

Baptist Progress

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World Missions Sunday

CONWAY, Arkansas—Feb. 22, 2015 is World Missions Sunday! The day is all about *Declaring His Glory!* The 2015 Prayer Calendars and Missions DVDs are now available. Order the calendars and DVDs in preparation for World Missions Sunday at your church. For the past three years a *50 Days of Prayer* theme has not been utilized in order to emphasize praying for our missionaries the entire year. Pray through the calendar from World Missions Sunday until next World Missions Sunday.

Your church is encouraged to participate in the World Missions Sunday special offering for global missions. This offering is vital for ongoing ministry in 76 different countries and for church planting efforts here in the United States. The prayer of BMA Missions leaders is that missions is not merely a line item in your church budget. May it be the very heartbeat of your local congregation as you make God's name known near and far. *Declare His Glory!*

You may place your order for the 2015 Missions Prayer Calendar and the Missions DVD by phone at 501-455-4977 (speak to Tasha); order through the BMA Missions website, bmamissions.org/worldmissions or by mail to, 611 Locust Avenue Conway, AR 72034.

WORLD MISSIONS DAY 2.22.2015
**DECLARE HIS
GLORY**
Psalm 96:3

MISSIONS
baptist missionary association of america

BMAMMISSIONS.ORG/WORLDMISSIONS

Inside



Jacksonville College
Page 6



Spring Edition of SOAR:LIT
Page 7



SBTC Church Revitalization
Page 12

Church Health

Presence > Performance

By LARRY BARKER

My good friend, Rob Hager, planted Jacob's Well several years ago based on a core value, "because there is a better way." Their vision statement as found on their website, welcometothewell.com states: "To constantly learn of, live out and lead others to God's 'better way' as we live together in biblical community of His truth, with His love and through His grace for His glory." In 2015 may all of us pursue a "better way."

Rob goes on to explain their vision statement: "God's 'better way' is a life lived on His truth, with His love through His grace for His glory in a biblical community. We are convinced that absolute truth exists and it is God and His reality as revealed in His inspired Word. Only as we truly know and embrace His truth in each area of our lives can we be set free to live the best possible life. We believe this truth must be presented to others as we 'show and tell' them in the context of love."

"Without love, our presentation of His truth is nothing more than disturbing noise that distracts or repels them from His good news. We believe the pursuit of the Great Commission and the Great Commandment is, like salvation itself, impossible apart from the empowerment of His grace through His Spirit. Likewise, we believe that truth, even in love, without an element of grace is incomplete."

"God did not just declare the truth of the world's evil, and in spite of that, choose to love the world, He did something to redeem it. And so we believe that as we submit, surrender and sync our lives...deny ourselves, abide in Him, walk in Him, crucify ourselves He will empower us to follow Him, bear much fruit in Him and Jesus Himself will in a sense live through us." Jacob's Well was founded, organized, and exists today because God does have a "better way."

The book of Ecclesiastes speaks of a "better way" and Hebrews speaks of a "better covenant." This better covenant is made possible because of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As we read Hebrews 8-9 we see it compares the old covenant with the new. You could sum up the old covenant in three words and they would be, "you do it." The new covenant can also be summed up in three words, "Jesus did it." His "better way" has made the old covenant obsolete.

The believers were not convinced that the new covenant was better/superior so the writer of Hebrews was assuring them not to feel bad about losing the practices and rituals of the old covenant but to realize that Jesus is better. We are told that He is better than the angels, Moses, the temple, inferior animal sacrifices, and the priestly order. The old covenant focused on a building while the new covenant focuses

on the heart. It is a better covenant because now every follower can have a close personal relationship with the Lord. Presence is greater than performance!

One of my goals for 2015 is to focus on His presence in my life more than on my performance. This new covenant is about an intimate relationship with Christ where we walk with Him, abide with Him, and fellowship with Him. The Holy Spirit now works inside of every believer. Psalms 27:4, "*One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in His temple.*"

Because the new covenant is a better way, our challenge is to focus more on His presence in our lives than on planning or performing. The question then must be asked: How do we do that?

Have a daily quiet time with the Lord.

- Remember, it is about relationship NOT just checking off your daily Bible reading.
- Be persistent in your prayer life, knowing that God does hear and answer us.
- Realize every day will be a challenge to think God's way (Romans 12:2).
- Ask God to change you!!!
- Live by faith because it's not by trying harder but by trusting Him.

The only faith that appropriates is the faith that causes you to ask God for what you need.

We must make sure that we pursue His presence in our lives, in our families, and in our churches. His presence is manifested through our invitation for Him to be in control of our lives. **My prayer in 2015 is that we will stop trying harder and start trusting Him more.** Planning is good, programs can meet needs, and working hard is admirable but unless the Lord builds the house we labor in vain.

Healthy churches realize that presence is greater than performance!



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Larry Barker is the operations director for North American Missions. For more information or to contact him, visit www.bmamissions.org.



BMA of America News

Northeast Texas Pastors Conference

MOUNT PLEASANT—The northeast Texas Pastors Conference will be a one day event this year Feb. 2 at Calvary, Mount Pleasant.

Registration will begin at 8 a.m., with preaching to begin at 10 a.m. There will be a break for lunch at 12 p.m. At 1 p.m., preaching will resume.

The annual fish fry will start at 5 p.m., with preaching resuming at 6:30 p.m. and dismissal at 9 p.m.

Visit www.bmatexas.org for further information that might be provided in the coming days.



Tanzanian Call

By **DANNY BULLOCK**
Barnabas Touch Coordinator

Last February I wrote the “Tanzanian Call” on the way home from that country. The response from our pastors and churches has been great. Mike Goodwin and I have already led three teams of nine preachers back to teach several subjects along with the Old and New Testament surveys. When I was there in November, Renatus Kanunu appealed to me on behalf of the 24 preachers to please bring someone back with me each time to teach the men English. He had mentioned that when we were first there last February, but Mike and I dismissed that since our desire was to teach the men the Bible and how to better pastor their churches. We felt that teaching English would just be a distraction for us.

However, when he mentioned this again, I asked him why they were so concerned about learning English. Was it just a novelty for them? He then explained that the men would like to be able to study Bible commentaries and reference books, but most of them are in English. I then understood their desire for our language. It is to help them

better understand the Bible and be better pastors and teachers.

I am wondering if there are some who might be qualified to teach English as a second language who might be willing to go to Tanzania with us three times annually through 2017 to fill this need. You would have 15-20 hours Monday-Saturday to cover the material each time we go. Maybe you can tell me whether or not this is even feasible with adult men who would be at various levels of English proficiency. So far God has been putting everything together for this ministry in East Africa. Maybe He has been burdening some to want to have a part, but you know you are not a Bible teacher and had no idea how to get involved. Would this be your opportunity to use your gifts and expertise?

Contact me at 870-904-5032 or danbull10550@gmail.com if you would like to discuss this. I am leaving again February 20 to return so do not know if it is possible to work this out quickly enough for this trip, but I will be going back again in July.

66th Annual BMA of America National Meeting

April 20-22, 2015

University Plaza Hotel & Convention Center
Springfield, Missouri

Program (Overview)

<p>Monday Evening, April 20 7:00 Worship Service President's Message (Dr. Jason Aultman)</p>	<p>Tuesday Evening, April 21 7:00 Worship/ Service Annual Message (Dr. Mark Livingston)</p>
<p>Tuesday Morning, April 21 8:00 WMA Meeting Brotherhood Meeting 9:30 Committee Meetings 11:00 Elective Session Noon Lunch</p>	<p>Wednesday Morning, April 22 8:30 General Session 11:00 Elective Session Noon Lunch</p>
<p>Tuesday Afternoon, April 21 12:15 Minister Wives & Widows Lunch (Hosted by WMA) 2:00 Elective Session 3:00 General Session 4:30 Dinner</p>	<p>Wednesday Afternoon, April 22 2:00 General Session 3:30 Guest Speaker (Tentative) 5:00 Dinner</p>
	<p>Wednesday Evening, April 22 7:00 General Session (Mission's Report) Commissioning Service — Missions Department</p>

Enrollment Committee Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
2:00-4:00 p.m. 6:00-7:00 p.m. and 30 minutes after session	8:30-9:00 a.m., 2:00-3:00 p.m. 6:30-7:00 p.m. and 30 minutes after session	8:00-8:30 a.m.



www.bmatexas.org

Baptist Progress

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Jacksonville 75766
903-586-2518
www.jacksonville-college.edu

Texas Baptist Home

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Name	Amount		
Anthony Drive, Ennis	600.00	Jackson, Joaquin	1,161.00
Antioch, Fairfield	300.00	Leggett, Leggett	300.00
Antioch, Palestine	650.00	Liberty, Henderson	500.00
Bardwell, Bardwell	500.00	Little Flock, Jewett	1,200.00
Bauman Road, Houston	60.00	Macedonia Red Land, Mineola	400.00
Beacon Hill, Waco	1,000.00	Macedonia, Etoile	263.71
Bethel of White Rock, Dallas	600.00	Macune, San Augustine	2,025.00
Bethel, Groesbeck	300.00	Magnolia Springs, Magnolia Springs	300.00
Bethel, Livingston	513.60	Mahl, Nacogdoches	861.00
Bethel, Port Arthur	200.00	Maranatha, Ft. Worth	106.00
Bishop Chapel, Jasper	275.00	Martins Prairie, Iola	1,500.00
Buena Vista, Tenaha	50.00	Mt. Lebanon, Grand Saline	250.00
Calvary First, Mesquite	395.00	Mt. Pisgah, Mineola	4,192.00
Calvary, Amarillo	100.00	Mt. Selman, Bullard	370.00
Calvary, Centerville	200.00	Myrtle Springs, Quitman	2,214.20
Calvary, Ennis	500.00	New Harmony, Tyler	1,395.00
Calvary, Fairfield	1,367.21	New Hope, Mineola	806.00
Camille Acres, Longview	500.00	New Hope, New Waverly	100.00
Carlos, Anderson	1,500.00	New Life, Gilmer	230.00
Cedar Creek, Teague	345.00	New Salem, Henderson	1,500.00
Center Hill, Oakhurst	1,000.00	Northside, Garland	833.00
Central, Aspermont	1,500.00	Oak Grove, Canton	531.00
Central, Bronte	155.00	Old Home, Joaquin	132.00
China Grove, Eustace	505.00	Omen, Arp	59.13
Clover Hill, Quitman	100.00	Pecan, Robert Lee	875.00
College Avenue, Levelland	445.00	Phillips, M., Gilmer	1,000.00
Concord, Gilmer	200.00	Pilgrims Rest, Emory	500.00
Corinth, Grand Saline	732.00	Pine Brook, Tyler	5,000.00
Corinth, Jacksonville	160.00	Pine Grove, Diboll	262.61
CrossRoads, Rowlett	500.00	Piney Creek, Kennard	150.00
Dallas Park, Dallas	210.00	Red Springs, Tyler	1,000.00
East Mayfield, Hemphill	692.00	Reed, Mary, Slaton	10.00
Ebenezer Friendship, Pittsburg	400.00	Richland Heights, Grand Saline	83.00
Ebenezer, Huntsville	500.00	Rocky Hill, Huntington	351.00
Elwood, Wills Point	250.00	Rose Hill, Mineola	196.00
Enon First, Iola	2,850.00	Rosewood, Gilmer	3,000.00
Farley Street, Waxahachie	2,304.33	Round Prairie, Fairfield	1,500.00
Fellowship, Winnsboro	200.00	Sand Flat, Grand Saline	435.00
Fifth Street, Levelland	225.00	Sand Prairie, North Zulch	1,500.00
First Missionary, Cleburne	575.00	Sardis, Henderson	268.00
First Missionary, Cockrell Hill	45.00	Shady Grove, DeBerry	77.00
First of Providence, Livingston	100.00	Shady Grove, Purdon	500.00
First, Flynn	990.23	Sheridan Terrace, Palestine	157.00
First, Gary	45.00	South Park, Ft. Worth	1,519.00
First, Jacksonville	1,120.00	Southline, Cleveland	190.00
First, New Summerfield	60.00	Suburban Wood, Humble	200.00
First, Talco	360.00	Tabernacle, Jacksonville	200.00
Folsom, Tenaha	1,500.00	Temple, Mexia	665.00
Forest Hill, Quitman	1,500.00	Thompson, Donald	20.00
Friendship, Hemphill	792.20	Union, Springtown	304.00
Friendship, Mesquite	1,051.00	Walston Springs, Palestine	205.00
Glenfawn, Cushing	391.00	Ward Prairie, Fairfield	500.00
Greenpond, Como	1,000.00	Weeks Chapel, Jasper	1,000.00
Harmony, Normangee	500.00	Winterfield, Pickton	250.00
Heritage, Waxahachie	46.00	Zion Hill, Jasper	500.00
		Total	76,606.22

EVENTS

FEBRUARY 26, 2015

BMA of Texas
Administrative Committee Meeting
@ Texas Baptist Home for Children
10 a.m.

MARCH 12, 2015

Liberty Association
Texas Baptist Home Rally
@ Coffeerville, Ore City

MARCH 20-21, 2015

Texas GMA Houseparty
@ Daniel Springs, Gary

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 Lifeward Rally
@ Cross Roads, Pittsburg

OCTOBER 11, 2015

Liberty Association Annual Meeting
@ First, Judson
Begin at 3 p.m.
First Session Speaker—Charles Johnson
Dismiss for Supper at 5 p.m.
Begin second session at 6 p.m.
Second Session Speaker—Randy Stracener



Want to Make a Gift That Keeps Giving?

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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PERSONNEL & POSITIONS

AVAILABLE POSITIONS

PIANIST—First of Providence, Livingston, needs a pianist for the worship services. Call Mark Moore, song leader, at 936-327-1529.

PASTOR—Grace Temple, San Angelo is seeking a full-time senior pastor. He will also oversee associate pastors and child development center. Send resume to Pat Jackson 7809 CR 339, Christoval, Texas 76935, email pwjack@aol.com or call 325-651-7875.

PASTOR—Grace Missionary, Tacoma, Washington, about 35 miles south of Seattle, seeks a bi-vocational pastor. The church pays a housing allowance that covers housing and utilities. Attendance on Sunday mornings is about 60 and there are excellent volunteer staff who lead a youth group of about 20. The music program consists of hymns and praise music lead by a band with guitars, keyboard, piano, bass violin and drums. Tacoma is a large city with opportunities to expand. Please contact Terry Holcombe at jacquelyn13@comcast.net.

YOUTH—Sardis, Henderson is seeking a bivocational youth pastor. Send resume to jaccalmom@yahoo.com or to the church at 13174 CR 4187 South, Henderson, Texas 75654, or call 903-854-4521. 1/21/15

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. TFN

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/. TFN

OBITUARY

Mary McEuen

Funeral services for Mary Brumlow McEuen, 82, of Searcy, Arkansas were Jan. 13 at Searcy-McEuen Funeral Home with interment following at White County Memorial Gardens in Searcy. Mary passed away Jan. 9, 2015 at the Beebe Retirement Center. She was born Feb. 27, 1932 in Center Hill, Arkansas to the late Herman and Jewell (Pettus) Brumlow. Mary was a member of Park Avenue Baptist Church where she served as church clerk for over 30 years. She is survived by two sons, Bro. Mike McEuen (Karen) of Bentonville, Arkansas, and Mark McEuen (Gretchen) of Springdale, Arkansas; one daughter, Karen Cherry of Searcy, Arkansas; nine grandchildren, Michael McEuen Jr., Elisabeth Srader, Jacob Cherry, Jared Cherry, John McEuen, Rebekah Lewis, Kelly McEuen, Hannah McEuen, and David McEuen; and 15 great grandchildren.



Gary Dale Divine

Funeral services for Gary Dale Divine, 84, were Jan. 15, 2015 at Southgate, Moore, Oklahoma. He was born April 26, 1931 in Logan, Iowa and went to be with his Lord on Jan. 12, 2015. Divine was preceded in death by his parents, Herbert and Hattie Divine; granddaughter, Maranda Harris, and son-in-law, Keith Harris. He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Reva Divine; daughter, Patty Harris; son, David Divine; grandchildren, Marley Harris, Karsten Harris, Anna Divine, Nicholas Divine. Gary was called into full time ministry in 1962 and served as pastor to churches in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Texas (Northside, Garland) for over 40 years. In that time he served as vice president and president of the Baptist Missionary Association of America. Services were under the direction of Resthaven Funeral Home & Memory Gardens, www.ResthavenOKC.com.



Grace Mims

Funeral services for Grace A. Hobbs Mims, 80, of Jasper, were Jan. 11, 2015 at Hillcrest, Jasper. Graveside services were Jan. 12, 2015 at Jarrett Cemetery, near Jacksonville. Grace died Jan. 8, 2015 at Timberlake Health and Rehabilitation in Jasper. A native of Huntsville and former longtime resident of Navasota. She retired from UTMB Medical Records at the Goodman Unit in Jasper. Grace was a former president of the Texas Women's Missionary Auxiliary and also president of the PTA of the state of Texas. She was a resident of Jasper since 1990 and was an active member of Hillcrest Baptist Church.

Survivors include her husband, Bro. Bill Mims of Jasper; sons, Bro. Dean Renfro and wife, Lavonne, of Conroe and Larry Renfro and wife, Patty, of Jacksonville; two step-sons, Scott Mims and Mike Mims, both of Jacksonville; daughter Rhonda Davis and husband, Ron, of Jacksonville; seven grandchildren and two step-grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Grace was predeceased by parents Bro. William H. Hobbs and Grace Glossup Hobbs; two brothers, Horace and Herbert Hobbs; and a sister Elise Haynes.

Memorial may be made to Alzheimer's Association, 2909 W. Holcombe, Houston, Texas 77025. Services were under the direction of Stringer and Griffin Funeral Home in Jasper.

CHURCHES IN REVIEW

JANUARY 4, 2015

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Anthony Drive, Ennis		90	
Cedar Creek, Teague	16	26	
Farley Street, Waxahachie	452	481	
First, Omen	36	58	1 By Profession
First, Palmer	31	52	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	17	38	
Harvest, Lufkin	20	25	
Jackson, Joaquin	62	121	
Little Flock, Lufkin	10	10	
Little Mound, Big Sandy	44	54	
Long Creek, Sunnyvale	83	94	
Merriman Hills, Sherman	18	20	
New Harmony, Tyler	303	387	1 By Baptism
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	42	58	
Pine Acres, Gilmer	23	56	
Rosewood, Gilmer	115	169	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	22	41	
Simmons Hill, Diana	24	47	
Temple, Mexia	30	42	

JANUARY 11, 2015

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Cedar Creek, Teague	13	19	
First, Blooming Grove	208		1 By Baptism, 1 By Letter
First, Omen	38	66	
First, Palmer	32	44	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	21	37	
Harvest, Lufkin	20	25	
Jackson, Joaquin	69	115	
Little Flock, Lufkin	15	15	
Long Creek, Sunnyvale	62	67	
Merriman Hills, Sherman	15	15	
New Harmony, Tyler	295	429	
Pine Acres, Gilmer	37	69	
Pine Brook, Tyler	26	61	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	25	52	
Simmons Hill, Diana	20	31	
Temple, Mexia	37	45	
Woodland, Splendora	37	51	

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

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, in turn, notifies the appropriate person. Listed in capital letters are those honored or remembered from December 1–31, 2014.

ENDOWMENTS

ANN PACE: Mr. & Mrs. Karl Pace; Mr. & Mrs. Robert Houston
MYRA STOKES: Mr. Bill Stokes

HONORARIUMS

MRS IRENE BEENE: Nancy Beddingfield
EDDIE BOOTH: John W & Belinda Thiele
MIKE & JUDI BOOTHE: Virginia Hopkins
CHUCK BOSTON: Mrs. Joan Hartsfield
MARTHA NELL CANNON: H. J. Cannon
MARGARET CHALFANT: Kathy Fox
AVERY & AARON CORLEY: Lainey West
CHARLES CONNELLY: Mrs. Mary N. Wilson
JOHN CLAY: Donna Waldrop
VERNON & DORIS CREASY: Harold Jacobs
JERRY & NANCY DOUGLASS: Donna Waldrop
MARY DUNAVANT: Cindy Dooly
MRS. MARGERY GILMER: Margaret Smith
JOHN & CAROLYN HOLT: Keith Nelson
PEGGY DILLARD: Joe Dillard
BRO. GARY HOUSE: William McAdams
JESUS OUR LORD: Earlene Crenshaw
CHARLES & CHARLOTTE JOHNSON: Bobby Trimbel
GLENNA LUCAS: Lynn Ashdown
BERTHA MCCOOL BIRTHDAY: Judy Lambert
KYLIE & KENNEDY MICHENER: Joe Card
KARL & MARTHA PACE: Lance Walker
DONNIE & DATHA PARRISH: Joyce Sullivan
BOBBY & SHIRLEY PHILLIPS: Michael Phillips
EVA & PHIL ROBINSON: Donna Waldrop
CURTIS ROSS: Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Ross
MR & MRS G DEAN SOAPE: Tonya Johnson
BILLY & JUDY SPECK: Donna Waldrop
DERRELL SPECK: Donna Waldrop
TED STANLEY: James W & Jimylin Hightower
JAMES TANKERSLEY: James Colvin
TBH CHILDREN: Harold M. Lewis
LADIES SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS, TUNDRA BAPTIST CHURCH: Virginia Hopkins
MRS. VICKI: J Selwyn Hollingsworth
GARY & RILEY WALDROP: Donna Waldrop
TEEL WITT: Billy Oates
MARY BETH WOOD: Mrs. Billie J. McKelvey
MARY DUNAVANT: James Hutchison

MEMORIALS

JOANN ALCEDO: Gary & Anne Terry
LEON & OLLIE ALEXANDER: Mr. & Mrs. Stan Mann
HATTIE EUGENE ALLMOND: Mr. Darrell Wolcott
ERNEST ARRINGTON: Debra Beathard
CURTIS BAKER: Mr. & Mrs. Curtis E Baker
RONALD BALLARD: Anthony Chiniara
VIRGINIA BARBER: Tim Thompson; Rosewood Baptist Church; Bro. & Mrs. Charles M Johnson
J S BASS: Charlotte Morgan
WALTER BECKER: Dennis Myrice
BILL BEDDINGFIELD: Nancy Beddingfield
JERRY BELL JR: Wayne Beason
CAROLYN BENTLEY: Mrs. Neta Hicks
LOYD BLAIR: Mrs. Peggy Blair
PATRICIA H BLANKENSHIP: J. C. Lassiter; H. V. Minter
ROBERT BOUDREAUX: Mrs. Frances Boudreaux
JACQUELY GOODWIN BRADLEY: Yolanda Brady
CLYDE BRADY: Mrs. Charmel Richey
FRANK BROWN: First Baptist Church, Carthage

TBH Memorials continued on p. 7



Why attend Jacksonville College

At different times and stages in life, people decide which college they will attend. Some have the choice made for them because attending a certain college is a family tradition. Others choose a college based on the program of study it offers, and some make decisions based on the influence of friends. While college recruiters persuade some to attend the college they represent, others make the choice based on finances or location. Still others wait until the last minute to make the decision and find their options quite limited. However, all ask, "Why should I attend that college?" Allow us to answer with an explanation of why it is in your best interest to attend Jacksonville College.

1. Baptist

Jacksonville College is owned and operated by the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas and affiliated with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention. Most Baptist parents consider it a privilege to send their children to a Baptist college. A New York restaurant owner said that he and his family ate in their restaurant at least once a week to show others they believe in what they sell. If Baptists say they believe in Christian education, they need look no further than Jacksonville College.

2. Size

Jacksonville College fills the need between high school and the university. Since many in Texas graduate from a small high school, entering a large, impersonal college or university can be overwhelming. Jacksonville College offers small classes instructed by teachers who give personal attention.

3. Morals

Jacksonville College is not ashamed of its conservative view of the Bible. We still have curfew, and students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with Christian standards.

4. Opportunities

Because of its size, Jacksonville College offers opportunities for all students to participate when larger institutions cannot. Opportunities for participation exist in the areas of sports, theater, music, leadership, and service in preaching and ministry.

5. Affordability

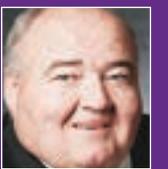
The Department of Education's College Affordability lists rank Jacksonville College as the second most affordable private nonprofit 2-year college in the nation. We also offer numerous scholarships.

6. Academic Accreditation

Accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) allows our course credits to transfer to any college or university.

On February 21, high school seniors will have the opportunity to attend Jag Mania for a closer look at what we have to offer and see why they should consider making Jacksonville College the college of their choice.

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



Ruth Bearden

(3/11/1931 - 1/4/2015)

It is with great sorrow that we say goodbye to Ruth Bearden, one of Jacksonville College's dearest friends. Ruth gave much of her life in support of the College, and we are deeply grateful for her many years of faithful service. Ruth worked as the secretary of the College for 20 years, and she was an active member of the JC Board of Visitors and the JAG Club. She was an enthusiastic supporter of the athletic program, and she volunteered much of her time to Jacksonville College. She loved ministering to JC students, and she was considered by many to be "The Smile of Jacksonville College." We will certainly miss her sweet and encouraging spirit. Although we know she is now rejoicing to be in the presence of her Savior, we ask that you continue to remember her family and friends in prayer.



nnville College?

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jaguar Talent Show

Thursday, February 5 from 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. in Buckner Chapel

Homecoming 2015

February 6-7

Lodging: Blocks of rooms will be held at a "Jacksonville College Homecoming Rate" until January 25 at the following hotels:

Best Western (903) 589-7143, Comfort Inn (903) 589-7143, and La Quinta Inn and Suites (903) 589-7143.

You must call the hotels to get the discount.

The Best Western will be the "primary Homecoming headquarters hotel," and they are offering the discounted rate of \$65 plus tax for Thursday night as well.

Lodging is also available without a discount at the Holiday Inn Express.

For details visit <http://www.jacksonville-college.edu/#!/homecoming/c24zb>

Contact: Alumni Liaison Neatha Cagle at (903) 589-7143, ncagle@jacksonville-college.edu

Jag Mania: Campus Visit Event for High School Seniors

Saturday, February 21, 2015

Cost: \$15

High school juniors must obtain special permission to attend from Sandra Clay, Director of Admissions, at admissions@jacksonville-college.edu.



Spring Edition of SOAR:Lit, Lost and Found

SOAR:Lit, DiscipleGuide's literature for junior high and high school students, will focus on issues and encouragements given to churches throughout the New Testament. Topics such as priorities, leadership, zeal, boldness and morality will be discussed. Each lesson has been carefully crafted by author Valarie Fish to stimulate meaningful conversation between students and leaders. SOAR:lit is downloadable material and can be ordered from discipleguide.org for only \$11 per student per year.

TBH Memorials continued from p. 6

GARY BURLESON: Jerry Hudson; Don Honeycutt Jr.

LORENE BURNS: Mrs. Jan Holcomb

ADA CAMSTER: Tom Youngblood

"MIMI" BONNIE CARRAWAY: Clyde, Debra & Kerry Wilson

IRENE COLEMAN: Bro. & Mrs. Charles M. Johnson; Rosewood Baptist Church

SISTER JERRY COLLINS: Latch Baptist Church

JOHN DAVID CORBIN: Martha McKnight

LANCE DUDLEY: Sally Dudley

JANIE DUNAVANT: Wayne Beason; Thomas Allen

MELODY ELAM: Central Baptist Church

HUGHLEENE ERDLEY: Mr. & Mrs. Andy McCuiston

JOHN BUFORD FOUNTAIN: L & I Transport

LOIS & HESTER GIBSON: Janice G Dore

ROY & ELDIWEASE GRAHAM: Marilyn B Farah

BILLIE GRIMES: Mr. & Mrs. John H Grimes

NOLAN HANKS: Marvin Hanks

J C HENDERSON: Tim Thompson; Bro. & Mrs. Eddie Marsh; Mr. Noble Midkiff; Bro. & Mrs. Charles Johnson

GERALDINE HERRING: Bro. & Mrs. Duane Turner; Weldon Sparks

JAMES HERRING: Mr. & Mrs. Rayburn McCown

DON, BILLIE & BILLY HONEYCUTT: Randy Parks

MY HONEY OF 62 YEARS: Mrs. Margaret King

RICHARD INGRAM: Harold M. Lewis

CHARLES R IVY: Jane Ivy

JESUS, MY SAVIOR: Mrs. B. H. Conn

C W JOHNSON: Bess Johnson

WARREN KEITH: Sheppard Drive Baptist Church; J. E. Shelton; Carolyn Dortch; Barbara Heitman; Bro. & Mrs. Eddie Marsh; Mr. & Mrs. Marilyn Johnson; Kent Massingill; Karey Hellyer; Mr. J. R. Starnes

JACLYN LANDRUM: Gary Landrum

JOE BILL LIGHT: Bro. & Mrs. Eddie Marsh; Bro. & Mrs. Duane Turner

VELMA & MARSHA LUSK: Mr. Billy L Lusk

SHELLI THOMPSON LYNCH: Clyde, Debra, & Kerry Wilson

LUCILLE MARSH: Tim Thompson

BILLIE SUE MARTIN: Terry Martin

VIRGIL & THELMA MAYES: Glynn & Veda Womack

IAN & STUART MATTINGLY: Jimmy Mattingly

KEVIN MCKINNEY: Jack Williams given through Fellowship Class, First Baptist Jacksonville

CONNER & MARIE MCKINNON: Ms. Jean Menough

BRADLEY JOE MITCHELL: Billy Mitchell

JEARLENE MIZE: Jerry Mize

KENNETH MONTGOMERY: Bro. & Mrs. Charles Johnson

NELLIE, BETTY, FAY, LAVERNE MOORE: Mr. & Mrs. John J Moore

CORY DOUGLAS MONZINGO: Mr. W. V. Watt

MRS. FRANCES NIXON: Jerry & Terri Hudson

IRIS O'ROURKE: Bro. & Mrs. Charles M Johnson; Rosewood Baptist Church

EARL & SARAH PARKS: Randy Parks

RICKEY DELL PARKER: Glee Hutson

ROBERT CLIFTON PARKER: Mrs. Daisy Parker

JACKIE PIERCE: Mary G Hunt

JOHN PILKINGTON: Mary G Hunt

OPAL PUMROY: Jerry Mize

JOAN ROSS: Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Ross

TOMMY SIMPSON: Mrs. Marilyn J. Simpson

EMILY STANBERY: Larry Arnold

BRUCE & WANDA STANLEY: Valera Green

DICK & MARY STANLEY: Lynn Stanley

EDNA STEELMAN: Rosewood Baptist Church

JOANN SULLIVAN: H Lloyd

GLORIA E SUTTON: Mr. & Mrs. David L White

PAM SHIRLEY VAUGHN: Mr. & Mrs. Gary C Thompson

ANNA B VESTAL: H J Cannon

GEORGE WATTS: Tim Thompson

BOB WEBB: Enon First Missionary Baptist Church

JO WHITE: Jerry Mize

ROSE WHITE: June Taylor

NOVIS WILEY: Wayne Beason

MARY E WOLFINGTON: John Wolfington

ROBERT WOOD: Ardeena Wood

Church Issues

Fifteen trends for churches in 2015

By DR. THOM S. RAINER

Trend prediction is both an art and a science. It is a science in the sense that I utilize the good objective research of credible research organizations like LifeWay Research and others. It is an art in that I depend on observations, anecdotal information, and ongoing interaction with church leaders and members.

At the beginning of every year, I attempt to present to you the major trends for congregations for the coming twelve months. I review my predictions from previous years to see how accurate I am. I have come to two conclusions. First, I am far from perfect in my predictions. Second, I do have a decent track record.

Some of my trends are called “tipping points.” Formally defined, a tipping point is the critical moment in an evolving situation that leads to a new and somewhat permanent reality. In simple terms, a tipping point here means that something has changed in our churches to the point that it appears to be permanent.

I am presenting them in reverse order.

15. A rapid increase in bi-vocational church staff. We have noted the growing trend of bi-vocational pastors. We will see in 2015 an accelerated trend of other church staff becoming bi-vocational.

14. The tipping point of churches eliminating Sunday evening worship services. We see the number of U. S. churches offering a Sunday evening service to dip below 5 percent of all churches in America. In other words, this service will become almost extinct.

13. More emphasis on congregational singing. In many of our churches, both traditional and contemporary, you can hardly hear the congregation sing. There will be an increased emphasis on intentionally bringing the congregants into worship through singing.

12. Growth of verbal incarnational evangelism. Incarnational evangelism is simply defined as presenting the good news through our Christ-like lifestyle to non-believers. There will be an increased emphasis to share the gospel verbally as well as demonstrating a gospel witness through our lifestyle.

11. The waning and reconfiguration of denominational structures. This trend is already taking place, but it will accelerate in 2015. Denominational structures will continue to get smaller and more streamlined, and churches will not be able to expect the same type of resources they have received in the past.

10. Congregations growing in favor in their respective communities. Churches are transitioning from being an island in the midst of their communities to being a real and positive presence. As church members seek to serve their communities in a plethora of ways, the communities will see these churches more as valued partners.



9. Continued flow of people from smaller churches to larger churches. There will be a continued increase in the number of attendees in churches with an average worship attendance of 1,000 and larger. Churches with an attendance of 400 to 999 will be collectively stable in attendance. And the number of people attending church in congregations with an attendance under 400 will decline.

Let me hear your thoughts on these trends. And return on Monday as I present the top eight trends in churches in America for 2015.

8. More partnerships between denominations and churches. Of course, not all churches belong to a denomination. For those that do, denominational entities typically created the resource or mission opportunity and churches would follow their lead. In 2015 we will see more “bottom up” partnerships, meaning that churches lead the partnerships, but denominations participate in them. That is particularly true for seminaries. That issue is thus a separate trend, noted in the number 7.

7. More focus on theological education in local churches. I am not among the pundits who believe that seminaries will become extinct. They still have a vital role for training ministers. I do see, however, a continued shift for more theological education taking place in local congregations. The successful seminaries in the upcoming years will seek to partner with churches rather than compete with them.

6. The tipping point for a plurality of teaching pastors. In the recent past, churches that had more than one regular preacher or teaching pastor were an anomaly, and they were usually very large churches. In 2015 multiple teaching pastors will become normative, and they will be pervasive in smaller churches as well.

5. Continued increased in the number of multi-site churches. Two years ago, the multi-site movement in America reached a tipping point. Their growth will continue

unabated in 2015.

4. The beginnings of prayer movement in our churches. I am seeing the growth of more and more organizations dedicated to prayer in the local church. I am observing this passion becoming a greater emphasis with pastors, particularly Millennial pastors. This movement will accelerate in popular Christian culture with the release of the next movie by the Kendrick brothers in 2015.

3. The tipping point for small groups. The evidence for the efficacy of small groups in the local church is too overwhelming to be ignored. I see a new movement of “groups” taking place that will be similar in growth as the Sunday school movement was in the late 19th century through the first half of the 20th century.

2. Increased difficulty in matching prospective pastors with churches with pastoral vacancies. This trend is growing and frustrating to both pastors and those in churches seeking pastors. It is particularly frustrating for those churches that use the pastoral search committee model. I will not be surprised to see that model begin to change in 2015.

1. Smaller worship gatherings. The era of the large worship gathering is waning. Churches that are growing will likely do so through multiple services, multiple venues, and multiple sites. This trend will accelerate through the growing influence of Gen X and the Millennials.

Happy New Year!

Thom S. Rainer serves as president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources. Among his greatest joys are his family: his wife Nellie Jo; three sons, Sam, Art, and Jess; and seven grandchildren. Dr. Rainer can be found on Twitter @ThomRainer and at facebook.com/Thom.S.Rainer.



Mission Life

By **JERRY BURNAMAN**

Our church planters have significant plans for the New Year. They are developing strategic ministries for reaching people, recognizing and developing leaders, and providing teaching methods for all believers to grow toward maturity.

This month, January, we began a new work in Tyler. Dewey Davidson and Rick Syndor are Co-leaders and they already have about six families committed to the new mission. The mother church is New Harmony, Tyler and Pastor Robbie Caldwell.

I ask you to pray for all our church planters. Last year there were many that trusted Jesus for salvation, new leaders discovered, and communities impacted with the gospel. This year will be more fruitful as all our churches and planters work together to bring reality to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

Here is the list of our Mission Projects:

Gary & Rhonda Southard

18366 Hollow Oaks Circle
Porter, TX 77365
(832) 2316506
gary@churchvalleyranch.com

Will & Kelly Hutchinson

122 Mossy Rock Cove
Hutto, TX 78634
(512) 354-6703
will.hutch1@yahoo.com

Cecil & Sue Linke

1712 Grand Canyon Way
Allen, TX 75002
(972) 678-0277
cecil@peopleonajourney.com

George & Nicole Martinez

1693 Niagara Falls Blvd.
Lewisville, TX 75077
(254) 379-1572
george.martinez1693@yahoo.com

Todd & Tina Cox

PO Box 2068
Terrell, TX 75160
todd@gototherefuge.com

Darren & Becky Lemons

PO Box 2068
Terrell, TX 75160
darren@gototherefuge.com

Matthew & Amy Prather

1332 Missouri Street
Celina, TX 75009
(469) 296-8557
matthew@discoverthebridge.com

Dewey & Denise Davidson

4089 Hogan Dr. #2214
Tyler, TX 75709
(678) 524-2722
dewey271@cs.com

Rick & Glenda Syndor

PO Box 239
Whitehouse, TX 75791
(214) 405-2418
RickSyndor@suddenlinkmail.com

Arnulfo Maldonado

20719 Sunshine Lane
Spring, TX 77388

He has seven projects in the greater Houston area and has plans for more groups in the future.

These men and their families appreciate your prayers and support. Take the opportunity to visit one of our mission projects and personally discover how they are making a difference in people's lives.

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



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. 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.

Auxiliaries

GMA Houseparty 2015

The Game of Life

By SHARON COLE

GMA girls and Counselors are going to see how we as Christians are to play "The Game of Life" March 20-21, 2015. The theme, taken from Matthew 7:13-14, will be the emphasis of the program and other activities. Registration begins March 13. Registration forms and all other necessary forms are available online at texasgma.org. Written forms can be mailed to Daniel Springs Camp, P.O. Box 310, Gary, TX. 75643. Fees for cabins are: \$22 per girl or counselor; for dorms: \$25 per girl or counselor. Include the name of counselor, name of camper and grade, name of church and address, contact phone number and e-mail. Upon arrival, registration begins at 4 p.m.

Churches or individuals are encouraged to decorate a theme-related game board approximately 11 inches by 17 inches in size. Guest speakers will be Stacie Gail Martin Bostic and Diana Morris. Miss GMA and Jr. Miss GMA questionnaire packets should already be in the hands of local GMA counselors. If you haven't received one, please contact Assistant GMA Promoter, Cheryl Hughes, 1435 VZCR 2434, Canton, TX 75103, 903-340-5457, hugheskc26@yahoo.com. Deadline for submitting all information is February 10. All project money and VIP project money needs to be sent to Texas State GMA Treasurer, Jeannie Walker, 13 Timber Creek Dr. Conroe, TX 77301, leonawalker@consolidated.net, 936-537-3794.

The following information is due Feb. 10: T-shirt order forms, GMA accomplishments and GMA officer survey. Mail to Kristi Key, 17304 CR 2854, Eustace, TX 75124, 903-451-1929, outnumberdad@aol.com.

Counselors, you are asked to prayerfully consider being an advisory council member if elected. The advisory council consists of five adult GMA workers (two years nominated and elected by the messengers at the State GMA Houseparty), State GMA promoter, State GMA assistant promoter, treasurer, and the State WMA president. You will be required to attend all state meetings, and any and all special called meetings by the State GMA promoter or GMA assistant promoter. By attending meetings you can offer support and guidance, and build a relationship with the girl officers.

The Advisory Council helps in implementing the state goals each year. They work behind the scenes to make the houseparty a memorable experience with positive attitudes, words of encouragement and an abundance of hugs. The advisory council meets with the State GMA officers to plan the state meeting. They make recommendations that would benefit the State GMA, including financial decisions. They help plan the State GMA meeting and other activities. They advise concerning parliamentary procedure. They interview and recommend nominees for State GMA offices, guide the officers and support them and the GMA program as a whole. The State GMA leaders and officers have worked as always to make this Houseparty the best and are looking forward to seeing you at Daniel Springs.

If your church does not have an organized GMA group and have girls between grades 4 and 12, consider attending and bring

your girls and see what the GMA program is all about. Let them experience the fellowship with other girls from all over the state and learn how they can have fun serving the Lord. The GMA program will prepare your girls beginning with salvation, learning scripture, learning about the church, missionaries, and how they can be a missionary right where they live. They are given opportunities to learn church business through being officers and practicing parliamentary procedure. They learn the importance of depending on God to lead them and even are able to teach the younger girls as they grow older. They put into practice the Watchword: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ..." 2 Corinthians 5:20.

Hope for Health and Healing

National WMA/BMMI Project: Laos

Hope for Health and Healing is a combined project by Baptist Medical Missions International and the Women's Missionary Auxiliary. BMMI will direct the project, provide consultants, physicians and dietitians, as well as conduct a five day seminar on Child Nutrition. The WMA will raise additional funds needed to facilitate the project. The National WMA 2014-2015 project targets medical educational leadership in Laos.

The goal is to teach basic nutrition to government health workers. Through this program people are taught the basics of sanitation and hygiene. They encourage the use of local products for a balanced diet and better nutrition.

People of Laos are subject to common problems such as scurvy (lack of vitamin C), Kwashiorkor disease (lack of protein), obesity, metabolic syndrome, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, osteoporosis and many other related diseases. Many of these health issues can be eliminated with basic sanitation and hygiene, things that we take for granted here in America. They also do not have the quality medical facilities that we enjoy in this country.

The BMMI not only provides medical services but are most concerned with the spiritual needs of those they serve. Everyone who is helped physically is introduced to Jesus Christ. After the medical team addresses their health issues, they are sent to godly counselors who speak to them about Christ. In supporting this effort you will be partially fulfilling the Great Commission as commanded in Matthew 28:19-20, "Go ye therefore..."

We can't all go into all nations physically, but we can provide the funds for others to go as God leads them. Mark your contribution "National WMA Project-2014-2015." To be included in the program book for the national meeting, the deadline is Feb. 28, 2015. Send your donations and offerings to National WMA, Pat Duncan, P.O. Box 30, Hardy, AR 72542.

District News

LIBERTY DISTRICT WMA met Jan. 10, 2015 at Fellowship Baptist Church, Pittsburg in a combined meeting with a Missions Retreat. The meeting was opened in song, led by Mellissa Henry, and welcomed by Brenda Stringham. The guest speaker was Bro.

Jason Walters, Missionary to the Navajo Indian Reservation in New Mexico, and who, not coincidentally, will be the recipient of this year's Liberty District mission project receipts. Bro. Walters gave a lively review of his 21 years as a missionary to the Indians there beginning only three days following his marriage. His current project there is working toward completion of Camp Christa. The camp is run strictly on donations and his wife, bless her heart, does all the food shopping and cooking for the campers. He issued an invitation to come, see and taste what missions is all about. Two of Bro. Walters' children, Victoria and Jared, accompanied him on this trip and blessed us with beautiful hymns prior to and following his presentation. Door prizes were handled uniquely. Nine prizes were given, one to each church, with the request that each church determine the manner in which they could best be used to benefit the mission's project. Approximately 50 were in attendance and about \$1,300 was collected for the project fund. A delicious lunch was provided by the host church.

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



Ladies help needed with National WMA Meeting

We need to know how many ladies can anticipate at the Minister Wives and Widows lunch. We need some kind of number to give to the hotel in order to be adequately prepared. Also talk up this lunch to all of the minister wives and widows in your area. We want to honor the ladies who stand beside their husbands in the ministry, as well as the ones who are still faithfully serving after their minister husbands have passed on.

We will be placing a memorial page in the report booklet this year. This is something that has "slipped through the cracks" in recent years. I am asking for you and others in your areas to provide the names, date of death and church of ladies who have gone on to Heaven in the last five years.

Send this information to Shirleen Smith at 730 Hwy 533, Laurel, MS 39443 or email to her at arthursmith@bayspringstel.net, or you can send it to me and I will forward on to her. She has graciously agreed to compile the names and word a tribute in the report book. Send me your name and number that will attend, as soon as possible.

Charlotte Johnson

Sunday School Lessons

God is Sovereign

By GARY HOUSE

DATE: January 25, 2015

TEXT: Ephesians 1:1-14

THE LESSON IN BRIEF: Bow in humble submission to the God who rule over all. God is sovereign. He rules over both worldly affairs and affairs of the heart. To find significance, believers must submit themselves before the Lord because God is in control.

The Definition of Sovereignty. While the word sovereign or sovereignty does not appear in the Bible, the truth of His sovereignty is evident everywhere in Scripture. What is the sovereignty of God? It's simply this: **It is the right of God to govern and control the universe which He has created.** God is supreme ruler over all. The word sovereignty means "principal, chief, or supreme." It speaks first of **position** (God is the chief being in the universe), then it speaks of **power** (God is the supreme power of the universe). Position and power belong to God. How He uses that position and power is up to Him alone. He is "God most high" (Psalm 57:2). A sovereign God could be a dictator (God is not), or God could abdicate the use of his powers completely (God has not).

He has all supremacy. The sovereignty of God is the exercise of that supremacy.

Because of that we must conclude that this God can be subject to none; He is beyond us, we cannot influence Him, we cannot bring Him down to our level and we cannot ascend to His great level. There is none like Him and there can be none who He is subject to. He is God, He asks permission of no one. Can you imagine Him applying or making application to a higher authority? No! Why? Because there is no higher authority to God, He is above all, He is supreme and the sovereignty of God is the exercise of that supremacy.

Many arrogantly believe Sovereignty is 'in the individual' - that we, as human beings, are the authors of our own destiny and our own fate, and therefore if there be a God out there, He is not concerned with the affairs of men, He has no such plan or counsel, but we determine our own destiny and our own fate. 'Our fates', they say, 'are activated when we determine by our own will: whatever will be, will be'. God is supreme. Ultimately, God is in complete control of all things, though He may choose to let certain events happen according to natural laws that He has ordained (Proverbs 21: 1). **God is and has the absolute authority.**

God has a plan (Acts 15: 18) that is all inclusive (Ephesians 1:11), that He alone controls (Psalm 135:6), that includes but does not involve Him in evil (Proverbs 16:4), and that is for the *praise of His glory* (Ephesians 1: 14). **God rules and reigns as He alone chooses.** No one ever forces God to do anything that is contrary to His divine will. Scripture repeatedly ascribes power to God. *"There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God"* (Romans 13:1). *"God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God"* (Psalm 62:11).

While some people fear the doctrine of sovereignty, you would not want a God who does not have the power to keep His promises. That kind of god is not the God of the Bible. Nothing ever catches Him unaware or by surprise. Although we will never completely understand God's will for our lives, just remember that the God who sees when a sparrow falls to the ground certainly knows the situation regarding His children.

The Difficulty of Sovereignty. Whenever teaching the doctrine of sovereignty, immediately two questions come to mind. What about evil? What about free will? Look closer at these two questions. **If God is sovereign, how do we explain evil?** A better question might be, since God is good, how come everything that happens in the world is not good? God is both good and sovereign; however, God reserves perfect goodness for heaven alone. One blessing from receiving God's gift of everlasting life is that believers will live in a place that does not know sin, suffering, or death! (Revelation 21). Meanwhile, He permits and uses adversity to show humanity its dependency upon Him. Without difficult times, we would never realize our need for God, the seriousness of sin, the grace of forgiveness, and the gift of eternal life. Evil is also one byproduct of living in a fallen world. While God never made humanity sin, we voluntarily sinned and therefore, we suffer its consequences (Romans 6:23).

If God is sovereign, how can humanity have a free will? In other words, are we simply God's robots or puppets? Absolutely not. **God's sovereignty in no way affects our privilege of making our own choices.** Think back to Adam and Eve (Genesis 2; 3). They made the conscious decision to eat of the forbidden fruit. Every person is still able to make responsible choices, and he or she is accountable to God for the choices that he or she makes.

Sovereignty does not obliterate free will, and free will never dilutes God's sovereignty.

The Demonstration of Sovereignty. Ephesians 1:1-14 descriptively explains God's sovereignty as it relates to salvation.

God **chose** us in Him before the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:4). This verse means that God chose us before forming the earth (See Psalms 139:13-16 and Jeremiah 29:11). You are special in the sight of God. The sovereign Lord loves you.

God **chose us for adoption** in Jesus Christ. *"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will"* (Ephesians 1:5). This verse means that God planned for our adoption as His own dear children through Jesus Christ. He wants us to be His children.

God works according to His own plan. *"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will"* (Ephesians 1:11). As God was creating the universe, He did not ask our opinion. As the Lord offered His Son for sin's sacrifice, He did not ask our advice. God does not need our help, nor does He need our wisdom. Yet when God made us, He made us in His image (Genesis 1:26). When God gave His Son, He gave His Son for us (John 3:16). Everything God does is intended to draw us into a personal relationship with himself. God predestinated everyone to go to heaven, but He leaves the choice (free will) up to us. In light of God's great commitment to us, why is the decision so difficult for many people?

God works all things toward good. *"That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ"* (Ephesians 1:12). The Lord works all things for our best. He cares more for you than you will ever care about yourself. His sovereign control is not that of a resistless power that treats us like pawns, instead His leadership is like a loving Father who treats us like children.

How do we respond to the truth of God's sovereign nature? **Submit to it.** Worship The Sovereign God, The Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Rejoice. **Trust in it.** God is for you, What a comfort. It is safe to trust in Him.

Ask yourself: If God didn't sustain the world, where would we be?

The Holiness of God

By GARY HOUSE

DATE: February 1, 2015

SCRIPTURE: I John 1: 5-10

THE LESSON IN BRIEF: Holiness in God demands purity in us.

THE MEANING OF HOLINESS. The Bible teaches that God is a holy God. The term "holy or holiness" appears more than 830 times in the Old Testament alone. Scripture mentions God's holiness more than any other of his characteristics. The idea behind the concept of holiness is separation. It comes from a word meaning "to separate or cut off." God is separate, or cut off, from everything that is sinful and evil-He cannot tolerate sin. To say that God is holy means there is no trace of evil in his character. John wrote this truth in figurative language. *"This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all"* (1 John 1:5). Light represents holiness and moral purity. The idea of light in this context has to do with a moral and spiritual light. It refers to not only the majesty of God, but his purity, his sinlessness, his separateness from his creation. It refers to both who He is and what God does. He always acts according to His holy character. God's internal righteousness is the moral excellence of His character. It is rooted in His absolute purity. God's greatest glory is His holiness.

Only God is holy. The primary attribute of God is that God is Holy. *"For this is what the high and lofty One says - he who lives forever, whose name is holy"* (Isaiah 57:15).

No one is like the Holy God of Scripture. *"There is none holy as the Lord"* (1 Samuel 2:2).

He is separate in His nature and character. Holiness is the concept of of God that distinguishes Himself and His creation.

He is perfect, humans are imperfect. Because only God is holy, any people or objects that are said to be holy are described in this manner because God has made them holy, or set them apart. Therefore, the term holy is applied to persons or objects that have some type of relationship with the Lord - they are set apart for His service.

The dual aspects of God's Holiness. With respect to God's character, holiness has both positive and negative aspects. On the negative side, holiness consists of what God does and does not do. He does not look upon or participate in any sin. He cannot be tempted by evil. This tells me that God cannot be credited in some way for being unfair or unjust. The psalmist wrote, *"You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with you the wicked cannot dwell"* (Psalm 5:4).

The positive side of God's Holiness. He Can Only Do Good Because He is holy, God can only do that which is true and good. He is absolutely pure and sinless. God, therefore, hates sin and loves the good. It is impossible for Him to sin. He always tells the truth. Sometimes people may do things that appear good, but do what they do for the wrong reasons. God's reasons are not only based on perfect knowledge, but perfect holiness as well. God cannot be credited with doing things for less than pure motives.

His Word is reliable. I know it isn't wrong or tainted by sin or would lead me astray or down a path that isn't for my best.

THE BELIEVER'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S HOLINESS. Believers should act in a holy manner because God is holy. *Be ye holy: for I am holy* (1 Peter 5:7).

John wrote. *But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin"* (1 John 1:7).

The believer is to **worship** the Lord in holiness. *"Give unto the Lord the glory due to his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness"* (Psalm 29:2).

We have a holy standard to live by. The holiness of God should cause believers to be **sensitive to their own sinful ways.**

Summary: Only God is holy. The main idea behind holiness is separation. God is separate from all sin. He is perfect in His nature. His character is one of flawless moral perfection. Holiness has a positive and negative side. On the positive side He always does what is right. On the negative side He is separate from all sin.

Allen Tilley writes, "Examine your life today. If you were to look in a spiritual mirror, who or what would you more closely resemble? Some might discover they reflect worldliness more than holiness. If so, repent of your sinfulness and spend time with the Lord. As you do, you will see that only a pure life will please the holy Father."

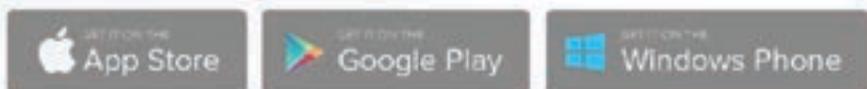
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