

Baptist Progress

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Moving day for the BMA of America

By **HOLLY MERIWEATHER**

Lifeword Media Ministries Development

Lifeword, DiscipleGuide and BMA Productions welcomed their colleagues, associates and friends to the new BMA Headquarters building in Conway, Ark. on June 2. While the outside is not quite complete and there are still several details to finish inside, the offices are ready to be occupied by the men and women of the BMAA Missions Department, additional DiscipleGuide staff members, Baptist Medical Missions supplies and the BMA Foundation.

Flowers and goody bags greeted the women of the Missions Department on Monday, and Nick Jacobsen and Jared Eakin, BMA Productions Team members, served doughnuts to everyone Thursday, which was National Doughnut Day.

Karen Keathley, Missions Department bookkeeper, said of the move, "It was raining off and on Monday and Tuesday as the men worked at unloading all our furniture and supplies. They occasionally had to take a break when the rain intensified. But they kept going, even when we asked them to rearrange our offices to get things to fit, although they did groan when moving the fully loaded fireproof filing cabinets.

"Everyone was very welcoming, tried to make us feel at home, and have been very helpful. They seem like a great group of people who will be easy to work with. We have almost gotten our offices set up, organized and are able to get our work done."

Because the move occurred a month sooner than expected, Scott Atteberry, John David Smith and Steve Crawley were not able to officially welcome everyone. Their schedules did not allow them to be present for all or part of move-in week. Mike Jones, BMA maintenance supervisor, and Luis Ortega, BMA information technology coordinator and Lifeword director of programming, were very busy all week making sure everyone was moved in and connected so work could continue without interruption.

"I think it's a wonderful testimony to everyone who has adjusted so well to change, the construction mess and noise, multiple office changes, inevitable disruptions, and moves. It has been a long process and it's great to see everyone coming together!" said Tina Cummins, Missions Department accountant.

Dedication of the building is planned for later this summer, but an official date has not been set.



▲ Tasha McGee, receptionist, and Phillip Rice, production team manager

▼ Tina Sellers, accountant; Jerry Kidd, missionary care director; and Jim Brewer, BMAA Missions warehouse manager



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Mission Life

By **JERRY BURNAMAN**

June is here! In fact half of June is passed and the hot days of summer are upon us. Soon it will be the “dog days” of August and our thoughts will turn to the cool days of fall.

The summer months bring vacations and variety of family activities. Many people are out of town and church attendance suffers. I can hear the groans and moans of church leaders as they seek substitute teachers and pray the budget doesn’t drastically suffer.

What are we to do? Here are some things to consider during the summer months.

Strategic Thinking

Instead of moaning and groaning, how about initiating some strategic thinking? Consider your vision and some projected goals for the fall months and build on them in preparation for the year 2015.

Unless the congregation has significant **buy in** of the vision, then it is no more than an empty dream. Your vision should be repeated every 30 days, specifically the first Sunday of the month to guide your ministries for that month. I’m assuming your church leaders and teachers have the vision in their minds and hearts before you present it to the congregation.

Promote a Plan

Without strategy, no general will ever win a battle, much less the war! In the same way a church’s effectiveness relies on the strategy and plans church leaders carefully

lay out. From counting the cost (Matt. 14:28) to preparing for the future (Pr. 16:3) planning is essential.

Here are some simple ideas to incorporate with your planning ideas for school to start and back-to-school activities. Creative thinking about your church ministries and your community are necessary. Ask questions like these: (1) Is a Labor Day Retreat good for us? (2) How can we develop outreach around the football games? (3) Is a Harvest Festival a good idea? (4) What about a Halloween outreach to the lost? (5) Is it possible to feed those in need at Thanksgiving? (6) What about the Christmas plays and musicals? When you look at the fall season, there is much planning that needs to take place right now.

With those creative thinkers on your TEAM you will discover many other activities than I’ve shared with you. The Bible teaches us to be intentionally engaged (Acts 1:8) in our community, doing everything possible to influence people with the gospel.

Prepare Through Prayer

It’s easy to be overwhelmed at the needs of your community, therefore, it is vital to seek God’s leadership and wisdom. Not only is it necessary to plan activities, there are leaders to secure and some training may be necessary. Share the positive plans with your prayer groups and the congregation to seek the Lord’s guidance in every activity.

With all the praying and promotion of the VISION and activities, God may give a great revival to your church and

community. Oh, how we need revival!

“There is no power like that of prevailing prayer—of Abraham pleading for Sodom, Jacob wrestling in the stillness of the night, Moses standing in the reach, Hannah intoxicated with sorrow, David heartbroken with remorse and grief, Jesus in the sweat of blood. Add to this list from the records of the church, your personal observation and experience, and always there is the cost of passion unto blood. Such prayer prevails. It turns ordinary mortals into men of power. It brings power. It brings fire. It brings rain. It brings life. It brings God.”

—Samuel Chadwick

As you reach people in your community, a reality will dawn upon you: There is a larger work than our community. The Great Commission (Acts 1:8) gives a specific strategy for believers to be witnesses in their local community, in their state, the United States and everywhere in the world. Our prayers and reaching people with the gospel just may result in REVIVAL among our churches.

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



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Just for Pastors

8 benefits to bivocational ministry

By **TERRY DORSETT**
Baptist Press

BARRE, Vt. (BP)--"But I don't want to be bivocational." That was the declaration of a young man whom I recently talked to. He was nearing graduation from seminary and felt led to do ministry in a lesser-reached area of the nation.

Vermont, which is the least church state in America, definitely fits the bill for being lesser reached. As the Vermont director for the efforts of my denomination, I have plenty of openings in which he could fulfill his calling to a lesser reached area. But when he found out that most evangelical churches in Vermont have less than 100 people in worship on a typical Sunday morning and that few could sustain a fully funded pastor, he was discouraged.

I can certainly understand his frustration. After all, he had invested a significant amount of time and money in seven years of schooling in order to gain his master of divinity degree from an accredited seminary. In any other field, such an investment of time and money likely would produce a lucrative career. But if a person feels a calling to ministry, and wants to do that ministry outside the Bible belt, the likelihood of finding a fully funded position drops significantly.

For those who may not be familiar with the term "bivocational," it simply means that the minister must work a second job in addition to serving a church. It does not mean that the minister is "part-time." It simply means his ministry position is not fully funded and therefore he must find additional income from some other source.

The reasons that people want to avoid this situation are numerous, but the most obvious is that it is a lot of hard work. Balancing two jobs and a family is a challenge. Pastoral burn-out among bivocational pastors is notoriously high. Unfortunately, bivocational ministry is a reality that is not going away anytime soon. Both the current economic situation in the nation, as well as the giving trends of younger generations, indicate that churches will continue to struggle to fully fund pastoral positions for some time.

However, just because there are challenges to bivocational ministry does not mean that such situations should be viewed in a negative light. There are actually a number of advantages that bivocational pastors have over their fully funded counterparts. Before dismissing bivocational ministry, pastors should consider these advantages:

1. Bivocational pastors are not as dependent on the church for their financial support as fully funded pastors. This relieves them of the stress of what might happen to their families if they were dismissed from the churches they serve. In some situations, bivocational pastors actually have more personal resources than fully funded pastors because they have two sources of income.

2. Bivocational pastors often find more opportunities to witness to the lost than fully funded pastors because they spend more time with non-Christians through their secular employment.

3. Bivocational pastors seldom live in a "bubble" where only church people inhabit. Their secular employment requires them to interact with and understand better the needs of non-Christians. Therefore, they frequently feel they relate to the people in their congregations better than fully funded pastors because they "work" just like the laypeople do. These frequent interactions and the increased sense of relating to laypeople often help bivocational pastors have more realistic sermon illustrations and greater credibility in the pulpit.

4. Bivocational pastors have the ability to serve a larger number of churches because they can serve churches that cannot fully fund pastors. They also get to experience the joy of allowing churches to fund other needed ministries instead of so much of the churches' funding going to support their own salaries.

5. Bivocational pastors feel they are better able to encourage the churches they serve to create a culture whereby the laity use their gifts and they devote more time for ministry, since there were no fully funded pastors "paid" to "do everything" for congregations. Most bivocational pastors feel this creates healthy churches over the long term, though it sometimes creates more stress in the short term.

6. Bivocational pastors often feel it is easier to teach about financial stewardship and/or to solicit contributions from church members. This is because so little of the churches' funds are spent on the pastors' salaries; the pastor asking for money is not perceived as being "self-serving."

7. Bivocational pastors frequently express that they feel more dependent on the Holy Spirit in their sermon preparation and less dependent on their formal theological training or on their elocution or research skills. This greater sense of dependence on the Spirit is perceived as a positive thing by most bivocational pastors. It is interesting to note that the bivocational pastors who express this the most strongly often have previously served larger churches in which they had been fully funded.

8. Bivocational pastors sometimes say that being bivocational gives them valid excuses not to attend denominational meetings that they perceived as irrelevant, uninteresting, and/or promoting things that are not helpful to their own ministry. This does not mean they never attend meetings, but that their bivocational status makes them feel more comfortable attending only the meetings that



they perceive as being helpful and as being more applicable to their situation.

While bivocational ministry has many challenges, it also has many advantages. Learning what the advantages are can help bivocational pastors, or those considering bivocational ministry, feel better about their ministry. When bivocational pastors feel more confident about their roles, they tend to be more effective in their ministries. Churches and denominational leaders need to look for ways to help bivocational pastors celebrate the advantages of bivocational ministry, a growing reality in North American church life.

Terry Dorsett is director of the Green Mountain Baptist Association. For information, visit VermontBaptist.org. Visit his blog at TerryDorsett.com.





www.bmatexas.org

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From the Editor

Reminder: \$102 for 102 Years

Thank you to those who have already mailed *Baptist Progress* \$102 for 102 years of ministry. We are most appreciative of the churches, Sunday school classes, auxiliaries, groups and individuals who find value in the ministry we provide. If your church has not yet mailed an anniversary offering to *Baptist Progress*, please do so to P.O. Box 2085, Waxahachie, Texas 75168. Be sure to mark your check "Anniversary Offering." Thanks again!

Here I come!

I'm looking forward to the upcoming dates when I will be privileged to meet and worship with others in our BMA of Texas family.

SUNDAY, JULY 6 & MONDAY, JULY 7, 2014

Revival @ Little Flock, Jewett
I will preach each evening.
7 p.m.

TUESDAY, JULY 22, 2014

District Brotherhood & WMA @ Omen, Arp
I will sing a few songs and speak about the ministries of the BMA of Texas.
6 p.m.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 1, 2014

Revival @ Calvary, Ennis
I will sing a few songs before Bro. Grady Cashion preaches.
7 p.m.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2014

Harmony Baptist Association Annual Meeting @ First Missionary, Cleburne
I'll sing a few songs and preach the annual message.
1 p.m.

More Graduates

Due to human error (yes, I'm human), the names of some graduates were omitted from the list of high school graduates we published in our last issue. Please accept my apology. The names are in the boxed announcement below.



▲ Jerry Fulton

Baptist Progress

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Congratulations Class of 2014!

Cornerstone, Jacksonville

Erika Henderson
Erin McGlarity
Kenzie Moore
Kayla Beth Stewart

Enon, Gilmer

Whitney Champion
Katie Davidson
Shannon Dodson

Fairmeadows, Duncanville

Kirby Anderson
Tanner Holt
Dixie Lewis

First, Glenn Heights

Samantha Dwyer

Round Prairie, Fairfield

Travis Beasley Jr.
Danny Cockerell
Alexis Donohoo

Kolton Gatson

Taylor Gray
Francesco Guardigli
Chris Lide
Byron Mireles
Tate Overall
Sam Robinson
Carla Shamblin
Daniel Solley
Leah Townsend
Cade Warren

EVENTS

JUNE 21-22, 2014

70 Year Celebration & Open House of new facilities @ Northside, Conroe
701 N. Farm-to-Market 3083 West Sat., June 21—Open House, 2 to 4 p.m. w/a praise concert at 4 p.m.
Sun., June 22—Worship 10:30 a.m. w/lunch following

JULY 6-9 2014

Revival @ Little Flock, Jewett
Sunday, July 6 through Monday, July 7
Jerry Fulton, evangelist
Tuesday, July 8 through Wednesday, July 9
Dr. Charley Holmes, evangelist
Music led by: Phil Koster
Tad Traylor, pastor
7 p.m.

JULY 22, 2014

Smith County District Brotherhood & WMA Meeting @ Omen, Arp
Jerry Fulton, editor of Baptist Progress, guest singer & speaker Meal @ 6 p.m. Meeting @ 7 p.m.

JULY 29-AUGUST 2, 2014

Revival @ Calvary, Ennis
Tuesday, July 29 through Thursday, July 31
Tommy Oglesby, evangelist
Friday, Aug. 1 through Saturday, Aug. 2
Grady Cashion, evangelist
Ken Cashion, pastor
7 p.m.

AUGUST 3, 2014

Homecoming @ Calvary, Ennis
James Patterson, speaker
Worship @ 10 a.m.
Lunch, following worship

AUGUST 14, 2014

Lifeword Media Ministries Rally @ Woodland, Gilmer

APRIL 27, 2014

100 Year Anniversary @ First, Maydelle
11 a.m.

OCTOBER 13-14, 2014

Annual Liberty Baptist Association @ Little Mound, Big Sandy

NOVEMBER 4-5, 2014

Annual Meeting of the BMA of Texas @ Keltys First, Lufkin

PERSONNEL & POSITIONS

AVAILABLE POSITIONS

Pastor—South Main, Malvern, Ark. is seeking a pastor. Contact Gene Clements at 501-844-5822 or email resume to gclements@sbcglobal.net or mail to the church at 2027 South Main Street, Malvern, Ark. 72104. (1/3)

Interim Pastor—New Salem, Centerville, Texas (Centerview Community) at 8097 FM 811, is seeking an interim pastor. Contact Bro. AC Hoyt at 903-536-2616 for information. (TFN)

Music—Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden is seeking a bivocational music minister. Send resume to Attn: Pastor Craig Kearby, P.O. Box 99, Golden, Texas 75444 or pilgrimresttwo@gmail.com or call 903-768-2653. (TFN)

Music or Music & Youth—First, New Caney is seeking a bivocational music or music & youth minister. Send resume to Pastor Jonathan Fitzgerald, P.O. Box 1027, New Caney, Texas 77357 or to fbcnwcaney@att.net, or call 281-399-9930. (TFN)

AVAILABLE MINISTER

Grady Moore, who resides in Allen, is available for pulpit supply or interim pastor. Contact him at 972-727-7440 (home) or 817-403-4769 (cell).

PASTOR & STAFF CHANGES

Tom Dixon is the new pastor at Piney Creek, Kennard.

ORDINATION RESCHEDULED

The ordination of Dane Goode to the Gospel Ministry has been reschedule for June 29 at 2:30 p.m. at Lakeside, Trinidad. The date was postponed due to a death in the family.

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CHURCHES IN REVIEW

JUNE 1, 2014

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Anthony Drive, Ennis	75	102	
Bethel, Groesbeck	32	40	
Cedar Creek, Teague	12	24	
Farley Street, Waxahachie	452	564	
First, Blooming Grove		202	
First, New Summerfield	37	52	2 By Letter
First, Palmer	51	74	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	24	38	
Harvest, Lufkin	20	25	
Jackson, Joaquin	61	102	1 By Letter
Little Flock, Lufkin		15	
Long Creek, Sunnyvale	55	80	
New Harmony, Tyler	273	386	
New Haven, Dallas	31	52	1 By Baptism, 2 By Statement
New Hope, Mineola	65	118	
Pine Brook, Tyler	34	68	
Rosewood, Gilmer		155	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	15	26	
Woodland, Splendora	43	62	

JUNE 8, 2014

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Anthony Drive, Ennis	75	95	
Bethel, Groesbeck	31	41	
Cedar Creek, Teague	14	22	
Ebenezer Friendship, Pittsburg	35	50	
Farley Street, Waxahachie	432	508	
First, Palmer	42	72	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	16	34	
Harvest, Lufkin	30	35	
Jackson, Joaquin	55	87	
Little Flock, Lufkin		70	
Long Creek, Sunnyvale	72	93	
Merriman Hills, Sherman	19	20	
New Harmony, Tyler	238	327	
New Hope, Mineola	63	102	
Pine Brook, Tyler	36	81	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	18	25	
Temple, Mexia	31	42	
Woodland, Splendora	43	63	

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

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ENDOWMENTS

E. ANN PACE: R. T. Willis-Attorney at Law, P.C., Mr. & Mrs. Karl Pace
MYRA STOKES: Mr. Bill Stokes

HONORARIUMS

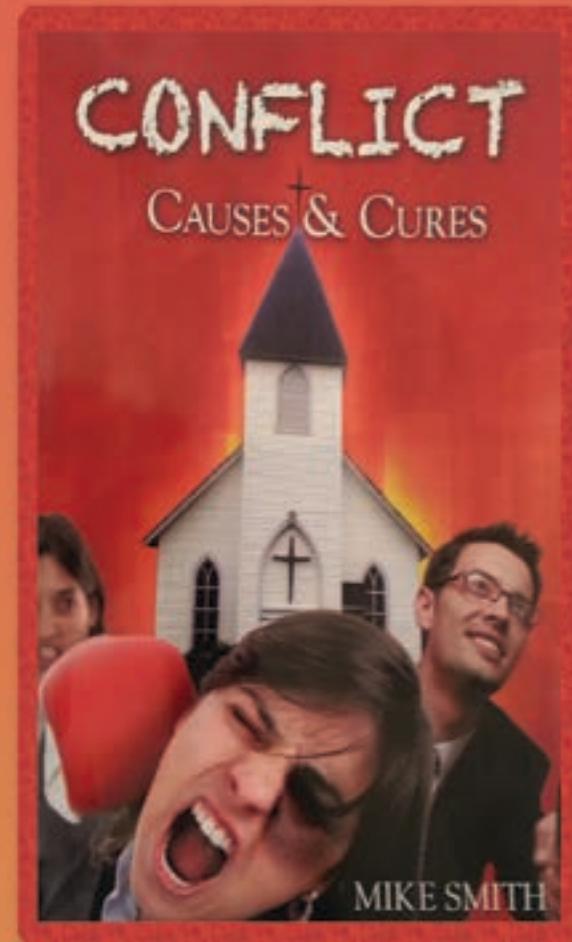
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ALL LITTLE CHILDREN: Charles & Vera Baucum
LILYANNA ARMSTRONG: The Moral Courage Foundation
JOSEPH CELSUR: The Moral Courage Foundation
CLYDE & BETTY DEAR: Mr. & Mrs. James Gunnels
MY GRANDCHILDREN: Mr. & Mrs. James O Hill
LAUREN HENDRIKS: The Moral Courage Foundation
AMY HERNANDEZ: The Moral Courage Foundation
JIM HYMER'S BIRTHDAY: Bro. & Mrs. Charles M. Johnson
RON & PAM KURTZ: Mr. & Mrs. J. F. Townley
CLAIRE LAVIOLETTE: The Moral Courage Foundation
ANDY MENDOZA: The Moral Courage Foundation
ALYSON MOORE: The Moral Courage Foundation
BRO. JIM PARKER'S 70TH BIRTHDAY: Harris Miller
PASTORS & MISSIONARIES EVERYWHERE: Mr. & Mrs. Roy Talbot
PHILIP, SILAS, TIMOTHY, SERENITY: Paul Zipp
EMMA PICKARD: The Moral Courage Foundation
CALVIN & VERNELLE RAYES: Mrs. Gloria Sutton
SIDNEY A SHARP: Ida N. Sharp
CHARLES SOUTHARD: Mr. & Mrs. Greg Price
STAFF AT TBHC: Mrs. B. H. Conn
RACHEL & ANNA USSERY: Lamar & Peggy Lee
IDA WADDELL: Mr. Noble Midkiff
EMMA WATSON: The Moral Courage Foundation

MEMORIALS

ALVIS & THEDA ADAMS: Mary Adams
CHARLES M ADAMS: Delores Adams
M/M ROY ANDERS: Raymond & Opal Anders
LAVERNE "VERNE" BAILEY: Bro. & Mrs. Charles M. Johnson
EZRA BEASON: Walter Dunn
WALTER BECKER: Dennis & Ilona Myrice
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HEATH: Jimmy & Cynthia Green
JOHN HELMS: Shady Grove Baptist Church
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MOODY & ALICE HOLLEMAN: Martha Miley
JERRY HUDSON: Red Springs Miss Baptist Church
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BILLY KING: Mrs. Margaret King
LAURI KUOPPALA: Mr & Mrs Larry C Gibbs
STEVE LANGFORD: Bro. & Mrs. Charles M. Johnson
JOE LISKA: Mrs. Mary Liska

TBH Memorials continued on p. 7

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TBH Memorials continued from p. 6

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CLARENCE MILEY: Martha Miley

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JOHN ROGERS: J.B. & Jean Dirt

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ROBERT E SEAGO: Mrs. Jo Ann Sikes

JOHN STACY: Mary Gilbert Hunt

BRUCE & WANDA STANELEY: Valera Green

WANDA STANSIFER: Raymond O. Dennis

BOB THOMMAN: Mrs. Roberta Thomman

MERLE THORNTON: Tracy & Rose Moore

PAT DE VILLIER: Tracy & Rose Moore

BRO. IRA WADDELL: Mr. Noble Midkiff

BILL WALKER: Temple Baptist Church

NOVIS WILLEY: Walter Dunn

T. J. WILLIAMSON: Joyce Williamson

LURLINE WILSON: Mr. & Mrs. Larry C Gibbs, Hal's Air Conditioning, Huey Penton, Clyde & Debra Wilson,

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JOYCE WORLEY: Mr. & Mrs. Larry C Gibbs

CATHY YORDY: Bro. & Mrs. Charles M. Johnson

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Family Matters

It's just never good enough

By DR. TRAVIS PLUMLEE

I have a friend who is a pastor's wife. At the surface, she is all smiles and full of the love for Jesus and everyone. At closer examination, she has low self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy. Her low self-esteem and feelings lead to a lifestyle of trying to do everything just right, and gaining acceptance from others.

When the lady who plays the piano for the church every Sunday has to leave for vacation or some special family event, this forces her to take on the role of playing the piano for morning services. She hates it. She gets ill thinking about it the night before. She doesn't sleep. She thinks everyone is criticizing her and finding fault with her piano playing because she doesn't know how to play very well, as she only knows a few hymns.

I sat down with her at a women's conference to examine the reason. Why do you feel like you are locked in a performance trap? You have to do certain things for others, and you must do them correctly or you beat yourself up. You are an approval addict. You must have people accept you. If they criticize you, your self worth falls flat.

And that was it. She grew up with a mom who always criticized everything she did. No matter how successful it was, no matter how hard she tried, it was never good enough for her mom. Her mom is no longer alive, yet she is still trying to overcome these feelings that she will never be good enough.

When she gets up to play the piano, she can still hear her mother's voice in her head. She doesn't smile when she plays. She is not playing for the Lord but for the approval of others.

For some of you, the title of this article alone, "It's just never good enough," gives you a sinking feeling in the pit of your stomach. For others, it is something worth exploring the impact in your own life.

This article will address the enormous impact of what living with someone who has a critical spirit does to your mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. It isn't always a parent who affects a child. There are many spouses who talk to me at break in a marriage retreat, or hand me a little slip of paper asking me to address the issue of living with a spouse who always criticizes. While that may be an exaggeration, the overall lifestyle of the home is one where you have a daily dose of criticism.

Having a critical spirit towards others is a total failure. People think that by pointing out all the mistakes, or areas of laziness that someone else has, they will be motivating this person to rise to their levels of expectations. But in reality, it does just the opposite. It so demoralizes the person that eventually they lose all motivation to succeed.

They will push themselves to be perfect and a workaholic. This is common in children who grow up with a parent who



is critical. The child so loves their parent that they want to please them at all costs. So they push themselves to the breaking point only to find out in the end it's just never good enough. This is not healthy.

Kids who are raised in such an environment, as adults, become perfectionists, workaholics or obsessive-compulsive people with no self-esteem. They never feel like they are good enough even for God. Their whole life is spent living out a script that plays in their head that they are never good enough and must always do better. They experience no joy, no peace and a lot of stress.

Sometimes the person living with a critical person just gives up. This is common in marriages. Why bother to help. All you will do is criticize, nag or complain. I will just withdraw. I can't be successful in your world, so I will pull away and isolate myself and my true feelings towards you. All intimacy in the relationship ends at this point, and the person starts drifting away. They get busy doing other things.

So, if you feel like I am talking to you, then you need to do a massive, long-term Bible study of who you are in Christ. Don't just get a head knowledge but a heart wisdom. Learn from the Bible that God accepts you 100 percent forever. John 6:37, Hebrews 13:5

Once in Christ, even when you mess up really bad, He still loves and accepts you. Romans 8:38-39

Don't let someone from your past dominate your present and future. Nail it to the cross. If it is someone you deal with today; then don't let them have victory over you. You have

victory in Christ. The person criticizing isn't perfect either. Jesus died for them too. Do the best you can and punt the rest. You can't do any task to make you more acceptable to God. You are always acceptable to Him because of Christ.

You don't have to have everyone's approval. I told the pastor's wife, go up there and have fun, play for the Lord and don't worry about what others are thinking. Smile and know that He will never disapprove of you.

I told her that God loves to hear His daughter play the piano for Him. As you sit down at that bench, repeat these words of scripture: Colossians 3:23, "*And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.*"

It is a long process of growth for her, but she is getting free. I saw her sit down on the piano bench that Sunday morning, close her eyes (I knew what verse she was repeating) then she looked up and beamed a smile at everyone and played. She was playing for the Lord for the first time, and she wasn't worried about what others thought about her.

Dr. Travis Plumlee is a full-time professional speaker and leads Family Ark Ministries. He is national board certified as a therapist/specialist in various areas of human behavior. For more information or to contact him, visit www.travisplumlee.com.



Christian Living

Seeking God's guidance

By PAUL GAUNTT

The late, great Dan McBride, a Baptist minister and comedian, wrote scores of songs poking a little good natured fun at some of the quirks of church people—and one, in particular, was a parody, bearing the lyrics, “It must have been the will of the Lord because it seemed so right to me.”

While his lyrics were humorous, they could be painfully accurate. He touched on an issue which is common with most all of God's people—especially when it comes to seeking His guidance.

I hesitantly, but firmly admit to having tried to shove a door open the Lord closed. I'm also fairly certain I missed a blatantly open door, created by Him.

What about this issue of seeking God's leadership? How can one know God's plan, and discern the direction of the steps He has ordered for us?

Probably the most profound message I've ever read on the subject was published by well-known BMA pastor/evangelist, Kenneth Bobo, many years ago. He said **special Divine guidance won't come when there is sin in your life.** Psalm 66:18 says, “*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.*”

Special Divine guidance will not come when it is already spelled out in His Holy Word. We don't have to spend time on our knees asking God if we are to be faithful to His church. The Great Commission (Matthew 28) has already answered that. We

don't have to spend time praying about being a faithful witness -- it's already spelled out in Acts 1:8.

Special Divine guidance doesn't violate sanctified common reasoning. It's just a hunch, but I would guess the Prodigal Son took leave of sanctified common reasoning when he demanded his inheritance from his father and left home to squander it. A woman once told me she, as a preacher's wife, was “led of the Lord” to smoke in order to keep her from being elevated in pride. That's not the way God leads. He will never lead one to become a drunk in order to effectively lead alcoholics to the Lord; He will never lead someone to be an adulterer in order to better witness in houses of ill repute. God will never lead a person to sin -- but He is the Master at forgiving and cleansing the sinner of sin and making him or her fit to reach others for Christ.

Special Divine guidance will never violate the peace of God in your heart. Col. 3:15 When I was a senior in high school, I had a chance to participate in a modern dance in our a cappella choir's presentation of *West Side Story*. I accepted the challenge, and buried myself in rehearsal. But there was this other nagging thought in my head—I'm music director at my dad's church; there will be lots of church members present at the production. I asked my dad to tell me what to do—and his answer was, “Son, it's totally up to you.” The dance wasn't lewd or even suggestive. But that wasn't the point. My spirit was restless and conflicted.

The peace of God was being violated. I called the girl in charge and asked her to get a replacement. It was the right thing to do — because it was God's Divine guidance.

When does Divine guidance come?

It comes to a heart that is thirsty for God—a heart, which daily wears a path to the Throne of God in confession of sin; a heart that diligently searches the scripture, in order to know the character, the mind and Person of God the Father; a heart which pleads for God's Divine wisdom.

Psalm 32:8 “I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.” Condition yourself to hear the still small voice of God. He wants you to know where He is leading you.

Paul Gauntt is the former 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 paul.gauntt@att.net.



Master's Builders work at Daniel Springs

By NELDA MALONE
Master's Builders Reporter

The Master's Builders arrived at Daniel Springs on May 12. Thirteen men were there to work on Cabin 13. Work on the cabin included remodeling the bathroom. They also built bunk beds, forms for the steps to the bookstore and replaced doors on some of the cabins. There is still a lot of work to be done at Daniel Springs. If a church or individual would like to donate funds for the materials, The Master's Builders are willing to do the work.

Thanks to Bro. James Speers for treating us to a wonderful meal before we were left. The Builders are now in Jacksonville working on a new dorm at Jacksonville College. The dorm project is the 130th job for the group and the last before September.

If you would like to visit and see what our men are doing, we would love it! Our prayer is for God to send men to help in this ministry. It is by watching, learning and assisting that most of our men have developed their skills in carpentry. Most have had very little carpentry training, so don't think you have to be skilled to work alongside us. You will find that the blessings in this ministry just keep on coming as we work for our Lord.

If your church has building needs or if you are interested in working with The Builders, please contact: Office Coordinator John Mangum at 318-202-5155 or (cell) 318-607-4100 or Field Coordinator Eddie Sikes at 903-725-6549 or (cell) 479-462-1675.



Auxiliaries

Get your hammer ready

By SHARON COLE

To date we have raised \$7,108.78 for the Master's Builders. The amount received is almost half of our goal of \$15,000. We need every one to hit the "nail" on the head!

Our Texas WMA Project this year benefits the Master's Builders organization. We would like to be a part of blessing them with a tool truck. Many of their projects require a number of tools to be used and must be transported from one job site to another. A new tool truck would remove their current limitations and allow the continued blessings of serving others.

The Master's Builders have been serving for 22 years. They have completed 125 projects, 57 of them in Texas. What ideas can you invent for raising money toward this endeavor? How can you inspire your local church to get involved? Help the Master's Builders get the tool truck they need to continue building for Christ! You will be blessed. To receive a blessing beyond measure, send your offerings to: Texas State WMA Project, Jo Strong, 149 NW Suzanne Terrace, Burleson, TX 76028. Contact her at 9817-480-0888, joekenstrong@juno.com.

Bible study: The lifeblood of our faith

After God's Own Heart is another very good book to study for any ladies' group, local WMA or personal study. Written by Lynn Silvey, the 15 week study is about one of the most fascinating characters of the Bible, David. He had to follow in his brothers' shadow until he became the hero when he killed Goliath of the Philistines.

Even as a boy, he was anointed by Samuel to be King of Israel after Saul. Through many trials and running from Saul, David never denied his God. Did David make mistakes in his life? Of course, he did. That is why it is such a wonderful study; because we make mistakes too. Don't miss out on this great book. You and your ladies will love this book. Contact Lynn Silvey at 936-269-3954; P.O. Box 113 Joaquin, TX 75954 or Lynnsilvey@hotmail.com. The cost of the book is \$5.00.

Consider being a Texas WMA officer

Ladies, there are more opportunities to serve the Lord than in your local church. Consider serving as an officer on the state level. You will never meet a more loving, caring, cooperative group of ladies whose only desire is to serve the Lord and continue to promote our churches, our missionaries and our BMA of Texas Departments.

It is time again to decide if God is asking you to serve. Don't be too quick to say, "Not me." Remember, God doesn't call the qualified, he qualifies the called. Serving God as a state officer has been one of the highlights of my adult life. During my tenure I have made life-long friends, been mentored by some of the greatest Christian examples around, and stepped out of my comfort zone (this is a good thing!). Don't think "I can't," think "God can." Listed below are the qualifications of an officer. If you feel led to pursue this adventure, please let me know by phone, 903-586-4249, or



e-mail, cindylynn90@gmail.com. The nominating committee will meet in July, so do not delay. Don't miss out on a blessing God has reserved for you. Cindy Allen

Qualifications:

- Be an active member of her local church
- Be active in local and district WMA
- Be able to attend regular state and officer meetings
- Be active in the area of work necessary
- Be able to attend workshops and seminars as needed
- Be willing to make the commitment of time and effort that are necessary to serve.
- Please prayerfully consider this opportunity of service.

National WMA project

Brochures are in the process of being completed but until we get them and get more information on our website, you can learn about the project: BMMI Laos: Hope for Health and Healing: a nutrition program for Laos (sticky rice). Sticky Rice is a common food in Laos. It is usually served in a section of bamboo. Basic hygiene and cleanliness in food preparation and service are not common in many places which can lead to many diseases. You can learn more by looking at the National WMA Facebook page. You can find pictures on this page to use in your missions programs in your groups and churches. Your contributions can make a difference in the future health of many precious children. Mark contributions National WMA Project and mail to Pat Duncan, P.O. Box 30, Hardy, AR 72542, patduncan3314@

yahoo.com. Also, information can be found on the National WMA Website: www.nationalwmaofbmaa.net.

Texas Sunbeams Houseparty

The Texas State Sunbeam Houseparty is fast approaching. It is planned for July 18-19, 2014 at Jacksonville College. All boys and girls from birth through 3rd grade are involved in Sunbeams. Much planning for the program has already been done and we are anxiously awaiting the arrival of this time to share what we have been doing all year. We give these boys and girls a chance to see what it is like to be leaders. We give them responsibilities of being officers and teach them to follow a program and parliamentary procedure. It will amaze you what these little ones can do. There will be food, fun and games, crafts and uplifting spiritual time. The theme this year is "Sonwest Round Up" and theme verse is Hebrews 13:8. Our project is the Work Fund for Bro. Tommy and Sara Rose, missionaries to Mexico. The goal is \$2,000. For more information contact the Sunbeam Promoter, Sandra Kizer, 903-767-1756 or Kizerfamily7@yahoo.com.

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.



Sunday School Lessons

A Servant's Heart

By GARY HOUSE

DATE: June 22, 2014

TEXT: Acts 21:1-14

LESSON IN BRIEF: God has a plan for your life and service. Be humbly determined to do God's will rather than your own. *Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is* (Ephesians 5:17).

In today's text, Paul is convinced that his place within the will of God was for him to go up to Jerusalem. The friends of Paul were persuaded that some kind of harm would befall Paul if he continued his journey and go to Jerusalem. They were troubled so much that they ask Paul not to go.

GOD HAS A PLAN AND A PURPOSE. All Christians want to know where they fit within God's will. We want to know His will concerning major decisions, such as the career that we should pursue, the person that we should marry and the place where we should live. If you know Christ as Savior and Lord, you want to please Him in every aspect of life by making wise decisions in line with His will. It takes a sensitive heart to determine and do the will of God.

GOD'S WILL IS SOMETIMES HARD TO UNDERSTAND. Be obedient. Much of God's will is revealed in the commands and principles of His Word. You don't need to pray for guidance in these areas. But how do we discern God's will when the scripture is silent? There is no simple, mechanical formula in scripture for discerning

God's will in specific situations. God primarily guides us through our relationship with Him, as we grow to understand His Word and learn to walk daily by His Holy Spirit.

Our text and the history of Paul in Acts reveals some principles on how to discern God's will. We should walk so closely with God that we discern His guidance as we live in obedience to His Word, depending on His Holy Spirit.

PRINCIPLES FOR DISCERNING GOD'S WILL (Adapted from a sermon by Steven Cole).

1. To discern the will of God, you must write God a blank check with your life. If we want to see God's will, then we must commit ourselves to doing things His way. It is futile to speculate about God's will unless you are 100 percent committed to obeying it. But you must yield your entire life to Him, trusting that His will is good, acceptable, and perfect (Rom. 12:1-2). Paul had long since done that, so that he could now say, *"I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus"* (Acts 21:13).

2. To discern God's will, you must grow to know Him intimately through His Word and His Spirit. Paul had known the Lord and walked closely with Him for years at this point. I think that as best as he knew how, Paul was seeking to obey the Lord by going to Jerusalem.

3. To discern the will of God, you must act on biblical principles, not human wisdom.

Human wisdom and logic would say that we should avoid a course of action that will lead us into obvious trials. But sometimes God's will is to be glorified through His servants as they endure various trials, or even through their martyrdom.

4. To discern the will of God, analyze your gifts, motives, and desires in light of God's sovereign purpose of being glorified among the nations. A key question, which is not always easy to answer, is, **"Where can I be the most effective in furthering God's kingdom in light of my gifts?"** In addition to our gifts and how we can best be used, we need to examine our motives and desires. Am I truly seeking God's glory and not my own?

5. To discern the will of God, you must listen to and evaluate the counsel of godly believers. Our text says that *"through the Spirit"* these believers told Paul not to set foot in Jerusalem (21:4). Some say Paul directly disobeyed the commanded will of God. Paul was directly inspired by the Spirit. So they see it not as Paul's rejecting God's command, but rather as God's revealing what would happen. Paul's resolve to stand alone, even against a group of godly men who were unified in pleading with him not to go, may show how firmly he believed that he was in the will of God.

6. To discern God's will, you must prayerfully evaluate the circumstances that God providentially brings into your life. The

same set of circumstances can be interpreted in a number of ways, and so we need to be careful in how we evaluate them.

7. After prayerfully following all of the above, in dependence on God, you must follow your own sound judgment, conscience and convictions, submitting to the consequences. Ultimately, each person must determine God's will. You can't blame others for the decisions that you make.

What if you make a mistake in discerning the will of God? If you come to realize that your mistake was due to stubbornness, self-will, or pride, confess it and ask God to overrule your mistake. I do not think that Paul sinned by going to Jerusalem, but I'm not sure whether or not he made the wisest decision. But God used Paul's prison years for His glory, and He can use our mistakes and even our rebellion if we submit to Him and seek to please Him.

For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 21:13). Paul's decision to go to Jerusalem despite the dangers predicted by the Holy Spirit (through caring men who were concerned for his well-being) was not a result of rebellion, but an obedient response to the command of the Holy Spirit to his heart. If we are going to be true servants of God, we must learn how to know God's will and we must begin to follow through on doing His will.

United for Service

By GARY HOUSE

DATE: June 29, 2014

TEXT: Acts 21:17-25

LESSON IN BRIEF: Believers stand together to serve God. Our words and actions have direct impact on the unity of the church.

Paul's determination to go to Jerusalem (recall last week's lesson) prompted others to accompany him. Not one voice was heard to say, "Well, Paul, you are own your own." Cooperation is necessary for the protection of unity in the church.

PRAISE (Acts 21:17). This is a straightforward verse, but I couldn't help contrasting this with how Paul was received the first time he came to Jerusalem and introduced himself to the Jerusalem church approximately 20 years prior! Read Acts 9:26. What an incredible turn-around, from your mere name causing fear, to being welcomed openly! The brethren, including James, the Pastor, received Paul and his entourage gladly. The next day, Paul recounted what God had done among the gentiles through his ministry (verse 19). Paul told the Jerusalem leaders about the things God was doing through his ministry. It was not Paul doing the work, it was God. James and the

elders gave praise (glorified) God for what Paul reported (verse 20). Praise is the natural positive expression that comes from a believer when they see God at work around them.

PROBLEM (Acts 21:21-22). The Jews were happy to hear that the gospel had effectively reached a large number of gentiles. Unfortunately, there were still some Jews who were not thrilled with the idea of Gentiles being saved without keeping the Law of Moses. People have been spreading lies that Paul had been teaching Jewish converts that they should abandon the Jewish customs and that they no longer should follow the laws as given by Moses. In Jerusalem, many of the Christian believers were Jews and, as described here "zealous" for the law. They, of course, would be quite offended that a fellow believer was teaching that Jews should no longer circumcise their children, etc.

PROPOSAL (Acts 21: 22-24). The elders know that Paul needs to do something publicly to set to rest this controversy surrounding him. Paul is being asked here not only to join in the purification rites, but also to pay for the expense of the sacrifices, as well as to notify the priests when their days of purification would be fulfilled

so that they could prepare to do the sacrifice. All this would have been a very **public** act and Jews of the community would have seen that Paul was willing to participate in Jewish customs. (See Numbers 6:1-21 for the requirements of a Nazarite vow.)

PARTICIPATION (Acts 21:26). Paul did what was asked of him and publicly demonstrated that he had no difficulty participating in Jewish rituals or in paying for them out of his own pocket. I think this is a wonderful demonstration of Christian submission. Paul was more than willing to make this personal sacrifice.

PURPOSE. This action by Paul would demonstrate to all that what they heard about Paul was not true.

This passage offers a four step approach for managing a crisis. We should apply these procedures when faced with differences among believers (From the *Compass teacher*).

They clearly describe the problem that Paul's presence in Jerusalem would arouse (verse 21).

They anticipated where the problem would make itself known (verse 22).

They had specific plans to solve the problem (verses 23-24).

They identified common ground that all could agree to (verse 25).

Be united in cooperation with others in addressing problems within the church.

Summary: The main thought of this passage is that our words and actions have a direct impact on the unity of the church. If we desire to live in a way that honors God, then we'd better place a very high premium on promoting unity within His church. It's not about me. It's about Christ in me and you. It's about Christ in us, changing our selfish natures to loving ones. It's about Christ in us, teaching us not to repay evil with evil, but to move in the opposite spirit and show genuine kindness—even to those who wrong us.

Gary House is the writer of the Sunday school lessons for Baptist Progress. He serves as pastor of Tundra Baptist Church in Canton. Contact him at Tundraparson@aol.com.



MORAL ACTION

2014 FREEDOM OFFERING

June 29th & July 6th



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