

# Baptist Progress

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## BMA of America department directors visit with Texas church leaders

By **JERRY FULTON**  
*Baptist Progress Editor*

Every BMA of America department was represented when directors of those departments met with church leaders from Dallas, Ellis and Hill Counties at First, Red Oak Nov. 14, 2014. Present were Dr. John David Smith, executive director of BMA of America Missions; Larry Barker, operations director of North American Missions (BMA of America Missions); Dr. Charley Holmes, president of Baptist Missionary Association Theological Seminary; Dr. Scott Attebery, executive director of DiscipleGuide Church Resources; Dr. Steve Crawley, executive director of Lifeword Media Ministries; Ron Chesser, executive director of Ministers Resource Services; Dr. John Adams, executive director of Moral Action and David Watkins, public relations director for the BMA of America.



▲ David Watkins

Following a

Texas-size barbecue lunch, a question and answer session was conducted with the directors. Watkins opened the meeting by noting, "We are all friends in this room, gathered to discuss how we can tell more people about Jesus."

The first question posed to the directors was concerning the liquidation of BMA of America Missions property in Little Rock. Smith said the department had a contract on the sale of the property, but it fell through due to the interested party's failure to secure financing. As of the day of the meeting, there were no serious parties interested in purchasing the property.

A second question was regarding the progress of the integration of BMA of America Missions, DiscipleGuide and Lifeword. Crawley said that the process is going better than expected. The shared vision of the national department directors is to become better aligned with state and local associations.

Richard Smith, pastor of Farley Street, Waxahachie, requested an update on the situation in Iraq. The BMA of America Missions executive director said that he had visited the Middle East twice this year and plans to return again before the end of the year. He



▲ BMA of America directors and some of the pastors and church leaders who attended the meeting

continued, "Despite what you've seen on the news, our missionaries are doing remarkably well. Baptisms are taking place in Syria, and work is great in Lebanon."

The executive director said regarding Iraq, "There is a scattering of people; believers are fleeing for safety reasons. As a result the Baptist church in Baghdad has decreased drastically in attendance." Even so, one missionary

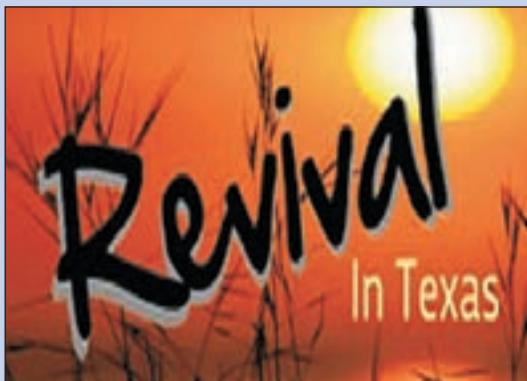
in Iraq is constructing a new church building, according to the director.

Also in the Middle East, a missionary from Jordan is reaching Arabs in Israel with the gospel. More information about the missionary's work is forthcoming.

Smith and Barker voiced their interest in helping the BMA of Texas reach lost Texans with the gospel. Smith also stated that he has had some exciting conversations with Jerry Burnaman,

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# The Power to Press Forward—President’s Address, Part 2

By CHARLES JOHNSON

BMA of Texas President

*“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13-14).*

I submit to you for the Lord’s churches to have the power to press forward in today’s world, it is absolutely essential for us to tap these three resources.

## The Power of Prayer

Prayer is always appropriate—well, at least in most cases. I am reminded of the young preacher who was advised by his mentor to stop and pray if he ever lost his train of thought or forgot what to say. This young minister was conducting his first wedding, and sure enough, near the repeating of vows, he could not remember what to say. Recalling the advice of his trusted trainer, he asked the wedding party to bow their heads, and then he repeated the words of Jesus from the cross, *“Father, forgive them for they know not what they do!”*

Maybe this young preacher’s choice of words in his prayer was not so wise, but rest assured, the early believers in Acts found the power to go forward as they prayed to their Heavenly Father. This is demonstrated in many places in Acts; I will mention a few examples.

First of all, they prayed together in earnest during the 10 days between Christ’s ascension from the Mount of Olives until the coming of the Holy Spirit in His fullness on the Day of Pentecost. I believe these were the 10 toughest days for the Lord’s Church in the history of the Church Age. Their leader had left. They did not know but what at any moment those in authority might storm their place of refuge and take them to Calvary’s hill to crucify them. They did not know what else to do, so they prayed.

These early believers found strength in their prayers. Prayer is the only thing recorded of their actions during these 10 days other than a brief business session to select a replacement for Judas Iscariot. They had two candidates, but there was no dissension in their election process because they were on their knees in prayer.

The apostle Paul prayed in *Acts*. When he arrived in Philippi after receiving the Macedonian call, he met on the Sabbath Day by a riverside where a group of women were assembling for prayer. Philippi did not have enough religious influence to warrant a Jewish synagogue which required ten men, but there was an influence for God in this town. I would call this group the Philippi WMA.

One of my mentors told me one time, “Charles, sometimes you are going to need to go along with the WMA ladies, even when it is something you may not personally desire.” Pastors, sometimes you just have to “bend over and take your licks.” I advise all pastors to support the ladies in your church. If you cannot back their projects, at least get out of the way and do not stand in their pressing forward paths.

Paul worshipped, prayed, and preached to the ladies at Philippi by the riverside and these, plus some others later, became the nucleus of the New Testament Church in that city. This church was the one to whom Paul would later write a New Testament epistle and a local body of baptized believers which helped him in his ministry.

Paul and Silas prayed in the jailhouse at Philippi. After being beaten, chained, and thrown into an inner dungeon, these men of



▲ Charles Johnson

God had a singing convention and prayer meeting in the darkness at midnight. If we had been in this predicament, we would probably have whined and complained, but Paul and his missionaries prayed, and God heard their cries and brought deliverance by an earthquake. At the same time the jailer of the prison had heard their prayers and threw himself at the feet of the apostles and asked the most important question one may ever raise, *“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”*

Prayer gave the Christians in Acts the power to press forward, and if we are to press forward for the cause of Christ in this present day, we must pray. So, pastors, organize your prayer chains, fill the prayer altars, establish prayer partners, and go personally to your prayer closets and pour your heart out to God.

## The Power of the Holy Spirit

The early believers also relied on the power of the Holy Spirit to go forward for Christ’s cause. In the Keltys parking lot today are a variety of cars. Some are big while others are small. Some are brand new while others have many years and high mileage. There are expensive and less expensive ones of various colors. All of these vehicles have one thing in common: each must have a small box-shaped device called a battery to give it the needed energy to start the engine so it may move forward.

The Lord’s churches are composed of all types, sizes, shapes, ages, colors, etc., of people. Without exception, each of these children of God is dependent on the power and spiritual energy of the Holy Spirit of God to be able to press forward for His glory.

The Holy Spirit came in His fullness on the Day of Pentecost and empowered the early Church with the needed energy to go forward with the Lord’s work. The Holy Spirit caused such “wishy-washy” Christians like Simon Peter to be transformed into a spiritual giant who looked his Jewish audience square in the eyes and pronounced them guilty of crucifying the only begotten Son of God—Jesus Christ. And the power had an effect, as over three thousand were saved after this Pentecostal proclamation and were added to the Lord’s Church.

The Holy Spirit led people to the right place at the right time. This is clearly seen in the life of Phillip. Phillip was one of the original seven deacons, but became Phillip the evangelist in Acts 8. He was having great revivals among the cities of Samaria as he traveled from town to town declaring the gospel of our Lord. Suddenly, he was led to go to the Gaza desert. This was a move which probably would have never been approved by today’s mission boards and missionary committees. It just did not make sense for Phillip to leave great success in Samaria to go to a dry, dusty and sparsely populated desert.

Gaza has been in the news lately with the Hamas attacks on Israel. It seems to now be occupied by some desert “rats.” When Phillip arrived at Gaza, he found one Ethiopian, probably a black-skin man, who was reading what we know as the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah from a scroll. Led of the Spirit, Phillip joined himself to this African and preached unto him Jesus. The Ethiopian believed and received Jesus as his personal Savior and was scripturally baptized in an oasis.

Because Phillip was led of the Spirit and not man’s logic and wisdom, a whole new continent was introduced to the Good News of Jesus. A good friend of mine, Bro. Earlon Lee of Grand Saline, related to me of traveling to Ethiopia several years ago to distribute *Bibles* for the Gideons International. While there he asked one of the Ethiopian Christians how Christianity had come to them. The man’s reply centered about an event nearly two thousand years ago when Phillip, led of the Spirit, preached to the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8.

The Holy Spirit of God brings conviction, convincing, and

conveys the Word of God to a sinner’s heart. The Holy Spirit makes strong and mighty Christians from weak, human vessels. Without the Holy Spirit, all our efforts are in vain. To press forward for Jesus, we must have the Spirit’s guidance and power; and we must humbly follow His leadership.

## The Power of the Preached Word

There are many great messages preached by the Lord’s servants in the book of Acts. I have already referred to the powerful message preached by Peter at Pentecost, but there were many more.

One of the great messages in Acts was preached by Stephen in Acts 7. Dr. Gaylor referred to this chapter as “The Readers’ Digest Condensed Version of Jewish History.” Stephen was on his literal death bed when he delivered this powerful Word of the Lord. He reviewed the history of Israel’s patriarchs in the Old Testament and brought them right up to Jesus whom he now saw standing at the right hand of the Father.

These persecutors of Stephen did not receive his message as they stopped their ears and picked up stones and stoned to death this first recorded Christian martyr. But, folks, God’s Word never returns to him void. It always accomplishes the purpose for which it is sent. Even though the stoners did not accept the Word, the message fell on the ears and heart of a young man, namely Saul of Tarsus, who was holding the coats of the accusers. Stephen’s dying words never left the heart and mind of Saul, and when he was headed into Damascus one day and a bright light shone from heaven, he already knew who Jesus was from Stephen’s message. I believe Stephen’s message was constantly in the front of Saul’s mind, not in the back of it.

Saul became Paul the Apostle, and he preached many different messages in Acts. He preached three Sabbaths in a row at Thessalonica. He was gentle with these Jewish worshippers the first two weeks, but on the third one, he “shelled the corn right down to the cob” and told them plainly, “Jesus is the Messiah!”

Paul was ejected from the synagogue, but the Word of the Lord still had great effect. The ruler of the synagogue was saved. A Gentile Roman citizen who had residence next door to the synagogue gave Paul refuge where he might continue to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Many Thessalonians came to a saving knowledge of Jesus through Paul’s messages.

Paul preached a great message to the intellectual crowd in Athens at the Areopagus on Mars Hill. There in the midst of a culture saturated with myths and worship of many different gods and goddesses, Paul used the example of the image erected to an Unknown God, to tell the Athenians about the God he knew and wanted them to know. While most of this crowd rejected the gospel, some believed and received the Lord. Praise God when even just a remnant believes.

Paul also preached to such Roman authorities as Herod Agrippa, Felix and Festus. He had a desire to obtain an audience before the Roman Emperor Caesar. Acts does not tell us if this became a reality; but if it did, I believe Paul’s message was no different when he stood before the mightiest ruler on earth. Instead of trying to impress the Roman emperor with his vast knowledge of the Greek, Hebrew, and Latin languages, I believe he related to Caesar what happened to him on the Damascus Road when he was saved. I believe Paul shared how his life had been radically transformed, and I believe he invited Caesar to let Jesus Christ make the same change and difference in his life.

The book of Acts shows us by example how to press forward for the Lord using the power of prayer, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the power of the Preached Word of God. I do not desire to see any church die. I do not want the BMA of Texas to die. May we all press forward until the Lord returns for us!

# Church Health

## We need a pastor, NOW

By LARRY BARKER

My heart's desire in blogging and writing articles is to promote spiritual health on a personal basis and on a corporate level in churches. One way of doing that is to make you aware of resources that could be a blessing to you and/or your church. Honestly, there is more out there today than any of us have the time to read and process properly. We have to be discerning about which resources we invest our time and money.

If we want to be physically and spiritually fit it will require making healthy choices. Every day we are faced with decisions that either promote or damage health. Many of the choices we make every single day, over 300, are not about right and wrong, but what is wise and what is unwise. Becoming unhealthy occurs over a period of time where we settle for less than God's best for our lives.

Several years ago, I watched a church I had resigned from begin the pastoral search process. One leader said this to the entire congregation when he felt they were moving too slowly, "We better take what we can get while we can!" They ended up calling a man who lasted six months and it was a disaster for the church and the pastor's family.

Recently, I heard this quote, "It is better to want what you do not have than to have what you do not want!"

After writing on this subject I noticed a blog by Thom Rainer and saw it as a confirmation to say more on this subject regarding the need for a pastor and to share some of his comments. "William Vanderbloemen has been able to combine over 15 years of ministry experience as a senior

pastor with the best practices of *Executive Search* to provide churches with a unique offering: a deep understanding of local church work with the very best knowledge and practices of professional executive search. William, his wife Adrienne, have seven children and live in the Houston area."

Here are a few of the highlights that were given for churches to consider: "Every pastor is an interim pastor. Succession planning is not just a corporate principle. It is highly biblical as well. A church is married to one man, and it's not the pastor—it's Jesus. When churches are searching out pastors, the first rule is 'slow down.' Churches hire too fast and fire too slow.

**The most expensive hire you ever make is hiring the wrong person.** Carrying the weight of the things of God becomes too much for a man at a certain age."

Vanderbloemen and Warren Bird have written a book on this subject entitled *NEXT, Pastoral Succession That Works*. One of the goals of their book is stated as to "demystify successful pastoral succession and help readers prepare for an even brighter future for their ministries." It might be worth checking out. In recommending, or even suggesting, any resource it is always opening yourself to criticism about something in the book someone disagrees with. Some good advice I was given years ago was to "eat the meat and spit out the bones."

In assessment, there are five characteristics from Dr. Charles Ridley which have become known as "knockouts." If the individual does not have evidence of these traits in their

life then it is best to not proceed. It is not saying they are not called nor is it devaluing them but it is saying that maybe they are not ready for the position they are seeking to fill. These characteristics are:

- Visioning Capacity
- Intrinsically Motivated
- Creates Ownership
- Relates to the Unchurched
- Spousal Cooperation

We must be careful of looking for the Sauls who are good-looking and tall, demonstrate leadership capacity, and charisma. We must dig deeper and look at character. What does his relationship with his dad look like? How would his wife rate their marriage on a scale of 1-10? How is his personal walk with the Lord? It is interesting that the five areas most often asked about in job interviews, (age, education, experience, race, and gender), have little value on predicting how they will perform. Remember the process is not about personal approval but is the candidate the right man, for the right place, and at the right time!

Healthy churches slow down and allow God to direct!

Larry Barker is the operations director for North American Missions. For more information or to contact him, visit [www.bmaamissions.org](http://www.bmaamissions.org).



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# BMA of America department directors visit with Texas church leaders cont.

director of BMA of Texas Missions, and looks forward to the national department more closely aligning with the state department in the future.

Dr. Scott Attebery informed church leaders that a new process is underway to attract new writers for *Compass* literature. In the meantime, the second edition of Dr. Henderson's *We Believe* writings will be distributed in December.

Concerning Daniel Springs Baptist Camp in Gary, Attebery shared that the camp director in waiting, Jason Prewitt, has a lot of dreams for that ministry. He plans to use college students to minister to children and youth in future camps.

Jordan Tew, pastor of Eighth Street, Grand Prairie, noted the growing Hispanic population throughout the state and asked what resources were available to help with ministry to the people group. Buddy Johnson, former missionary to Mexico and Hispanic church planting coordinator for BMA of America Missions, offered to meet with Tew to discuss ideas. Johnson noted the greatest need for Hispanic ministry is meeting places.

Stephen Marsh, assistant children's ministry director of Farley Street, Waxahachie questioned Crawley about what services Lifeword Media Ministries has to offer churches that wish to become more technologically savvy. The director mentioned that Lifeword is currently working with Brandon Cox to help churches learn how to effectively use social media to reach their communities for Christ. Cox has written a book titled, *Rewired*, available through Amazon.com. Crawley directed church leaders to a website that explains the process, <http://lifeword.org/social>. He also said that Lifeword personnel would love to come and work with any church to help the church become more successful in the area of technology.

Charles Johnson, president of the BMA of Texas and pastor of Rosewood, Gilmer, asked Smith to rate the success of the new 65/35 Plan that funds BMA missionaries on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest. The plan requires missionaries to raise 65 percent of funding for their mission field, while receiving a guaranteed 35 percent of funding from the Missions department. The director said that he would rate the implementation and success of the plan so far at 8.5. He also noted that there are more BMA missionaries serving around the world than ever before in the history of the association, and said that the BMA of America Missions is encouraging more

individuals to personally support missions work through the 65/35 Plan.

The question was posed, "What can the BMA of America do to help struggling churches?" Larry Barker noted that his goal as operations coordinator of North American church is to help existing churches plant new churches and to help all churches to be healthy. The department is developing a revitalization program called Activate, whereby coaching—not telling a pastor what he should do, but listening and guiding the pastor who has already heard from the Holy Spirit—is offered to pastors. More details will be shared when a final game plan has been decided.

Dr. Holmes told the pastors and others at the meeting that BMA Seminary has welcomed 36 new students. He said, "There is a better spiritual atmosphere on campus as we try to reach out past our main campus."

Additionally, the Seminary has begun expository pastor training lunches in Lindale and Livingston. The president further stated that biblical preaching is the number one mark of a healthy church.

Ron Chesser reported that Ministers Resource Services passed the \$2 million mark in their portfolio this year. Returns on accounts have remained at 8 percent for 11 years; however, this year the returns were below 8 percent, due to sell offs and market correction. He cautioned that flexible annuities, whilst advertised heavily, are actually quite dangerous. On the other hand, fixed annuities are safer. Chesser went on to encourage every pastor to have a home paid for and a plan in place by the time he reaches retirement age.

Other topics discussed during the meeting included the possibility of a stewardship emphasis among BMA churches, whereby members are taught how to best handle the money the Lord has entrusted to their care, and a ministry for pastors' wives was also mentioned.

Finally, some pastors expressed that it would be helpful to have breakout workshops, seminars or practical information for ministers and churches shared at each BMA of America annual meeting, and less time reserved for reports and business.

The spirit of the meeting was incredibly harmonious and encouraging with great attendance. More town hall meetings will be scheduled with pastors in the months to come.

## Plan Now for 2014 Year End Giving

As we approach the end of another calendar year, are you planning special year end contributions to your church, or favorite charity? Why not add the BMA Foundation to your list this year?

Your contribution will never be spent. It will be invested and only the earnings will be used to help the departments of the BMA of America spread the gospel to a growing number of people around the world. Please send your contribution to: BMA Foundation, P.O. Box 1188, Conway, Arkansas 72033. Contributions must be received by December 31 to be tax deductible for 2014 income tax purposes. If additional information is needed please call 501-329-6891.

## EVENTS

### DECEMBER 18, 2014

Liberty Association BMA  
Theological Seminary Rally  
@Camille Acres, Longview

### JANUARY 15, 2015

Liberty Association State Missions Rally  
@ Cherokee, Gilmer

### JANUARY 17-22, 2015

The Great Escape  
Youth & Children's Leaders  
Conference Cruise  
Go to [discipleguide.org/thegreatescape](http://discipleguide.org/thegreatescape)

### MARCH 12, 2015

Liberty Association  
Texas Baptist Home Rally  
@ Coffeerville, Ore City

### APRIL 20-22, 2015

BMA of America Annual Session  
@ University Plaza Hotel  
and Convention Center  
Springfield, Missouri  
Headquarters Hotel: University Plaza Hotel

### MAY 14, 2015

Liberty Association BMMI Rally  
@ Concord, Gilmer

### AUGUST 13, 2015

Liberty Association Lifeword Rally  
@ Cross Roads, Pittsburg

## PERSONNEL & POSITIONS

### AVAILABLE MINISTERS

**DAVID HAYES**—David Hayes is available for pulpit supply or to serve as interim pastor or pastor. Contact him at 903-854-2930. 1/21/15

**JIM CRUMP** is available for pulpit supply or revivals. Contact him at 903-918-3260.

### AVAILABLE POSITIONS

**PASTOR**—First Missionary, Morton is seeking a pastor. Send resume to the church at P.O. Box 981, Morton, Texas 79346 or to [jimmysealy@aol.com](mailto:jimmysealy@aol.com). TFN

**PASTOR**—Antioch Missionary, Gilmer is seeking a pastor. Send to the church, ATTN: Larry Johnson at P.O. Box 688, Gilmer, Texas 75644.

12/3/14

**PASTOR**—Greenwood Missionary, Fulton, Mississippi is seeking a senior pastor. Send resume to Greenwood Baptist Church, c/o Suzanne Little, 1400 Greenwood Church Road, Fulton, Mississippi 38843; [suzanne.little@hunterdouglas.com](mailto:suzanne.little@hunterdouglas.com) or call 662-401-8910. 12/3/14

**PASTOR**—Grace Temple, San Angelo is seeking a senior pastor. Send resume to Calvin Watkins, 505 Alexander, San Angelo, Texas 76901, [cnwatkins1@hotmail.com](mailto:cnwatkins1@hotmail.com) or call 325-944-1890. 11/5/14

**YOUTH**—South Park, Fort Worth is seeking a director of youth ministry. For information about the position and to submit a resume visit [fortworthbaptistchurch.org/YouthDirectorSearch/](http://fortworthbaptistchurch.org/YouthDirectorSearch/). TFN

## Central Baptist College invites applications for Vice President for Finance

Central Baptist College in Conway seeks an innovative and experienced financial administrator and leader with a proven track record in the management of financial systems to serve as vice president for finance.

Reporting directly to the president, the vice president for finance serves as chief financial officer of the college. The vice president for finance will provide strategic leadership and oversight of the college's finance and accounting functions, business services and auxiliary enterprises, human resources and facilities and physical plant operations. As a member of the president's executive management team, the vice president will support the president and will contribute to the strategic objectives and direction of the college by providing sound and ethical fiscal planning and financial management to ensure the long-term financial stability and growth of the college.

The successful candidate will have an MBA or Master's degree in business management, accounting or related field and a minimum of five years accounting/finance related experience in a supervisory or managerial role.

The vice president for finance is a 12-month full-time position with remuneration and benefits commensurate with experience. The Search Committee will begin reviewing applications immediately. The search will continue until the position is filled.

Send letter of application, resume, and the names, addresses and phone numbers of three references to: Vice President for Finance Search Committee, c/o Terry Kimbrow, President, Central Baptist College, 1501 College Avenue, Conway, Arkansas 72034 or email [tkimbrow@cbc.edu](mailto:tkimbrow@cbc.edu). Electronic submissions are encouraged.

Candidates must support the Christian identity of the college and demonstrate mature faith, Christian lifestyle, and a strong belief in Baptist doctrine. CBC will conduct a criminal background investigation as part of the hiring process.

## THANK YOU

Dear BMA of Texas,

My family and I want to express our gratitude for the donations and gifts that have been poured out to our family. It means a lot to know how much Kent was loved and how many lives he touched. Thank you also for your prayers and kind words. This will be a hard journey but it helps to know we have people around us that love us this much. Thanks again. We love you!

Angie Cox

## CHURCH NAME CHANGE

Omen Missionary Baptist Church, Arp is now First Baptist Church of Omen.

## CHURCHES IN REVIEW

### NOVEMBER 23, 2014

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Anthony Drive, Ennis	73	141	
Cedar Creek, Teague	17	21	
Farley Street, Waxahachie	464	573	3 By Profession, 2 By Letter
First, Omen	53	68	3 By Baptism
First, Palmer	43	57	1 By Letter, 1 By Baptism
Glade Creek, Gilmer	15	35	
Jackson, Joaquin	73	122	
Little Flock, Lufkin	10	15	1 By Baptism, 1 By Letter
Long Creek, Sunnyvale	95	111	
New Harmony, Tyler	282	351	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	56	68	
Pine Brook, Tyler	24	76	
Rosewood, Gilmer	119	175	2 By Letter
Security Calvary, Cleveland	25	61	1 Baptism
Simmons Hill, Diana	24	45	
Temple, Mexia	32	39	
Woodland, Splendora	47	65	

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



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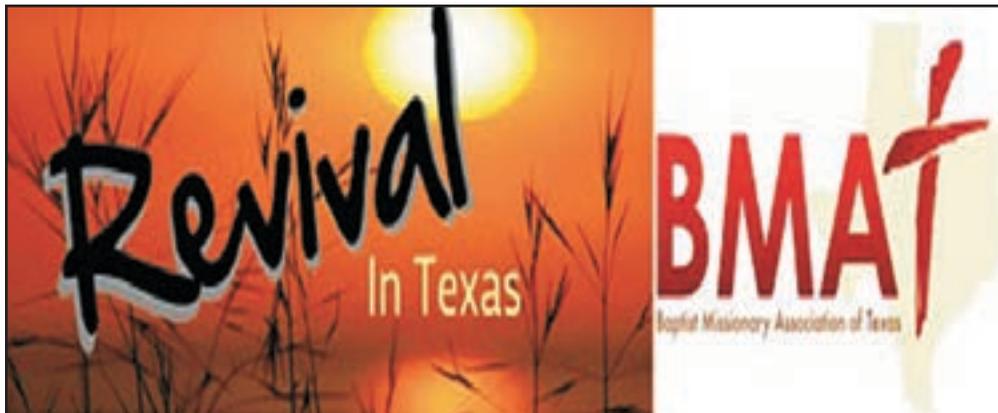
The BMA Foundation provides that opportunity. Your gift is never spent, it is invested and only the earnings are used to support any or all departments of the BMA of America as you specify. Your gift keeps giving until the Lord returns. You may make a cash contribution or contribute through your estate plan. Checks should be made payable to BMA Foundation and mailed to P.O. Box 1188, Conway, Arkansas 72033. For more information, call the BMA Foundation office at 501-329-6891.

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**North Workshops at Calvary First Mesquite**

5:30 to 8:30 p.m.  
2850 Eastglen Blvd, Mesquite, TX75181  
(972) 289-1661

December 7, 2014  
January 18, 2015  
March 15, 2015

Online Calendar:  
<http://revivalintexasnow.com/calendar-of-events/>

**South Workshops at Suburban Wood**

9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
6515 Eddie D., Humble, TX 77347  
(281) 226-0867

November 17, 2014  
January 17, 2015  
February 21, 2015

To Register:  
<http://revivalintexasnow.com/upcoming-events/>

**OBITUARY**

**Paul Robinson**

Naaman Paul Robinson passed away November 23, 2014 in Houston, at the age of 80. He is survived by his loving sons Naaman, Stephen, Richard and daughter, Sandra; his grandchildren, Adriana Robinson, Crystal Perez, Belen Martinez, Estrella Martinez, Johanna Robinson, Rusty Robinson, Karla Ruvalcaba, Colton Robinson, Johncarlo Ruvalcaba/ John Carlo, Chandler Robinson, Cindy Rivera, P.J. Robinson; and great grandchildren, Elijah Perez, Isaiah Perez, Cameryn Hartuickson, Marley Manriquez, Juan Caleb Rivera, Josias, Rivera. The family received visitors on Friday, Nov. 28, 2014 at Center of Life Church, 11250 Bentley Rd, Houston, TX 77093 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. The funeral service was held Saturday, Nov. 29, 2014 at Center of Life Church, 11250 Bentley Rd, Houston, TX at 10 a.m.



*Reception for Bro. Gary House*

In honor of 41 years in the ministry, the family and friends of Gary House will host a reception on Saturday, Dec. 6, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m, in their home at 114 Lake Meadow Drive, Canton. All friends, former members, and especially pastor brothers and co-workers, are invited. Cards and letters may be sent to the same address, to be compiled into a book of remembrances.  
For more information, please call 214-931-7069.



Texas Baptist Home's Adoption  
**Mustasche Dash**  
Run for Their Lives 5K

Date: January 24th 2015

Registration: 8:00 AM

Race Start: 9:00 AM

Early Registration

Individuals: \$30

Teams of 4 or more: \$25 a person

Grow or Wear your  
Favorite Mustache and  
Come Run/Walk to  
Support Adoption



**Register early by January 9th**  
to be guaranteed a Race T-shirt

Same day Registration is Available  
For Information and Registration  
Visit our Website at  
[www.texasbaptisthome5k.org](http://www.texasbaptisthome5k.org)



# Sixteen professions of faith at BMA church plant

By **MATTHEW PRATHER**  
*BMA Church Planter*

It has been an amazing first year for The Bridge, Celina. So many things have taken place in the almost 11 months since we launched The Bridge. Since our last email update we have continued to see new faces and God continues to show up in big ways.

One thing that we had prayed about before we moved to Celina was that we wanted to reach the lost and un-churched. Since our last update, we have seen 16 come to know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Since August, we have baptized 10. Just a few weeks ago we baptized six in one Sunday! God is good! It is incredible to watch lives being changed.



▲ Matthew Prather

## Let me share a few stories with you.

1. In our last update I shared this, “In a recent conversation with one individual, she shared with us that she had never really been to church. She said they were loving going to church and learning about the Bible. Please pray for her family’s salvation.” Since our update, we have seen her accept Jesus Christ as her Savior and be baptized. Continue to pray for the individual as she continues to grow and that this decision impacts her family.

2. In our last update I shared this: “Another family recently posted on Facebook about trying to find peace so their family chose to come to The Bridge. Please pray for this family as we minister to this family and share the gospel with them.” Since this time all four of their kids have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and have been baptized. We celebrate the way this family’s lives are being changed. Please continue to pray for this family.

3. Another individual that began attending The Bridge

during our last sermon series accepted Christ as his savior. Please pray for him as he learns what it means to lead his family as a Christ follower.

**We also continue to minister to many different families that are struggling and hurting in many different ways. God continues to bring in broken people looking for healing and love. Some examples...**

1. As we reach the unchurched in our community there are many hurting families that are dealing with current hurts and struggles as well as past hurts and struggles. Please pray as we minister to these families that they will find peace and healing. And more importantly that many of them will accept Christ as their personal Savior.

2. Please pray for the men we are reaching. Many of them do not know what it means to follow Christ. We believe that if we can impact more men with the gospel we will begin to see families changed in our community.

3. As with many communities all looks great and well from the outside but the families living inside the homes of that community are struggling. This is what we continue to find in Celina. Please pray that families find peace, healing, and Christ in our community.

We could share many different stories like these of the families that God continues to bring in that are hurting and to whom we have the opportunity to minister.

We covet your prayers as we strive to make a difference here in Celina and reach out to many different families in our community.

## Prayer Needs

- Please pray for more people to get connected to The Bridge in order to hear the Gospel.
- Please pray for one more family to move to Celina to help with our work here. We know God has someone in mind.
- Pray for the many hurting people that we are ministering to.

- Please continue to pray for us as we reach new families each month.
- Please continue to pray for us as we multiply our community groups.
- Pray for God to use us to reach the lost around us with the hope that only He can give.

## Needs

We are in the process of needing to create an additional class room for our pre-school age group. In order to do this we have to purchase portable walls to set up in the gym we use for our kids ministry. The cost for this is approximately \$500.

## Giving

There are many who have committed to sacrificially give toward this mission. We are humbled by their faithfulness to God and we give Him the glory! We are continuing to ask God to raise up additional partners to help us with work funds to be able to accomplish the mission to which God has called us. We can be fully funded as God provides the following:

- 3 more partners at \$25 per month
- 1 more partners at \$50 per month
- 2 more partners at \$100 per month

You can give online at [www.discoverthebridge.com/give](http://www.discoverthebridge.com/give).

## Thank you

Again we want to say thank you for all your support and prayers. There is no way we could have accomplished what we have in the past 11 months without your support and prayers. There are many times we receive emails and phone calls from people checking on us and letting us know that you are thinking about us and praying for us. Those mean more to us than you can ever know. As I write this a simple thank you does not seem like enough, but I want you to know that we really appreciate each one of you!

## BMAA Missions welcomes West

By **DR. JOHN DAVID SMITH**  
*BMAA Missions Executive Director*

The BMAA Department of Missions is happy to welcome Paige West to our Global Missions Team as the administrative assistant to the directors of missions. Paige is the wife of Pastor Todd West of Oasis Church in Little Rock, Arkansas. Todd and Paige have two daughters, Addison and Riley, age 12. Paige comes to the Department of Missions after serving for a number of years on staff at Oasis Church. She will assist the executive director, the director of North American Church Planting, and the director of International Missions. She will also serve as the office manager for the Missions Department staff at the Global Ministry Center in Conway, Arkansas. Paige has great people skills in addition to her organizational abilities. If Paige can assist you in any way, please contact her via email at [paige@bmaam.com](mailto:paige@bmaam.com) or by phone at 501-455-4977, ext. 3848.



▲ Paige West

## DiscipleGuide partners with BMA Seminary

By **THOMAS MOBLEY**  
*DiscipleGuide Church Resources*

DiscipleGuide is pleased to announce a new partnership with the BMA Theological Seminary for the purpose of ensuring theological accuracy in Bible Study curriculum. Seminary faculty have begun reviewing lessons for *Compass*, DiscipleGuide’s adult Sunday school material, and *Compass Teacher*, the corresponding leader’s guide. The first of the Seminary-reviewed materials will be released in the winter editions of the literature.

“When it comes to teaching God’s Word, accuracy is vital,” explains DiscipleGuide Executive Director Scott Attebery. “That’s why we are so thankful for the Seminary’s willingness to review our lessons. Scripture is the greatest treasure we have been given on earth, and we want to provide literature that is true to God’s Word.”

Seminary President, Dr. Charley Holmes comments, “Even before I was a part of the Seminary, it had an active role with DiscipleGuide Sunday school material. Seminary professors and graduates have written or edited numerous quarterlies and other helps. I am delighted to have one of our grads, Dr. Scott Attebery, as the editor of educational materials. We are blessed by having the privilege of assisting Dr. Attebery with reviewing the theological and biblical content of our BMA educational materials.”

To learn more about, or to order *Compass* curriculum, go to [discipleguide.org](http://discipleguide.org) or call 800-333-1442.



# 10 Common Worship Distractions

By **CHURCH LAWLESS**

*Southeastern Seminary Professor of Evangelism and Missions and Dean of Graduate Studies*

Worship is frequently a controversial topic, and it's not my goal with this post to add to those debates. I also realize that the focus of worship is God. Any attention we give to the human component of worship might send us in the wrong direction, but that's not my intent, either. I simply want us to think about aspects of worship over which we have some control – and that we might improve for God's glory.

Based on my work as a church consultant, reports from our consultation "secret shoppers," interviews with church members, and my own experiences, here are ten far-too-common distractions during worship services.

**Starting late.** Our secret shoppers know to be present in the worship center prior to the publicized starting time and to record what time the service actually begins. A late start may be unavoidable, but too often the tardiness is seemingly due to disorganization and apathy. A late start seldom strengthens an attitude of worship.

**Poor sound and/or video quality.** Occasionally this problem unexpectedly happens when the system malfunctions. At other times, it seems clear that either (a) rehearsal never occurred to detect and correct any problems or (b) leaders chose to ignore problems. Either one is unacceptable.

**Excessively loud music.** I suspect my age is apparent here, but even some of our young secret shoppers have commented negatively on this issue. Increased volume may be appropriate in some settings, but it does not automatically strengthen worship. Sometimes, worship occurs best in the quiet.

**Incomprehensible choir or praise team words.** The lyrics are probably great, but we cannot tell. The sound system may be poor, the singers may not enunciate well, or the music may drown out the words – but we miss the message while straining to understand the words. Simply including the lyrics on a Powerpoint would help.

**Grammatical and/or spelling errors on the screen.** Granted, this error should perhaps not be a distraction. Surely, we can overlook an omitted apostrophe or misspelled homonym. On the other hand, God – and worshipers who are often well educated – deserve our best in presentation.

**Poor synchronization of presentation slides.** The operator gets caught up in the worship and fails to progress to the next slide. Or, activity in the sound booth becomes itself a distraction for the operator. Nevertheless, it's difficult to worship in song when the lyrics on the screen are measures behind the worship leader.

**Unclear directions.** Worshipers – especially guests or unchurched attenders – do not readily follow everything that takes place in a worship service. Even our best secret shoppers sometimes feel awkward over such questions as: Who is the person speaking (no one introduced him)? Will they recognize guests (and will I be put on the spot)? Am I permitted to partake of the Lord's Supper (no one explained it)? If the church does not take an offering, how do I give (again, no one guided us)?

**Poor lighting.** The problem may simply be weak lighting; that is, uneven lighting in the worship center creates dim sections where reading the Bible is difficult. In some cases, delayed maintenance results in burned out bulbs. In others, a darkened room intentionally creates worship ambience – but also reflects a wrong

assumption that all worshipers will be reading the Bible only on the screen.

**Bad preaching.** This conclusion is subjective, but nonetheless truthful: worship is challenging when the preaching is boring or disorganized. It's even more taxing when the sermon covers everything but the Bible.

**Crowd movement.** To be fair, I admit that worship should so focus on God that crowd movement is not distracting. In addition, many folks we interview sit toward the back of a worship center, where the movement is likely more noticeable. Nevertheless, folks coming and going from the worship center – especially during times of prayer, reflection, preaching, and response – can be disruptive.

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# Mission Life

## My prayer: God give us revival

By JERRY BURNAMAN

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ...” (Romans 1:17) is the text that has brought the world’s greatest revivals. It is good for us to think about this Bible verse for a few minutes and apply some principles to our postmodern society as we seek a powerful revival among our churches.

Revivals have been a common occurrence in the history of Christianity. When revivals occur, they usually have two common principles:

First a key person emerges, a man whom God particularly endows to lead a spiritual awakening. Some great revival leaders are well known: John Wesley, Charles Finney, George Whitefield, D.L. Moody, R.A. Torrey, Billy Sunday and others.

The other common factor in most revivals is a doctrinal one. Some aspect of Biblical truth that has been neglected in the passage of time surfaces among Christian thought and experience.

In 1741 and 1742 the American colonies experienced a Great Awakening and at the same time, the Evangelical Revival swept across England. Out of that revival the emphasis on the new birth emerged as the key doctrine. George Whitefield’s experience on the Oxford campus and John Wesley’s Aldersgate Street experience in a Moravian meeting infused new life in churches as they preached powerful messages about the new birth. On both sides of the Atlantic masses of people responded to the gospel by believing in Christ for salvation.

In 1801 a great revival broke out near Lexington, Kentucky. Like a prairie fire it swept from the western part of the state to burst forth in the camp meeting at Camp Ridge. Thousands gathered and were greatly affected by the revival’s key emphasis: the sovereignty of God and the total depravity of man.

The year was 1821 and a young lawyer was converted in Adams, New York. In the ensuing years God used Charles G. Finney to bring about a spiritual awakening in America’s eastern states. As in other historic revivals, there was a spectacular doctrinal emphasis: the assurance of salvation.

America’s second Great Awakening began in 1857. As a result of a noon prayer meeting on Fulton Street in New York City, the Spirit of God moved across the eastern half of the United States with a most thorough spiritual awakening America has ever known. Oddly enough, this revival is not very well known because no great leader emerged. The key doctrine was the power of prayer.

For many of us who grew up in the last half of the twentieth century, we were enamored with the Billy Graham crusades. Remember his strong words: “The Bible says.” Some historians say this may have been the key doctrine of the mid-twentieth century revivals.

(Summary thoughts from *Revival in Romans*, by Walter K. Price)

Unfortunately this emphasis about the authority of God’s Word has faded into the background because of the proliferation of many religions in America proclaiming there is more than one way to heaven. Dear BMA pastors and churches, we desperately need revival!

I remember very well a discussion about the Bible in a seminary systematic theology class. It was the time when several new translations were published by various groups. One student said, “Perhaps we need a new definition of the scripture.”

I wanted to reply but before I could do so another student exclaimed: “We don’t need a new definition of Scripture but a new demonstration of its power!” A convicting silence swept through the class giving us a great truth to think about.

In our day Christian minds have been confused by modern skepticism. It is like a pervasive cancer infecting Christian thinking resulting in powerless preaching and ineffective church ministries. “The uncertainty and confusion about God which marks our day is worse than anything since Gnostic theosophy tried to swallow Christianity in the second century” (J.I. Packer).

It is my prayer that God will raise up a preacher, or perhaps a group of pastors that will repeatedly emphasize that God’s Word is truth (John 17:17) and is trustworthy for understanding the way of salvation and Christian living. It just may be the key doctrine for the coming revival is God’s Word is truth.

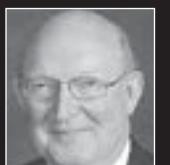
## Bibles, Books, Music & Gifts

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





# Auxiliaries

## Keeping Christ in Christmas

By SHARON COLE

In our society today, “the mouse that roared” syndrome is very prevalent. The majority are letting the minority change traditions and even change history. Why are we letting people rob us of the pleasure of saying, “Merry Christmas?” It is because people who do not reverence God are speaking out and those who say they do, are not.

Traditions become accepted and are seldom explained. In the melting pot of America, traditions and customs come from many lands. Many have filtered from generations until they have become an integral part of our Christmas celebration. Nowhere in the world is Christmas observed with a greater variety of customs and traditions than in the United States. Although many Christmas customs are secular, many have a spiritual symbolism that contributed to their beginning and can make them more meaningful to Christians.

Most every American family will gather around a brightly decorated tree Dec. 25 and open a lot of presents. But, many will not. Many will sit down to a big turkey and lots of vegetables and desserts and forget that some will be hungry. Is that what Christmas is all about? To many people without Christ in their heart, it is sadly true.

Dec. 25 is the time that has been chosen to celebrate and remember the birth of Jesus. We give gifts to those we love because Jesus came and gave himself to us.

The Wise Men brought gifts to the child Jesus and worshipped Him because they believed He was the Messiah. Each gift was for a specific purpose. Gold was the most precious and expensive of metals; a symbol of nobility. It has been suggested that it was for living expenses until they returned to Nazareth when Joseph could resume his carpentry business. Gold represented Jesus’ royalty.

Frankincense was a costly and aromatic incense used only on special occasions. It was used in grain offerings in the Old Testament in the Tabernacle and Temple as a symbol of the people’s

desire to please the Lord. Frankincense represented Jesus’ deity.

Myrrh was also a perfume, not as expensive, but valuable. It was mixed with other spices and used for burial, even Jesus’ body. Myrrh represented Jesus’ humanity.

Giving doesn’t have to involve expensive items. Children need to be taught that the most sought after special toy doesn’t satisfy them for very long. Let us leave them with the wonder and simple beauty of Christmas, not so much with presents under a tree, but with praise and thanksgiving for God and for one another.

If we are tired from all the shopping, parties and entertaining, they pick up on it and think that Christmas is about just getting instead of giving. As parents and grandparents we need to ensure that the true meaning of Christmas is taught. It is critical that we separate the secular from the spiritual and teach our children the difference.

Many of us can remember as children we were happy just to have a bag of fruit and one small homemade toy. Today, children are given so many toys and items of entertainment that break or wear out, or they get bored with them before the warranty expires.

Do you have a talent for sewing, crochet, knitting, cross-stitch, needlepoint, cooking, painting, bow-making, crafting handmade toys, wood-working, writing poetry, etc? The list is endless of things that you may know how to do that you can teach someone; perhaps a child or grandchild. This would be a gift that keeps on giving. I have an apron that my mother made for me as a child to wear when we cooked together. Giving gifts of these talents would be priceless treasures.

There are many people in nursing homes, shelters, prisons and jails. There are homeless people on the street, those who have lost their jobs, single moms trying to make ends meet. All need a personal touch to help them remember that there is still good in the world. As an individual or a church group, you don’t have to look far to find someone in need.

Your gift of time creates more memories and leaves people feeling good more than anything you could buy. Give cuttings of favorite plants or make an herb garden in a large pot to give to someone; then encourage them to grow for the Lord. Invite some children to your house and help them make and decorate cookies for their family for Christmas. This teaches sharing, kindness and cooperation. Visit the Humane Society or Animal Shelter and adopt an orphan animal and with parents’ permission give it to a child as a Christmas gift. Take a checkerboard or dominos to a nursing home and challenge someone to a game.

When children or grandchildren beg for one more story; say, “Yes.” Then tell them the greatest story ever told. Give grown children handwritten recipe cards of “mom’s favorite dishes,” the ones they grew up enjoying. Yes, I said handwritten; not typed. That handwriting will someday become a treasure.

Do some yard-work for an elderly neighbor who is unable. Promise a friend with handwritten coupons a year’s worth of lessons in something you do well: baking bread, baseball pitching, etc. Write an encouraging note to your pastor thanking him for his dedicated service to the Lord. Your pastor doesn’t do what he does expecting thanks, but kind words of encouragement and your faithfulness to what God has called you to do make his job a little easier.

Subscribe to the *Baptist Progress* for someone who cannot afford it. Invite a person to dinner who will be alone on Christmas, or anytime for that matter. Giving to others unselfishly can be a positive way to express the love of Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the needs of a church family or someone else in the community.

There are so many more ways to show the love of Christ during the Christmas season. It’s not the gift, but the attitude behind it that is so important. Most of us are so busy with our own lives we sometimes neglect the little things that mean so much. Love isn’t love until it is given away.

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## The door is always open

By JACKIE RICKS

National WMA Editor

Oscar and Tamy Gaitan’s door is always open to anyone who desires to support the mission work in Nicaragua in any way. The same held true years ago when Tamy’s mother, Karen Smith, went to Nicaragua to teach. She found Paul and Mickey Robinson and John and Shirley Ladd very welcoming to her. In fact, she lived with John and Shirley for a while. At that point, Nicaragua was a growing mission work within the BMAA. Then, due to the political situation, we had to withdraw the American families from there. Now it seems to be open and thriving again.

Oscar and Tamy married in 1998 and have lived in Nicaragua the whole time, Oscar, having grown up there. They have two children: Lidia Sarai, who is 10, and Ostali Natanael, who is 1. The children go with their parents and help in the mission work as well.

In 2004, Oscar was asked to be the coordinator of missions for the country of Nicaragua. At that time, they began with Action

centers (or what we might call cell groups) in different parts of the country. They have opened at least one church plant each year, and sometimes two. This year, however, God has blessed them with four new church plants. They currently have 26 churches in Nicaragua—17 churches and 9 new church plants that are less than 5 years old. They begin a church plant with an action center or cell group and grow and multiply from there.

Nicaragua also has a Bible Institute with two extensions to train their leaders. One is in the area of San Francisco Libre; the other is at La Esperanza, on the east coast. This is a much needed asset anywhere. Without proper training, it is difficult for those who have never known anything about true Christianity to understand what they need themselves, much less to provide it for others. The classes are taught by men from Nicaragua.

Years ago, the Robinsons and Ladds began a clinic ministry in

Nicaragua. There is also a clinic ministry operating in a remote area of Nicaragua today. That allows the people to get general medicines much closer to home. This is in San Jorge, San Francisco Libre. BMMI teams also come on a regular basis to perform needed medical and dental work in these areas.

Different churches from Arkansas, Mississippi and Texas have greatly supported the ministry in Nicaragua. These people have sent groups to work on construction of church buildings and other ministry needs such as conferences. These groups help not only with the work, but also in establishing contact for them and spreading the gospel to different areas of Nicaragua.

Oscar and Tamy say, “We are always glad to have visitors and if you ever need a place to serve in missions, we would love for you to consider Nicaragua. Our home is always open to those who desire to support mission work in any way.”

# Sunday School Lessons

## The Existence of God

By GARY HOUSE

DATE: December 7, 2014

TEXT: Exodus 3:1-14

**LESSON IN BRIEF:** Acknowledging God's Existence is the first step to developing a healthy relationship with Him.

**OVERVIEW OF THE QUARTER:** The year-long study of *What we Believe* will focus on *What We Believe About God*. We will examine 13 unique traits that belong to God alone. By studying these qualities, we will better learn to trust God in every area of life.

**IS THERE REALLY A GOD?** The atheist says that God does not exist, while the agnostic says he does not know if God exists. A materialist declares that he needs no God, and the fool hopes there is no God (Psalms 14:1). Ninety-five percent of Americans affirm they still believe in the existence of God. Yet they do not all believe The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God revealed in scripture. Some people think of God as "the force" from Star Wars, with both a good side and a dark side. Others picture God as an enormous man in heaven. Some see God as a celestial highway patrolman setting up speed traps to capture people. Still other people believe the universe is God, and still others believe themselves to be gods.

Ergun and Emir Caner, in their book, *Unveiling Islam*, put it this way: "The popular notion that Jews, Christians and Muslims all worship the same God is blasphemous to all three religions and founded only in modern pluralism. Jews do not worship Jesus, nor do the Muslims. For the Christian, not to adhere to the Trinity is not to be Christian at all. Yes, there is one God and He is in control of everything and everyone. Yes, according to the teachings of all three faiths, everyone will stand before Him in judgment. But to say that all worship the same God because we use the same generic (name for Him) is like saying that all references to the name "Mike" must refer to the same person." While most people in our country claim to believe in God, it is clear they do not believe in the God revealed in Scripture. The question then should not be: Do you believe in God? The question should be: In what God do you believe? You see, when different people talk about God, they are not all speaking of the same person

**GOD IS FOR REAL (Genesis 1:1).** We start with the very first phrase from the Bible: "In the beginning God..." (Gen 1:1). The Bible never attempts to prove God's existence, but it merely assumes that God exists. This is because no one in the ancient world questioned the existence of God. The debate back then was over what God was like and how to relate to God.

**How has god told us of his existence?** Some critics like to use the argument that if they cannot see God then He does not exist. While these same critics have never seen the wind, they testify to its effects. Just because they have never seen air does not invalidate the existence of wind. The same is true with God. Although no one has ever seen God, He is actively at work in this world and in the hearts of humanity.

**God reveals himself.** One day while he was in the wilderness, Moses had such an encounter with the Lord (Exodus 3:1-14). While tending sheep for his father-in-law, Moses experienced God's presence in the form of a burning bush (Exodus 3:1-4). Immediately, Moses

came face to face with three truths about God. First, God is holy (Exodus 3:5). Second, God knows all things (Exodus 3:7). Third, God is loving and caring (Exodus 3:8).

God is under no obligation to interact with His creation. Yet, He chooses to reveal himself to the world. From the beginning of time God chose to fellowship with His human creation. Our relationship with God is all one-sided. We can offer Him nothing of value, but He comes offering us the privilege of eternal fellowship with Him.

**God declares himself.** In Exodus 3:14, God declared himself to be the great *I AM THAT I AM*. God's name in this instance is a difficult concept to translate into our modern language, but this declaration provides a glimpse into God's very being. What does this name signify?

1. That He is self-existent; He has always existed.
2. That He is eternal and unchangeable, and always the same, yesterday, today, and forever.
3. That He is incomprehensible; we cannot know His complete nature.
4. That He is faithful and true to all His promises, unchangeable in His word as well as in His nature.

God told Moses to let Israel know that "I AM" had sent him. God is the one and only supreme deity. Everything else derives its existence from God, and is wholly dependent upon Him.

**ADDITIONAL PROOFS ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.**

**Humanity's need to worship** witnesses to the existence of God. Regardless of nation, race, or culture, there is a "God shaped" vacuum within each individual that makes him want to know God (Romans 1:18-23).

**Creation** declares the existence of God (Isaiah 40:20-23).

**History** reveals the existence of God. Examples: The flood (Genesis 7); Psalms 78, together with Egypt's historical records, gives specific details of God's work in the history of Israel starting with the Exodus from Egypt.

**Scripture** proclaims the existence of God (John 5:39).

**Jesus proves the existence of God (John 17:3).** Jesus came in human flesh to show what God is like (John 1:1, 14, 18) and to provide redemption for sinners. His miracles show God's glory (John 2:11); His words show God's love. His character shows God's nature (John 14:19).

Only a small fraction of humanity has ever denied God's existence. Wise people can look objectively at the evidence and see that God exists. Most people do not need more evidence. They simply need to respond to His outstretched hands.

The chief goal of humanity is to know God and to love Him forever. How well do you know the Lord?

Gary House is the writer of the Sunday school lessons for Baptist Progress. Most recently, Bro. House served as pastor of Tundra Baptist Church in Canton for 13 years. Contact him at [Tundraparson@aol.com](mailto:Tundraparson@aol.com).



## The Eternity of God

By GARY HOUSE

DATE: December 14, 2014

TEXT: Psalm 109:19-28

**LESSON IN BRIEF:** God has always existed and He always will. Nothing can resist Him and nothing will ever be able to bring an end to Him. Eternity is God's signature—it is who He is.

Who created God? Where did He come from? These questions have been pondered by man for centuries. They are even more relevant as contemporary society questions everything. The lesson text (Read Psalm 109:19-28, 26, 27) coupled with many other scriptures, addresses this issue, and bring brings hope, assurance and comfort to all.

**Definition:** "Eternal" means "without beginning, without end and without change." Eternal refers to the endless past, the unending future, or to God's present experience of all time. God has no beginning as man can understand beginning, and no ending either, but God exists now and knows both the beginning and the end as we perceive them.

**Meaning:** This truth points to how much we can trust God. Since He created time as we know it, He lives outside of time and can see the beginning and the end of our lives and the age of men and the church. Therefore, when He tells us what events will precede and be a part of the end of the age, we can rest assured that those events will happen just as He described. More than that though, we can live with the peace of knowing that when we die we will be with Him forever without end. A day will be as a thousand years.

Many verses of Scripture support God's eternity: "God said to Moses, 'I am who I am'" (Exodus 3:14). The theological grounds for God's eternity are found in several other attributes. For example, immutability implies eternity, for an immutable being cannot change. But whatever is in time changes. Hence, God cannot be in time. God's eternity can also be inferred from his infinity. An infinite being has no limits, whereas a temporal being has limits. Therefore, God is not a temporal being

Other Scriptural references to this truth include:

**Psalms 90:1-2,** "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

Charles Spurgeon comments: "God was, when nothing else was. He was God when the earth was not a world but a chaos. If God himself were of yesterday, he would not be a suitable refuge for mortals. The eternal existence of God is here mentioned to set forth, by contrast, the brevity of human life" (from *Treasury of David*).

**Isaiah 57:15,** "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity..."

**Deuteronomy 33:27:** "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and 32:40, I live forever."

**1 Timothy 1:17:** "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

The Bible declares that God is eternal. He was before time, and He created time. Hence, he cannot be a part of time, though he can relate to time as its Creator in the way a cause relates to its effect.

To the skeptical question as to who made God, the only answer that satisfies all the facts of both science and human reason is that God is "from everlasting." He is the Creator of time as well as space and all things that exist in time and space. This is beyond our mental comprehension, but there is no other rational explanation for our existence compatible with the intuitions of our spiritual comprehension.

God satisfies the heart regardless of difficulties conjured in the mind.

God is eternal because He is self-existent. He depends upon nothing outside Himself. God contains within Himself the cause of time. To Him, there is no past, present or future. He does not live in time, but beyond it in eternity and, as the eternal God, He is not subject to time (Isaiah 40:28.) Unlike His creatures who are bound by time with life that is brief and fleeting, the Creator is eternal. Everything in existence is dependent upon Him. This means that God controls everything. He created creation (Psalm 102:25). He governs the affairs of humanity (Psalm 102:23). He controls time and death (Psalm 102:26).

All other things receive their being from Him, and can be deprived of their being by Him. All things depend on Him, He of none. Whatsoever is not God, is temporary; whatsoever is eternal, is God.

**How does the eternity of God affect one's life?** For all of us as human beings, life is full of surprises. We never know exactly what lies around the corner, but while we do not know what the future holds, as believers in Christ, we do know Him who holds the future and for whom nothing is a surprise. Since nothing ever surprises God, no problem I face slips up on the Lord who sees the future as clearly as the present.

Psalm 90 is a psalm in which Moses reflects on man's temporality and sinfulness (Psalm 90:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11) in the light of God's eternity (Psalm 90:1, 2). As the eternal One, regardless of the generation in which we may live with all its surprises, God is our Dwelling Place, our Place of Refuge and Fortress (see Psalm 90:1; 91:1, 2). What then is our need? To know that regardless of the brevity of life, we must know that God has a special purpose for each of us. As believers, we are a special part of the plan and purpose of God. In that regard, our need is to pray that we might number our days to bring in a full harvest of God's wisdom (Psalm 90:12) and seek God's blessing on our lives to experience His joy and the confirmation of the work He has designed for us to do.

Spurgeon comments on the relationship between God's love and God's eternity. "Do you not know that God is an eternal, self-existent Being, that to say He loves now, is, in fact, to say He always did love, since with God there is no past, and can be no future? What we call past, present, and future, He wraps up in one eternal now. And if you say that He loves you now, you thereby say that He loved you yesterday, He loved you in the past eternity, and He will love you forever; for now with God is past, present, and future. Those who talk of God's beginning to love His people know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm." They might speak of man beginning to love; they might speak of angels beginning to love; but of God we never can, since He, without beginning, had a deathless love in His heart; He has an affection which has no source except in Himself, He could not begin, for He is without beginning of years, and without end of days. From everlasting to everlasting He is God; and from everlasting to everlasting His mercies extend to His people (from his sermon *Christ's Prayer for Believers*).

Since God cannot have an end and He promises to provide me with eternal life with Him if I believe His Son died for me, I will believe and live my life right now serving Him. As the eternity of God is the ground of all religion, so the eternity of Christ is the ground of the Christian religion. Through faith in Jesus Christ, we become a part of eternity and possess eternal life.



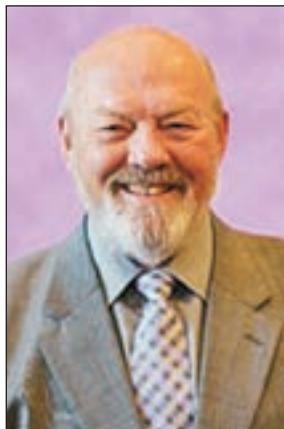
# JACKSONVILLE COLLEGE

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## Music program

The purpose of the Jacksonville College music program is to provide students with a way to use their God given talents to praise the Lord and to achieve their full musical and choral ability. The choral program, part of the Fine Arts Department, consists of the choir, Singers, Overcomers, and men's quartet. In addition to directing three choral groups, the Choral Director teaches classes in Music Theory and Music Appreciation.

Tim Timmons, a very gifted bass vocalist, is the Choral Director for Jacksonville College. Tim was born in Lubbock, Texas. He is married to Nancy, and they have two sons, Marcus and Matthew, and six grandchildren. Tim is a graduate of the University of Science and Art of Oklahoma. Tim accepted Christ as Savior at age seven, surrendered to the call of ministry, and began leading music in churches at age 13. He has served as full-time Minister of Music in nine churches, his last position being with First Baptist Church of Rusk for eleven years. He and Nancy are members of Norwood Heights Baptist Church in Palestine where their son Matthew is pastor. Tim's hobbies are woodworking and all sports. Tim says, "As Choral Director at Jacksonville College, I have the joy of training young college students to be outstanding members of the choir and vocal ensembles. The greatest blessing is to hear these young men and women lifting their voices in praise to the Lord."



▲ Jacksonville College Director of Choirs Tim Timmons

Another part of the music program at Jacksonville College is the band, directed by Mike Kellogg. He has been married to Suzy for 32 years, and they have 2 daughters and 4 granddaughters. Mike says the reason he is at Jacksonville College is because "God opened the door, and I was just smart enough to walk through. I praise God every day for this opportunity." Mike plays the saxophone in several groups as well as in his local church. He enjoys hunting, fishing, and remodeling homes.

Music Department Chair Gerald Orr has been a part of Jacksonville College for over 50 years. He also serves as a music instructor, and he still finds time to play the keyboard in the JC band. During the summer, Gerald loves to travel to new places all over the world.

We need your help informing students you know about Jacksonville College and our music opportunities. Tim is available to bring the choir, Singers, or Overcomers any Sunday; and President Mike Smith often comes with them and preaches. Consider having a Jacksonville College Day at your church one Sunday. Tim and his students, dough-nuts and juice in hand, speak to your youth in Sunday School, promote Jacksonville College, and sing in the worship time; Dr. Smith preaches. There is no fee. If the church elects to receive a love offering, it all goes to help Jacksonville College continue its mission to challenge minds and transform lives.

## Christmas at Jacksonville College

We invite you to attend our upcoming Christmas Show at 8 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 4 in Buckner Chapel. Seasonal songs and entertainment will delight guests as the Choir, vocal ensembles, band, and Theater Department present "Christmas Cards." While fun and festive, the show will also celebrate the main reason for our great joy this time of year—the birth of our wonderful Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Before the program, from 5 to 8 p.m., the JAG Bookstore will also host a Christmas Open House. Refreshments will be served, and all Christmas items will be discounted by 20 percent.



▲ The Jacksonville Choir prepares to perform for the Fall Concert. Director Tim Timmons is pictured on the right.



▲ The JC Band with director Mike Kellogg on the left with the saxophone, and Music Department Chair Gerald Orr on the right at the piano

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Winter Term Registration

October 1 through December 15

### Winter Term Session I

December 15, 2014 - January 9, 2015  
(online and traditional courses)

### Winter Term Session II

January 2- 12, 2015 (traditional classroom courses)

### Spring Term Registration

Early Registration: November 1 - December 19  
Regular Registration: December 12-13

### Christmas Open House

December 4 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. in the Jag Bookstore

### Christmas Show: Christmas Cards

Produced by the Music and Theater Departments  
December 4 at 8:00 p.m. in Buckner Chapel

### Campus Wide Garage Sale

December 5-6 from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
at the former Joe Wright Elementary School at  
215 Kickapoo Street across from the main JC campus