

Baptist Progress

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50 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Seven Key Reasons PEOPLE CHOOSE A CHURCH

By DR. THOM RAINER

Why did you choose to come to this church? I ask the question hundreds of times each year, especially to people who joined a church within the past year.

Now we have new research that gives us specific reasons why people decide on a particular church. I am grateful to Pew Research for their massive study on the behavioral patterns of members and guests.

In their most recent study, the respondents noted seven key reasons for choosing a church. They were allowed to offer more than one reason. Here are the top seven responses:

Quality of sermons (83%). The primacy of the pulpit is the number one factor for those looking for a church home. These results are very similar to my research published in the book, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched*, fifteen years ago. Unfortunately, the demands on many pastors make it difficult for them to put the time they need in sermon preparation.

Feeling welcomed by leaders (79%). It is so important for pastors and staff to take the lead in welcoming guests. No, they are not supposed to do all the welcoming, but their role has a huge impact.

Style of services (74%). I would love to be able to unpack this response a bit more. One thing, however, is clear. People are still choosing churches by the styles of worship

of the congregations. The numbers are overwhelming. Three out of four church seekers say worship style is a factor for the church they choose.

Location (70%). I want to be careful not to say things these numbers don't mean to say. But I would surmise that location is more important today than it was ten years ago. This reality would at least partly explain the dramatic increase of multi-site churches. Churches are going to the communities where the people are. It also prompts us to follow the trends of large regional churches. Will people more and more prefer a church in their own community rather than driving to the regional church?

Education for kids (56%). This number is incredibly high, especially since many families do not have kids at home. Obviously, those who do have children at home consider this issue vitally important. "Education" likely refers to more than the teaching ministry to children; it probably encompasses the total scope of children's ministry. I have said on more than one occasion the first staff member I would bring to the church after the pastor would be a children's minister.

Having friends/family in the congregation (48%). Relational connections are very important. We see this issue to be so important that we created a ministry (Invite Your One)

to engender an attitude of inviting. Those same connections play a crucial role in the assimilation process in the church as well.

Availability of volunteering opportunities (42%). This factor was very encouraging to me. People no longer want just to sit and soak; they want to get involved. If guests know there are opportunities to get involved quickly in the church, they are more likely to choose that church. I have no doubt the Millennials are instrumental in this number being as high as it is.

From my perspective, these seven factors are not huge surprises; they are really affirmations of much of what we have been sharing with you.

The real issue is not the intrigue of this research; it is what you and your church will do about it.

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.





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Baptist Progress Anniversary Offering

The following is a list of those churches and individuals who gave to the
Baptist Progress Anniversary Offering.
We appreciate your contributions very much.

Delores Adams	\$106
Anchor Bible Baptist Church, Pharr	\$106
Anonymous	\$500
Anthony Drive, Ennis	\$106
Beacon Hill Baptist Church, Waco	\$106
Bethel Baptist Church of White Rock, Dallas	\$106
Jerry & Nancy Burnaman	\$106
Calvary Baptist Church, Arlington	\$106
Calvary Baptist Church, Ennis	\$106
Calvary Baptist Church, Fairfield	\$1,000
Camille Acres Baptist Church, Longview	\$106
China Grove Baptist Church, Eustace	\$106
Cornerstone Baptist Church, Jacksonville	\$300
Elwood Baptist Church, Wills Point	\$106
Enon First Missionary Baptist Church, Iola	\$106
Enterprise Baptist Church, Jacksonville	\$106
Fifth Street Baptist Church, Levelland	\$106
First Baptist Church, Bardwell	\$106
First Baptist Church, Desoto	\$106
Friendship Baptist Church, Mequite	\$106
Jerry & Cassie Fulton	\$212
Glade Creek Baptist Church, Gilmer	\$200
Jacksonville College	\$106
Ronnie & Sarah Johnson	\$106
Little Flock Baptist Church, Jewett	\$106
Macedonia, Etoile	\$106
Macune Baptist Church, San Augustine	\$106
Mahl Baptist Church, Nacogdoches	\$106
Martins Prairie Baptist Church, Anderson	\$212
New Harmony Baptist Church, Tyler	\$106
New Beginnings Baptist Church, Ferris	\$106
New Hope Baptist Church, Mineola	\$106
New Hope Baptist Church, New Waverly	\$106
Pecan Baptist Church, Robert Lee	\$106
Michael & Lisa Phillips	\$106
Red Springs Missionary Baptist Church, Tyler	\$106
Round Prairie Baptist Church, Fairfield	\$212
Sheridan Terrace Baptist Church, Palestine	\$75
Soda Missionary Baptist Church, Livingston	\$106
South Jefferson Baptist Church, Mt. Pleasant	\$106
South Park Baptist Church, Fort Worth	\$106
Suburban Wood Baptist Church, Humble	\$106
Ward Prairie Baptist Church, Fairfield	\$106
Weeks Chapel Baptist Church, Jasper	\$100

TOTAL

\$6,521



Dad Are You Still There?

Heart-wrenching fear engulfed Ryan and Amy Patterson as they heard the news. After 5 ½ long years of infertility, praying, testing and waiting, a new baby was finally on the way and life had never seemed so good. Until now.

In an instant, everything changed. When Amy was five months pregnant, an ultrasound revealed what was later diagnosed as Shone's Complex Condition (an extremely severe, rare heart problem) which meant it was possible their baby would only have half a heart. In some cases the development process is delayed, and transplants as well as multiple surgeries are often required. While there were many unanswered questions, this one loomed large in their mind and refused to go away: Will our baby live? Research indicated that survival rates are not good. Only their surgeon held out hope.

With few answers and no promises, the process was begun. Amy was accepted into a trial program and on June 27, 2015 she was admitted to a hospital in Houston where she would remain throughout their baby's birth, treatment and pending surgery. At 12:18 pm that same day Noah Patterson was born, a C-Section Breech baby many believed would not survive. When he was 13 days old, he had open heart surgery and they were told they would be in the hospital approximately six months.

Ryan's job allowed him to work off site, so together he and Amy weathered this frightening experience. Discouraged and physically exhausted, they survived one moment at a time. Through dark days of dread and uncertainty, the faith they had grown up learning about from family and from church became personal. Far from theory, it was their life line to the only One who could bring peace and hope to their heart. Joshua 1:9 became their constant "go to" Bible verse reminding them God would never leave them alone. And He didn't!

Twenty-seven days after Noah's open heart surgery they were dismissed from the hospital! June 27, 2018 Noah Patterson celebrated his 3rd birthday—a happy, busy, energetic little boy who loves life to the fullest and doesn't want to miss out on any of it. The future for this little one and his family is uncertain, but by God's grace they are learning to live in the moment, grateful for each one they have.

Ryan is my nephew and he shared this moving testimony at our recent family reunion, including some important life lessons that transformed their lives:

1. Be ready to watch God work—through people and circumstances.
2. Be ready to be changed—new priorities, purpose and faith.
3. Be ready to surrender—leaving space for hope, thanksgiving and JOY!

He closed with a bedtime ritual he and Noah often have when the lights are out and the room is dark. Noah: "Dad, are you still there?" Ryan: "Yes son, I'm here,"

Noah: "But I can't see you." Ryan: "Reach out your hand—My face is right by yours."

Like Noah, we need a reminder that our Father is always with us. When we're not sure, it's okay to ask: "Dad, are you still there?" Then read Joshua 1:9 and rest in His promise. "Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

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



Has the great falling away from the faith begun?

By **DR. MIKE SMITH**

President of Jacksonville College

I have been working on a new course for Jacksonville College this summer. The course is Philosophy of Religion. What is philosophy? Why study philosophy?

The word philosophy comes from two Greek words: *phileo*, “to love,” and *sophia*, “wisdom.” Thus, philosophy is the love of wisdom. Philosophy is a course that is designed to encourage a student to think about the difficult questions of life.

WHY STUDY PHILOSOPHY?

1. Philosophy plays a role in the proclamation of a Christian worldview. The first universities in our country included philosophy in their course offering. They felt philosophy to be important to the university. Jacksonville College operates out of a Christ-centered philosophy that begins with the belief that all truth comes God. The mission of Jacksonville College is to provide a quality education from a biblical worldview that challenges minds, transforms lives, and equips students for servant leadership and lifelong learning.
2. Philosophy aids in the task of apologetics. Apologetics is defending your faith. According to 1 Peter 3:15, every Christian should “. . . be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” We need to know how to communicate our faith to others in a culture that is increasingly antagonistic to the Christian faith.
3. Philosophy asks the basic questions of life. What is real? What is true? Why are we here? Does God exist? Why does evil exist? What is the difference in determinism and free will? Is there an eternity?

According to statistics, 70% of professing Christian youth who go to college end up leaving their faith during their first year on campus. If they attend a secular college, they will find that 72% of the faculty describe themselves as politically liberal, 25% are professing atheists or agnostics, and 51% describe the Bible as “an ancient book of fables, legends, history, and moral precepts” (www.coldcasechristianity.com).

Jacksonville College is the only two-year faith-based college left in Texas. Why send your youth to a college where their faith will be ridiculed and challenged? Send them to Jacksonville College. At Jacksonville College, all the required core curriculum classes are fully accredited and transferable to other colleges and universities. Moreover, classes are taught from a biblical worldview. The Bible is clear that in the last days, “. . . many will turn from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people” (Matthew 24:10-11).

Jacksonville College is needed today more than any other time in history, and we need your help. We need your prayers. We need your financial support. Fall classes will soon begin. Encourage any prospective college student whom you know to contact our Admissions Office at (903) 589-7110 or admissions@jacksonville-college.edu. We ask you and your church to give a special financial gift to help us make needed facility repairs in order for us to be ready for these students.

NEW JC RECRUITER

Jacksonville College welcomes JC graduate Judson Frazier

as the College’s new recruiter. The son of Wayne and Jennifer Frazier, Judson enjoyed being home schooled with his nine siblings. Like his father, who serves as pastor of Montalba Baptist Church, Judson surrendered to preach. He chose to attend Jacksonville College because he wanted to further his education in a Christian environment.

As a student at Jacksonville College, Judson was well loved by students and faculty. He played the guitar and sang in the JC praise band, and he served as president of the B.J. Albritton Ministerial Alliance. He was also a member of the Walter Prescott Webb Historical Society. Judson was crowned Homecoming King 2018, and at the annual Awards Evening in the spring, he received multiple awards. He was voted the recipient of the Curtis Carroll Award by the JC faculty; and he was voted Mr. Sophomore Class Favorite, Mr. School Spirit, and Mr. Jacksonville College by the student body.

Judson is recently engaged to JC alumna Amanda Johnson, daughter of BMA missionaries to Mexico, Grady and Denise Johnson. Judson loves to talk about Jesus, and he frequently preaches in area churches. He is thankful for the opportunity to return to Jacksonville College as a recruiter because he believes in the mission and ministry of the College.



▲ Judson Frazier

Upcoming EVENTS

JACKSONVILLE COLLEGE FALL SEMESTER 2018

August 15 – December 6

EARLY REGISTRATION:

New Student Registration:

July 20 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Walk-in Registration

(no appointment needed):

July 17, 31 from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

PLACEMENT TESTING:

July 17, 20, 31; August 10 and 13
at 8:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

REGISTRATION:

August 10 and 13 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

An expression of everlasting love

Many of our friends choose to honor or remember a family member, a friend or an associate with a gift for the children of the Baptist Home. Texas Baptist Home for Children, in turn, notifies the appropriate person. Listed in capital letters are those honored or remembered from May 1, 2018 – May 31, 2018.

ENDOWMENTS

E ANN PACE: Karl & Martha Pace

MYRA STOKES: Bill Stokes

HONORARIUMS

ALL THE LITTLE CHILDREN: Charles & Vera Baucum

PALMER ANDERSON: James & Susan Anderson

HOLLIN ANDERSON: James & Susan Anderson

ROBBIE & JANICE CALDWELL: Charles & Charlotte Johnson

ROBBIE CALDWELL'S RETIREMENT: Larry & Pat Kearby

MAXINE CAVENESS: Larry & Ann Garner

GLYNN HORTON'S 90TH BIRTHDAY: Charles & Charlotte Johnson

KENZIE ELIZABETH MCNUTT: Robert Erwin

KENNY & JOYE THOMPSON'S 60TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY: Charles & Charlotte Johnson

LEO & JOAN TRIMBLE'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY: Charles & Charlotte Johnson

MEMORIALS

HELEN ANDERSON: Steven Anderson

JOSE ARIAS: Charles & Charlotte Johnson; Rosewood Baptist Church, Gilmer

WALTER BECKER: Dennis & Ilona Myrice

DOLORES BILBREY: Charles & Charlotte Johnson

JOYCE BINGHAM: Charles & Charlotte Johnson

RICHARD 'DICK' BORRMANN: Charles & Charlotte Johnson

FLEANOY AVON CORLEY (F.A.): Sue Corley

LOUISE CRUMP: Red Springs Missionary Baptist Church, Tyler

ELMER & LULA DENNIS: Raymond & Claynell Dennis

RICHARD EASTER: Audra Easter

TILMON GOEBEL: Judy Goebel

MATASHA GOEBEL: Judy Goebel

RUTH ANN STANFORD GOGGIN: Joe & Linda Dodson

HERBERT A HOLMES: Joey Holmes

BLANCHE HOLMES: Joey Holmes

PAM HUDGINS: Valton & Brenda Ray

JACKIE HUGHGINS: Larry & Ann Garner

BETTY KELLUM: David & Deana McAdams

CHARLES KELLY: Don & Richie Honeycutt

LARRY KENNEDY: Johnny & Phyllis Howell

VERN KUHN: Sherry Carter; Tom & Debra Black; John & Renetta Lindsey; Gary Don & Kela Williams

ROY L LEWIS: Linda Lewis

MILDRED MANETZ: Michael & Kathy Fox

BILLIE SUE MARTIN: Terry & Sharon Martin

J.R. MCKITHERN: Tommy & Virginia Gipson

MALCOLM & MAXINE MCMILLAN: James & Micah Krauskopf

MARTHA NATIONS: Larry & Lilla Benefield

LARRY SANDIFER: Joe & Linda Dodson

PHILLIP SCHIRICO: Debbie Schirico

S.A. SHARP: Ida Sharp

LEE SHORT: Florence Short

PETE TAYLOR: Duane & Charlotte Turner

WANDA: Bob Hickingbotham

RITA WILKINS: Tommy & Virginia Gipson

E.T. WILLIAMS: Minnie Williams



CHURCH HEALTH

Are we there yet?

By **LARRY BARKER**

Is your church any healthier today than it was at this time last year? Have you taken effective steps toward the preferred future you envisioned? The reality is that after speeding up the music, spicing up the sermons, and sprucing up our buildings our church health and overall spirituality is no better off. You have to know that it is not easy to take the steps that need to be taken for your church to be what God desires it to be. There will be challenges that will tax you and there will be challengers that will push you to your wits end at times.

First, you should expect there to be some resistance. Not everyone will like your ideas or suggestions and to be completely transparent some will hate them. In this process of accepting the reality of resistance you should determine the level of resistance. Are they hostile, resistant, passive, cultivatable, receptive or ready? These have also been described as never-adopters, late-adopters, and early-adopters. Realize that some need time to process and there needs to be a balance between going too slow and not slowing down enough.

Second, with whom do you need to have a conversation? The temptation is to avoid and stay away from those who seem to always oppose innovation and change. The reality is that you should pull them in close, listen to them, and see if you can discover why they are against your proposal. Yes, there are some (the never-adopters) who will just be against it. They can even be hostile toward change but that is actually the exception and not the rule. Do not allow one person to hold you hostage and see if there is a way you can move forward with them.

Third, make sure that you are clearly articulating the vision and changes you believe need to be made. Ask several to share with you what they are hearing and see if they are close at all. The communication curve is sometimes very steep and is always a challenge. Be willing to consider ways you can make the vision and message clearer. Ed Stetzer says, “People are willing to sacrifice in the present for something better in the future.” Make sure you cast a vision for the end result and goal and not the changes that need to be made.

Fourth, develop a prayer strategy. Listen to what Samuel said to the people in I Samuel 12:23, “As for me, I vow that I will not sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you.” It is hard to remain mad at someone you are praying for regularly. Take time in your meetings to pray out loud for one another. Get in groups of three, ask what you can pray about for them, and then take turns praying for one another. The work of the Lord requires much prayer. We say we know that but we must make sure that we are intentional and strategic in implementing it.



Fifth, determine what needs your attention first. Do not be overwhelmed by all that you have to do but instead focus on what you can accomplish and where you can make a difference. As you look at a particular ministry, program or area of your ministry start by asking what is working. Then you must ask, what is missing and what is confusing?

Sixth, consider thinking through the necessary steps for the change you desire to occur. Learn from others. An excellent resource is John Kotter’s Leading Change. One aspect of his process is to create a guiding coalition. Make sure you have prayer partners who are willing to speak into this process honestly and with transparency. The team concept is biblical and it provides you strength in numbers because it gives you a system of checks and balances. Make sure that you always remain a good listener and that you have a teachable spirit.

Seventh, brace yourself for opposition because it is coming at some point or time. Everyone will not like your ideas and they may hate some of them, a lot. Get ready because the attacks that seem very personable sometimes are not. They point the blame at you and the attacks are often founded upon the thought that they didn’t have the problem until you brought it up. I recently heard it said that if no one is upset you probably are not doing enough and need to get busy. Certainly, our goal

is not to upset or anger people but when you lead it will happen.

Eighth, make sure that you practice patience. The change you propose and lead your church in will not happen overnight. We already made reference to this but you must acknowledge that some people are just going to oppose you. Prayerfully consider what the real issue is and what questions you may need to answer for them. We usually cannot accomplish all we want to in one year but normally we can accomplish far more than we imagine in five. Develop a five-year plan and then begin taking the necessary steps to make it a reality.

Leadership can be lonely but remember that He has promised to never leave you nor forsake you. Knowing that He will never abandon us as we obediently follow Him allows us to never give up, never give in, and never give out as we depend upon Him daily.

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





INSIGHTS *for* PASTORS

A successful building program

By DR. ALLEN TILLEY

Unfortunately, a number of churches complete a building program only to experience more challenges than opportunities. As a result, they become discouraged and disillusioned. The building program was perceived to be a significant answer to their needs; instead, the church found itself with declining ministries and attendance. So what is the difference between the successful and unsuccessful building programs. Here are six keys to successful programs.

Key 1: Before deciding to build, pray intensively and extensively, asking God for His solution for your needs. In prayer, you may find that you don't need to build or that the people are not ready to build. He may even provide an alternative to building, such as rearranging ministries or using sites off campus. A building program is a huge undertaking. Proceed only after saturating the need in prayer.

Key 2: Plant a vision for ministry, not just a building. A building program is not an end, but a means – a means of doing either new ministry or expanding existing ministry. A building is nothing more than a tool. If the building is your vision, the vision will die once the building is complete. On the other hand, if your vision is reaching a new target group or making room

for additional worshippers, your vision will outlast the building program. Without a clear ministry focus, the aftermath of a building program is not pretty.

Key 3: The pastor must be convinced this is God's will for the church. Since the pastor will be involved in casting the vision, raising the money, and inspiring others to join the project, he must be fully on board with the idea. If not, people will sense his reluctance or hesitation, and the project will fail.

Key 4: Key leaders must be on board. Church leaders often think of getting key lay people involved so the funding can be secured. But churches need more than their money. They need these lay leaders influence so that others can grasp and own the ministry vision behind the build.

Key 5: A significant amount of funding needs to be in place before building. Taking on too much debt can strangle the life out of a church. While no hard rule exists, I've always raised a third before entering into a building program, raised a third during the building phase, and then financed the remaining third. Securing funds before and during the building program is much easier because the excitement is at its highest than after the project is complete.

Key 6: Communicate the vision, communicate the vision, and communicate the vision. Churches with successful building programs remind the congregation of the ministry vision behind the project. Then they remind them again. And again. The congregation must never be lulled into thinking that the vision is the building; the people must be reminded redundantly that there is a ministry vision behind the project.

A church building project is a huge investment of money, ministry, and time. The aftermath of such an endeavor can be new momentum in ministry and unity. Conversely, those churches that approach a building program poorly may see significant problems in the months that follow. Pray, plan, and lead wisely.

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



BMA Pastor Publishes Book Summer Time

By JASON CURRY

Jordan Tew, pastor of Eighth Street Baptist Church in Grand Prairie, has published a book titled *Small-Town Churches: Challenging the Culture and Theology*.

In his book, Jordan combines sound biblical exposition, personal experience and hard-hitting truths, as he builds a case against small-town culture and theology, landing a blow against the established norms.

Dr. Charley Holmes, President of BMA Seminary, believes the book is "A well-written, yet reader-friendly book, which will make a great resource for pastors...It will also serve church members well in helping them to see 'blind spots.'"

Topics such as moralism, traditionalism, racism and unbiblical church practices are all examined. Whether you're a pastor, seminary student or a regular ol' church member, this practical, yet challenging book will push you to leave small-town Christianity behind and pursue God's Word.

Jordan is a graduate of both Jacksonville College and BMA Seminary, and is no stranger to small-town churches, growing up in rural east Texas.

You can order the book at amazon.com

If you are around kids during this time of year you know that one very special thing happens to them...they go crazy. No more school, staying up late, playing outside or escaping the heat inside. Texas Baptist Home for Children (TBHC) is no exception. We are able to open our swimming pool, see kids playing outside around the grounds and seeing them experience many outdoor activities. It is one of the best things to think about around here. Even with some of the difficult situations that our kids face, you can see in each one a thrill to play and a peace that only being safe brings.

TBHC helps equip foster parents to understand their role in kids' lives. Yes, it is care giving but it is so much more. It's playing! I remember the first time I understood how impactful playing was as a foster parent. It's not just in the physical development of a child, it is in the emotional and sociological development. When our kids can play, they can heal. Pray for our kids in foster care or adopted homes. Know our foster and adoption families are all over the greater Dallas and Fort Worth areas! Because if we can help a child have recreational fun, then we can see hope for a restored future.

After all that talk of summer, I do need to discuss the coming school year. This month, we are preparing for our TBHC kids to

have school supplies. Each child will need to enter the school year ready with supplies in hand and you have been so important with helping us reach our goal of providing for every TBHC child. The TBHC website, www.tbhc.org, has all the items listed that we are still in need of this year. You can even purchase the items from our Amazon Wish list (link on website) or you can drop off the needed items by Aug. 3 to the TBHC Waxahachie Campus. You can also donate and help us reach our school supplies goal of \$2,500.

TBHC kids are also having a back to school party Aug. 17. We are currently looking for sponsors and/or volunteers to work the event. You can help them have a great back-to-school party! Information for sponsorship is also listed on our website.

Thank you for always praying and supporting TBHC kids and families. As always, thanks for helping bring kids Home!

Jason Curry is the president of the Texas Baptist Home for Children. Contact him 629 Farley St, Waxahachie, TX 75165, 972-937-1321 or jcurry@tbhc.org. For more information, visit www.tbhc.org.





A word from your mission office

By HEITH MITCHELL

We have spent the last three months completing our training with a group of men carrying 11 different God given burdens for lost people. Two of these men were from outside the state and are networked with Bro. Ashraf Sarah and US Arabic Outreach. The other nine are burdened to reach different groups here in Texas. It is humbling to see God at work and a blessing to be a part of it. What these future missionaries have in common is their diversity. They come from different cultures, have different backgrounds and are different ages.

We can't put God in a box. He expresses himself uniquely, through unique people and brings glory to Himself time and again. What your missionaries have in common is a burden for lost souls, a desire and plan to make disciples and a heart to plant lot's of churches. The BMA of Texas is marching forward. The Kingdom is growing. The enemy is attacking. Pray and rejoice!

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

A WORD FROM YOUR MISSIONARIES

**CHRIS DRIVER—
WEST TEXAS CHURCH MULTIPLICATION NETWORK**

Summer is in full swing here in west Texas. That means school is out and so are the people! The two main groups in loop and Whitharral are doing well and both have plans for taking their first steps in reaching outside their groups. Loop is reaching others through Facebook live and the satellite group in Colorado. Whitharral has plans for a family night VBS outreach in a neighboring community. The Brockway family from east Texas is all moved in and getting settled in the town of Meadow. They are meeting their neighbors and we are working on getting a group going there soon! Please be in prayer for all these efforts as well as for me as I clarify the process for new groups. We are beginning to press hard into the next phase of aggressively and intentionally reaching new towns. The task ahead is big, but I'm thankful that my God is bigger!



▲ Chris Driver

**JAIME GARCIA—
IGLESIA BAUTISTA NUEVA VIDA
MISSION, GILMER/MESQUITE**

It is good to recognize that God is the one who is orchestrating his Work and we learn to trust the Lord Jesus Christ and his faithful and true promises. Only this way can we



▲ Jaime Garcia

succeed and give Him glory and honor. We recognize that it is not possible to see a sinner repent to whom God is not calling and continue to praise his name because he has done so with us.

**MATTHEW PRATHER—
THE BRIDGE MISSION, MIDLOTHIAN/WAXAHACHIE**

The month of June was a good and busy month at The Bridge. We were able to host two groups from different churches that came to help us serve. We greatly appreciate Calvary, Fairfield and Temple, Rogers Arkansas for all their help and work. We were able to have what we called "Rock The Block" with their help. These were one day VBS type events hosted in several different neighborhoods. We also were able to partner with a food bank and teen pregnancy center and serve. We made many new contacts and had one person accept Christ this month. We continue to have guests at our Sunday morning worship services. Thank you for your continued prayers and support. Please continue to lift us up in prayer.



▲ Matthew Prather

**NEPTALY MOLINA—
IGLESIA BAUTISTA MISSION, NACOGDOCHES**

We have two new families that will begin to congregate in our Church and three men who will initiate discipleship. The challenge is to be able to fully penetrate with the message of the gospel to the sectors of the Ponderosa and Selva I sector, where a large number of Hispanic families come together to extend us much more.

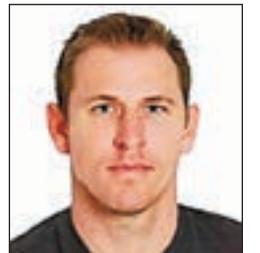


▲ Neptaly Molina



**BRANDON DURHAM—
REDEEMER'S LOVE MISSION, HOUSTON**

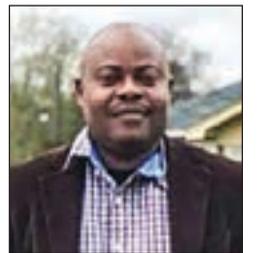
Redeemer's Love Houston is excited to welcome a new member to our pastoral team! Kingsley Nduka, BMAT Church-Planter-in-Training, will partner with us for the next 12 months! As a seasoned pastor from Nigeria, Kingsley adds both depth and diversity to our team. Please keep Amanda (my wife) in your prayers. She continues to battle rheumatoid arthritis, endometriosis, and anemia, and has been largely homebound the past two months. Redeemer's Love Houston continues to shine the light of the gospel in Southwest Houston. This past month, God entrusted us with ministry to a man who spent the past 20 years in prison. It's been rewarding to watch our church family love him well; investing time and relationship to meet his immediate needs and to share the gospel. On behalf of Redeemer's Love Houston, thank you for your continued prayer and support!



▲ Brandon Durham

**KINGSLEY NDUKA—
INTERN PREPARING
FOR HOUSTON**

An effective disciple maker puts Jesus first, not just their lives but their disciple-making. Also they understand Jesus' strategy and therefore know where to start (one on one).



▲ Kingsley Nduka

**JOHN HARRIS—
FOUNDATION COMMUNITY MISSION, BENBROOK**

Thank you for your supporting us through prayer! We have an opening into another area of Benbrook now and are praying that God gives us impact there. Would you pray with us in that? Pray also that the Mission Life Group that we have running will continue to grow and understand how much opportunity we have in Benbrook to love others in the name of Jesus! A big thanks to South Park Baptist Church for their help with the elementary school cleanup this month! We will serve again this month and would love to have help!



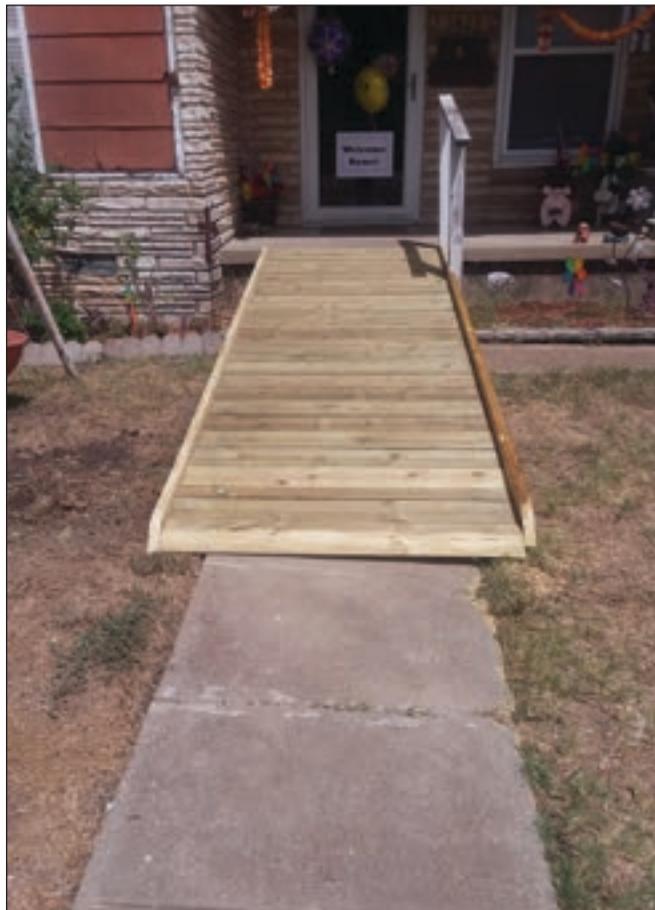
▲ John Harris

BMA TX MISSIONS continued on p. 9

Beacon Hill, Waco helps welcome member home

Editor's note: The following was sent to Baptist Progress about a project performed by men of Beacon Hill, Waco:

My mother is 93 years old and fell and broke her hip. After surgery and rehab we were able to go home but in a wheelchair. I talked with mother's pastor at Beacon Hill Baptist Church and he told me some of the men at his church build ramps. I had no idea. Bro. Reggie Blake called and said they would be at mother's house the next day to build the ramp. What a blessing this church and these special people are to our family and to the neighborhood. We are so thankful for their loving and caring spirit. May God continue to bless these special people. Great job men!



Rosewood, Gilmer hosts celebration for pastor and wife

Rosewood, Gilmer hosted a celebration for Pastor Charles Johnson and his wife, Charlotte, for being in the ministry for 50 years.

Bobby Trimble welcomed everyone to the services. Charles Harrell of White Oak gave the invocation.

Dr. David Johnson of Houston gave memories of his parents' ministry. Other speakers for the event were Wayne Whiteside from Farmersville, Louisiana; Brian Mauk, son-in-law; and Tracy Miller of Cumming, Georgia.

Special music was presented by the Kingdom Kids of Rosewood. Granddaughter, Triniti Mauk sang a solo, "Thank You for Giving to the Lord."

Bro. Duane Turner of Hughes Springs gave the benediction and blessing on the food. The group met in the gym where it was decorated in a patriotic theme. The congregation enjoyed a barbecue lunch with all the trimmings.

In honor of Bro. Johnson being a 20-gallon blood donor and not being able to participate any more, the community had a blood drive with 27 pints being given after the meeting.

Charles Michael Johnson was born to J.R. and Florence Hymer Johnson May 19, 1952. He married Charlotte Harrell Johnson June 9, 1972. They have a son, David, and wife, Nicole, and grandson, Cayden. They also have a daughter, Mary Ann, and husband, Brian Mauk, and granddaughters, Triniti and Allie.

Johnson was born and raised at Rosewood in Upshur County and was saved at the age of 12. He surrendered to preach on Sunday morning, June 22, 1968 at the age of 16 after Rosewood Church had a revival with his Uncle Don Hymer preaching the services.

His first sermon was preached on June 29, 1968 and it was from Revelation 3:16.

Johnson was ordained March 28, 1972 when he was called to

pastor Holly Springs, Pittsburg.

He always said, "The only reason they called me is because Charlotte could play the piano."

The presbytery consisted of 40 ministers and deacons, one of the largest groups ever assembled to ordain a man in their memory they said. He graduated from Jacksonville Baptist College and Texas Eastern University (now called University of Texas at Tyler).

Johnson pastored Holly Springs, Pittsburg for five years; Little Mound, Big Sandy for eight years, and has pastored Rosewood for 34 years.

He has conducted 462 funerals, 109 weddings, and 432 baptisms. Charles has been bivocational and taught school for 30 plus years serving as a coach, teacher, assistant principal, bus driver, maintenance worker and drivers ed teacher.

He is caretaker of the Rosewood Cemetery following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather.



▲ Charles Johnson and family

An expression of everlasting love

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

ENDOWMENTS

MYRA STOKES: Bill Stokes

HONORARIUMS

CONSTANCE BOLLEN: Jean Eshelman

CLYDE KING: Wilda Langley

MEMORIALS

RUBY ADERHOLD: Gayle Ferguson

WALTER BECKER: Dennis & Ilona Myrice

BOARDMAN FAMILIES: Neta Hicks

ROY BOLING: Larry & Carol Brock

DAVID KEITH BROWN: Sarah Brown

KRISTEN CANUP: Charles & Charlotte Johnson

DOUG DUBOIS, SR.: Allbright Insurance Agency (Norma Allbright)

CHUCK FLORROW: Jed and Glenice Whitaker

AUBREY & PAULINE GANDY: Jerry & Virginia Gandy

LOIS & HESTER GIBSON: Janice Dore

JOEY GREEN: Charles & Charlotte Johnson

JACK HENSON: Jed & Glenice Whitaker

MACK HICKS: Neta Hicks

HICKS FAMILIES: Neta Hicks

RUTH FANNIN HILL: Charles & Charlotte Johnson

SUE HODGES: Charles & Charlotte Johnson

CHERYL JARVIS: Temple Baptist Church, Mexia

LOFTON & TENNIE KING: Wilda Langley

DOYLE KING: Wilda Langley

OLETA KING STEPHENSON: Wilda Langley

MITCH MODISETTE: Charles & Charlotte Johnson

BETTY STEELMAN: Brent & Tammy Swanner; Charles & Charlotte Johnson

DAVID WALKER: Charles & Charlotte Johnson

DAPHNA WHITEHEAD: Billie Jean Whitehead

HAROLD M. WILLIAMS: Charles & Charlotte Johnson

NORMA WINSKIE: Wood County Baptist Association

memorials-honorariums



Sunbeams CIA (Children in Action)

By SHARON COLE

The Texas Sunbeams met June 29-30, 2018 at Jacksonville College for their annual Houseparty with a business meeting, programs, fun crafts and games. As always, the cafeteria staff provided good food and we appreciate them so much.

Melissa Henry and Vera Koonce told ways of communicating without words by making a craft airplane and explaining how to use the "Wordless Book." God also used symbols to communicate such as a donkey, the Ten Commandments and a rainbow.

Saturday morning, Cindy Allen, Texas WMA president, spoke to the group about secret agents and the officers are like them except they are not to be secret. They are to tell others about Jesus. Secret agents have a plan or mission. We have a plan also and find our instructions in the Bible; from our Sunday school teachers and our pastors. Cindy then installed the new officers and gave them a challenge to be agents for Jesus.

The new officers are: President-Kody Hall; Adult-Shayna Hall; 1st Vice President-Cayden Koonce; Adult-Vera Koonce; Second Vice President-Daelan Mathis; Adult-Gene Mathis; Secretary/Treasurer-Shayna Hall; Asst. Shawn Norris; Song Leader-Kainan Moy; Adult-Dera Moy; Co-Project Promoters-Abby Norris & Javen Cano; Adult-Shawn Norris; Historian-Kaleb Moy; Adult-Dera Moy; Webmaster: Alicia Johnson. Advisory Council: Melissa Henry, Shawn Norris, Shayna Hall, Shera Clair, and Dera Moy.

The project this year was "Lifeword Community Radio with a goal of \$1,200. Our Sunbeams raised \$1,540 which was enough to put transmitters in four different places. These transmitters can pick up stations that broadcast our Lifeword programs into places where our missionaries cannot go to tell the world about Jesus. The new project is "Water For Christ" with a goal of \$1,500.

TEXAS WMA PROJECT

Don't forget our Texas WMA Project for this year is to help our BMA of Texas missionaries and church planters with their outreach programs by providing a large box trailer equipped with supplies to carry with them to mission points in spreading the gospel by hosting activities. Go to texaswma.com and click on tx project scan.pdf to get instructions on how to help and then txprojectscan2.pdf to access the list of items needed. You may choose to purchase some of the items or give generously to the Texas WMA project fund. Contact the Texas WMA Project Promoter for more information: Diana Morris-grammydi1013msn.com, 903-288-7575. Send offerings to: Texas WMA Project- Jo Strong 149 NW Suzanne Terrace, Burleson, TX 76028.

TEXAS LADIES' RETREAT

The annual Texas Ladies' Retreat will be held September 14-15, 2018 at New Bethlehem Baptist Church, Cut and Shoot, Texas; 14630 Millmac Rd. Conroe, Texas 77303. The meeting begins Friday evening at 6 p.m. until 9 p.m. and Saturday morning at 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. Come join us as we hear from different women sharing their journey of how God reached into their lives during difficult times transforming them and is using them for His glory today. Their stories will leave you inspired, encouraged and challenged as you reflect on God's hand on your own life shaping and molding you into His masterpiece. There will be inspiring speakers, a time of worship, plus fun and creative workshops. Don't miss it!

Hotel information: Hotels are located in Conroe, which is about a 20-minute drive from Cut and Shoot. Here are four suggestions and approximate cost before tax. (Prices may vary) Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott, 3010 Interstate 45 North, Conroe, Texas 77303, 936-756-3040 \$89; Holiday Inn Express & Suites, 2240 Stoneside Rd., Conroe, Texas 77303, 936-788-5200-\$116; Hampton Inn & Suites, 2242 Stoneside Rd.-Conroe, Texas 77303, 936-539-1888-\$119; Homewood Suites by Hilton, 3000 Interstate 45 North, Conroe, Texas 77303, 936-703-6000-\$139. To download registration forms go to texaswma.com or on Facebook at Texas WMA. For more information contact: Texas WMA Second Vice President: Glenda Chamberlain, 3913 Bison Rd. Gilmer, Texas 75644, gcham33@yahoo.com, 903-725-6570 or (cell) 903-806-3484. Hope to see you there, you will be blessed.

THEM "OLE" YELLOW WEEDS

I don't know about your neck of the woods, but during Spring and Summer in East Texas there are so many things blooming and buzzing, it is a great time of year. However, with all the good comes some not so good; and one of these is yellow weeds. I am sure they have a real name, but I am also sure I don't know what it is. I just know they are everywhere, they are ugly, they are useless and did I mention they are everywhere? So yesterday I set out to rid a certain area of all those pesky weeds. As I was pulling them a thought came to my mind. These weeds could be a metaphor for sin in my life. First of all, I don't know where the weeds come from, much like the sins I commit. They just pop up: "Did I say that?" Where did that thought come from?"

"When did that become a part of my life?" Also, the weeds are on display for all to see. Passersby will see a field of yellow in the pasture, and probably yard, surrounding our house. But you know what? I will see them in others' pastures too, and I cannot judge them because we suffer from the same issue, those

"ole yellow weeds." Just like sin, everyone has them; and if I am busy trying to devoid my property of them, I do not have time to speculate about what other people should do for theirs.

So, as I set out to pull these weeds, there was another similarity to sin I noticed. Some just pulled right up and some were more stubborn; some I pulled roots and all and tossed to the side. Others broke off at the ground, only to return another day. HMM, just like the sins I have. Some are just pesky and I can quickly identify them and toss them aside, but others run deeper and are harder to let go of because the roots are stronger. These are sins that are more difficult to get rid of in my life. These are the sins I enjoy.

Yes, I said enjoy: the gossip in the breakroom (if it doesn't hurt anyone, just sharing), the little bit too much pride I have when recognized for a job well done. These deep sins are sometimes the ones no one but God and I know about; the sins that rear their ugly "yellow" heads in my mind. These are the sins I have tried to pull up, but just broken off. God knows what they are, I know what they are. You know what, if I really want to get rid of those stubborn ones, I could go get the hoe, dig the roots up and they would be finished.

However, that would mean going to the shed and finding the hoe, remembering where that weed was...just too much effort. So, I break it off and know it will return again for me to deal with. Sound familiar? Unfortunately, it happens in our lives as well as in our yards. So, I pulled those weeds up for about 30 minutes. (well really only about 10, but seemed longer) and you know what? When I returned to that spot today there were more weeds. Some that had just shown their heads today, but some that were there yesterday and I just didn't notice. Just like sin, they keep coming back. That is human nature, which is what Satan uses against us. But we can't give up.

There will come a point in time when those weeds will just get the best of me and I will give up. We can't do that with sin. We have to keep on keeping on. I hope each person reading this has a blessed year and wish lots of luck with the weeds in your yard and the weeds in your heart. I John 1:9 "For if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

Cindy Allen, Texas WMA President

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.



2018-2019 Theme—Women's Mission Association Auxiliary Baptist Missionary Association of America Catch the Vision

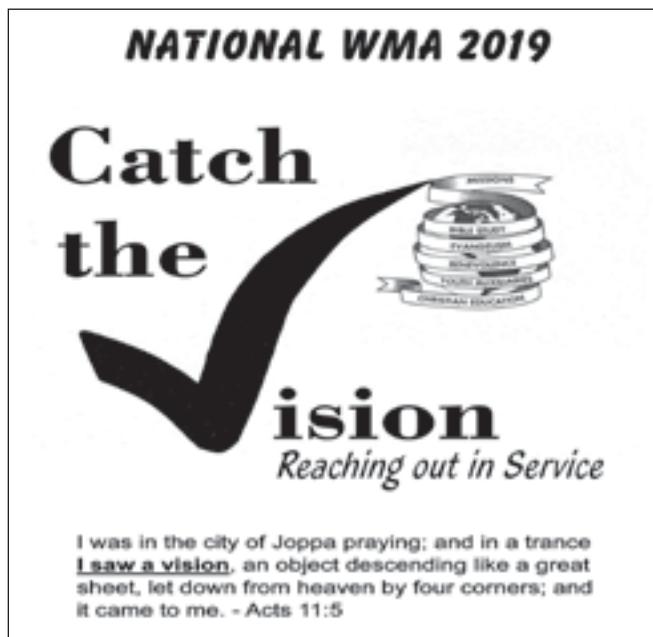
As we go through this year, I want to encourage each lady in each church to “Catch the Vision” of Acts 11:5. Your first thought may be, “What vision should I catch?” When I chose “Catch the Vision” as our theme, it brought to mind our WMA theme song. We need to catch the vision of reaching out in service—the opportunities are endless. As you become willing to catch the vision, God will show you specific ways for you to personally reach out in service.

First, we need to catch the vision of reaching out in benevolence to those who are in need. Since I spent 27 years working at the BMA Children’s Home in Arkansas, the benevolent ministry to our children’s homes has a special place in my heart. There are also needy and homeless families and individuals in our communities, lonely widows with various needs, elderly neighbors in need of our help, encouragement, and love. That’s just a start! There are many opportunities for benevolence through groups such as The Masters Builders, Baptist Medical Missions International, and Evangelistic International Ministries Shepherd’s Bags.

Second, we need to catch the vision for reaching out in witnessing. This one needs to start at home and in our communities as we share the gospel with our families, friends, co-workers and others we come in contact with. Another area we can be involved in that shares the gospel is Lifeword Broadcast Ministries.

Third, we need to catch the vision of reaching out in service to our Sunbeams, GMA’s and other youth groups in our churches. For some of you, this vision may include being a teacher or counselor for these young people. For others, it may simply be setting a Godly example for them, encouraging them, supporting their projects, and praying diligently for them.

Fourth, we need to catch the vision of reaching out in missions to a world that’s lost in sin. This one also begins at home. We need to be involved in the support of local, state, North American, and worldwide missions. I believe each project sponsored by our local, state, and national BMA associations has missions at its core. This includes our state and national Missions departments, our Chaplaincy Department, Baptist Medical Missions International,



our camp ministry, Lifeword, our seminary, our college ministry, and our children’s homes.

Have you caught the vision yet of Reaching out in Service?

- In benevolence
- In witnessing
- To our youth ministries
- In missions

I challenge each of you to truly **Catch the Vision of Reaching out in Service**. Pray about it! Read about it in the Bible! Anticipate what God wants you to do! Take the risk of getting involved! Then, once you catch the vision, reach out because we know that there is a world full of people who will perish if we do not reach out in service to them.

Brenda Hornaday,
2nd Vice President
bhornaday@hughes.net

BMA Texas Missions cont.

CLIFF ROBERTSON— CARPENTER’S HOUSE MISSION—LAKE JACKSON/CLUTE

Our time as a mobile church is coming to an end due to an amazing amount of work done by a handful of volunteers. Pictures will be coming soon! God moved in so many ways... opening doors!

WORK OPPORTUNITY:

Carpenter’s House has possession of their new (old) building and can use help with demo and remodel work. They welcome individuals and teams that want to help. Contact Cliff at drcliffrobertsonjr@gmail.com.



▲ Cliff Robertson

CHRISTIAN MARTINEZ— GRACE HARVEST BAPTIST MISSION, LUBBOCK

The gospel is the power of God for salvation and it is amazing to see how it changes people that are not seeking God but are living for themselves. As a church planter, I’m able to be devoted full time to preach the gospel and equip other to do the same. It is a privilege to see God saving people and changing their lives from self-centeredness to missional living. Thank you for your prayers and support that allows us to be devoted to the planting of a gospel-centered church for God’s glory.



▲ Christian Martinez

PRAYER REQUESTS FROM THE FIELD

-Pray for each of your mission points as they engage in summer outreach.

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

-Pray for Joshua Pickard and his family as they move to Lake Jackson this month.

-Pray for several men and women waiting on immigration documents.

-Pray for Kingsley Nduka and his family as they travel in and out of Nigeria in August.

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

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

PRAISE REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

-I know of fourteen saved this month!

-Crossroads Church of Rowlett, Redeemer’s Love Mission in Houston, The Church at Valley Ranch in New Caney, and Antioch Mission in Georgetown are all hosting new resident interns!

-God continues to answer your prayers on behalf of your mission effort!

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



Back to School and On a Mission for God

What’s Your Journey, What’s Your Part

July 27-28

Rosewood Baptist Church, Gilmer

Free to all girls 3rd grade through high school
register by text 903-790-1385 or
FB Charlotte Harrell Johnson online
deadline July 22

Friday July 27

6:30-7:00 Registration
7:00-7:30 Game time
7:30-8:00 Worship
8:00-8:30 Speaker-Kelly Johnson
8:30-9:00 Ice Cream Sundae Bar
9:00-10:00 Game time
10:00-11:00 Share time-Our Journey can be Rough but Our God is Good
11:00-11:30 Devotional-Jayna Williams
11:30-12:00 Snacks/Visiting
12:00 lights out

Saturday

7:30-8:00 Breakfast
8:00-8:30 Worship and Devotional
8:30-9:00 Game time
9:00-10:30 Break out sessions

Sessions:

Missions- Jayna Williams
Fashion/Makeup- Debi Powers
Friendships- Mary Mauk
Witnessing-Kelly Johnson

10:30 Wrap up-Charlotte Johnson
11:00 Head home

LEAVE IT TO CLEAVER



Random thoughts from Jeremiah

By DR. TONY CLEAVER

JEREMIAH 1:16 I WILL PRONOUNCE MY JUDGMENTS AGAINST THEM...WHEN THEY ABANDONED ME..."

Our money has emblazoned upon it: "In God we trust." Do we really trust in God? We sing: "God Bless America." Do we really mean it? We have a national religion. We have the sacred writings such as the Constitution. We have our sacred heroes such as Washington, Lincoln, or King. We have our sacred holidays such as the Fourth of July. What need do we have of God and His precepts! We have our nationalistic formulations that serve our country as its basis of religion. We have added the mantra of being socially aware, politically correct, and culturally open to our national sacred creed of religion. When the people of a land "burn incense to other gods" and worship the works of their own hands, the God of Heaven responds in a way that is unimaginable to the worshippers of those things made of their own hands.

JEREMIAH 2.13 "THEY HAVE ABANDONED ME, THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATER, AND DUG CISTERNS FOR THEMSELVES--CRACKED CISTERNS THAT CANNOT HOLD WATER."

One evil is enough, but to purposely commit another to make it a double evil is difficult to imagine. Artesian wells, large aquifers, and flowing columns of water are part of the natural process. So it is with the flow of goodness, grace, and the awesomeness of the Lord to those who belong to Him. His people cannot enjoy more than these kind of blessings. They are insurmountably the best because it is a flowing, never ending fountain of living water. Good Reader, have you turned to your own water supply? Is your supply just as dry as a pond with a broken dam baked in the summer sun? Don't commit double evil by turning from Jesus to trust in your own works, goodness, wealth, social position, or family to quench your soul's deep thirst.

JEREMIAH 10.23 "I KNOW, LORD, THAT A PERSON'S WAY OF LIFE IS NOT HIS OWN; NO ONE WHO WALKS DETERMINES HIS OWN STEPS."

The trusting child is at ease in the hand of father. Father guides the child to see pretty balloons, quacking ducks, and treats to delicious ice cream, cookies, and other snacks. The father also feels the child move closer to him at the sound and sight of a snarling dog on the path. Not so

“It is the Father who guides the way to determine the right steps.”

the strong-willed child! The child who is not obedient goes another way and with a different mind. That child forfeits the rights of joy and surprise the father provides along the way. The self-willed child has no respite from alarm at the snarling dog in the path. The child of God is that one who walks with the Father's hand clasping closely. It is the Father who guides the way to determine the right steps.

JEREMIAH 14.14 "THEY ARE PROPHECYING TO YOU A FALSE VISION, WORTHLESS DIVINATION, THE DECEIT OF THEIR OWN MINDS."

It is not a new thing that false prophets speak chatter and blather from their own hearts not from the Lord's mouth. The popular, the mass media, and the televangelist spew forth putrid pronouncements that are from the greed of a Godless heart. If the purveyors of foolishness speak only their own minds, let them be accursed! Certainly the Gospel can be presented over mass media. It is true that the technology of our day can be a blessing of hope to many who hear the Gospel for the first time. The spirit of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, not the jabber and blabber of someone in a flashy suit and an expensive haircut.

JEREMIAH 18.6 "JUST LIKE THE CLAY IN THE POTTER'S HAND, SO ARE YOU IN MY HAND, HOUSE OF ISRAEL."

God Bless America! Long may our land be bright with freedom's holy light. America land of the free and home of

the brave... Good Reader, it is the sculpting of The Potter's hands that we enjoy the beneficence of this land. Divine Providence shaped our history and controls our present. That some Divine Providence will sculpt us tomorrow. Let us trust in God. Let us worship God. May we turn from the worthlessness and valueless of those things we think wonderful and majestic. May we turn away from the transitory to the eternal and timeless. May we turn to the God whose hand shaped us like the potter with the clay. Lord we pray You shape our land to Your glory!

JEREMIAH 33.3 "CALL TO ME AND I WILL ANSWER YOU AND TELL YOU GREAT AND INCOMPREHENSIBLE THINGS YOU DO NOT KNOW."

Only a few years ago one might ask, "What is a smart phone?" Before the 20th century one might ask, "What is a computer?" Even before then it was said, "If God wanted man to fly, He would have given him wings." It would be incomprehensible to my grandfather the common processes I take for granted today. The Lord of the Armies is telling His people even though things are in devastation in Jerusalem with the Babylonians at the gate, He can incomprehensibly change things. Dear Reader, are things in a mess? Is your life in shambles? Has the glad light of day turned only to the gloom and doom of darkness with you? Are you in a place where there is not a way out? The God who created you and who controls all the parts of His creation asks you to call on Him. Time and again in the Scriptures He showed His incomprehensible power to change people, circumstances, economies, even kings. This God asks you to look to Him. He has not failed in the past. He will not fail you in the present. Is there something that is way, way beyond you that you need insight into...then let lips join heart in calling to Him.

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



EVENTS

EAST TEXAS MISSIONS DISTRICT MEETING

DATE: August 28, 2018

PLACE: Centro De Vida Mission,
1013 S. Robertson Avenue, Tyler, Texas

TIME: 6 p.m.

118TH ANNUAL SESSION OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS

DATE: November 5-6, 2018

PLACE: Calvary Baptist Church, Fairfield, Texas

pastor & staff changes

EUGENE CRAWFORD is the minister of music of Little Flock, Lufkin.

LAWTON WATTS is the new pastor of Pine Acres, Gilmer.

PERSONNEL & POSITIONS

AVAILABLE POSITIONS

YOUTH PASTOR—Anthony Drive, Ennis is seeking a bivocational youth pastor. Salary is \$18,000 per year plus home with utilities paid. Must love the Lord and live a godly lifestyle, be a self-starter and have some formal biblical education or plans to begin. Duties include training up our teens (6th-12th grade) in God's Word, arranging and executing all camps, missions and activities, planning Bible studies for Sunday morning and Wednesday evening and being accountable for all money received for youth activities. Send resume to Pastor Matt Walker at mattwalker@adbcennis.org. 7/18

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

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

AVAILABLE MINISTER

SCOTT SCHULLE is available for to serve as an interim pastor or a bivocational pastor within 50 miles from Rusk. Contact him at 903-948-0058 (cell) or 903-795-3886 (home). 7/18

BMMI CHRISTMAS SHOEBOX COLLECTION POINT

Rosewood Baptist Church, 8260 Arrowwood Road in Gilmer, is serving as a collection point in east Texas for Christmas shoeboxes for BMMI's "Operation Everlasting Smiles." Donations must be brought to the church by Saturday, Aug. 25, for delivery to Conway, Arkansas. For more information, please contact Charles or Charlotte Johnson at 903 725-6366, 903 790-1385, or 903 790-1691 or email to cj1972@etex.net.

OBITUARIES

ERMA SUE HODGES

Erma Sue Hodges, 86, peacefully went to be with her Lord and Savior on Friday, June 15, 2018 surrounded by her family. Mrs. Hodges was born on Oct. 7, 1931 in the Horton Community, Delta County, Texas. She married the love of her life, M. D. Hodges, on May 2, 1951 in Commerce, Texas. Mrs. Hodges was a member of the Camille Acres Baptist Church, formerly the Ware Acres Baptist Church, in Longview. Mrs. Hodges was a Christian lady who enjoyed being a help mate to her husband, the late Rev. M. D. Hodges, to churches in Weatherford, Houston, Gilmer, Bridge City and Longview. Mrs. Hodges was very active in the church, the Baptist Missionary Association of America, the Women's Missionary Auxiliary where she held offices on the local, state and national levels, and the Senior Friends and Senior Circle. Mrs. Hodges was a homemaker and it brought her great joy to take care of her husband and two children. She enjoyed spending time with her family, especially her grandchildren and great grandchildren. One of her delights was



to spend time with her friends, Norma Moore, Helen Wynn and LaDonna Moore playing dominos, going out to eat and shopping. Mrs. Hodges is preceded in death by her husband, Rev. M. D. Hodges; parents, Dan Jacob and Willie Clayton Smith; and sisters, Bythia Abbott and Fronia Lee Roberts. Mrs. Hodges is survived by her daughter, Deborah Jeter and husband, Bob, of Longview, Texas; son, Danny Hodges and wife, Vickie, of Fort Worth, Texas; grandchildren, Tammy Kessler and husband, Alan, of Union Grove, Texas; Rhonda Jeter and Kimmy Leake of Longview, Texas; Danyelle Hodges of Huntsville, Texas; Rylie Hodges of Mansfield, Texas; Alyssa Hoover of Fort Worth, Texas; Kelcie Breshears of Mansfield, Texas, and Whitney Beatty of Burleson, Texas; great grandchildren, John D. "J.D." Kessler of Union Grove, Texas; Joshua Kessler of Union Grove, Texas; Jake Kessler of Union Grove, Texas; Amanda Kessler Slaydon and husband, Adam, of White Oak, Texas; and numerous nieces and nephews. She is also survived by her church family at the Camille Acres Baptist Church. Donations in her memory may be made to the Camille Acres Baptist Church Building and Grounds Fund. A funeral service was at the Chapel of Rader Funeral Home in Longview on June 22, 2018.

CHURCH REVIEW

June 17, 2018

CHURCH	SS	WORSHIP	ADDITIONS
Anthony Drive, Ennis	35	128	
First, Omen	27	85	2 by baptism, 3 by letter
First, Palmer	39	48	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	21	38	
Jackson, Joaquin	63	131	
Little Flock, Lufkin	50	100	
Little Mound, Big Sandy	35	52	2 by letter
New Harmony, Tyler	279	370	
New Hope, Mineola	58	135	
Olde Tyme, White Oak		49	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	38	72	2 by baptism, 3 by letter
Pine Brook, Tyler	25	55	
Rosewood, Gilmer	102	207	
Sand Flat, Grand Saline	39	78	
Simmons Hill, Diana	10	26	
Yellowpine Macedonia, Hemphill	18	24	

June 24, 2018

CHURCH	SS	WORSHIP	ADDITIONS
First, Palmer	63	85	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	27	45	
Jackson, Joaquin	76	140	
Little Flock, Lufkin	75	100	
New Harmony, Tyler	276	373	
New Hope, Mineola	74	154	2 by baptism, 6 by letter
Olde Tyme, White Oak		46	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	38	52	1 by baptism, 2 by letter
Rosewood, Gilmer		251	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	29	49	1 by letter
Simmons Hill, Diana	16	22	
Yellowpine Macedonia, Hemphill	15	19	

July 1, 2018

CHURCH	SS	WORSHIP	ADDITIONS
First, Omen		64	
First, Palmer	56	63	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	24	43	
Jackson, Joaquin	72	105	
Little Flock, Lufkin		75	
Little Mound, Big Sandy	35	50	
New Harmony, Tyler	296	461	
New Hope, Mineola	62	124	
Olde Tyme, White Oak		70	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	44	64	
Pine Brook, Tyler	23	44	
Rosewood, Gilmer	93	186	
Sand Flat, Grand Saline	38	61	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	22	38	
Simmons Hill, Diana	14	27	
Yellowpine Macedonia, Hemphill	18	21	

July 17, 2018

CHURCH	SS	WORSHIP	ADDITIONS
First, Palmer	47	61	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	21	43	
Jackson, Joaquin	69	112	1 by statement
Little Flock, Lufkin	100	105	
Olde Tyme, White Oak		44	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	41	62	
Pine Brook, Tyler	30	59	
Rosewood, Gilmer	132	212	
Sand Flat, Grand Saline	32	53	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	25	35	
Simmons Hill, Diana	20	25	
Yellowpine Macedonia, Hemphill	16	28	

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

The Lord is my keeper

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: August 5, 2018

TEXT: Psalm 121

This is one of the most comforting of the Psalms.

Verse 1—The hills which are in reference to Jerusalem, Mount Zion and Mount Moriah. The sacredness of the hills is the fact it represents God's presence. Abraham witnessed the provision of Holy God on Moriah when he was obedient in offering Isaac. Genesis 22:1-19. The Tribe of Judah found themselves in a strange land (Psalm 137). They were captive of Babylon, and they had lost their song. They wept when they thought of Zion—where they had experienced God's presence.

Verse 2—Where is one to seek help? Obviously from one Who has all the resources, all knowledge and all power. One who made the heavens and earth.

Verse 3-4—His watch care is constant — 24:7. He enables you to not slip and fall; and He never sleeps, thus keeping His eye on us always. Matthew 6:25-26

Verse 5—He will shade you upon your right hand — the hand not carrying a shield

Verse 6-7-8—He shields us from the heat of the sun, forces of evil, and He guards our footsteps.

Blueprints for building a home

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: August 12, 2018

TEXT: Psalm 127

Verse 1—Matthew vividly contrasts the house built by a wise man and one built by a foolish man. Remember the song in Sunday school as a child? If one refuses to build their lives upon the Solid Rock, it will not stand.

Verse 2—describes the futility, the emptiness of frantically, anxiously working from early in the morning until late at night as though your very existence depends on it. A purposeful, meaningful life is one which is yielded to God, who gives rest to His children. Solomon finally learned the futility of placing all his emphasis and cares on the things “under the sun.” Ecc. 7:15

Verse 3—In David's day, arrows were rough, primitive sticks, which had to be shaped and honed. Else they would be of little use. When we nurture and mold children into Godly men and women. They will not depart from that Godly teaching and bring shame upon him.

Children are born to a young man. Scripture sanctions early marriages. How many times have we heard a grandparent say, “Now I know why God gave children to young parents.”

Never let a day pass without thanking God for giving you children. They bring joy to life. verse 5

Out of the depths

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: August 19, 2018

TEXT: Psalm 130

We see in verses 1-3 the despair of being in the depths of guilt because of sin. The Lord will not hear the prayers of one who regards iniquity (Psalm 66:18) but he does receive, with compassion, the pleas of one with a broken heart. (Psalm 34:18)

Verse 4—assures us of a forgiving heart from a compassionate God, which results in a renewed reverential awe in our Holy God.

Verse 5—The one seeking God's forgiveness is willing to wait, expectantly. While he is waiting, he places his trust in the Word of God, and relies only on the Word for solace, and victory over sin.

Verse 6—What is significant about a watchman waiting for sun up. Possibly because the darkness shielded evil deeds or attacks. The sun brings comfort and reassurance that a new day has dawned. Those who wait patiently on the Lord will be rewarded. Psalm 37:7. Isaiah 40:31 “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Verse 7-8—gives Israel a great promise. Though they rebelled at His leadership in the wilderness—though they provoked Him to wrath and gave up their privilege of seeing the Promise Land, God has always and shall always be faithful to the covenant He made with Abraham.

Our all mighty God

By PAUL GAUNTT

TEXT: Psalm 139

DATE: August 26, 2018

Job worded it well when he said, “I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.” Job 42:2

God is absolutely wonderful! In order to truly grasp the explanation of this Psalm concerning God's wondrous works and sovereignty, we must break it down into sections. I see in it, five sections.

1. GOD HAS PERFECT KNOWLEDGE OF YOU. VERSES 1-6

He knows all about you, and completely follows you from sun up to sundown. It matters not how far you might wander from His presence, He knows perfectly, the details of your every daily activity and your most intimate thoughts and passions.

He knows your path, and orders it for you (37:23) You cannot speak without His knowing perfectly well, what you are going to say before it even comes to your mind.

He is all around you—He has literally hemmed you in. He has His hand on you. His omniscience is unfathomable. It is too high for any earthling to understand, or to attain. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” Romans 11:33

2. GOD'S PRESENCE CANNOT BE ESCAPED. VERSES 7-12

You cannot run from Him. His view of you spans from the

Heavens to Sheol—from the east to the west (infinite distance)

You cannot escape His grasp. The darkness cannot impair His view of you.

3. GOD DESIGNED YOU. VERSES 13-16

He created your inward parts. He knitted you while you were inside your mother's womb. You were just as much a complete human being as an embryo as you are today. God's “planned parenthood” is perfectly conceived in His sovereign will. The devil loves nothing better than to seek to disrupt that process. While it may be within the devil's reach, and agenda to mutilate a fetus, no force between heaven and hell can hinder that precious little baby boy or girl from going immediately into the presence of Jesus. 2 Samuel 12:23.

He did not just make you, but He instilled awesomeness in you, which no other person, educational system or entity can do. No Downs syndrome, nor any other physical malady can stop God from His magnificent work in a precious life. Helen Kellar is a case in point—born blind and deaf—she became one of the greatest communicators of modern history.

While you were in that embryonic stage of life, His plan for you was established. He saw perfectly, your potential, your character traits, your personality, and even your stumblings, and loves you with an intimate, infinite, indescribable love.

4. GOD HAS A PERFECT, WARM, DIVINE REGARD FOR YOU VERSES 17-18

God's thoughts toward you are innumerable, constant, and precious.

5. DAVID'S IMPRECATORY PRAYER. VERSES 19-24

The Psalms are replete with imprecatory prayers. (calling down God's judgement upon the wicked)

In this prayer is the expression of utter abhorrence for works of evil, and for the people of wickedness that seek to come against a Holy God.

At the same time, David also called for God's complete investigation and examination of his own heart. “Blot out the iniquity—the wicked ways.” Such is the petition of one whose heart is right with God.

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

