

Baptist Progress

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INSIDE



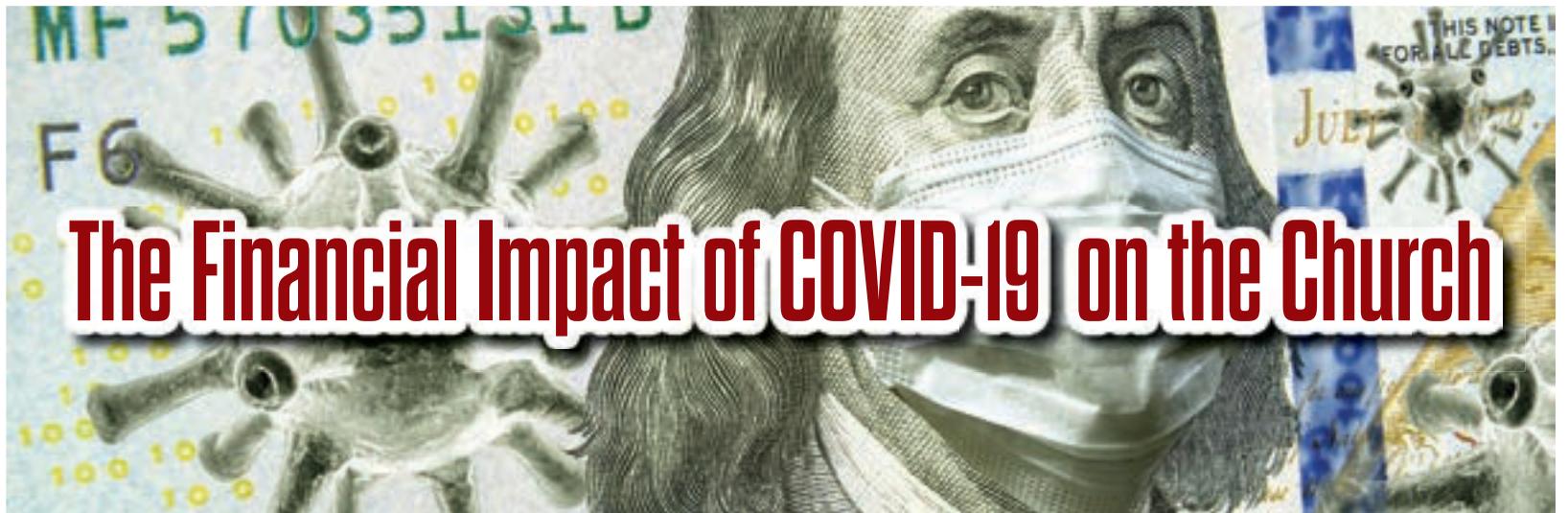
PAGE 5
JACKSONVILLE COLLEGE



PAGE 8
BMA TEXAS MISSIONS



PAGE 9
BMA MISSIONS



The Financial Impact of COVID-19 on the Church

By **DR. STEVE CRAWLEY**

Ministers Resource Services Executive Director

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our lives in no small way. These changes are pervasively reaching into most every area of life, but the most quantifiable of the changes obviously relate to our finances. As church members face financial challenges, churches will certainly be impacted.

How might leaders address these inherent financial challenges their congregations are and will be facing due to COVID-19?

Bill Wilson, director of Center for Healthy Churches, estimates that as many as one third of churches across the United States may close within the next five years and that there will be a 33 percent decline in giving this year. Part of the reason for this drop is obviously related to a general prediction that post-pandemic church attendance is expected to drop, particularly among those who are occasional attendees.

While Wilson's estimate is hopefully high, a decrease in giving is most likely, as we are experiencing first hand at BMA America's national level.

While the current worldwide pandemic presents a formidable financial challenge, it also presents an opportunity for churches to rethink their overall strategy for reaching and teaching people—financially and otherwise. To thrive and not merely survive in this environment will likely require we are intentional in our leadership approach. Here are four suggestions to consider in response to the looming financial challenges we may face:

Preach and Teach Financial Stewardship. Empirical data provides a clear correlation between teaching about biblical finance and higher giving levels. David King, director of Lake Institute on Faith & Giving (part of the prestigious Indiana

University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy), shares that churches that regularly discuss the theological importance of giving through sermons, money management classes, and stewardship training have significantly higher levels of giving.

As an example, a recent research project revealed that just 12 percent of the 1,200 churches surveyed reported that they addressed financial matters on a regular basis; yet of those that did, 73 percent reported increases in giving.

Implement Alternative Methods of Giving. When conducting my dissertation research in 2013-14, I found that just 6 percent of churches affiliated with Baptist Missionary Association of America offered electronic giving options. Yet much has changed over the past six years, particularly with the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Churches with electronic giving options in place when the pandemic hit were better poised to maintain cash flow. It might be wise to consider an on-going option for such giving.

As a practical measure, Phillip Martin of The Church Network suggests that churches send out regular emails on Saturday evenings or Sunday mornings to prompt and remind members to give. Further, to overcome the stigma of on-line giving and to aid in the act of worship when members do return, churches may consider providing giving cards to place in the offering plate for those with electronic drafts containing a simple statement: "I gave online."

Be Less Focused on Physical Assets. We know that the church is not a building, but our practices in the U.S. might suggest otherwise. Billions of dollars are tied up in physical assets that carry significant overhead costs.

These costly assets are often used only a small portion of the week.

With tighter financial margins likely, churches will be forced to become better stewards of their brick and mortar. This may mean cooperating with another congregation in the use of the facilities, or possibly leasing a portion of the property to generate income.

Set Aside Sufficient Cash Reserves. Bill Wilson, director for Center for Healthy Churches, claims that based on his years of experiencing in working with churches, approximately 30% of congregations operate with little to no cash reserves. The past two months provide a good example of why it is important to set aside an emergency fund for lean times.

Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability suggests churches adopt policies requiring, at a minimum, reserves adequate to cover accrued designated gifts and debt service reserves.

Moreover, it is advisable to be intentional in building a cash reserve by incorporating a line item into the church's annual budget; otherwise, it is not likely to happen. A general rule of thumb is to aim for 90 days of cash on hand to cover your operating costs.

In conclusion, in the midst of the financial challenges facing churches across the world, we recognize God as our Sovereign Lord and know that he is in control. The earth and everything in it belongs to the Lord, and His Word instructs us to be good stewards of his assets. May God use the challenges of the current pandemic to lead us to become more effective in the use of his resources, in the fulfillment of the Great Commandment and in carrying out his Great Commission.



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MAKING PROGRESS

Keep the main thing the main thing

By **JERRY FULTON**

With the COVID-19 Pandemic, a crashing economy, protests, riots and looting, our world has seemed to be in chaos over the last several weeks. But make no mistake, God is still in control. Nothing that has happened has caught Him by surprise. So how do we respond to the happenings in our world?

I can assure you that rage is not the answer. Politics is not the answer. Hateful tweets on Twitter are not the answer. Disrespectful posts and memes on Facebook that make fun of politicians and those with opposite viewpoints are not the answer.

A personal relationship with Jesus Christ has always been and always will be the answer.

Until the hearts of men, women, boys and girls are right with God, nothing else is going to have any lasting effect on our society.

Neither Donald Trump or Joe Biden can fix what is wrong with America. Only Jesus can do that. As Christians, our number one job is not to protest, not to register people to vote and not to express our personal opinions, while all of those things might be beneficial to some degree.

Our number one task is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with a lost and dying world.

Let's do what we are called to do and stop being coerced by the media (liberal and conservative) to take our eyes off of what really matters. Let's keep the main thing the main thing.

JESUS IS THE ANSWER!



▲ Jerry Fulton

Remember our Anniversary Offering, \$108 for 108 Years of Ministry

Baptist Progress was established as the official publication of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas in 1912. The purpose of *Baptist Progress* is to promote interest in missions, evangelism, benevolence and Christian education among the churches of the BMA of Texas.

Later this year, *Baptist Progress*, will celebrate 108 years of ministry. Each year, during the month of June, we humbly request a special anniversary offering of **\$108 for 108 years of ministry** from churches, classes, groups and individuals. We understand with the COVID-19 Pandemic that things might be different for you this

year. If you cannot give, we certainly understand. However, if you can give, we will deeply appreciate your offering to help us meet our budgetary needs.

The goal of our anniversary offering is to raise **\$10,000** to meet our budget for the year. A list of those who give will be published in a future issue of *Baptist Progress*. Offerings may be mailed to:

Baptist Progress
P.O. Box 2085
Waxahachie, Texas 75168

More high school graduates

The following list of graduates were not included on the list published in our last issue. Congratulations to these graduates!

FIRST, BLOOMING GROVE

Michael Adkins
Mykayla Adkins
Kaleb Ferguson
Madison Peterson
Jessica Sykes
Joe Velasquez

FRIENDSHIP, MESQUITE

Chris Villanueva

Helping Christ build His church

By PAUL GAUNTT

How Christ must grieve when He sees His children try, in the energy of the flesh, to build His church. My face is almost flushed with embarrassment right now when I think of all the silly, secular-driven, carnival-like, pathetic efforts we have attempted through the years, to build the church, thinking all the while that we were doing Him a huge favor.

During the period of time that I call the “pre-church growth years,” church attendance campaigns evolved and became the rage. Much like the modern-day vitamin, diet, wrinkle-erasing and enhancement commercials we are bombarded with on TV, there were many parachurch organizations that developed materials and tools, made available to churches, to boost attendance. Some campaigns were products of innovative pastors and educational directors who developed their own in-house campaigns.

A favorite was “All Sheep in the Fold” day. We ordered hundreds of cardboard sheep—black on one side, and white on the other. Every Sunday school member would inscribe their names on a sheep. They were all strung across the front of the auditorium, and when the big day came, we would see how many white sheep and black sheep we had.

Another was the Ezurpyboob campaign. Ezurpyboob was a very unsightly manikin that was assigned to the class that had the lowest attendance percentage on a given Sunday. The disgusting visitor would occupy a prominent place in the class during the Sunday school lesson until another class reported a more abysmal record. The campaign may last a month or longer. These silly little campaigns were sometimes hailed a success—that is, until the Sunday it was over and attendance went back to the usual—or even lower.

But I suppose the most outrageous campaign I ever heard of was “Be One of the Bunch.” This was especially big in the bus ministry. A helicopter landed on the church parking lot and a man dressed in a gorilla costume emerged, carrying a huge bunch of bananas. Each child received a banana, and was instructed to gather in a huddle, and hold their bananas together for a photo, displaying the fact they were being one of the bunch.

Other such campaigns included T-shirt Sunday, giant comb Sunday, donut and juice Sunday, yo yo Sunday, Top Sunday and any and all trinkets that could be purchased for next to nothing, were incorporated into special attendance campaigns - all for the purpose of showing that huge number on the attendance board.

The church growth era which gained popularity in the 1980s and 1990s, gave us “Side door evangelism,” where churches developed venues, including sports teams, potty training seminars, prayer breakfasts, all with the objective of exposing the unchurched to church people in a non-threatening environment.

When we were at Colonial, Lubbock in the late 1970s, a few young couples just decided to meet at the church and play volleyball. They gathered in our half-court gym building, brought soft drinks and cookies and played volleyball on a Friday night until almost midnight. The fellowship then became an every-other-Friday night

activity, and before long, older couples came and brought their dominoes. I recall that our church had a good harvest of young families to join as a direct result of this volleyball fellowship, which just inadvertently happened.

Church growth proponents, in their research, discovered the greatest building investment a church could make was to have a large foyer—at least 25 percent the size of the worship center. They reasoned that the 10 minutes before and after worship was vital to outreach because these were times when people interacted and relationships were developed. Some churches even installed coffee bars adjacent to the foyer to further enhance the relation-building.

Probably the most effective (and in my opinion, closest to the Great Commission) was what was known as F.R.A.N. Day the culmination of an effort for the membership to invite their friends, relatives, associates at work and neighbors, to the house of God. A vital part of reaching the lost is centered around relation-building. It also brought the realization to light that the pastor, donning his coat and tie and knocking on doors yielded virtually no church growth results. People are more likely to run and hide when a pastor knocks on the door, but the people in the congregation who have developed friendships and relationships with unchurched and lost in the workforce and community, will have much better results winning people for Christ.

All of this being said, we must always remember that it is Christ Who builds His church. I can't do it—you can't do it—we are not called, nor are we responsible for doing it. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus, in essence, told Peter, “You are just a little tiny pebble (petros) but upon this Rock (Petra—Christ, the Foundational Stone) I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

I am thankful Christ hasn't placed that responsibility on me. I have tried, in the flesh, to build Christ's church. Looking back, I think some of the effort was driven by ego—or else by compulsion because of being pastor of a people who, themselves, were driven by productivity and success in the workforce, and that philosophy seemed to translate into the church organization. Perhaps we occasionally saw some temporary upticks in attendance but our efforts to build Christ's church is not only unsuccessful, but it's unsustainable.

Not so with Christ's church building campaign. His results are eternal. Ephesians 3:20-21 says, “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worth in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

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.



Our Lord—Our Rock—Our Redeemer In Him we will trust!

It was not a big “to do” as in a party with lots of folks, games and entertainment. But in my heart, it was a celebration. We were together enjoying a delicious meal with our son's sweet family (social distancing of course) when all I could think about was how grateful I was for this moment. Even though I missed the hugs and kisses, our little family was together, everyone was well and that was what mattered.

That was May. Now it's June and life just got harder. Without warning, pictures of death and destruction flashed across our television screens, leaving a fresh wave of sorrow, anguish and pain in its strewn path. Chaos and, in some cases, anarchy appeared to reign and I wondered if evil might win.

Reflecting back to a different time and place where another group of folks faced even harsher treatment gave me a new perspective. Just one small piece of that story was enough! The reminder that a tyrannical King of Egypt ordered every newborn Hebrew boy to be thrown into the Nile River and I was done with the whining! Read the rest of the story in the book of Exodus and you'll see that relief for the Israelites was a long time coming but Moses finally arrived and this massive group of two to three million Jews was released and headed for the Promised Land.

Nothing about this “deliverance” was easy. Even after they walked out of Egypt a free people, obstacles loomed large in their path. On occasion it seemed like they might not survive. It was an up and down struggle with good days of obedience and bad days of rebellion. How quickly they forgot that God had opened the Red Sea and they walked away on dry ground—not to mention the other magnificent miracles He had performed! Sound familiar? Is it possible that we have the same DNA ‘cause that's how we are today. How easily we commit! How quickly we forget!

Revisiting this passage has been a strong reminder of God's power and promises for all of His children. Remember these true stories: Paul's prison shackles. David's Goliath. Daniel's lions den. God was with each of them and He is standing watch for us today. No matter what we go through, including the valley of the shadow of death, He is there. And a promise!

*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through the fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.*

*For I am the LORD your God . . . (Isaiah 43:2-3a) ESV
He sees our problems, He feels our pain. He hears our petitions.
And He keeps His promises because that's who He is: Our Lord.
Our Redeemer. Our Deliverer. In Him we will trust!*

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



Church visitation: It wasn't broke, so why did we fix it?

By **JORDAN TEW**
Baptist Publishing House

Some of you may remember when churches would make a priority of visiting their members or prospective members. Every church has people in it who are sick, shut-in, or have not been attending worship regularly. In days past, it was the norm for a group from the church to visit these people to check on them, pray with them and encourage them in their walk with the Lord. However, in the last couple of decades, many churches have simply stopped doing this. Why? The Scriptures speak clearly of our need to watch over one another. Remember these words: *“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching”* (Hebrews 10:24-25).

There is, perhaps, no better avenue for a visitation ministry than the Sunday school class or Bible study group.

CONSIDER THIS QUARTERLY VISITATION MINISTRY PLAN:

On the first Sunday of each new quarter, take a look around your Sunday School class or small group, and determine who is not there. Put them on a list.

Round up some people from your class or group and plan to go visit them the next Saturday.

When you visit them, bring them their Sunday School book. This does three things:

It gives you a good reason to visit them, helping them not to feel uncomfortable when you arrive.

It gives you an opportunity to bless them. The sick and shut-in would love to be at church, but simply cannot be there. Those who have been unfaithful in church attendance will appreciate not being forgotten about or feeling a cold shoulder. They will be glad they still matter to you.

It opens doors to Gospel ministry. You will have opportunities to not only share the Gospel with the people you visit, but you will be able to demonstrate the Gospel to the people you visit by showing God's love for them.

Invite them to come with you to church Sunday morning. You may even consider taking them to lunch afterward.

Some things are timeless like showing love, compassion, and concern for others. Visitation ministry never broke, so why did we “fix it?” Any church can maintain a quarterly visitation ministry. Try it and let us know how it goes. If you don't have enough literature to distribute, you can order more on our website, www.baptistpublishinghouse.com. We look forward to hearing from you! Contact us at baptistpublishing@gmail.com or at P.O. Box 279 Jacksonville, Texas 75766.

Daniel Springs Baptist Camp offers Daniel Springs in a Box option for your church groups, families and individuals



By **JASON PREWITT**

After much prayer and thoughtful deliberation, Daniel Springs Baptist Camp will not be open for our regular summer camp schedule for 2020. We believe the health and safety of our FAMILY (our campers, adult sponsors, staffers and the members of our local community) are of great importance. One of the many things we love about camp at Daniel Springs is how we have campers, sponsors and staff from 10 to over 500 miles away that travel each summer to spend a week together to retreat and be refreshed by God.

With the blessing of family from all over, the health of our family and the adherence to regulations and guidelines set by the Texas governor and CDC becomes immensely challenging to safeguard and manage. Many facets were considered during this process as we poured over the recommended guidelines. In truth, some of the aspects we love most about camp would have to be done away with for us to gather.

Camp is for Bible study, worship, swimming, recreation, it's meeting new friends and taking every opportunity to build those relationships. Wearing masks, social distancing and limited interactions with people from outside your group are foreign concepts to camp. Camp is for growing together in Christ's love! On top of the relational side, our staff would be strained with new guidelines that include cleaning, food preparation and health screening.

We know that none of what has happened over the last few months is a surprise to the Lord. Even through this, He has a plan and many opportunities for the church to be on mission. We, personally, are all very disappointed about having to make this decision. The camp is too quiet! We take our mission of being an extension of the church very seriously

and consider it a blessing to partner with you in ministry. At this time, we believe this is the very best decision we can make to serve the church, you and your ministry.

We are excited to announce an amazing resource we are working on called Daniel Springs in a Box. This could be an option for your groups, families and individuals to experience some of the things we love about camp. There will be digital resources, like Bible leaders teaching the lessons, recreation ideas and instructional videos and also material you can order such as T-Shirts and camp merchandise. Keep watching our social media sites or go to www.DanielSpringsCamp.com for updates on Daniel Springs in a Box resources and details.

We are also excited to say that even though we cannot host big groups we have the option to host retreats for groups and families. If you would like to discuss options, feel free to contact us.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the camp at 903-685-2433 or email jason@danielspringscamp.com. We know and believe that God moves in great and mighty ways. We are praying for your church and the ministry He has placed you in and if we can be of any help please let us know.

Jason Prewitt is the director of Daniel Springs Baptist Camp. Contact him at P.O. Box 310, Gary, Texas 75643, 903-685-2433 or info@danielspringscamp.com. For more information, visit danielspringscamp.com.



Christmas Shoebox Info 2020

By **DR. RALPH IZARD**

Baptist Medical Missions International Director

Friends, we need your help! Your church is invited to partner with us to provide Everlasting Smile Christmas Shoeboxes to missionaries in Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama and Nicaragua. These shoeboxes are a great tool to help our missionaries meet and build relationships with people. Many people will come to a service that is providing a “gift from the States” that would otherwise not come to a service.

This year, more than ever, we are excited to send the boxes. This will provide a great opportunity for our missionaries to connect and reconnect after a long time of quarantine. Many people in these countries have lost jobs, money is tight and that means they don't have much food. The boxes will bring much joy to parents and children.

Packing a shoebox is a great way to help open

doors to spread the gospel to people who may otherwise never attend a service. It seems like a simple thing for us, but to our missionaries, it is a vital tool for ministry.

The smile that a child finds when opening a shoebox is often for a moment, but the love of Jesus that they find through this ministry is the Everlasting Smiles.

For more information, visit bmamission.org/christmas-shoeboxes. We look forward to working with you to provide Everlasting Smiles.



Waiting

By **DR. MIKE SMITH**

President of Jacksonville College

In June of 1873, Dwight L. Moody and his new song leader, Ira Sankey, arrived in England with their families to start evangelistic services. They had an invitation from three businessmen; if they would come to England, their way and expenses would be paid for them. When they arrived, they discovered that two of the men had died and the third had no memory of making a promise. It seemed that the door had been closed to them, and Moody told Sankey that if God did not open a door, they would return to America. So, they waited. A man who had started the YMCA in York invited Moody to visit him. They prayed and decided to start preaching in local churches that Sunday. Moody started in the church where F.B. Myer was pastor. They became friends and prayed often for England. Over the next two years, two and a half million people heard Moody preach, and England experienced one of her greatest revivals.

Waiting is hard. During this COVID-19 pandemic, waiting has been hard for me. I have been waiting to see when we can have worship services together again, waiting to see if we can start classes on campus in the fall, and waiting to see if we can compete in sports this fall. I pray that we are not required to wait much longer.

Enrollment in our summer courses has been strong, and we plan to open the campus in the fall for face-to-face classes and sports. So, tell everyone that there is time to apply to Jacksonville College. We are open for business.

The last week of May was as hard of a week emotionally as I have encountered. Dr. Blanton Feaster, Jacksonville College Vice

President of Executive Affairs, moved to Dallas Baptist University. Blanton was not just a colleague that I depended on but a personal friend and prayer warrior. He is missed.

On Monday, May 25, Bennie Lybrand, whose wife Carole is a Jacksonville College Trustee, died suddenly. I had gotten close to Bennie. He was very generous. He was at the College on Friday, helping with a major project, and we had a good visit. As his interim pastor at New Harmony Baptist Church in Tyler, I visited with him on Sunday. Then on Monday, after he and Carol watched Vanna turn those letters on "Wheel of Fortune," Bennie exchanged this life for the next. His life was a blessing to many, and he will be missed.

Sunday, May 31, Susan and I and Jan Brazier attended the funeral of Deloris Johnson, wife of Jacksonville College's All-American basketball wonder, Chief Herbert Johnson of the Coushatta Indian Reservation between Livingston and Woodville. Delores will be missed.

Saturday, June 6, the funeral for Kenneth Cline, Trustee for Jacksonville College, was held at the Lindale High School. Kenneth and his pastor at Red Springs Baptist Church were very instrumental in providing Jacksonville College with LED lighting throughout our buildings. He will be missed.

These departures leave a tremendous vacuum in faithful givers and servants to Jacksonville College. Yes, I am sad for these were my friends. Yet I am waiting to see whom God raises up to fill the gap they have left. "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord" (Psalm 27:14).

Upcoming Events

SUMMER 2 TERM

Reduced tuition rates and no fees

July 6-July 39

FALL 2020

Classes begin August 12

For more information, contact Admissions at admissions@jacksonville-college.edu, (903) 586-7110



Expanded *mission:world* Magazine goes digital

One of the great desires of BMA Missions is to maintain a close and open relationship with the churches we serve. On a daily basis, Missions leadership is doing everything possible to communicate with our local pastors and churches. Through state papers, emails, phone calls, text messaging, social media and printed periodicals, BMA Missions has a deep commitment to keeping pastors and church members connected with the missionaries who serve them. One of the communication tools that BMA Missions has produced for over 50 years has been *mission:world* magazine.

The publication has been an evolving piece of literature since its inception. In the early days of BMA Missions the magazine was known as the *Gleaner*. Our association of churches only had a few missionary families on the field and their stories and adventures were featured monthly in the magazine. As BMA Missions grew in its scope around the world and more missionaries were sent to serve, the magazine grew as well.

Eventually *mission:world* moved to a bi-monthly publication, and it became impossible to feature every missionary in every edition of the magazine. And along with the growth of the magazine came an increased cost of production. Keeping up with a changing world as more and more people received

their news and information online, BMA Missions moved to producing an online version of the magazine as well.

Today *mission:world* has become much more than just a magazine. There is a monthly video companion to the printed version of the magazine called *mission:world.TV*. There is a website dedicated solely to the magazine and all its missions content: missionworldmag.com. And now BMA Missions is moving to make *mission:world* even more accessible to everyone.

Today anyone who wants to follow what God is doing through the almost 600 missionary families serving BMA Missions will be able to do so in a variety of different ways. "I'm excited about the opportunity to speak more often and to give more timely reports to our churches about what God is doing around the world," said BMA Missions Executive Director Dr. John David Smith. "Expanding *mission:world* will allow it to become much more than a bi-monthly magazine. It will be a missionary news outlet."

Beginning July 1, expect to see *mission:world* missionary content in many different forms. The magazine will continue to be produced in digital form and will be emailed free of charge to everyone who wants it. The digital version will include more *mission:world* video reports straight from the mission field. Social media reports will also be available for those who live on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

This will allow BMA Missions to speak to a whole new audience. Continued direct reporting via video from BMA Executive Director Dr. John David Smith and his team will be coming directly to BMA church members via their inbox and on social media platforms. All of this is an effort to keep our churches better informed about their missionaries serving around the world.



The printed version of *mission:world* will be discontinued with the May/June edition, allowing the \$80,000 annual expense of printing and mailing the magazine to be redirected to our missionaries and their fields.

To subscribe to *mission:world* for free and receive the magazine directly to your inbox, go to www.missionworldmag.com. For up-to-date and live broadcasts from BMA missionaries around the world, like our BMA Missions Facebook/Instagram and Twitter accounts.



CHURCH HEALTH

The church has left the building

By **LARRY BARKER**

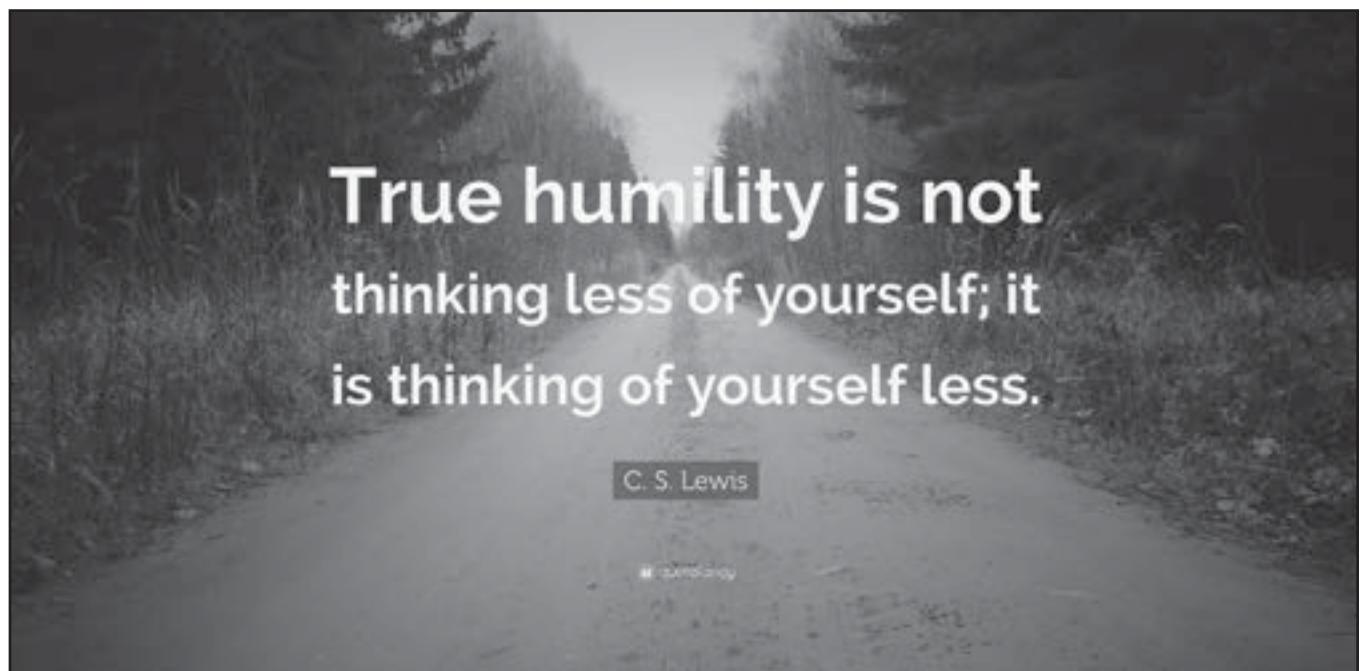
When you think of what is required to be a leader what qualities do you place on your list? What are your top five? Many mention capabilities (skill sets), charisma (likeability), chemistry (ability to get along), and character (morals and ethics). Unfortunately, even in some parts of the church world, it seems that character can sometimes be overlooked for capabilities (what the leader can accomplish) and charisma (who they can convince and win over). Have some allowed flashy and glitzy to become more important than Godly and faithful?

Through the years I have always gravitated towards two qualities when looking for staff, church planters, and missionaries: loyalty and being teachable. When looking at past behavior there must be a consistent pattern of faithfulness to the Lord, family, church, work and to their friends. Can a pattern of and a commitment to life-long learning also be seen? Have they arrived and figured it out or are they on a journey of growing in the Lord while also seeking to learn from others around them? Are they ready to listen to those who have gone before them?

Both of these qualities have a fundamental foundation in what Jesus emphasized as the No. 1 quality of being a leader, humility. In Mark 9 we have one of the accounts where the disciples were arguing over who was the greatest, sound familiar? In verse 35 we read, “Sitting down, He called the Twelve and said to them, “If anyone wants to be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.” That does not sound like the world’s Leadership 101 at all does it? Jesus emphasizes this again in Luke 22 telling them to not desire domination over others as the Gentiles did.

Pride is insidious because it is always ready to trip you up, trap you, and trick you into thinking you are the only one doing it right. If you have a large church you must be doing it right and others would be wise to do what you are doing. If you have a small church then you begin to believe that you are the only one preaching the truth correctly and that has to be why you are small. Carey Nieuwhof says that pride is like a weed because it does not need any help in growing and it is always there ready to show its ugly head.

Pride has a way of showing up and taking over without any effort at all. Solomon said that pride comes before destruction. Pride causes you to believe that you are always being overlooked, unappreciated, and unnoticed. Pride is that little voice inside your head asking, “Why am I not getting the recognition I deserve?” When some recognition does come your way it is pride that says, “Finally people are beginning to notice just how valuable I really



am!” Solomon also said, “Better to be lowly of spirit with the humble than to divide the plunder with the proud.”

In John 13 Jesus gives the perfect example of humble leadership by washing the disciples feet. Then in verse 15 He says, “For I have given you an example that you also should do just as I have done for you.” Servant leadership is driven out of a character of true humility. Humility desires our participation not our applause. It is a call to help and assist by dedicating our lives to serving others. Jesus was willing to do what, normally, nobody else wanted to do. He made certain that they understood that they were to follow His example.

Humility is the ability to take your eyes off of you and focus on others. When you remain humble the applause of others will not corrupt you nor will the criticism of others crush you. It enables you to avoid comparison to other preachers and ministries. Humility does not allow envy and jealousy to raise its ugly head in your heart. It keeps you from being driven by strategy and planning while your personal intimacy with Christ suffers. Humility is what causes you to be more concerned about what He thinks than being motivated by pleasing people.

Here is a good test. Does your ministry draw attention to you or to Christ? Francis Chan wrote, “For many of us, our default is self-preservation and self-exaltation. In our insecurity, we worry

about what people will think of us rather than hoping they will not.” Never forget how crafty and tricky pride can be. Some take pride in how many love and applaud them while others take pride in proving that no one likes them. The challenge is clear for the follower of Christ by John the Baptist, “I must decrease and He must increase.”

Pride maintains your natural inclination to focus on yourself while humility causes you to focus on Christ first and then others. It enables you to lead by example in placing others first. Read Philippians 2:1-8 real slow a couple of times. This is when the beauty of your church family will be displayed by how everyone will begin assisting in ministering and caring for one another. Then the weight of serving is distributed more evenly. Carey Nieuwhof says it well, “Only humility will get you out of what pride got you into!”

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

When to add staff

By DR. ALLEN TILLEY

Not all problems in churches are equal. Problems like declining attendance or offerings can cripple a church, while the issue of needing to add staff in a growing church is a blessing. Early in my ministry, I realized that I was well-equipped for preaching, pastoral duties, and leadership, but when it came to adding staff, I was unprepared. Thankfully, with the help of a business owner in my church, he provided me with experienced insights that I still use today.

Knowing *when* to add staff and for *what* position is crucial for the continued growth of your church. While every church has different needs, here are some guidelines that might prove useful.

Make prayer a priority. Always seek the will of the Father before making any decision but especially one that will change the structure of your church. If possible, spend weeks or months praying over the decision before talking with your leadership team. Instead of telling God what you want, ask Him to tell you what is best for you.

Make budget considerations. Personnel expenses usually make up the most substantial portion of a church's budget. According to Dr. Elmer Towns, healthy churches have salaries and related costs at around 65 percent of the overall budget or lower. Although I believe in living by faith, whenever it comes to wages, I make it a rule never to add staff unless our budget allows for it. The worst thing I could do is hire someone and then not be able to pay him. I also believe that churches should pay their staff well, including insurance and retirement. Church Tax and Law produces a staff compensation handbook each year. For more information, visit their website at www.churchtaxandlaw.com.

Make "need" the primary motivation. To determine need, assess your church's ministries by asking the following questions. Where are we growing the fastest? What areas need leadership development? What positions would enhance the overall effectiveness of our church? Carefully examine every aspect of your ministry. After discovering your need, be sure you write a job description for the position. Outlining responsibilities will guide the person who fills the position and temper unrealistic expectations of church members.

Make mental adjustments. In other words, once you have a new staff member, give control over to that person. When my church helped me focus only on preaching and teaching by calling an executive pastor to handle the administrative



duties, it was hard for me to let go. For almost forty years, I've served as a human resource specialist, a facility manager, and a problem solver. Only when I relinquished those responsibilities did I realize I could be more effective in my current role. John Maxwell said, "If someone can do your job 80 percent as good as you, then let that person do it. Eighty percent is good enough."

Steer clear of these pitfalls. When asked about growing a larger church, I quickly admit that I don't have all the answers. However, I can tell you what doesn't work. Over the years, I've done lots of things that have failed. As you enlarge your staff, avoid these three mistakes. *First, don't take ministry away from your people.* If your volunteers are doing a great job, let them do the work of the ministry. You could never pay enough staff to replace a passionate group of volunteers. *Second, watch out for agendas.* Sometimes,

church members want their own "personal" minister because of feelings of entitlement. Instead, do what is best for the entire church. *Third, don't copy another church.* Don't create a position that you don't need just because another church created the position. Copycats seldom experience the same success.

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.





A word from your Missions Office

By HEITH MITCHELL

Don't forget about your missionaries on the field in these trying times. They need your faithful financial support along with your prayers and encouragement. They are faithfully serving the Lord. There were 17 more souls saved this month!

Please don't forget them as God faithfully provides for your church and you. They depend on your giving for their salary and equipping. Most churches have continued to faithfully give, but 24 churches did not give last month. We trust that the Lord will provide and bless each of you.

Thank you for praying for baby Tripp last month. He is home! He is doing very well. Continue to pray for the Brockway family.

We would love to share with your church about what God is up to and show you how you can be involved. I am personally available to come and share. We also have tools we can provide you to help you become a partner in church planting. Reach out to us.

Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

A word from your missionaries

JAIME GARCIA—

IGLESIA BAPTISTA NUEVA VIDA MISSION, GILMER/MESQUITE
JAIME.GARCIA2911@GMAIL.COM

I have gratitude in my heart for all of you and recognize you as participants in missionary work just as the Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans in Romans 16 names a list of people who participated in missionary work together with him, forming a team to achieve the purpose of his ministry. I still believe that God sends us people willing to collaborate in our ministries, the churches of the association and the missionaries. We are together bringing the good news of Jesus into the world. Thank you for allowing me to be part of the winning team. Blessings.



▲ Jaime Garcia



CESAR CANTU—

INTERN PREPARING FOR WEST COLUMBIA
CESARHCANTU42@GMAIL.COM

The Hebrew writer highlights speaking and hearing as signs of life.

- How good are we at reading others' distress?
- Can we tell when there is life in someone?
- How do I know if you are saved?

Proverbs 18:21 says, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue:

and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof. With all this power at the tip of our tongue, how then can we revive someone. How can we bring life back into that person?"

In John 10:27, Jesus says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me..."

Some of us have been highly qualified to lead in a certain direction. We have been in those dark places and are learning how to come out of them. The purpose of this is so that we may lead others out into life and light.

Allow God to qualify you even in those dark places. You will become a much better minister to others in doing so.

Prayer Needs:

My prayer is that we find the right home in the right area.

WESLEY BURKE—

REDEMPTION BAPTIST MISSION, NACOGDOCHES
WESLEYDAVIDBURKE@GMAIL.COM

God is sovereign even when his church is forcibly scattered. May the scattering from this pandemic grow all of your hearts to value the gathering more in days to come.

Prayer Needs:

Pray that we will be able to share the gospel in a post COVID-19 world.



▲ Cesar Cantu

May and had most of our members take time each week to cover our city in prayer. Our online schedule has kept us very busy and seems to be effective.



▲ Wesley Burke

MIKE WATT—

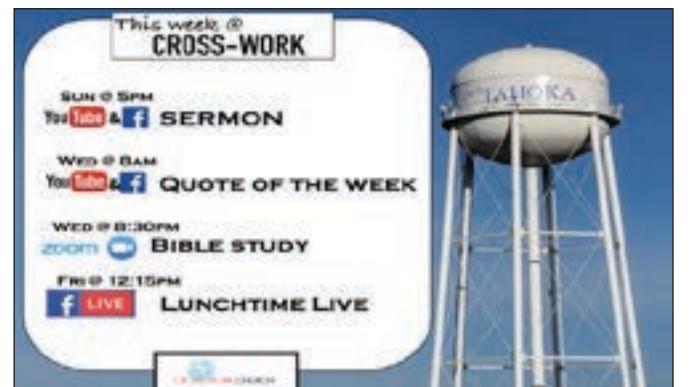
CROSS-WORK MISSION, TAHOKA
MIKE.WATT@CROSSWORKCHURCH.ORG

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, we started having the Lord's Supper at our regular service time. We just gathered for 15-20 minutes. Most recently, we observed the Lord's Supper followed by a watch party for the sermon with social distance recommendations. We are beginning to reintroduce our people to gather.

In addition, we led a city-wide prayer walk for the month of



▲ Mike Watt



BMA TEXAS MISSIONS continued on p. 14

International crisis response by BMA Missions

By **HOLLY MERIWEATHER**

BMA of America Missions

In BMA Missions leadership among eight key leaders and field coordinators, there is an average cross-cultural experience of 33.75 years. That calculates to 270 total years of experience living in other countries and/or working in cross-cultural situations.

All of these leaders lived full time for multiple years in their respective fields of service. This amount of time on the mission field and working with missionaries in dozens of countries has fostered a deep love for God's mission, God's people, and their plight as they seem to move from one calamity to the next.

One issue in missionary service that most all have to confront and none seem to come to grips with is abject poverty. In most places of the world you do not have to go looking for poverty, it will find you . . . Under "normal" circumstances many of these great people live a subsistence lifestyle where they do not dream about vacations, 401Ks, or retirement leisure; they think about what will be eaten for the next meal.

Since living on the edge of survival is a daily reality, any kind of added pressure from things like government oppression, natural disasters, war, drought, etc. can be the culprit that pushes them over the edge. Some of the most conservative estimations are that in the coming months, upwards of 130 million people in the world will be in danger of death by starvation as food chains are broken and unemployment rises as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

WHAT ARE WE DOING? WHAT CAN WE DO?

BMA Global Missions first of all cries out to God each day on behalf of people around the world who are most vulnerable. A quick glance at this potential situation can bring a sense of overwhelming helplessness. There is no way we can help all those who need help.

Therefore, we do not cry out to God as a last resort but as the first and best option. In the realm of the supernatural, we believe and trust in God and pray to him on behalf of the threatened masses.

And in the realm we are entrusted with leading, we act out of some very clear parameters and guidelines. In this area of discussion, we would like to recommend a useful resource, a book entitled *When Helping Hurts* by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert.

There are also two areas that we must be clear on before we proceed with simply throwing money at a situation:

First, the definition of poverty is not the lack of material things. In the U.S. we tend to measure everything in a monetary fashion. That simply cannot be the measure in every situation. Truly poverty is a broken relationship with God, self, others, and creation. Only God through the gospel of Jesus Christ and the effect of the gospel in our lives can truly bring a person out of poverty.

Second, we have to be able to evaluate the current situation for what it is. Corbett and Fikkert state in the book that most every situation fits into one of three categories: relief, rehabilitation, or development. The problem we have as Americans many times is the application of our affluent standard to all peoples, but this, more often than not, leads to the determination that *every* situation is a relief situation.

Under "normal" circumstances around the world there is

a great need for rehabilitation and development that demand great investments of time and energy, not just money (relief).

Our present worldwide pandemic is quickly moving to a full-blown relief situation. This simply means that if there is no intervention, people are going to die; that is a relief situation.

We understand that most people in the world are in somewhat of a survival mode. We are unsure of our futures and we turn inward to protect me and mine. That is normal. Let's not be normal.

HERE ARE SOME OF OUR PRACTICES AND GUIDELINES WE WOULD LIKE FOR YOU TO BE AWARE OF:

1. BMA Missions is present in over 80 countries of the world.
2. During this pandemic we are speaking to our leaders in those countries at least once a week to get updates.
3. So far each leader who has expressed the knowledge of people or families on the brink of starvation has been helped by our churches with aid from our disaster relief fund.
4. We have been able to help thousands in multiple

countries through the work of our churches and missionaries.

5. There is a very well identified system of implementing funds through missionaries, pastors, and churches who are all connected to our global network and accountable to someone beyond themselves.

6. No one should be soliciting funds from BMA churches in the U.S. on behalf of BMA entities or churches around the world without hearing from our recognized leadership in those places.

7. We certainly do not have unlimited funds, but we will help all we can.

8. If you desire to help out in some of these countries around the world, we would be glad to speak with you, put you in contact with the leaders in those places, and help in any way. We must apply the measure of a true relief situation in order to make sure that we are helping those who are the most vulnerable right now.

Please join us in praying for those who are on the edge both here at home and abroad: "Oh God, may you bring relief in a situation that could be catastrophic. May we extend unbridled compassion with divine wisdom. Amen."



▲ Two BMA Philippines churches on Palawan Island packed and distributed relief supplies and food for people in their community.



Sweet Hour of Prayer—Holding on to Hope

By **GLENDAM CHAMBERLAIN**

Kristi Key, Texas WMA second vice president, is so excited about our theme, *Sweet Hour of Prayer*. Kristi's theme is based on Ephesians 6:18, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

The Lord knew now, more than ever, how important prayer would be in our life. Kristi comments "I don't know about you, but I have spent so much time in prayer over the last few months. It may be "Lord help" or "Lord protect." Or maybe even a deeper heart wrenching prayer. Many of you have been overwhelmed with a new norm. Maybe you have been working from home or homeschooling. Maybe you or your spouse lost your job. We have all been affected by this pandemic in different ways. I am a nurse and I have been blessed to continue to work, but my work has gotten more complicated, more stressful. There were days I was so stressed because I was going in early and staying late, not getting my time with the Lord. On those days, my prayers were "Lord help me through this day, or help me through this hour!" We've prayed for protection, protection for our family. Now, as we open our state, there is still fear and worry. Over the past couple of weeks, we have more turmoil and unrest within our nation. We pray over the injustice and for protection over our law enforcement family and friends."

Kristi notes, "As women of God, the most important thing we can do is pray! How do we pray? What do we pray? All I can tell you, is just get in the Word. Pray scripture. Prayer looks different to all of us. Prayer looks different to me depending on the situation---the day, the hour, maybe the minute. Praise God, He knows and understands the desire of our hearts, our needs, our dysfunction. He loves us more than anyone and wants our best. I encourage you to pour out your heart to Him and worship Him in prayer. I want to share with you the lyrics to a song my daughter Makaye sang during a Zoom/Facebook live meeting." The song is "Just Be" by Kim Walker-Smith:

Everything else can wait, I've come to seek Your face. So everything else can wait, I'm here for You—I want you. Just be, here at Your feet. Just be, here on my knees. Here in Your presence I am complete. Jesus, You're all I need.

Everything else can wait. I've come to seek Your face. So everything else can wait. I'm here for You—I want to, Just be, here at Your feet. Just be, here on my knees. Here in Your presence I am complete. Jesus, You're all that I need.

There's nothing I want more, 'Cause nothing matters more. There's nothing I want more, God. 'Cause nothing matters more, no, no. There's nothing I want more, more than You, oh, Cause nothing else matters more, There's nothing I want more. I'll just be.....

I encourage you today to "Just Be." Just be with the Lord. He desires to be with you!

Our WMA fall ladies retreat is still being planned for Sept. 11-12, 2020 at Northside, Conroe. Kristi notes, "Our special guest speaker will be Stacie Bostic, and worship in music by Makaye Key and John Mendez. We will have breakout sessions that are sure to meet your need. Sweet hour of prayer: while grieving, during divorce, with aging parents, raising teens, raising littles, in Bible study, for the pastor's wife, the working mom, newly married, the empty nester, young lady/teen, retired, intercessory prayer, sharing the gospel, mentoring. There will be a time of prayer journaling later for anyone interested Friday night. See you soon!"

PERSONAL SERVICE EMPHASIS IN WMA

As we enter the summer months, and ask the Lord to light our path as we seek ways to revitalize WMA activities as the pandemic subsides, let us seize the opportunity to focus on our core mission in WMA. Maeva Thompson, Texas WMA first vice president comments, "One of the most important facets of WMA has always been to allow the Lord to develop a servant's heart in us and then to commit ourselves to action as His servants. We have called this important facet of WMA work 'Personal Service'. What a wonderful opportunity we are given in this season of need in the culture around us to be the hands and feet of Jesus!"

As we prepare our hearts in scripture and prayer, we allow Him to equip us and the Holy Spirit to enable us to become the daily servants we are called to be. In the realm of personal service, our first mission is to share Jesus and the gospel with those around us without hope. Wherever we encounter lost souls, we must offer the living hope that we have been given.

Our preparation for personal service begins with our own consistent Bible study and prayer, and commitment to faithfulness, both to our church and to its ministry.

Our personal service can then reach out to disciple new Christian ladies and to minister to them. This ministry can involve teaching, training, enabling young women to participate in activities, and mentoring their spiritual growth. But those objectives must be built upon first establishing strong relationships with individual ladies, listening to them, praying with them, meeting them at their point of need. We are called to encourage and to edify, to seek out and walk alongside the women the Lord places in our scope of ministry. What a privilege and blessing He gives us as His servants! Our best model of how to do this is Jesus himself, and the love he ministered every step of his journey while here on earth. May each new lady see His love in action in the testimony we live before them daily.

Mrs. Thompson suggests specific acts of personal service take many forms: a prayer together during a phone call, visits, beautiful cards, tender words in fragile moments, a delicious dish or entire family meal, help with childcare, and the many ways ladies all around us need a helping hand. For many of us, our service expands to include serving in Youth Auxiliaries, such a vital part of reaching the next generation.

May we prayerfully seek the Lord's guidance in this new era of spiritual need in our world, asking Him to send us out in His Name with a renewed vision and the spirit of a true servant's heart to reach many new ladies for Christ! 2 Peter 1:5-7

TEXAS SUNBEAMS SPACE TRAVELER

A fun "Space Travelers" theme is planned for the State Sunbeam Houseparty slated for July 17-18, 2020 at Jacksonville College.

Registration begins on Friday at 4 p.m. and the Houseparty ends with lunch on Saturday. Registration fee is \$15 per person. Three meals and snacks are provided. You will need to bring your own bedding for a sleepover at Collin's Hall (girls dorm).

The Texas Sunbeam project is Water for Christ. All Houseparty information and registration is on www.texaswma.com, click on the Sunbeam tab.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF STUDENTS AT MARTHA JOHNSON SCHOOL

The Lord has blessed the school with tremendous growth and they have outgrown their current facilities. The school has a desperate need of new classrooms for their students. The Martha Johnson School in Huejutla de Reyes, Hidalgo, Mexico is the Texas WMA project for 2020.

Be the difference the students need to excel in their studies and grow in faith by giving to this project. Please be in prayer for ways your WMA can help build the classrooms that are needed.

Send your offerings to: Jo Strong, 149 NW Suzanne Terrace, Burleson, TX 76028. For more information please contact Diana Morris, Texas Project Promoter at 903-288-7575 or at grammydi1013@msn.com. Mrs. Morris would love an opportunity to share more information about the school and their needs at your District WMA meeting.

Glenda Chamberlain is the Texas Women's Missionary Auxiliary (WMA) editor. Contact her at gcham33@yahoo.com. For more information about the Texas WMA, visit www.texaswma.com.



TEXAS BAPTIST HOME FOR CHILDREN

I'm just sayin'

By **JASON CURRY**

During our fostering years, and especially during our group home period, we had a restaurant that truly blessed us. They had kids eat for \$1 and because we were foster parents, they also let us use a coupon. This meant we fed our family of 11 for \$35 which always astounded us.

Walking in, people around us would always murmur because of the number of kids. The looks would also range from sympathetic to grumpy. We did not go to this place because of the people we sat around. It was the wait staff that blessed us and made us keep coming back.

They would help with getting kids in their seats, opening the crayons and coloring on their pages. This place, this staff, became a highlight every time we went in. We would arrive and come in at our table for 11 and be blessed like this every time. The staff spoke to our kids by names in greeting them as we went in. For a foster child that was so special to them.

Some people we knew made the comment to us once "you have so many kids in and out" we don't worry about learning their names. I want to encourage you to never take that approach with the children God has entrusted into the care of a family. People who come to your church are waiting to see who cares about them and is willing to help them.

A deacon at our old church was at the same spot every week waiting for me and my family to arrive. We would unload everyone at this drop off spot and he would push our stroller as my wife would hold hands with older kids. This allowed me to go park our mini-bus and join them inside. He may never know what a difference he made but it was so wonderful to know that when we arrived there was someone who smiled and talked to our kids, who spoke their names and was always glad they were there.

1 Peter 5:14 tells us to greet one another with love, the kiss

is a nice gesture too. But no matter how we welcome anyone it should be in love. As you go about your days and weeks there are families that desperately want to be welcomed and known in love. The hardest thing about large families is knowing everyone's names but each would know you love them if you simply spoke it out loud. The best gift you can give a child in a foster home or any child in any home is calling them by name.

I hope each of you understand that is what Texas Baptist Home for Children (TBHC) is doing as an organization. We are equipping foster and adoptive parents to help kids learn they have a name and are valued. Your help during this time is so important. More kids are entering care not less. And as we strive to meet that need it is making a difference in one child's life at a time that bring us joy. Your ministry is continuing to serve children and during this time there is no exception to how well they are cared for.

During this time of crisis, we must continue to care for kids in need. If you are supporting us now thank you. If you have wanted to but not taken the time please don't delay. For everyone I beg you to pray that the resources of our ministry never run dry, the staff never lose heart and our kids know God knows them all by name (John 10:3). Thank you for making a difference and bringing kids Home. I'm Just Sayin'.

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.



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 1-31, 2020.

ENDOWMENTS

MYRA STOKES: Bill Stokes

E ANN PACE: Karl & Martha Pace

HONORARIUMS

MR. & MRS. GEORGE PHILLEY: Leon & Johnnie Ross

MR. & MRS. KEN PRESSLEY: Leon & Johnnie Ross

MR. & MRS. ALAN THOMPSON: Leon & Johnnie Ross

MR. & MRS. HEITH WILKERSON: Leon & Johnnie Ross

MEMORIALS

AGNES ALEXANDER: Arnie Alexander

DANIEL BAKER: Sara Stewart; Axley & Rode LLP; Dana Cotton

WALTER BECKER: Dennis & Ilona Myrice

KARIE BEVILLE: Clayton Estes

MARY BLACKBURN: Jed & Glenice Whitaker

LARRY & ROSELEN BOBO: James Bobo

L.D. DAVIS JR.: Frieda Davis

JANIE DUNAVANT: Margaret Wolf

FLOYD JOHNSON: Temple Baptist Church, Mexia

JOHN LANDRUM: Charla Ivy

DORIS LASITER: Alan & Vicki Clark; Mr. & Mrs. Philip Goodwin; Trey & Susie Cardwell; Goodwin-Lasiter-Strong; Harold & Patsy Renegar

MARY MCCLURE: Jed & Glenice Whitaker; Antioch Baptist Church, Gilmer;

BARBARA JEAN MCDONALD: Karen Peake

ELIZABETH MONK: Fairmont Baptist Church

JACOB 'BUD' MORROW: Jerry & Ruth Williams; David & Nancy Jackson

WELDON SENN: Georgia Senn

DONNY SHAMBURGER: Charles & Charlotte Johnson

SHAWN SHANNON: Jed & Glenice Whitaker

ANNA BETH WILHITE: Weldon & Lana Sparks

THELMA WOLF: Margaret Wolf

memorials-honorariums

National GMA Covid-19 Update

By **LAURIE HICKS**

National Director of Youth Auxiliaries

It was a hard decision for the National GMA Advisory Council, but we voted to cancel the 2020 National GMA Camp. There are so many uncertainties during this time, and we felt it was a decision that had to be made. We know God has a plan that is bigger than all of this, and we are praying for His direction in how to proceed with future plans for the National GMA.

Since National Camp has been canceled, the GMA Advisory Council has voted to allow all 2019-20 officers that are willing to serve to continue as officers for 2020-2021. We understand that some girls may not be able to continue to serve and some may have to be appointed to fill vacant positions. Therefore, we are asking girls that qualify and feel led to be a national officer for the 2020-2021 year to fill out the officer survey form. The National

GMA Advisory Council will determine if the applicant is qualified to fill a needed position. Girls may also be chosen to work with some current officers in mentoring situations, and some may be selected to work as support officers for the next year.

The Advisory Council voted to keep the same theme and project for 2020-2021 — 95 percent Freeman BMA Philippines building remodeling and 5 percent General Fund. Groups that have raised money for the project this year are asked to go ahead and send it to Kristin Herring by Aug. 1, 2020. Bro. Freeman needs the funds to get started on the project. Next year's project money will be due Aug. 1, 2021. Awards will not be given for project money sent this year but will be given for the total of funds sent this year and next year.

Some T-shirts were already printed for camp, and they are available in a limited supply. If anyone is interested, contact Mandy Townsend.

The Advisory Council is recommending that the National GMA give Daniel Springs a love offering of \$5,000 to help alleviate some of the financial burdens due to camps being cancelled because of Covid-19. The Council is asking for each church to cast a vote of approval for the love offering on the Google Docs Vote being disseminated by state and district promoters.

GMA Counselors should be watching their email because they will get all of this information with links to all forms, surveys and contact information in an email from their district promoters.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

The Gospel according to Joel

By **PAUL GAUNTT**

DATE: July 5, 2020

TEXT: Joel 2:28-32

THE HOOK

I always thought the last days were those just prior to Christ coming for His Bride, followed by the subsequent events, such as the Great Tribulation, the Judgement Seat of Christ, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, the setting up of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ on earth and the White Throne Judgement. But Joel included the pouring out of the Spirit upon the Church in Jerusalem just 50 days after Christ ascended back to glory, as being the latter days. Joel did not use the term “last days” in his prophecy, but Peter, in reference to that prophecy, did refer the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the church as the beginning of those days. According to Joel, the last days began when the New Testament Church was empowered by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:16-17).

THE BOOK

1. Joel’s gospel included the descent of the Holy Spirit. This doctrine had to have been as astonishing to the Tribe of Judah as was their captivity and exile by the Babylonian army. They could not relate to a personal filling of the Holy Spirit in individuals. It would penetrate men and women from every walk of life (verses 28-29).

2. Joel’s gospel included the Holy Spirit’s empowerment of the church. His prophecy was looking some 900 years into the future to the time when the Spirit would descend upon the newly-formed church in Jerusalem (Acts 2:16-17). It is the empowering of the Holy Spirit of God, which makes the church the most unique and powerful entity in all the earth.

3. Joel’s gospel described the incredible power of the Holy Spirit to change lives. Matthew Henry described the power of the Spirit as possessing “converting grace, miraculous gifts which were conferred on both Jews and

Gentiles, and the urgency of one to call upon the Lord in faith.”

4. Joel’s gospel described the events of the end times (i.e. the Great Tribulation, the White Throne Judgement of God (verses 30-31).

5. Joel’s gospel revealed the mercy of God to receive all who confessed Him (verse 32). The remnant is in reference to the 144,000 Jews that shall be converted and called to evangelize the world in the Great Tribulation. The phrase, “. . .the remnant whom the Lord shall call” is further verification of the absolute sovereignty of God the Father to save all who call on Him. (John 6:37) But one shall not call upon Him if He has not called them first.

THE LOOK

Joel’s gospel places absolute emphasis on the Holy Spirit, in calling men and women to repentance.

The valley of decision

By **PAUL GAUNTT**

DATE: July 12, 2020

TEXT: Joel 3:1-21

THE BOOK

God restores His people (verse 1). This refers to God making Judah prosperous and joyful again. Psalm 137 describes the extent of their loss.

God judges their enemies (verses 2-7). The NLT describes God’s people as his “special possession.” He brings the enemies of His people into the Valley of Jehoshaphat (The Lord judges) There is a dreadful day of reckoning for those who touch God’s anointed people. They scattered the people, forced them to live among other nations, divided land, cast lots for people and sold young men and girls into debauchery. Verse 19 says that God will confer desolation upon the enemies of God’s people. The Valley of Decision is the place of the Lord’s movement against the nations (verses 2-12) saying that the day of the Lord’s judgement (the day of the Lord; 1:15) is near in that valley.

God will bless the Jews (verses 16-21). He will be their refuge and stronghold (verses 16-17). He re-establishes the truth that they will realize that He is the Lord their God. Foreigners in verse 17 is in reference to those not born into the family of God.

God promises the land will yield much fruit (verse 18).

God the father is ready and willing to open the windows of Heaven to His people.

THE LOOK

Joel 3 is a vivid picture of the judgement on the earth in

the future. It is intended to cause God’s people to awaken out of our lethargy and complacency. We are to make it our passion, as God’s people, to diligently follow after Christ every moment.



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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

The Lord's roar of judgement against the nations for their sins

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: July 19, 2020

TEXT: Amos 1:1-2:16

THE HOOK

Our lesson this week points out in no uncertain terms, the terror that comes with God has had enough -- when He thunders His voice of warning to wayward nations. It is tragic when a sinful society takes lightly the judgement and terror of One who holds the keys of death and hell—who has created all things—who “giveth and taketh away”—at his own good pleasure and his own good will—one who can control, with the wave of a hand, the storms—who can tame vicious lions—who can use the insignificant to accomplish His will. This is a God which is not to be trifled with. Judgement will come.

1. Introducing the prophet Amos. Amos was a shepherd from Tekoa, a small town just south of Jerusalem. His vision

of God's judgement was during the days of Uzziah's reign in Judah (769-733 BC). It was Amos who warned that the shepherds will mourn, and the top of Mount Carmel (9:3) would dry up.

2. Amos, an humble servant. The prophet never had formal training as a prophet, but tended sycamore trees and was a shepherd. But Amos had a heart for the common man and especially the oppressed. His warnings to the nations, which had fallen upon the judgement of God, were anything but comforting. The northern kingdom was enjoying great economic times and consequently, were unjust and cruel to their society. God seems to delight in sending the simple—the most unlikely—the less polished and trained, to do His bidding. Such was Amos.

3. Amos warns the derelict people of God's impending judgement, which included the people of Damascus who beat down the people of Gilead. The people of Gaza who

sold people into slavery in Edom; The people of Tyre, for selling who communities of people into slavery and captivity in Edom; The people of Edom for her murderous rampages. The sins of Ammon for destroying pregnant women for the purpose of enlarging their land mass. God's judgement upon these groups included setting walls and palaces on fire, kings going into captivity.

Chapter 2 includes God's judgement on Moab, Judah, Israel, for slavery, blasphemy against the name of God, materialism, rejecting God's word in favor of lies.

THE LOOK

Dr. R.G. Lee preached his famous sermon “Payday Someday” thousands of times during his ministry. Make no mistake, a nation's sin and debauchery, the selling of people into slavery, abortion, and the like, will always reap the judgement of God (2 Chronicles 7:14).

With great privilege comes greater accountability

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: July 26, 2020

TEXT: Amos 3:1-15

THE HOOK

The principle is seen everywhere in scripture—with great privilege comes great responsibility. James says, “My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation” (James 3:1).

In Hebrews 13:17, it says, “Obey them that have the (spiritual) rule over you and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account. . .” Teachers have a great calling -- and for dereliction, they have great judgement—as does those who have the spiritual rule over the church (the pastor).

THE BOOK

Chapter three of Amos gives a run down of the principle of cause and effect. Out of all peoples of the earth, God has especially chosen the Jews to have a special relationship with them. But when they err, the result is judgement. It is illustrated in a Lion that will roar when it has caught an animal; a bird falls into a trap when there is bait; When a trumpet blows a warning sound into the city, people tremble with fear. Cause and effect. Walk in the Lord's favor, be blessed. Sin against God, reap a harvest of judgement.

Amos 3 is a commentary on the principle of sowing and reaping. Psalm 126:5 says, “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.” Proverbs 11:18 says, “The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.”

THE LOOK

Ralph Waldo Emerson's famous quote is appropriate in studying Amos 3. “Sow a thought, and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny.”

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.



BMMI trip canceled

It is always depressing to have to cancel a BMMI trip, but due to the virus and after talking with Pastor Paul Tinoco in Peru, it is the proper thing to do. He relates that churches are closed there until Aug. 1. He also reports that there have been no cases of COVID-19 with the Ashaninka's along the river Tambo.

The Zambia trip that is scheduled for Oct. 24-Nov. 4 (and is fully staffed) is still on at this point.

The following trips are scheduled for 2021: **Thailand** with Missionaries Siripong (Jo) Yaebeang and Brandon Lingle; (Jan. 15-25), **Ukraine** with Missionary Larry Wood; and **Guatemala** with Missionary David Marroquin.

All trips are subject to change.

Other trips in the future include Armenia, Moldova, Cambodia, Jordan, Mexico, Philippines, Angola, Argentina, Laos and Burma. Please pray for open doors in India.

— Dr. Ralph IZARD, Dr. John LADD and Angela RICE

MISSIONS
baptist missionary association of america

BMA Texas Missions cont.

Prayer Needs:

Pray for our little church plant as we keep moving forward while allowing our people to re-engage at their pace. Maintaining our online routines will be vital to be inclusive as we seek the Lord for our next steps. Cross-Work has a lot of new coming our way! The biggest new thing is our new location. We will be moving forward with a soft launch and hope to soon be able to celebrate and get some community involvement with our new space.

MATTHEW PRATHER—

THE BRIDGE MISSION, MIDLOTHIAN/WAXAHACHIE

MATTHEW@DISCOVERTHEBRIDGE.COM

DUAL SUPPORT BMAA/BMAT

The past few months have been challenging for all churches. We are no different. We moved to online services only for about 10 weeks. In the middle of May, we did two outdoor services and now we are back in our building. Pray for us as we minister to those that are ready to meet in person and those that are not ready yet. During the time that we were meeting online only, we met a lot of people online. We received many messages from people struggling, hurting and seeking God. We saw two people saved from our online efforts and we praise God for them! We are continuing our online efforts in order to continue to reach our community during this time. Please pray for us as we navigate this time. Thank you for your continued prayers and support. They are much needed during this time!

Prayer Needs:

Pray for us as we lead our church through COVID-19.

JESSE HALES—

STARTING POINT MISSION IN ROUND ROCK

HALESJESSE@GMAIL.COM

DUAL SUPPORT BMAA/BMAT

As Chris and I begin to merge or two church planting efforts, God is already starting to show us the many benefits to working as a team. We are both so excited about what God is doing. One major blessing for our family has been how God has provided us a new house to rent in the perfect location. We are still in Round Rock, close to the people we have already been connecting with, but we are now much closer to Chris and Sarah and the future home of the church. We are still moving into the new place and are meeting new people every day. God has even started to open doors with more of our current neighbors at our apartment. God is good and we thank you for your prayers.

Prayer Needs:

Pray that we will be able to connect with our new neighbors well and use those connections to share the gospel in a meaningful way. Please pray for the ongoing merger as we continue to form our partnership with Chris and Sarah Mindi and the church planting work they are doing. Pray for those that have reached out to us recently who are looking for “healthier” friendships, that we can be the light in their darkness. Thank you.

JAIME HENRIQUEZ—

FUENTE DE VIDA ETERNA MISSION, HOUSTON

“Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest (Joshua 1:9).”

RONNIE MILLS—

KINGDOM CHAPEL MISSION, SAGINAW/FORT WORTH

RONNIE@KCHAPEL.ORG

Hey, BMA family! I want to thank you for your continued prayers and support for our mission here in Saginaw. We have been richly blessed, and just as many of you, we’ve certainly had some challenging times during the past several months. Here’s my biggest takeaway, and what the Lord has been teaching me. Stay faithful. I have been dwelling on the parable of the ten minas, and at first glance it seems to be about results or talents and gifts. But a closer look reveals all Jesus wants is for us to remain faithful to Him. Leave the results to Him, stay faithful. Those are the words that have been ringing in my ears through this quarantine and now, with civil unrest. In the midst of all of this, we’ve seen the Lord do incredible things among us. Hearts are turning to God. We’ve seen people overcome fear, turn from their idols and deepen their love for their Savior. We take discipleship very seriously here at Kingdom Chapel, and we are still thriving in a love for Jesus, and His gospel. Blessings to you all!

Prayer Needs:

Pray for us as a church, that we love and serve well, that we continue to remain faithful to the task at hand and humbly advance the cause of Christ.

NEPTALY MOLINA—

IGLESIA BAUTISTA MISSION, NACOGDOCHES

NRMOLINA23@GMAIL.COM

We want to reflect and evaluate well the strategies we have been using to continue building the missionary work here in Nacogdoches and Lufkin and to renew the vision as expressed in John 4:35, to raise our eyes to the fields that are already white for the harvest. We have to pray to the lord of the harvest to send more workers to his fields.

ISAIAS ROJAS OSECHAS—

CHURCH PLANT IN SPRING

ISAIAS.ROJAS299@GMAIL.COM

Thank you for your support in prayer, location, establishment and execution to achieve the stipulated goals. We serve the Lord with more dedication in the work of planting new growing groups, despite COVID-19. But the pandemic does not stop evangelism and discipleship. The gospel is not oppressed. Thank you for being God’s instruments in blessing our lives. We love Him. Keep praying for us.

SPENCER SIMPSON—

REDEEMER’S LOVE MISSION, HOUSTON

SPNCRSMPN@GMAIL.COM

Thank you for your prayers and support that encourage and allow us to bring the gospel to this area of Houston!

Prayer Needs:

Pray for our ability to be a light in southwest Houston during COVID-19. We want our community to see the hands and feet of Jesus through our efforts as a local body of Christ.

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.



OBITUARY

JAMES BICKLEY

Funeral services for Bro. James Richard Bickley, 82, of Pollok, were at Keltys First, Lufkin May 21, 2020.

He was born July 5, 1937 and passed away peacefully at his residence May 17, 2020. He retired as the pastor of Piney Creek, Kennard after seven wonderful years.



Bro. and Mrs. Bickley were a blessed couple being married for 62 years. They had three boys, Mike (World Peace) Bickley of Jasper, Rev. Wayne Bickley and wife, Suzie, of Livingston, Rev. Keith Bickley and wife, Karen, of Pollok, and a wonderful daughter, Sherice Burton, of Pollok. They had 12 grandchildren, Rev. Ryan Lavin of Pollok, Michael Burton and wife, Destiny, of Cleveland, Kori Isbell and husband, Eric, of Deer Park, Keri Ditsworth and husband, Adam, of Lufkin, Staff Sgt. Kevin Bickley and wife, Salena, of Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, Adam Bickley and wife, Dana, of Lufkin, Tony Bickley and wife, Sonya, of Spring, Jessica Bickley of Livingston, Amber Price and husband, Will, of Lufkin, Tara Pope and husband, Jason, of Huntington, Jill Ann Brantner and husband, Jimmy, of Lufkin, 22 great-grandkids, and numerous other relatives.

Services were led by grandson Ryan Lavin and assisted by Rev. Wayne and Rev. Keith Bickley.

He was a blessed man and was lovingly known by his great-grandkids as “Mean PaPaw”. (I ain’t gotta carry out the garbage no more.)

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Piney Creek Missionary Baptist Church, 7105 FM 2781, Kennard, Texas 75847.

MARK WALTON WINSKIE

Services for Bro. Mark Walton Winskie, 82, of Grand Saline, were held at Lakeside, Canton June 6, 2020. Officiating were Clay Winskie and Bro. Richard Ansley.

Bro. Winskie passed away in Tyler June 2, 2020. He was born in Stateboro, Georgia to Frederick and Bertie Lee Durden Winskie February 18, 1938. He spent his early years in Pooler, Georgia and last 39 years in Grand Saline.

Bro. Winskie served in the U.S. Army during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He served as a pastor for 54 years with the last 30 years being at Richland Heights Baptist Church. He was a chaplain for many years with Cozby-Germany Hospital and Autumn Woods Hospice. He was preceded in death by his parents; wife of 58 years, Norma Jean Jolley Winskie; sisters, Elouise Kilpatrick, Betty Sasser and Lavern Jones; and brother, Dean Winskie and Louie Winskie.

Survivors include son, Clay Winskie and wife Ayla of Griffin, Georgia; two daughters, Sharon Ousley, of Canton and Leigh Gomillion, and husband, Jim, of McKinney; five brothers, John Winskie, and wife, Doris, of Clarkston, Washington, Tony Winskie and wife, Carolyn, of Ellabell, Georgia, Butch Winskie and wife Pam of Chattanooga, Tennessee, Danny Winskie, and wife, Judy, of Huntington and Wayne Winskie, and wife, Gail, of Springfield, Georgia; sister, Willa Belle Frances and husband David; eight grandchildren, Chris Patterson (Danielle), Crystal Dyer (Michael), Joshua Winskie (Jennifer), Rebekah Naive (Titus), Michael Gomillion (Jade), Megan Foster (Tracie), Samuel Gomillion and Andrew Gomillion; four great-grandchildren, Moira Dyer, Carolyn Dyer, Tobias Naive and Jayden Gomillion; and numerous other relatives and friends.

Memorials can be made to BMA Missions.

EVENTS

BMA OF TEXAS ANNUAL MEETING

DATE: November 9-10, 2020

PLACE: Farley Street Baptist Church,
Waxahachie, Texas

pastor & staff changes

CHESTER BURKE is the new pastor at Central, Mineola.

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

church news

FIRST, RICE reports meeting for the first time in 10 weeks with an attendance of 44.

personnel & positions

AVAILABLE POSITIONS

PASTOR—Beacon, Bryan is seeking a pastor. Send resume to pulpitcommittee@beaconbryan.com or mail it to Tira Sexton, 14614 FM 3090, Anderson, Texas 77830.

VICE PRESIDENT OF EXECUTIVE AFFAIRS—Jacksonville College is accepting applications for vice president of executive affairs. This is a supervisory position over the business office, human resources, finances, housing, student life, athletics and maintenance. A master's degree is required and a doctorate is preferred. Go online for application, then mail application to Jacksonville College, Attention: Dr. Mike Smith, 105 B.J. Albritton Drive, Jacksonville, Texas 75766. TFN

YOUTH/STUDENT MINISTER—Antioch, Gilmer is seeking a bi-vocational youth/student minister. Send resume to Pastor Michael Pool, 7391 Giraffe Road, Gilmer, Texas 75644 or to pool-michael@hotmail.com, or call 903-315-6822. 6/20

PASTOR—Gray's Prairie, Scurry is seeking a pastor. Send resume to the church at P.O. Box 206, Scurry, Texas 75158. You may also call Chris Taliaferro at 214-674-8064, Bob Stewert at 903-802-3182 or Willie Niches at 972-754-9405. 6/20

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

YOUTH MINISTRY—South Park, Fort Worth is seeking a bi-vocational youth director and a youth ministry intern. Visit spbc.life/joinourteam for more information. TFN

PASTOR—Mount Olive, Scurry is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resume to the church at P.O. Box 99, Scurry, Texas 75158. TFN

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

GOD'S GIFT

HEAVEN IS A FREE GIFT!

It is not earned or deserved. No amount of effort or good works can earn a place for you in heaven. Why? Because . . .

MAN IS A SINNER.

"For all have sinned . . ." (Rom. 3:23) Because of this, man cannot save himself. GOD. On the one hand, God is merciful and does not want to punish us. Yet God is just and must punish sin. God solved this problem for us in the Person of . . .

JESUS CHRIST.

He died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins and rose from the grave to purchase a place for us in heaven—*"the Lord has laid on Him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all"* (Isa. 53:6).

THE GIFT IS RECEIVED BY FAITH.

Saving faith is trusting in Jesus Christ alone for eternal life. It means resting on Christ alone and what He has done, rather than what you or I have done to get us into heaven. *"Believe on (or trust in) the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved"* (Acts 16:31).

SO MAY WE ASK . . .

Have you received God's free gift of eternal life? The Bible assures us in 1 John 5:13 that we can know we have eternal life.

Do you know for sure that you are going to heaven when you die? The Bible says, *"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."* *If you are willing to repent (turn away from your sin and to the Lord Jesus) you can receive the free gift of eternal life by simply praying: Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner and do not deserve eternal life. But I believe You died and rose from the grave to purchase a place in heaven for me. Jesus, come into my life, take control of my life, forgive my sins, and save me. I am now placing my trust in You alone for my salvation, and I accept your free gift of eternal life.*

Bibles, Books, Music & Gifts

To order Bibles, books, music and gifts from Baptist Progress, visit www.bmatexas.org and click the flashing box at the top of the right hand column.

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MORAL ACTION



2020 *Freedom Offering*

June 28th & July 5th

Please pray for and give financially to help Moral Action expose the anti-Christian agenda of such groups as A.C.L.U., American Atheists, Freedom From Religion Foundation and the Gay Rights Movement.

Pray for us as we visit Washington, D.C.

-Dr. John M. Adams

Help Needed for BMA of Texas Office Building Repairs

Help is needed to pay for recent repairs at the BMA of Texas Office Building. An evaporator coil had to be replaced in an air conditioning unit directly above the conference room and other repairs were made as well.

The cost of the repairs is \$3,777.93.

If any churches or individuals can help in paying for the repairs, it would be greatly appreciated.

Please send your donations to:

BMA of Texas
P.O. Box 73
Waxahachie, Texas 75168

Be sure to mark your check "Building Repairs."

Thank you in advance for your help!