joe served as pastor of seven churches in Texas and Arkansas, professor of church ministries at the Baptist Missionary Association Theological Seminary, dean of the seminary, chairman of the religion department of Jacksonville College and president of the Columbia Baptist Bible School. Later, God opened a door of ministry to the Hungarian speaking Romanian people. He traveled to Romania several times a year for 20 years to train pastors and raise church buildings.

Graveside services were held at Resthaven in Lubbock Nov. 18, 2020. A celebration of life service will be held at a later date.



## MIKE EDMONDSON

Just before we went to press, Baptist Progress learned that longtime BMA pastor Mike Edmondson was called home to be with the Lord. He suffered from dementia for several years. A funeral service was held at Old Bethel, Canton Dec. 13, 2020. No other information was available.



**Want your Baptist Progress issues to arrive faster and save money at the same time?**

To receive each issue of *Baptist Progress* approximately one week earlier, switch your mail subscription to an email subscription!

In addition to receiving each issue by email, you will get our e-News Update between issues. News alerts are also emailed periodically. The cost of an email subscription is \$18 (\$6 less per year than mail subscriptions).

So... faster delivery, more news, less cost...

**WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?**  
Make the switch, email us today at [editor@baptistprogress.org](mailto:editor@baptistprogress.org)

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

## “You have heard it said” about murder

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: Jan. 3, 2021

TEXT: Matthew 5:21-26

### THE HOOK

My favorite opening comment to use, when examining the sin of murder is one of the most humorous statements that I ever heard Billy Graham make. In a television interview once, the commentator asked the venerable evangelist, “Have you and Mrs. Graham ever considered divorce?” In his thick, North Carolinian drawl, he instantly replied, “We have never even considered divorce, but we HAVE discussed murder.” Of course his comment was a lighthearted joke, but yet with the suggestion that the human heart is capable of harboring murder—and it can, and often does, become an open act. The thought is so serious, Christ emphasized the truth that wishing someone dead is dangerous because it is a forerunner to the open act.

### THE BOOK

Christ seems to be categorizing murder in several forms and stages. And all are subject to the judging hand of God.

**1. An anger without a cause (v. 22a).** Hate-driven rage will evoke

murderous thoughts. Joseph’s brethren wanted him dead (Genesis 37:18-19). Their only “cause” was jealousy because Joseph was the favored son—and he also seemed to taunt them with his dreams which they construed as boastful. This type of anger was subject to trial in civic courts.

**2. An anger expressed with disparaging language (v. 22b).** This offense of using the Aramaic term, “Raca” was a term of ridicule or scorn. This was even more serious because the rage was being expressed with disparaging terms. This offense was subject to the Sanhedrin Court, which was a much higher court than the lower civic courts. It would be like being taken before the Supreme Court today for calling someone “empty headed” or “stupid.”

**3. An anger expressed by a more serious term—“thou fool.”** It’s a term with the intensity of “you idiot—you moron.” This offense carried with it the most severe penalty because it made one liable for the fires of Gehenna, a valley outside Jerusalem where children in Old Testament times were sacrificed to a pagan god. Gehenna is also symbolic of hell.

**4. An anger, which will negate the worth of your gift to God (v. 23).** This is not just anger you direct to your brother, but it is also the knowledge that your brother has aught against you. Either way, fellowship is breached,

and reconciliation must be experienced before one can be blessed in giving—and in fellowship in the church. (Matthew 18)

**5. An anger, which calls for reconciliation or else face imprisonment (v. 26).** It is to our advantage to settle disputes with our brother or else face long-range imprisonment, and even financial ruin. This reconciliation is also vital to the fellowship and ongoing ministry of the New Testament Church.

### THE LOOK

This text reminds us of the instructions of proper church discipline as presented in Matthew 18. If the penalties are great for anger and a murderous heart in open society, how much more penalty will we face for harboring such hatred and a murderous heart within the framework of the New Testament Body? What are the judgements of that? Partaking the Lord’s Supper in an “unworthily” manner, which includes a heart that does not discern the Lord’s broken body and shed blood. 1 Corinthians 11 deals with disputes in the New Testament body. 1 Corinthians 6 makes us liable for the judging hand of God. I believe the take away lesson is that judgement comes to those of us who harbor a cantankerous, self-absorbed, murderous spirit.

## “You have heard it said” about adultery, divorce, and oaths

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: Jan. 10, 2021

TEXT: Matthew 5:27-37

### THE HOOK

The three issues we deal with this week, adultery, divorce and swearing oaths, along with variations of each, pretty much epitomize fallen man. All three, occur when someone demands that their fleshly passions be satisfied, or else utilizing fleshly means to bolster one’s self-worth.

### THE BOOK

**Adultery (v. 31)** is to succumb to appetites of the flesh, and steal the affections of one who has been solemnly joined, by God to another. One taken in adultery has no regard for others—he or she has no regard for the two rejected spouses, not to mention upending the lives of offspring, other relatives and close friends, including young Christians who once regarded the adulterer or adulteress as a spiritual ideal. Adultery destroys relationships and Christian witness.

The Mosaic law says, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” Jesus says, “Do not even harbor it in your heart.” Lust and adultery are such blatant

violations of God’s law, He uses the imagery of severing that part of the body that is an instrument of the sin.

**Divorce (v. 32).** Over half of every marriage in America today ends in divorce. There is a scriptural “out” for divorce, only in the case of sexual immorality (Matthew 19:9). But most divorces occur when a spouse feels they are not having their needs met—or looking upon someone else and imagining the “grass being greener on the other side of the fence.”

Most heartbreaking of all, divorce in the world today, serves as a microcosm of Israel’s unfaithfulness to God, by going after other gods. This issue was addressed in the book of Hosea. So, He granted her a writing of divorcement. But one day, His relationship with Israel will be restored (Romans 11:25-32).

**Oaths (vv. 33-35).** Concerning oaths, Matthew Henry said, “The worse men are, the less they are bound by oaths; the better they are, the less there is need for them.” Solemn oaths are for the court of law, not for everyday conversation.

Out of fear for his life, Peter cursed in order to prove, the night before Jesus’ crucifixion, that he was not associated with Him. He cursed to portray himself as something he was not.

Others swear oaths in conversation to convince people of their authority. Whenever someone must swear an oath every other breath, they prove their own inferiority and ignorance.

Jesus says “Do not swear by Heaven—it is God’s throne; Do not swear an oath to the earth, because it is His footstool; Do not swear by Jerusalem, it is the city of the Great King; And do not even swear by your own head, for God has created it. Just a simple yes or no will suffice.

Once my daughter, Randi, asked her second to youngest son, Lane, “Did you hit your brother?” With a smile and excitement in his tone, he said, “Yes!” Perhaps sometimes without the exhilaration such simplicity should earmark our answers.

### THE LOOK

There is no greater manifestation of integrity and holy living than when one regards marriage as solemn and holy. Integrity and holiness cause one to be faithful and loving to their spouse, especially when the spouse least deserves it. Holiness and integrity will be demonstrated when one’s speech always glorifying God. One does not have to swear an oath to establish their credibility—just a simple “yes” or “no.”

## “You have heard it said” about retaliation, neighbors, and enemies

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: Jan. 17, 2021

TEXT: Matthew 5:38-49

### THE HOOK

We recently studied about meekness. Jesus was “meek, and lowly in heart.” A meek person is described as one who has power under control. A meek person never considers himself or herself as the issue—but always considers God’s will as preeminent. One who is meek, never seeks retaliation, and if there is every any anger in a meek person, it is because the rights of others have been violated, and more importantly, God’s righteousness has been violated (i.e. Jesus in the Temple—John 2:13-16).

### THE BOOK

Mosaic Law said, “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth” (Exodus 21:24, Leviticus 24:20). But today, under grace, God, the Father, is your Refuge—your Protector, your Defender. Paul emphasizes this in 1 Corinthians 6:19 “What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: . . .” Being such, we have assurance of His defense and protection of His children.

**The law of grace advocates going the extra mile for someone (vv. 40-44).** Do not just reach out grudgingly or half-heartedly—but show that you are a child of God by ministering grace and love with a gracious spirit.

**The law of grace can only be manifested in the life of God’s children (vv. 40-44).** The unregenerate can do good deeds and show kindness, but such can only be done in the flesh.

**The law of grace demonstrates such love to friends and foes (vv. 43-48).** Both the good and the evil are recipients of God’s goodness. If we just heap goodness on those who merit it, or who can pay recompense, there is no reward in that – but it is when we shower blessing on those who least deserve it, that God’s grace is truly revealed in His children.

### THE LOOK

Remember Paul’s words in Romans 12:19, “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”

In our minds, sometimes God’s vengeance doesn’t come soon enough. But it always comes in exactly the right time—and in His way.

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

## The proper practice of righteousness

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: Jan. 23, 2021

TEXT: Matthew 6:1-8, 16-18

### THE HOOK

My father loved to tell of the woman who acquired a diamond ring—probably one of the largest diamonds ever mined from the earth and made into a ring. As she was amid one of her high society dinner parties, she was distraught that no one seemed to be making over her ring. When the conversation subsided, she nonchalantly uttered, “My, it is warm in here—I think I’ll take my ring off.”

Humankind has such a deep-seated desire to be noticed—to be recognized—to feel an utter sense of significance and importance. And humankind seeks to demonstrate it by sounding the trumpet, or else doing some deed of “compassion” with the sole purpose of being noticed. God tells us in no uncertain terms that if we do things to seek recognition from others, that will be our reward.

### THE BOOK

**1. An earmark of an empty life is when one does alms only to be seen of men, rather than to glorify the Father (vv. 1, 4).** This describes what Jesus was discussing when He said, “Don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.” When we do great service with our right hand, let us not use the left hand to point to the deed. Let us not sound the trumpet and orchestrate the fanfare for our “good deed.” I had a deacon once who took me to task because I publicly acknowledged a great work he did for the church. He told me the next day, “Please don’t do that again—I’m not doing it for the people, but for the Lord.” Lesson learned!

**2. An earmark of an empty life is to live a life of hypocrisy (v. 2).** A hypocrite is literally a “play-actor.” Actors on stage in Greek culture were known as hypocrites. Today’s connotation of the word suggests insincerity and pretense. The hypocrites in the synagogue were play-acting faithfulness in worship, but were, in effect, worshiping self.

**3. An earmark of an empty life is prayers to impress others (v. 5).** The hypocrites loved to pray publicly to be seen of men. Effectually,

fervent, powerful prayer happens when one is in their private prayer chamber—praying to the Father. The prayers are not for glorification of man, but earnest, desperate struggles to reach the ears of God.

**4. An earmark of an empty life is when one involves themselves in religious ritual—again, to impress others.** They feign a sad countenance, and appear to fast, but it’s all for show. Again, they have their reward.

### THE LOOK

To practice righteousness is to always seek heartfelt forgiveness from God, to confer heartfelt forgiveness on others—to always seek genuine fellowship with Christ, and with His children. Rather than defend ourselves, we should seek to defend the righteousness of God before men. Genuine righteousness is when a child of God confers more grace and ministry on the needy, rather than to spend all prayer time, begging God for our fleshly desires to be met. In Jesus’ Model Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) the only time He addressed His own need, was “Give us this day, our daily bread.”

## The Lord’s Prayer: believers speaking to their Father

By PAUL GAUNTT

Date: Jan. 31, 2021

Text: Matthew 6:9-15

### THE HOOK

I have become convicted of the “give me” prayers that I have habitually prayed to the Father. Yes, He does say “Ask and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you...” But I wonder if our prayers sometimes become nothing more than a “to do” list for God. Lately, I have truly enjoyed another dimension in my conversing with God. I love to go back through my life, and highlight the ways that I now recognize as God’s unseen hand guided me. I have told Him, “Father, you had Your hand on me all the while, and it is now in retrospect that I really recognize it. Thank you, thank you, thank you!” Or, “Father, I wrote some disparaging remarks about a brother years ago, and I want to ask you to let my path cross with his so I can ask for forgiveness.” Or praying, “Father, please tell me where you want me to go. I’ll go anywhere—just please speak to my heart.” Or “Father, I have really had an impatient spirit toward Bro. So-and-so—please deliver me from it.”

I truly think God longs for His children to just talk with Him—or even just sit quietly and listen for Him. Prayer is so much more than our laundry list to Him.

### THE BOOK

Jesus did not just issue a standard, verbatim prayer, but rather He gave us a templet—a model for the spirit in which we are to pray.

**1. We are to begin our prayers by extolling, praising and reverencing the name of the Father.** Notice Jesus said “Which art in Heaven?” What’s so significant about saying that? There are so many false gods and other objects of worship located in so many places, it is good to acknowledge the only true and living God, whose throne is in Heaven. It is proper and good to designate the location of the Father in our prayers—if for no other reason than to proclaim it to any worshiper of false gods who may be listening.

2. We are to pray in anticipation of God’s Coming Kingdom (v. 10).

3. We are to pray for His will to be done (v. 10).

4. We are to pray for only today’s sustenance (v. 11).

5. We are to pray for His forgiveness, and to affirm our forgiveness to our debtors (v. 12).

6. We are to pray for protection from temptation and evil (v. 13).

7. We are to end the prayer as we began—extolling, praising and reverencing God, His kingdom, His power and His glory (v. 14).

### THE LOOK

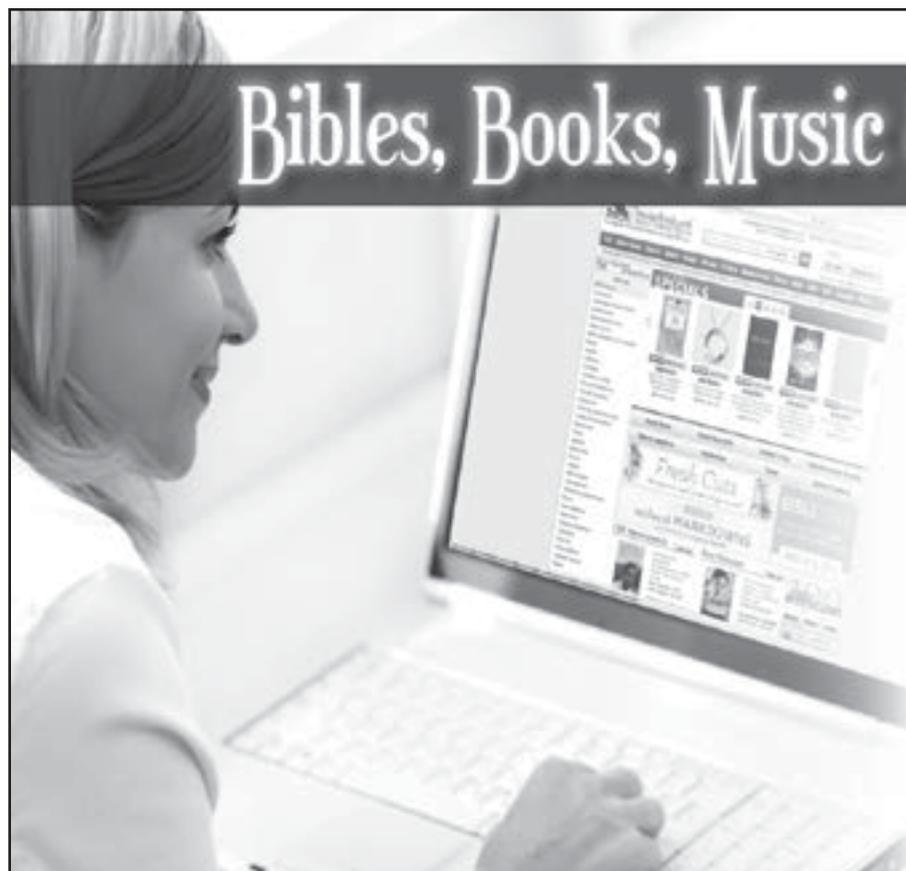
Let your prayers indicate your delight in the Lord. Psalm 37:4 says, “Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”

When your desires line up with His desires, He has no reason to withhold anything from you that you ask of Him.

*Paul Gauntt served for 16 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](mailto:pop.gauntt@gmail.com).*



## Bibles, Books, Music & Gifts



To order Bibles, books, music and gifts from *Baptist Progress*, visit [www.bmatexas.org](http://www.bmatexas.org) and click the flashing box at the top of the right hand column.

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



*Our warmest  
wishes this  
holiday season!*

MERRY CHRISTMAS  
AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

FROM: JACKSONVILLE COLLEGE

