

Baptist Progress

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WEIGHING IN ON THE ECONOMIC SECURITY ACT

Never in our nation’s history has the economy come to a standstill as it has over the past month. Financial and economic analysts agree that a possible major recession, which is essentially a twenty-first century term for depression, is looming large.

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and its impact on the economy, the U.S. Federal Government passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to assist citizens, businesses and non-profits in navigating through these unprecedented circumstances. The legislation, which is the largest economic relief package in history, provides benefits to citizens in the form of cash payments, enhanced unemployment benefits and delayed tax obligations.

Benefits afforded to businesses and nonprofits include payroll protection loans and other extended financing options. Given this backdrop and the inherent burden on their congregants, many church leaders are weighing their options and wondering if they should lead their congregations to apply for provisions contained in the CARES Act. This dilemma brings to mind Ronald Heifetz’s book *Leadership Without Easy Answers*.

Granted, one could build a decent argument for or against the church’s involvement. On one hand, as Baptists, we have a long-held belief that “separation of church and state” is a measure to protect individual consciences, churches and other religions from governmental intervention. If a church or faith-based nonprofit were to accept a provision such as that

offered in the CARES Act, would it possibly open the door to the governmental intervention that might impact our religious liberties in the future?

On the other hand, Baptists, along with other denominations, have long been recipients of substantial governmental provisions that are typically accepted without reservation. Notable examples of these benefits include the Ministers Housing Allowance and exemption from property taxes.

Of course, based on our ecclesiology, whether or not a church applies for provisions in the CARES Act rests with the local body. In an association of 1,200 plus churches, there are diverse views with regard to their internal structure, the way they conduct business and the establishment of congregational policies. For instance, some churches feel at liberty to borrow money from external sources for capital expansion when the need arises and others feel convicted that they should never take on debt.

Another consideration for church leaders pertains to the Baptist Missionary Association Doctrinal Statement. Would receiving funds from the CARES Act provision be analogous to receiving a government subsidy? To think through this matter, one might consider the original intent of the writers of the document and the church messengers approving it.

It does not seem likely that that they could envision and address an economic anomaly such as the one we are currently facing. Perhaps a key aspect for leaders to evaluate in this situation is to determine if there are inherent obligations built into the benefits afforded.

The provision offered in the CARES Act does not indicate any expectations from churches with regard to government mandates.

The “subsidy language” in the Doctrinal Statement would seem to relate to an ongoing, obligatory form of government funding versus an isolated and unencumbered provision to keep church workers gainfully employed and off government unemployment benefits.

Notwithstanding, regardless of the position a church or pastor takes, we as the body of Christ must be mindful that congregations will respond to the situation differently and there is room for diverse views without breaching fellowship.

Although the loan program will remain in place until June 30, 2020, there is a funding cap. With thousands of businesses and nonprofits alike making application, the demand for benefits greatly outweighs the provision. If your church or nonprofit entity does wish to apply, resources are available to aid you in the process and can be found at www.ministersresourceservices.com under the *Forms & Resources* tab.

Note: This article contains the collective input of departmental directors located at the BMA Global Ministry Center (GMC) in Conway, Arkansas. These opinions in no way represent those of the association at large nor other departmental or agency directors not located at the GMC.



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MAKING PROGRESS

A different world, a renewed focus

By **JERRY FULTON**

It seems as if, one day, we were living life in what we knew to be normal conditions, then, the next morning, we awoke to a different world. The Coronavirus Pandemic has turned the world and the church upside down, or perhaps I should say, right side up. We have all been forced to adjust our lives during these trying times. We are having to do things as we have never done them before as individuals, families and churches.

Despite sickness, death and job loss, we can find a silver lining in the cloud that hangs over us. The pandemic has been a blessing in many ways, as we have been forced to communicate with each other, minister to others and dedicate ourselves to the worship of our Lord in new ways. God has used this time to move us outside the church walls and truly be the church—a local body of baptized believers commissioned by Christ, Himself, to literally take the gospel into a lost and dying world. This pandemic has also reminded us of just how much we have focused on the world—riches and entertainment—and just how much more we need to focus on Jesus.

I don't know who wrote it, but he or she has penned exactly what I'm attempting to express in a better way than I ever could. Consider the following:

In three short months, just like he did with the plagues of Egypt, God has taken away everything we worship. God said "you want to worship athletes, I will shut down the stadiums.

You want to worship musicians. I will shut down civic centers.

You want to worship actors. I will shut down theaters.

You want to worship money. I will shut down the economy and collapse the stock market.

You don't want to go to church and worship Me. I will make it where you can't go to church."

"If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from Heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

Maybe we need to take this time of isolation from the distractions of the world and have a personal revival where we focus on the ONLY thing in the world that really matters—Jesus!

Father, help us to do just that—focus on the ONLY thing in the world that really matters—Jesus!



▲ Jerry Fulton

This issue

This issue includes recommendations from BMA of America departments, agencies, committees and the Coordinating Council. Due to the fact that the BMA of America will not be meeting this year, each church is asked to complete and mail a ballot. Each church may mail one ballot, and it must be received by April 29. The ballot and mailing information can be found on page 13 of this issue. Recommendations are included throughout this issue.

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BMA of America Proposed Resolution on Beholding the Majesty of God First Baptist Church • Cave Springs, Ark.

Whereas, the Scriptures are filled with robust, soul-piercing revelation of the triune God in majesty (Exod. 15:11) as He is utterly unique in His transcendence, since He is infinite (Job 11:7-9), eternal (Psa. 90:2), and unchangeable in His being (James 1:17, Exod. 3:14), wisdom (Psa. 147:5), power (Rev. 4:8), holiness (Isa. 6:3), justice, goodness, and truth (Exod. 34:6), and

Whereas, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 9:10) and the Apostle Paul prayed that the church in Colossae would increase in its knowledge of God (Col. 1:9-10), and

Whereas, the Baptist Missionary Association of America stands in great need of growing in our fear of the Lord and knowledge of Him, and

Whereas, the Lord of hosts is jealous for His own glory, refusing to share it with any false gods (Isa. 42:8), and dishonored when His people turn to sources outside of His divine revelation in order to analyze or understand the greatest need of a pagan and godless culture (II Tim. 3:16-17), and

Whereas, God will not hold those guiltless who take His name in vain (Exod. 20:7) by thinking less of Him than they ought, knowing less of Him than they ought, and loving Him less than they ought, and

Whereas, lack of awareness of the majesty of God is the root cause of so many serious issues churches and denominations, even our Baptist brethren, face in the 21st century (Psa. 115:8), including, but not limited to, the lack of trust in the sufficiency of Scripture, being pro-LGBTQ+ lifestyles; having women preaching to and teaching/exercising authority over men in the church (I Tim. 2:12), ignoring sexual abuse and covering it up, a lack of concern for evangelism, purporting a man-centered theology, and lacking biblical church discipline and concern for

regenerate church membership in local churches, and

Whereas, our triune God is honored and glorified by His people when they humbly adore Him for who He is and seek to adjust their lives in all ways possible to conformity of His will as revealed in His Scriptures (John 4:23-24), and

Whereas, the chief end of our existence is to glorify this great and holy God and to enjoy Him forever and ever (Psa. 145:1-3), now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the messengers to the BMA of America Annual Meeting, assembled in Waxahachie, Texas, April 27-30, 2020, (sic) acknowledge our desire to worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness as He is revealed in the Scriptures; and be it further

Resolved, That we call upon all BMA churches, pastors, departments, agencies, leaders, laypersons, and associations to repent of any and all ways that God has not been honored, through sins of blatant disregard of His Word or sins of ignorance or neglect of His Word; and be it further

Resolved, That we call upon all BMA Baptists to behold the Majesty of God in humble reverence through means of prayer and Bible intake, both corporately and personally, and having an intentional local church focus on preaching the majesty of God in regular Sunday services as well as special emphases throughout the year on beholding God together; and be it finally

Resolved, That we warn churches and individuals who do not take the majesty of God seriously that not only will there be adverse consequences in this life, but also in the one to come.

Unanimously Approved for submission in the Regular Business Conference of First Baptist Church, Cave Springs Arkansas of March 8, 2020; Michael Battenfield, Pastor; Gaylene Vanhook, Church Clerk

Moral Action Proposed Resolutions

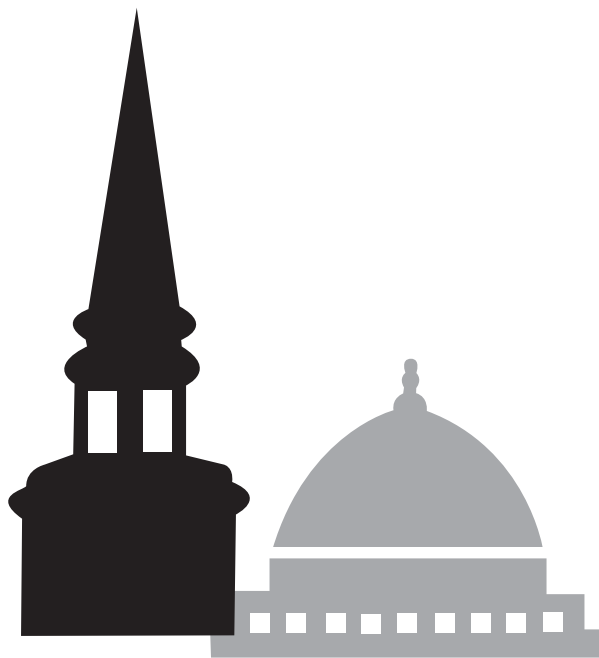
• **For the U.S. Coins** — “In God We Trust” was first inscribed on American coinage in 1864 and in 1956 Congress made it the National Motto of the United States. We resolve to continue supporting this.

• **For the U.S. Congress** — Congress has opened its session with prayer since 1774, usually given by its official chaplain in both houses. We resolve to continue support of these prayers.

• **For the U.S. Flag** — Congress placed “Under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance in 1954 to combat the rise of atheism and communism. We resolve to continue this pledge.

• **For the U.S. Court** — Since 1820, the U.S. Supreme Court has opened its sessions with the unison prayer of “God save the United States and this Honorable Court.” We resolve to support this prayer pledge.

• **For the Presidential Oath** — Since the first president George Washington added “so help me God” to the inaugural oath April 30, 1789, every U.S. President since has likewise asked for God’s help in their Presidency. We resolve to continue supporting this brave oath.



The Gift of Peace For Such a Time as This!

“The breast cancer has metastasized.” Crushing, paralyzing words from the doctor fell hard on Lisa’s unsuspecting ears as her mind raced to dispute the harsh diagnosis. This wasn’t her first encounter with the “C” word nor was it the first time she had been surprised. My friend Lisa isn’t naïve. She’s optimistic and looks for good in every situation. Here is a portion of Lisa’s Facebook post on March 15 after receiving bad news from a recent PET scan: “The silver lining is that it is still contained in my bones which is better than soft tissue like lungs, liver or brain. . .” She added: “More than likely, it will be IV chemo again. Here’s to Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow. I’ll have a party again if I get to that point . . .”

Don’t misunderstand. Recently Lisa shared some of her doubts and fears after her first diagnosis in 2008. Struggling with a lot of “what ifs” and even a few all-night crying sessions, Lisa scanned the internet to research but still felt as though she was stumbling through the dark without answers.

Twelve years later she shared the following in her March 15 Facebook post:

“A couple of things I do know. I accepted the gift of grace Jesus gave us when He went to the cross and died for our sins. I know that in Ephesians 3:20 (from the Message) that ‘God can do anything . . . far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams!’ God could choose to heal me here on earth OR give ultimate healing where I will be dancing in heaven with no disease. . . I trust wherever He takes me.” She closed with this prayer: “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

When I asked Lisa how she is doing today, she answered: “I am a Metastatic Breast Cancer person with a terminal diagnosis, but I have peace. God’s peace.” Several years ago a caring friend prayed for her and shared Philippians 4:7. This became her life verse, bringing comfort and contentment—even when the diagnosis stinks! Thank you, Lisa Wilkinson, for sharing your personal testimony and for guiding us to this passage during these trying, turbulent times in which we live today.

Paul was in prison when he wrote these words, but even then, he practiced what he preached. As life in our own neighborhood and all around the world seems to be tipping over, out of control and hanging on by a weak thread, read verses four through six to receive the promise of verse seven. My summary:

(1) Rejoice because God’s in control. (2) Be kind. (3) Don’t worry. (4) Pray. (5) Be thankful! Paul wraps it all up in verses 8 and 9: Practice these things and God’s gift of peace will be with you—for such a time as this!

Be blessed. Be encouraged. Be safe!

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.





From BMA of America President

We the officers of the Baptist Missionary Association of America, in consultation with the department and agency directors, the Coordinating Council, and the national meeting production team, have canceled the 2020 BMA of America national meeting. The reasons for this historic decision were explained in a press release. Let me just say, that this decision has forced us into territory that we have never trod before and created a boatload of additional work. I am so thankful for the diligent work of the officers of this association, the department and agency directors, the Coordinating Council, and the national meeting production team all of whom have worked without complaining.

Because of our uncompromising belief in the autonomy of the local church, in the pages that follow we are presenting the issues to the churches of this great association to vote on—the very issues we would have voted on should the 2020 meeting of the B.M.A. of America been held. We realize that this is not a perfect option, but we feel that it is the best of several options that we have considered.

That being said, it is important that each church know the following:

- Each church in the BMA is allowed one vote by paper ballot or one vote by a digital ballot.
- Due to the present national emergency, the present slate of BMA of America officers—Jeff Swart, president, Dr. Mark Livingston, first vice-president, and Justin Rhodes, second-vice president will continue to serve another year as will Paul White, chairman of the Coordinating Council.
- Luis Ortega will have the opportunity to preach the 2021 annual message.
- Because the directors of our departments and agencies stand as nominees, and other nominations are open from the floor of the association, this is not a viable option this year. Therefore, we are giving our churches the opportunity to reaffirm the present department or agency directors to serve another year.
- Because the members of the Advisory Committee of the Missions Department are elected from the floor of the association, those members scheduled to go off the committee in 2020 (Richard Smith, Randy Shepherd, & Jeff Swart) will continue to serve until April 2021. All other trustee members of all departments and agencies will be elected on this ballot.

Additionally, everyone is invited to attend the commissioning service for the newly elected missionaries in conjunction with the SOAR conference, the first week of July (July 1-3, 2020) at the Gaylord Hotel in Grapevine, assuming SOAR is not cancelled.

If you have made reservations at a Waxahachie area hotel, please contact that hotel and cancel your reservations so that you will not be charged for your rooms.

We are asking that each church send an offering with your ballot for the Minute and Meeting Fund so that we can cover the cost of the printing and mailing of these ballots to our churches. The Minute and Meeting Fund is presently in the red approximately \$25,000 and we need your help to rectify this situation.

You can access a digital ballot and vote online by logging on to bmaamerica.org/2020ballot or mail your paper ballot to: BMA America P.O. Box 878, Conway, AR 72033. Ballots must be returned by April 29. If you choose to vote by digital ballot, please remember to send in an offering.

Thanks for your patience and understanding,

Jeff Swart

President of the Baptist Missionary Association of America

Ballot for the Churches of the BMA of America

Due date—April 29, 2020

Proposed Amendments to the Statement of Principles of Cooperation

Since the BMAA Department known as DiscipleGuide no longer exists, the Coordinating Council proposes that the Department of Camp Ministries and the Publishing Department be re-created similar to the way that they functioned (up to 2004) before the creation of DiscipleGuide. If these changes are adopted by the churches, then Article X—Department of Church Resources would be replaced. **We are proposing the following changes to the Statement of Principles of Cooperation.**

ARTICLE X — DEPARTMENT OF CAMP MINISTRIES

Section 1. This association shall elect a Department of Camp Ministries board of trustees consisting of fifteen (15) members, eight (8) of whom shall constitute a quorum.

Section 2. The duties of the board of trustees are:

- A. To act in its field as an executive of the association between annual sessions, performing all duties entrusted to it by the association.
- B. To fulfill the purpose of the department, which is to provide a retreat from outside pressures to focus on spiritual needs through Christian fellowship and evangelical ministries.
- C. To be responsible for the physical properties and the establishment of administrative policies relative to the operation of the camp.
- D. To fill any vacancy between sessions that may occur in the Executive Director's office.
- E. To require each applicant for a position in the Department of Camp Ministries to sign a statement that he/she is in agreement with the Statement of Principles of Cooperation and the Doctrinal Statement of this association before election.

ARTICLE XII — PUBLICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Section 1. This association shall elect a Publications Committee, which shall also serve as the corporation's board of directors consisting of fifteen (15) members, eight (8) of whom shall constitute a quorum.

Section 2. The duties of the board of Directors are:

- A. To act in its field as an executive of the association between annual sessions, performing all duties entrusted to it by the association.
- B. To fill vacancies between sessions that may occur among staff writer positions and the Executive Director's office.
- C. To recommend to the annual session all writers of publications. Special writers (non-staff writers) may be elected by the committee between sessions.
- D. To require each applicant for a position in the Publications Department to sign a statement that he/she is in agreement with the Statement of Principles of Cooperation and the Doctrinal Statement of this association before election.

Section 3. The publications of this association will be a complete course of Bible Study literature and such other literature and publications as the association may deem advisable.

Section 4. All literature bearing the name of the Baptist Publishing House, the publishing agency of the Publications

Department, or any other trade names as the board of Directors shall authorize, including literature published in foreign languages, will be under the supervision of the Executive Director of Publications and the Publications Committee.

Section 5. The Publications Committee shall elect annually a subcommittee of three (3) hereafter called the Audit Committee. The responsibilities of the Audit Committee are:

- A. To oversee the financial integrity of this department.
- B. To consult with the director as often as necessary.
- C. To make recommendations concerning the finances of the department to the Publications Committee.

We propose the following addition to the Statement of Principles of Cooperation concerning the BMA of America Service Team which is neither a department nor an agency of this association:

ARTICLE XVII – BMA OF AMERICA SERVICE TEAM

Section 1. Purpose: Baptist Missionary Association (BMA) of America Service Team (BMA Service Team) is a wholly owned subsidiary of the departments of the Association located at the BMA Global Ministry Center in Conway, Arkansas. The BMA Service Team was created for the purpose of providing an entity designed with the capacity to share employees and assets, thereby minimizing costs and maximizing return on investment for support services and functions.

Section 2. Governance: BMA Service Team activities are supervised by the executive directors of departments and agencies located at the BMA Global Ministry Center in Conway, Arkansas. To oversee day-to-day operations, the executive directors may hire, in cooperation together, a Director of Operations. The BMA Service Team annual operating and capital budgets are approved by the respective boards of the governing

departments with the allocated share included in each entity's annual financial plan presented to the Association. The expenses for these shared services are pooled and allocated using Activity Based Costing methodology. This accounting procedure safeguards each department so that it is charged only for the applicable costs related

to that organization's activities. Non-allocated costs for BMA Service Team are apportioned based on each departments' prorated share of allocated costs.

Section 3. Specific duties assigned to the BMA Service Team are:

A. To provide shared services to supporting BMA departments and agencies to minimize overhead costs and prevent duplicate activity. These services include accounting, conferences, human resources, information services, information technology, production, and development.

B. To provide a legal entity to hold shared employees and assets of BMA departments located at the BMA Global Ministry Center in Conway, Arkansas.

C. To provide services to departments, agencies, and applicable committees in producing the annual BMA national meeting.

BMAA BALLOT FOR CHURCHES continued on p. 5

Ballot for the Churches of the BMA of America cont.

If the proposed changes concerning the Department of Camp Ministries, Publications Department, and Shared Services are adopted, then the articles in the Statement of Principles of Cooperation will be renumbered as follows (wording in red indicates a proposed change):

PREAMBLE

ARTICLE I – NAME

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

ARTICLE IV - NATURE

ARTICLE V - POLICY

ARTICLE VI - POWERS ARTICLE VII - OFFICERS

ARTICLE VIII - COORDINATING COUNCIL

ARTICLE IX - DEPARTMENT OF MISSIONS

ARTICLE X - DEPARTMENT OF CAMP MINISTRIES

ARTICLE XI - CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

ARTICLE XII - PUBLICATIONS DEPARTMENT

ARTICLE XIII - LIFEWORD BROADCAST MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT

ARTICLE XIV - MINISTERS RESOURCE SERVICES AGENCY

ARTICLE XV - MORAL ACTION AGENCY

ARTICLE XVI - BMA FOUNDATION

ARTICLE XVII - BMA OF AMERICA SERVICE TEAM

ARTICLE XVIII - COMMITTEE ON ARRANGEMENTS/ PRODUCTION

ARTICLE XIX - STANDING COMMITTEES

ARTICLE XX - ENROLLMENT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

ARTICLE XXI - NOMINATING COMMITTEE

ARTICLE XXII - MEETINGS

ARTICLE XXIII - FUNDS AND PROPERTIES

ARTICLE XXIV - AMENDMENTS

We further propose the following changes to the old Article XXII—Amendments, new Article XXIV, if the other proposed amendments are adopted. The reason for this proposal is to bring the Statement of Principles of Cooperation in line with our actions this year of not printing the Recommendations Booklet (wording in red indicates a proposed change).

Section 1, Letter A — *Proposed amendments to this Statement of Principles of Cooperation must be submitted in writing to the clerks of the association no later than February 1 prior to the annual meeting. It shall be the responsibility of the clerks to provide a copy of each proposed amendment, no later than February 15, to be published in the Recommendations Booklet which will be distributed to the churches. Any additional expenses involved in developing and distributing the Recommendations Booklet shall be paid from the Minute and Meeting Expense Fund.*

Section 2, Letter A — *Proposed amendments to the Doctrinal Statement must be submitted by a cooperating church to the clerks of the association no later than February 1 prior to the annual meeting. It shall be the responsibility of the clerks to provide a copy of each proposed amendment, no later than February 15, to be published in the Recommendations Booklet which will be distributed to the churches. Any additional expenses involved in developing and distributing the Recommendations Booklet shall be paid from the Minute and Meeting Expense Fund.*

DISCIPLEGUIDE BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

The DiscipleGuide Board of Trustees respectfully submits

the following recommendations regarding the Baptist Publishing House:

1. That Dr. Charley Holmes be elected as Executive Director of Baptist Publishing House for one year.

2. That the proposed budget of \$465,855 for Baptist Publishing House be approved.

3. That DiscipleGuide be dissolved and the Baptist Publishing House operate as independent department of the BMA of America as defined in the proposed changes to the Statement of Principles of Cooperation.

The DiscipleGuide Board of Trustees respectfully submits the following recommendations regarding Daniel Springs Baptist Camp:

1. That the proposed 2020 budget of \$567,440 for Daniel Springs Baptist Camp be approved.

2. That Daniel Springs Baptist Camp stand as an independent department of the BMA of America apart from Baptist Publishing House and conferences as defined in the proposed changes to the Statement of Principles of Cooperation.

3. That the names presented by the Nominating Committee of the BMAA be approved as the new Board of Trustees for Daniel Springs Baptist Camp.

We recommend the reelection of Jason Prewitt as the Executive Director of Daniel Springs Baptist Camp.

LIFEWORD BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We recommend that the proposed operating budget of \$1,475,285 for fiscal year 2021 be adopted.

2. We recommend that Sunday, October 18, 2021 be designated as Lifeword Sunday across the BMA.

3. That every BMA church be encouraged to support Lifeword on a monthly basis as part of their Great Commission strategy.

4. That the housing allowance be set at \$2,500 per month for the Director of Operations, Director of Digital Broadcasting, Director of Finance and the Executive Director for this year and beyond until amended.

5. We recommend the reelection of Donny Parrish as Executive Director.

BMA SEMINARY TRUSTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Affirm the proposed budget of \$1,435,043.

2. Re-affirm the appointment of Dr. Charley Holmes as president.

3. That each church observes Sunday, May 17, 2020, as Scholarship Sunday with: (a). Special prayer for our graduates. (b). Receive a special scholarship offering to support the training of future BMA ministers and missionaries on that Sunday.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS DEPARTMENT

1. We recommend the election of Elvis Garcia as the North American Hispanic Church Planting Coordinator.

2. We recommend the election of Cristian and Vanessa Martinez as international missionaries to Romania.

3. We recommend the election of Tyler and Emily Brantley as international missionaries to South America.

4. We recommend the election of Buddy and Taffy Johnson as international missionaries to Ecuador.

5. We recommend the election of Gavin and Haley Roberts as North American church planters to Utah.

6. We recommend that Brad and Heidi Faulk be supported with \$2,000/month as they replant and strive to reach sustainability in the state of Washington.

7. We recommend the reelection of Dr. John David Smith as Executive Director of Missions.

MORAL ACTION BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That our Baptist Missionary Association of America reaffirm and approve these five (5) Moral Action resolutions and that they are mailed to the President, United States Senators, the United States House of Representatives, and the United States Supreme Court.

2. That we embrace and support the National Day of Prayer May 7, 2020, and the Sanctity of Life emphasis on a designated Sunday in January 2020. That we go to the town halls, city halls and county courthouses and join other Americans in prayer for our nation.

3. That we humbly request that these resolutions be printed in our BMA state newspapers (these resolutions are printed in our state newspapers and online but are not copied on this ballot due to expense).

4. That Dr. John M. Adams represent the BMA of America in Washington, D.C. by encouraging and contacting our United States Senators and Congressmen and Congresswomen and other Christian moral/ political organizations, such as American Family Association, Focus on the Family, and Family Research Council.

5. That our local associations, our local and state WMA and Brotherhoods, and our local churches and pastors give either a monthly or a yearly financial gift to Moral Action.

6. That all our BMA churches schedule June 28 or July 5, 2020, as the Moral Action “Freedom Offering” Sunday. This is an opportunity to honor or give memorials for our soldiers, both past and present.

7. That the proposed budget of \$65,040 be approved.

8. That Dr. John M. Adams be reelected as Executive Director of Moral Action.

MINISTERS RESOURCE SERVICES BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That we adopt the proposed operating budget of \$112,287 for fiscal 2021.

2. That \$12,000 of the executive director’s salary be designated as housing allowance.

3. That we recognize Bro. Dwayne Ashcraft for his faithful service to the MRS board.

4. That Dr. Steve Crawley be reelected as Executive Director.

BMA FOUNDATION BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the proposed 2020-2021 operating budget of \$35,564 be approved.

2. That the Executive Director’s salary be set at \$7,200 and that he be paid a \$500 Christmas bonus in December.

3. That Charles Attebery be reelected as Executive Director.

4. That BMAA church members prayerfully consider including the BMA Foundation in their estate plans. An undesignated bequest will benefit all BMA of America departments and agencies or individuals may designate their bequests as desired.

RESOLUTION ON BEHOLDING THE MAJESTY OF GOD

We do acknowledge that a resolution was submitted by First Baptist Church of Cave Springs, Arkansas which has been printed in our state papers and online but is not reproduced on this ballot due to the expense. (See the proposed resolution on page 3)

Missionaries receive degrees



▲ Stan and Donna Scroggins

Louisiana Baptist University and Seminary announces graduation ceremonies for May 7, 2020. Included in this year's graduation class are Stan R. Scroggins and Donna M. Scroggins, missionaries to the Philippines. Mrs. Scroggins graduates with honors with the degree of Masters in Education. Her dissertation is titled, "The Philippines Implementation of Eleventh and Twelfth Grade Education."

Bro. Scroggins graduates with honors with the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Theology. His dissertation is titled, "A Missionary God from the Very Beginning: An Examination of the Spread of the Gospel through the Book of Acts."

Dr. and Mrs. Scroggins are Baptist Missionary Association of America missionaries to the Philippines assigned as teachers at the Baptist Missionary Association Bible College in Talisay City, Negros Occidental, Philippines.

Names of high school graduates requested by Baptist Progress



Baptist Progress requests that churches of the BMA of Texas submit the names of their graduating high school seniors to be published in the May issue of Baptist Progress.

Names of graduates should be emailed by Thursday, May 7.

Please alphabetize the names of your graduating seniors. Names are all we need. The names of schools and/or other information will not be included.

Opportunities in the middle of limitations



▲ Dr. John David Smith visiting a church in Guatemala in February 2020

By DR. JOHN DAVID SMITH

BMA of America Missions Executive

In 1 Kings 17, Elijah is divinely sustained with water from a brook and food brought by ravens during a drought. The location and the sustenance was all given by God. This is what we would call **SOLITUDE**. Solitude can be defined as an intentional separation for the refining of our soul. This is us running **TO** God.

Solitude is necessary because we tend to substitute intimacy with God with busy-ness for God. The most important things found in solitude are the provision and presence of God! Notice that the brook dried up . . . solitude is temporary, and it is intended for us to find strength and direction to move on in obedience . . . not stay forever.

In chapter 18, Elijah is used by God for one of the great power/truth encounters of all the Bible. The prophets of Baal are supernaturally defeated by the power of God. Much could be said about letting our guard down after a great victory and when things seem like they couldn't get any better . . .

In chapter 19, Elijah finds himself isolated in a cave. Unlike the current situation where we are mostly obligated to stay away from others because of Coronavirus, Elijah's isolation was voluntary . . . self-inflicted. It was a spiritual and emotional isolation, not merely physical. He had just witnessed God use him in a supernatural way on Mt. Carmel, and now he is cowering in a cave because Jezebel had threatened his life.

This is what we would call **ISOLATION**. Isolation is what we crave when we neglect solitude. Isolation is running **FROM** God. Here are the four lies of isolation:

- 1) *I am the only one.*
- 2) *Nobody understands.*
- 3) *There is no hope.*
- 4) *God cannot resolve this.*

God ministered to Elijah in his isolation by giving Elijah a clear picture of himself, renewing his lost perspective, giving him a plan . . . (in other words, Elijah, get up and get busy . . . fear and self-pity are not the proper responses . . . we need active obedience to clear commands), and telling him to rely on people.

There is great joy in the presence of God, the provision of God, and in active obedience to his commands. Finding that joy begins with surrendering to him. May we all use our present circumstances as a time of solitude, not isolation. May God give us clear ideas and direction as to how to find great new opportunities within our new limitations.

There are people suffering more than you and people more at risk than you. It won't be hard to find them, encourage them, and serve them.

John Meriweather Serves The BMA



▲ John Meriweather, Rama and Jeremiah

In 2013, the churches of the Baptist Missionary Association of America made the historic move of relocating much of its departmental structure to Conway, Arkansas. The dream of a unified vision, the benefits of a Shared Service Team and the savings of thousands of dollars derived from this integration have been a tremendous victory for our association. The move has given BMA Missions and Lifeword unprecedented synergy and effectiveness in reaching around the world with the gospel. And when DiscipleGuide began to suffer and eventually dissolve its ministry, many of its functions were seamlessly absorbed into this new structure that was already in place.

One of the great highlights of this move has been the success story of the BMA Service Teams. These are specialized employees that are not limited to serving one BMA department but have a wide range of expertise shared by different departments. Information Technology (IT) services, media production, building maintenance, financial accounting, and human resource experts make up the BMA Shared Service Team. They support the needs of our missionary family around the world and are integral to making the worldwide ministries of the BMA effective and efficient.

God has given the churches of the BMA an experienced professional to shepherd this area of ministry. John Meriweather holds a degree in business management from the University of Central Arkansas. He comes to BMA America after serving with Axiom Corporation from 1990-2016. Axiom leverages data and information services and technologies to support the marketing strategies of (primarily) Fortune 500 companies. Serving in numerous client management and operational leadership roles during his time at Axiom, his last role was Vice President of Client Implementation Services—leading the teams that design and implement marketing services solutions for new and existing clients. John's business acumen helps to bring a high level of professionalism and efficiency to the management of the BMA Service Teams.

"I never imagined how my skills and experiences could be used in ministry," said Meriweather. "It has been an incredible experience to see how God shaped my heart and opened opportunities in my life to serve him in a ministry capacity where my skills and experience can be leveraged for his glory. And I've continued to be amazed at how he is able to reshape and leverage previous skills in new and exciting ways."

John has been married to his wife, Holly, since 1990, and they have three grown children, Landon, Sidney and Olivia. Last year they welcomed their first grandchild, Phillip. To connect with John and to find out more about his service to the BMA, email him at john@bmaamerica.org.

Waxahachie hotel update

By **JEROME COOPER, BILL THORNTON AND DANIEL WILLIAMS**

BMA of America Arrangements Committee

BMA officers have already announced the cancellation of the BMA of America Annual Meeting that was scheduled for April 27-29 in Waxahachie. The hotel properties that were holding blocks of rooms for the BMA meeting have been notified, and if you have already reserved a room, you may have already received a notice that your reservation has been canceled.

However, since rooms within the hotel blocks are reserved by individuals, it is important to remember that if you have made a reservation with a property in Waxahachie, it remains your responsibility to make sure your reservation is cancelled. Call the hotel property directly, identify that your room was in the BMA block of rooms, and cancel your reservation. Most of the hotel properties have a 48-hour cancellation policy, but please take care of this as soon as you can to avoid unnecessary charges.

The Association plans to make Waxahachie its destination once again in 2021, so the arrangements committee is already at work with the Waxahachie Visitors Bureau to set up blocks of rooms for next year. Here are all the future meeting dates and locations for the BMA national meeting.

2021: April 19-21; Farley Street Baptist Church, Waxahachie, Texas

2022: April 18-20; University Plaza Hotel and Convention Center, Springfield, Missouri

2023: April 17-19; Antioch Baptist Church, Conway, Arkansas

Daniel Spring Baptist Camp—March 2020



By **NELDA MALONE**

Master's Builders Reporter

The Master's Builders began their 2020 work year with their annual visit to Daniel Springs Baptist Encampment in Gary. Jason Prewitt, camp director, had several projects planned for the Builders to work on. Projects included tearing down the old pool pump house and building a new one, building an 18' X 24' staff recreation and multi-purpose room, building a guard shack for the entrance gate, and building a human foosball court. This was the 165th job for The Master's Builders.

We had 17 Master's Builders who came to work and divided up into groups to complete each project. We also enjoyed having a youth group from Farley Street Baptist, Waxahachie, who spent part of their Spring Break helping clean up around the camp.

The Master's Builders welcomed a new couple into our group at this job. Dennis and Kris Mitchell, from Waxahachie, spent several days working with our group. We are so happy to welcome them to our Master's Builders family. The Jacksonville College Choir with their director, Randy Decker, came and sang for us on Saturday evening,

March 7. We always enjoy these young people and are so blessed by their singing and the sweet fellowship!

The Builders would like to extend special thanks to Jason and Jessica Prewitt for taking such good care of us as we worked at the camp, and to Bethel, Clayton, for the special way they love on us. Also, to Keith and Tina Nutt for the delicious BBQ meal they prepared for us! As always, we had lots of fun, food and fellowship!! Thanks folks!

We have a very busy spring coming up. We have the following jobs already booked: StoneRidge Baptist Camp, Smithville, Arkansas; New Liberty, Emmet, Arkansas and Mt. Pisgah, Mineola. If you are interested in helping please contact The Builders. We would love to have you!

Remember, if you have questions about The Master's Builders Ministry or if your church has building needs, you can contact Eddie Sikes at 479-462-1675 or Mike Green at 972-935-3877.

Like us at "The Master's Builders" on Facebook (arbor logo). Keep up with us each day as we work. As always, we appreciate your prayers and support!



Just the Crumbs ministering in Nashville

Just the Crumbs arrived in Nashville March 12 and immediately began setting up to be ready to replace Mercy Chefs. We began feeding March 16. We have averaged feeding between 300 to 400 per day. Our most difficult challenge has been the continuous rain and wet ground where we are set up. God has provided us a tremendous group of volunteers from Texas, Indiana, Kentucky, Arkansas, Mississippi, Mexico, Brazil, and, of course, Tennessee.

We have partnered with the awesome organization, Connect Nashville, to reach this community. Our needs remain the same: food or monetary donations. We have agreed to stay as long as the need and resources last. We

have permission to stay at this location for at least another two months as needed. Nashville is on lockdown due to COVID-19, but our services have been deemed essential, due to so many of the elderly and others that are in need. We are complying with all the safety measures put forth.

All volunteers have been told if they feel vulnerable and want to leave to feel free to do so. Pray for us and the people God allows us to minister to. Thank you to all the BMA Churches and Individuals who have helped us continue this service thus far. Contributions can be made through BMA of America Missions Office or PAYPAL, justthecrumbs21@gmail.com or Just The Crumbs, 10 Wagon Trail Sumrall, MS 39482.





INSIGHTS *for* PASTORS

Resolving conflict in the church

By DR. ALLEN TILLEY

When things are going well in church, every pastor knows that lurking in the shadows is an ugly spirit-draining, time-consuming, joy-robber named conflict. Whether intentional or accidental, one conflict can quickly derail the happiest moments of ministry. No matter how hard a preacher might try, conflicts are an unavoidable part of dealing with people. Since the first complaints arose in the early church, conflicts have always plagued churches (Acts 6:1).

While no single answer fits every situation, let me share some tips for effectively resolving conflict in the church. Like most spiritual problems, be sure you saturate the issue thoroughly with prayer before taking any course of action and gather all the pertinent information before making a decision.

Tip #1: Step back and see if the conflict resolves itself. One thing I've learned as a pastor for almost forty years is that some fires burn out quicker than others. Since BMA Baptists believe strongly in the priesthood of the believer, give the Holy Spirit time to convict before stepping into the problem. Often, things said or done in the heat of the moment between mature believers are quickly repaired when things settle down.

Tip #2: Examine yourself. Sadly, most problems in the church have nothing to do with doctrinal issues or policy. In too many cases, division comes from a perceived threat of diminishing control. For example, we don't want to give up our classroom or accept that there may be a better way of doing ministry. As a result, we dig in our heels and resent any intrusion that might make us uncomfortable. When confronting conflict, make sure you are not the problem. And please, don't let pride get in the way. Always remember that preferences are subject to change.

Tip #3: See yourself as a peacemaker. Instead of taking sides, building walls, and engaging in gossip, offer solutions. Remind everyone involved that Satan is the real enemy, and he delights when conflict, not the Great Commission, consumes the church. Peacemakers are not passive. They lovingly point out errors and other grievous mistakes. If you assume the role of a peacemaker, be forewarned. Some people find it easier to attack the peacemaker than to attack the issue. Therefore, be sure you are prayed up and ready.

Tip #4: Follow Christ's guidelines as outlined in Matthew 18: 15-17. Jesus prescribed three steps when dealing with conflict. Keep in mind the goal of this process



is restoration as demonstrated by the parable of the lost sheep (Matthew 18:12-14). First, go to the offending party in private, offering a listening ear and a reconciliatory spirit. If that doesn't work, then schedule another meeting with at least two or three impartial witnesses. Established in Deuteronomy 19:15, multiple witnesses acted as a safeguard against a false witness who might bring an untruthful charge. Lastly, if the first two steps can't resolve the problem, then the matter should be brought before the church. Collectively, the family of God can seek the heart of the Father and determine the appropriate course of action.

Because the church is made up of people, church life can sometimes become messy and painful. No church is immune;

all churches have conflicts. Those who overcome are those who meet challenges head-on, grow from the experience and continue glorifying the Lord. Don't let conflict destroy the work God has called you to do (Nehemiah 4:6).

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.





CHURCH HEALTH

The church has left the building

By **LARRY BARKER**

God has not hit the pause button on His mission. God has not stopped asking us to go and make disciples. God's mission has not slowed down and He still asks of us to love our neighbors as ourselves. The Great Commission and the Great Commandment remain unaffected and unchanged. Many things are being canceled but hear this: NOT CHURCH!

Yes, it will look different and large services will not be held. But the church continues to pray, function, minister, meet needs, worship, study and love one another. We must continue to be salt and light. Do you know why? The truth is that the church is not a building and never has been. The church is you and me...Christ followers.

As we submit (not surrender) to the authorities' recommendations and mandates we should take a position of cooperation for containment as we care for our flocks and our community. The church is the people of God who love and follow Jesus. The church is His children pointing others toward Him. And right now, people need Jesus. It is all of us who are His disciples helping people to find and follow Him.

A.W. Tozer said, "A frightened world needs a fearless church!" Maybe, without realizing, we have turned the Great Commission into, "Go into all the world and make more worship attenders!" We have measured success too much by the size of those present more than those actively becoming disciples who make disciples. Size and money no longer give any church an advantage or disadvantage.

The challenge to everyone of us is to have the heart of Christ and a willingness to be His hands and feet. In Colossians 4:3 Paul says, "At the same time, pray also for us that God may open a door to us for the message, to speak the mystery of the Messiah, for which I am in prison." You cannot mobilize a worship service but you can mobilize a body. The power of the church is not in its ability to gather but its ability to scatter.

Now geographical proximity is everything. How do we take responsibility for those around us? Who on my block is a believer and how can we cooperate to minister to others? It is time for us to draw a circle around those close to us that we can effectively reach and accept that responsibility. If you are rural, your circle may include those two to three miles around you and if you are in the city it might include two to three blocks.

What if we began logging our prayer walk distance? We say we believe in prayer but this is a great opportunity to put it into practice. How many miles a day could the members of your church log if each one practiced a mile prayer walk in their neighborhood? If your church has around 100 attenders that could potentially be 100 miles a day and easily add up to 700 miles a week.

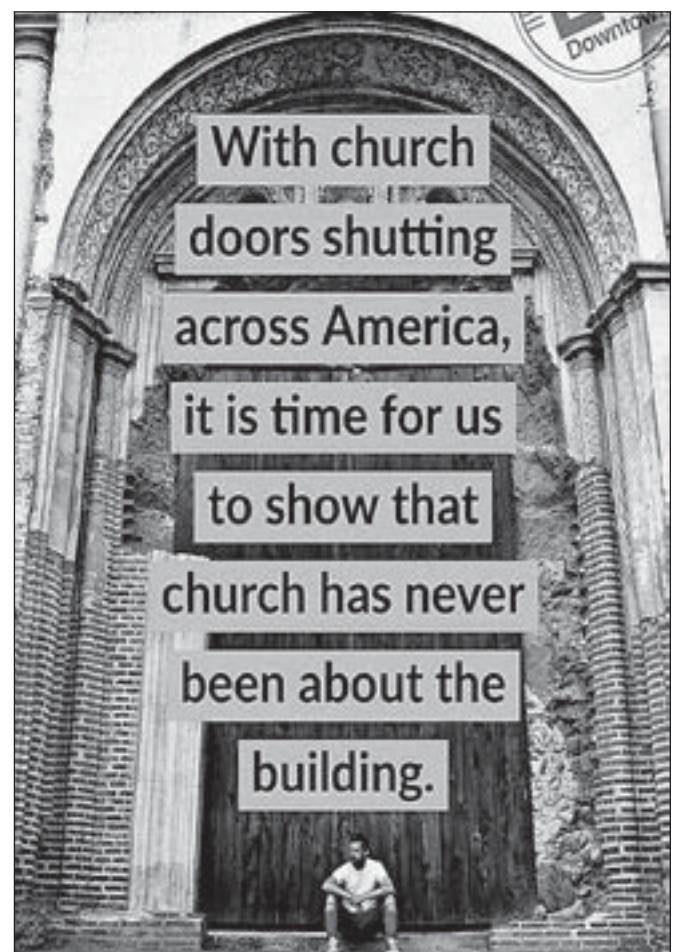
What if we began holding each another accountable by asking two questions? How are you doing? And then following that up with, how are your neighbors doing? We do not have a relevancy problem, but instead we have an accessibility problem. The metaphor that comes to mind is that our lights have been under the bushel far too long. This is a wonderful opportunity to love our neighbors the way Christ commanded.

How do we live through a crisis like this? By being the church. We became experts on doing church but now Christ has placed us in a time to love our neighbor by finding out how can we pray for them and how we can serve them. We have probably heard someone at some time say, "It's all about the weekend!" It is not and never has been. It is important and corporate worship is needed, but now more than ever it is time to also be the church.

Maybe God is using this crisis to reorient us to love Him first more than a building, a program, a service or an event. Here is a word from the leadership of one church, "Since the ascension of Jesus, the church has gathered with a regular rhythm, but often in different venues. Sometimes the church has met house to house, sometimes in synagogues and sometimes in catacombs."

"Sometimes in cathedrals, sometimes in schools, and sometimes in former movie theaters. The point was never where, rather, an encouragement to do so on a regular basis (Hebrews 10:24-25). This is an amazing opportunity for us to remember, and declare, that the church is not a building." It is not all about the weekend and never has been. It is the people of God on mission together.

Have we forgotten about Matthew 18:19-20 that states where two or three are gathered He promises to be present? Jewish tradition stated that ten men had to be present to constitute a synagogue or to even hold a prayer meeting. Jesus promised to be present in the midst of even a smaller flock. Yes, we love getting together but what a comfort to



know this truth that He is with us even in groups of 10 or smaller.

To whom is Jesus sending you? To whom does He want you to be His hands and feet? To whom does He want you to show His heart of compassion in your acts of kindness and service?

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.





A word from your Missions Office

By HEITH MITCHELL

These are odd and uncertain times. A month ago, we didn't see our current reality coming but God did! I am so reminded this morning that the path in front of us is only ever known to God. At times we feel so "in control" but we aren't. We aren't in control but we also aren't alone. I write to you quarantined from home thanks to an unexpected pandemic but I am "Safe in the arms of Jesus." I am also very aware that "This world is not my home. I'm just passing through." I am rejoicing in my hope of eternity. (You can tell there are songs on my heart today.)

Your missionaries are carrying on through this season like champs. Though they are quarantined they have reported saved this month. They continue to share their faith, disciple, and equip the saints for the work of ministry. The most negatively affected are those who are in the very early stages of mission work in their communities. Wesley, Kingsley, and Jesse were just beginning engagement and are now on hold. These families could feel the most isolated as well. Join me in praying for them.

Overall, the mission is moving forward. Your missionaries, like you, are making the most of technology and available methods to continue the work. We all long for the new normal that is to follow this. We know that some of the methods we are currently engaging are a cheap substitute for the church face to face and hand in hand. Each mission is being the church and doing the work of the church though. These men are innovative. They have helped equip many of you with tools to take care of your people. We have been blessed with the opportunity to help facilitate that. If we can help you, please let us know.

I want to remind you that the mission of God for his church is alive and well. We must engage with more urgency than ever. Jesus Christ will come back! I know we long and look for his return but our communities and this world need to be prepared for his return. We must help them prepare.

Together we are laboring and praying with the hope of seeing:



- That we see an aggressive multiplication movement of churches who make disciples, equip and release leaders and start churches for the glory of God and the advancement of his Kingdom mission
- That each new mission begins with a plan to begin three new churches in their first 10 years
- That pastors and churches of the association be encouraged and equipped to start new churches
- That we connect, evaluate, identify and train new prospective church planters

Not for our glory, not for the BMA, but for the King and

His Kingdom. We hope to see this goal become a reality without really focusing on church planting. We want to stay focused on our Great Commission. If we focus on sharing our faith, baptizing, and discipling towards obedient Christ followers then these new churches among these unreached pockets of Texans will result.

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

A word from your missionaries

**CHRIS DRIVER—
WEST TEXAS MULTIPLICATION NETWORK/
TEXAS MISSIONARY CARE
CJDRIVER316@GMAIL.COM**

So much of ministry is about recognizing and walking in God's timing and not your own. All that is happening in our nation has proven that to me once again. And like everyone, here in west Texas we are trying to navigate this unprecedented time and see it as a God given opportunity to see Him do something we could never have imagined or planned ourselves. Our guys are continuing to find ways to meet and minister to the people they have as well as find new ways to meet and minister to new folks as well. I'm super proud of how they've responded and how God is using them! I can't wait to see all the fruit that God creates out of what looks like a chaotic mess!!

Prayer Needs:

Brockway family and their new baby boy

The new discipleship/leadership development process we are implementing across the WT network.



▲ Chris Driver

**JAIME GARCIA—
IGLESIA BAUTISTA NUEVA VIDA MISSION, GILMER/MESQUITE
JAIME.GARCIA2911@GMAIL.COM**

Although these are difficult times let us go on trusting that our Savior is taking care of all of us. Our closed churches make us return to the times of the primitive church where they met in their homes and God was with them favoring them. Today we can still see God's favor in our homes. Let us continue to carry the precious and glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer Needs:

Pray for us that God will take care of the coronavirus and also all my brethren.



▲ Jaime Garcia



**MATTHEW PRATHER—
THE BRIDGE MISSION, MIDLOTHIAN/WAXAHACHIE
MATTHEW@DISCOVERTHEBRIDGE.COM
DUAL SUPPORT BMAA/BMAT**

Pray for us as we navigate this difficult time in our nation as we deal with social distancing and the COVID-19 virus. Where we are located, we are not able to meet normally in our building. We are adapting and engaging people online. We are doing everything that we can to continue to minister to our community. So far, we have seen one saved because of our online communications and we praise God for that! During this time please continue to pray for us that we can be the shining light of God's love and show people what Hope we have. Thank you for your continued prayers and support.

Prayer Needs:

Pray for us as we navigate and lead through this difficult time in our nation.



▲ Matthew Prather

**WESLEY BURKE—
REDEMPTION BAPTIST MISSION, NACOGDOCHES
WESLEYDAVIDBURKE@GMAIL.COM**

This time of COVID-19 lockdown has caused me to reflect on how much I miss the gathered body. My admonishment to all is to thank God for the graces we have received during this time to connect with one another. We must learn to number our days (Psalm 90) during this time and increase our longing to gather again one day in the future. Until then, we must rest in the sovereignty of God over all things. Even the microbe of Coronavirus.

Prayer Needs:

We met six weeks as a gathered church before COVID-19 sanctions prevented us. Now, when we do gather, it will



▲ Wesley Burke

Coronavirus and BMA missionaries

By **HOLLY MERIWEATHER**

BMA of America Missions

Coronavirus has caused concern, panic, even terror all over the world. Although “social distancing” is recommended, there are stories of compassion like the young lady who shopped for an elderly couple terrified to enter a grocery store and the man who gave \$100 tips at restaurants in his city.

It’s a chance for Christians to do what they do: Meet people’s needs, both physical and spiritual, something our missionaries do instinctively.

Executive Director John David Smith says, “Early on (in this crisis) some of our missionaries could have gotten out, but they chose to stay because they would have lost all credibility when they returned. They put themselves in greater levels of risk for the cause of Christ. It’s what the missionary spirit is all about.”

Our missionaries around the world are familiar with risk. Also, their ministries are in countries with poor infrastructure, mass transit ill equipped to handle the population, and financially-strapped economies. Coronavirus may have brought life to a standstill, but not their mission work:

One of those countries is India, where the first death reported in the country was just 100 meters from the Prakash family’s home in Gulbarga, which is currently on high alert. Their primary ministry work is to the 1,500 children in the schools where Prashant is administrator. Also, the churches and church plants he and his team visit are in rural areas with limited access to more supplies than just masks and sanitizers. In addition, Golda Prakash says “it’s difficult for people in our town to understand the seriousness of the matter.”

Sam Jordan, missionary to Jordan, recently received a

container filled with mixed rice through a partnering agency. During a time of diminished supply chains, he praises the Lord for those supplies being distributed to Syrian refugees at their camp and church facilities, his team’s largest area of ministry. Please pray for the refugees, especially these days, because of the coronavirus. They live in very difficult situations with little means to purchase basic personal hygiene products.

In Lebanon, Middle East Coordinator Charlie Costa says that coronavirus has further complicated the financial crisis there. Because of the country’s ongoing economic problems and inflation, bank withdrawals are restricted to \$100 a week. In addition, ministry work and other gospel activities in the Middle East have halted because of travel bans in the region. Pray that the good news would have an open door, and that God would protect his people in the Middle East.

“There are opportunities in limitations,” Smith says. “It’s an opportunity to talk to an audience with hearts and ears that are somewhat more softened and a little more open to the gospel. We abide by the guidelines for precaution, but we look for opportunities to exalt the name of Christ. Our missionaries will be greatly limited but opportunities will appear, and they will be looking for them.”

Some of the issues paralyzing the countries where our missionaries serve are the same worldwide: closed schools and churches, canceled meetings and events, and empty shelves in the stores. Americans, while inconvenienced, don’t have the paralyzing issues that the Prakashes, the Jordans and the Costas do.

Of course, it’s not just our missionaries who are called to look for opportunities. Christians are called to offer comfort during uncertain times, and there are already many examples of their sacrifices.

Follow BMA Missions on Facebook for updates, go to <https://bmamissions.org/missionaries/> to pray for them by name then find them on Facebook.



▲ A Syrian refugee in Jordan receives supplies for her family



Written by:

-Bro. Jake Vandenberg
Pastor, Walnut Road Baptist
Spring Hill, LA

-Dr. Greg Parsons
Professor, BMA Seminary



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"I've been teaching Sunday School 40 years. It is the best material I've ever used."
-Sunday School Teacher, Louisiana

"I've seen my Sunday school teacher grow in his ability to teach the Bible by using this material."
-Sunday School Student, Texas

"Our church loves the Baptist Expositor. They think it is the best curriculum ever."
-Pastor, Mississippi

COVID-19 Update

By **DR. MIKE SMITH**

Jacksonville College President

“My momma always said, ‘Life was like a box of chocolates. You never know what you’re gonna get.’”—
Forrest Gump

We can’t know what the future holds, but Scripture assures us that we have nothing to fear if we are followers Christ. Jesus said, “Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for tomorrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matthew 6:34).

A few months ago, none of us could have imagined the challenges we are facing today. I pray for those who are suffering through COVID-19. I pray for the families who have lost loved ones to this virus. I pray for our medical staff and those on the front line of this war. I pray for our leaders who must make tough decisions. I pray for our pastors and churches who have had to figure out how to meet online, hold virtual services, and find new ways to fellowship. I pray for our missionaries, church planters, and associational leaders whose support could be threatened as church offerings decline. I pray for Jacksonville College faculty and employees who have risen to the occasion and continue to provide a quality education from a biblical worldview. I pray for our students and faculty who are adjusting to online classes.

The current worldwide health crisis has required many adjustments and sacrifices. Almost every aspect of life has been affected, and college life is no exception. Jacksonville College courses were transitioned online during Spring Break to follow the guidelines from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and other agencies. Since then, we have continued to follow the guidelines from our federal, state, and local medical and governing officials. We had hoped that things would improve so that we would be able to meet on campus again later in the semester. Sadly, this was not the case.

Considering the present conditions and the directions of our governmental leaders and health care officials, the Jacksonville College administration has decided that the College will finish the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester online and remotely.

My heart is heavy at the sight of an empty campus. I miss our students and employees who normally fill our hallways with excitement. I am saddened for our students who looked forward to a graduation service, a spring banquet, and spring athletic competitions that have now all have been cancelled.

Pray for Jacksonville College:

1. Pray that a cure for COVID-19 is found soon, ending the pandemic and allowing for a return to normal life.
2. Pray for coaches, the choir director, the theater program director, and the director of admissions as they recruit students.
3. Pray for Jacksonville College finances. We must refund \$56,000 in room and board costs to our on-campus students. We were going to have our annual Jaguar Day Across Texas appeal in May and use part of the gifts

received to cover the loss. However, because present circumstances have led to low church offerings, I do not feel I can ask our churches for more at this time.

4. Pray that God will lead students to apply for admission to Jacksonville College in the summer and fall semesters. We need a record fall semester to make up for the loss in funds during the pandemic.
5. Pray that we as Christians will not miss what God is telling us in this crisis and that we will present the gospel message to the lost as never before.

Even though Jacksonville College has had to adapt to the current health crisis, our plans to offer summer and fall terms have not changed. Jacksonville College is accepting applications for our three summer terms (Maymester, Summer 1, Summer 2) and for Fall 2020. Applications may be submitted online at www.jacksonville-college.edu/application. For more information, contact Admissions by

email at admissions@jacksonville-college.edu or by phone at (903) 589-7110.

Registration for summer classes continues through the first day of each term, with tuition rates reduced and fees eliminated for all three summer terms. Maymester classes will be held May 13-27, Summer 1 classes will be held June 1-25, and Summer 2 classes will be held July 6-30. Almost all summer courses are online classes. Registration for Fall 2020 begins April 16. To view course offerings, visit our website at www.jacksonville-college.edu, and click on “Courses.”

If you would like to help Jacksonville College financially, any amount you can contribute will be greatly appreciated. You can mail your check to Jacksonville College at 105 B.J. Albritton Drive, Jacksonville, TX 75766. To give online, visit www.jacksonville-college.edu/donate-support-invest.

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).



▲ Jacksonville College Singers at First Baptist Church, Jacksonville



▲ Jacksonville College praise team leading worship in Chapel on March 4



▲ Congratulations, Bro. Mike, for receiving the 2019 Outstanding Citizen of the Year Award at the 95th Annual Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet.

Nominating Committee Report

BMA FOUNDATION

Term to expire 2021

Marilyn Battles (to replace Craig Cloud)

Term to Expire 2022

Jeremy Franklin – TX
Clifford McQuillen – MO
Ryan Burchett – TX

Term to Expire 2025

Judy Wallace – AR
Pat McCown – TX

Term to Expire 2023

Justin Rhodes – MS
Charles Johnson – TX
Johnnie Rose – TX

INTERNATIONAL REVOLVING

LOAN FUND

Term to Expire 2023

Bryson Haden – MS

Term to Expire 2024

Bart Herrington – AR
Scott Carson – MS
Billy Byrd – TX

NORTH AMERICAN

REVOLVING LOAN FUND

Term to Expire 2023

Michael Kelley – WA

Term to Expire 2025

David Yarbrough – TX
Derrick Bremmer – AR
Justin Cameron – MS

BMA SEMINARY

Term to Expire 2025

Larry Geraldson – MS

Nick Kerry – TX

Josh Bullock – AR

DANIEL SPRINGS BAPTIST CAMP

(Elected on a staggered basis beginning this year)

Term to Expire 2021

Aaron Middleton – AR
Keith Head – AR
Emilee Baker – TX

COMMITTEE

ON ARRANGEMENTS

Term to Expire 2023

Bill Thornton – AR

Term to Expire 2022

Pam Chavers – TX
Billy Sheets – AR
Thomas Mobly – OK

LIFEWORD

Term to Expire 2022

Steve Stringer – MS (to replace Harold Barnard)

Term to Expire 2023

Clayton Edgar – OK
Kevin Cook – TX
Diana Morris – TX

Term to Expire 2025

Yalanda Merrell – AR
Rodney Burns – LA
Ross Burgess – AR

MINISTERS RESOURCE SERVICES

Term to Expire 2025

Kenneth Lott – MS

Dennis Clark – OK

Term to Expire 2024

Devin DiGuilio – AR
Charlotte Johnson – TX
John Gradberg – TX

Term to Expire 2025

Katie Holliman – TX
Frank Escamilla – TX
Robert Murphy – TX

MORAL ACTION

Term to Expire 2025

Dan McGee – MO

Jerry Jolly – AR

NOMINATIONS FROM THE BMA OF AMERICA OFFICERS FOR THENOMINATING COMMITTEE

Terms to Expire 2023

Frank Garrido – CA
Aaron Polok – KS
Zach Rogers – MS

BAPTIST PUBLISHING HOUSE

(Elected on a staggered basis beginning this year)

Term to Expire 2021

Brian Kingston – MO

Emily Attebery – TX

Gene Hankins – OK

Remember, this ballot must be received by April 29. Please include an offering for the Minute and Meeting Fund.

**Thank you for your cooperation,
Jeff Swart, Dr. Mark Livingston and Justin Rhodes**



Please vote and return this page to BMA America, PO Box 878, Conway AR 72033.
Your donation to the BMA Minute Fund can be included with your ballot.

Church Name: _____ Your Position: _____
Name: _____ Email Address: _____

In Favor	Opposed	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed Changes to the Amendments to the Statement of Principles of Cooperation (Department of Camp Ministries)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed Changes to the Amendments to the Statement of Principles of Cooperation (Publications Department)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed Addition to the Amendments to the Statement of Principles of Cooperation (BMA of America Service Team)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed changes to the Statement of Principles of Cooperation (new Article XXIV)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	DiscipleGuide Board Recommendations
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lifeword Board Recommendations
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	BMA Seminary Trustee Recommendations
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Advisory Committee Recommendations for the Missions Department
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moral Action Board Recommendations
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ministers Resource Services Board Recommendations
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	BMA Foundation Board Recommendations
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resolution on Beholding the Majesty of God
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nominating Committee Report



Impacting the World for Our Savior

By **GLENDAM CHAMBERLAIN**

Johnnie Ross, president of the Texas WMA shares words of hope and encouragement during this difficult time. Mrs. Ross comments, “The WMA resolutions for this year encouraged us to seek to bring honor to our Savior, instead of glory to ourselves. I’d like to highlight those resolutions again in light of the current situation with the COVID-19 virus and the directive from our government to shelter in place.”

In seeking to glorify Him, we should resolve to:

1. Trust in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, and encourage those we meet daily to do the same. We have a unique opportunity to share the gospel with those around us right now. People have begun to question their mortality. They are coming face to face with the certainty that one day they will die. If God has prepared their heart, we cannot be ashamed to share the gospel with them. We must be the witnesses that he desires. Seize every opportunity to share the gospel story in the days ahead.

2. Seek to place God’s Word as our authority in all areas. Since knowledge of God’s Word is necessary, we should be studying now more than ever. I seem to have more time right now that I’m trying to fill. I would imagine you do too. There are an unbelievable amount of free bible studies online that normally you pay for. Involve yourself in one (or several) and invite your friends to join you. It’s not going to cost much, if anything, and think of the wonderful information, insight and innovative witnessing you can share.

3. Spend quality time in prayer. Through prayer we have peace and we have power. Through prayer we can be a witness to others. Through prayer God reveals more of His Will and His Word. Through prayer we can intercede on the behalf of others. “Sweet Hour of Prayer” is the WMA theme for 2019-2020. How could we have been blessed with a more appropriate theme this year? If you do not already have a prayer journal, start one. My original prayer journal was the steno spiral notebook by the telephone that everyone in the house was supposed to use for notes about phone calls, but also for notes to one another and for things that were just on our minds. Then just thumb through that notebook daily.

4. Be a light for Christ. How has your light been shining the last month? Have you truly been a light for Christ, deliberately seeking to make a difference in the church and the world? We have seen our churches reaching out to others in ways we would never have dreamed of two months ago. God has developed an awareness of new ways to reach out and reach others. He has enlisted members of the community, who are not even members of our churches, to help our churches reach out. There seems to be much more generosity among our people than we normally see. Be aware of what

God is doing in and through His church right now. He’s showing us again how to be a light for Christ.

5. Be committed to a local church. Although we are commanded to gather together as Christians to declare our love for God and His Word, we are unable to assemble in groups of 10 or more at the present time. But, churches are finding a way to virtually assemble together or to assemble and maintain social distancing. There is joy and communion when members of the same congregation are live-streaming the Sunday School lesson together and commenting on it together. There is encouragement when you attend drive-in church and all tune in to the same FM channel and listen to the sermon together while the preacher stands on the porch of the church to preach. There is unity in proclaiming the gospel to a lost and dying world when we make a special effort on Facebook to speak Words of Life about our Savior.

By committing to these resolutions, we are accomplishing several parts of the WMA Plan of Work and we are impacting the world for our Savior.

MARTHA JOHNSON SCHOOL NEEDS OUR SUPPORT

Our Texas WMA Project for 2019-2020 is to support the Martha Johnson School located in Huejutla de Reyes, Hidalgo, Mexico for needs as they enlarge their school building.

The school was first known as Lincoln Bilingual Elementary School. This was a dream of our missionary in Mexico, Mrs. Martha Johnson. She had put in the hours doing the groundwork for the beginning of the school and had opened the school in 1990 with four classes and 35 students. Martha and her family were in the states on furlough in 1991 when she suffered a brain hemorrhage and would never see the building complete. The government asked that the name of the school be changed to the Martha Johnson Bilingual Elementary School.

Students come from not only villages in Mexico but from all over the world to attend the Martha Johnson School. The main attraction of the school is English which is included in the curriculum. Parents are insured upon graduation, their children can read, write and understand English. There is always a waiting list to attend the school.

Every teacher is very dedicated to educating the students and sharing God’s word with the student while they are in attendance. The teachers and students alike take much pride in their curriculum, the cleanliness of the building and grounds and in the growth of facilities. There is no longer a library, it has been turned into a classroom. Every possible space is now a classroom because of the demand of students wanting to attend.

Diana Morris, Texas Project Promoter commented “In July 2019, Union Hill, Brownsboro took a mission trip to Mexico to help lead VBS in Huejutla. While there we took a day trip to visit the Martha Johnson School. We noticed the school was very organized and we were amazed by the dedication of the Johnson’s to continue the ministry. We loved the school and thought it was well laid out but lacked a lot of conveniences that we have in our schools in the states. The lunchroom was outdoors. Another thing we noticed was not a lot of extreme decorations and lack of furnishings yet the students and staff we talked to were so proud to be there.”

Mrs. Morris also noted “The workers were laboring in the hot sun on a new addition to the school and were carrying cinder blocks by hand up the ladders because they had no modern equipment. Yet, there were smiles on each of their faces and you heard no grumbling. Again, you could just feel the spirit even in the workers that were on the job. There was just such a great atmosphere.”

Now what can you do to help raise \$15,000 for the school?

1. Put the cash that you would have spent on a new Easter outfit in an envelope and mark it Project Fund and put it in your Bible until you go back to church.

2. Number envelopes 1 to 50 (or any number) Place the envelopes on a table or attach to a wall in a central location. Encourage members to take one and return it with corresponding money inside. (i.e., envelope #3 would have \$3, #25 would have \$25 inside) This allows people to donate what they can afford. 50 envelopes returned equals \$1275 for the project.

3. BBQ Cook Off or Baking Contest

4. Do you have someone in your church that can paint? Have a paint party. Everyone pays to paint and fellowship.

More information and the history of the Martha Johnson School can be found in *Tow Sacks* by Buddy Johnson. *Tow Sacks* is available through our Baptist Missionary Association of America Missions.

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

COVID-19

By **JASON CURRY**

Well, as many of you may imagine, TBHC is experiencing some changes due to the current crisis encompassing our world. We have guidelines that we are adhering to, as an agency, to oblige our affiliates' requirements. Each of these affiliates are wanting to make certain we maintain a relationship with them and demonstrate our level of care for children. It is dependent on our actions, not theirs and unlike them, we will experience all the loss if we don't. We are honestly willing to comply with all these demands because this has allowed us to be acknowledged by you, our community and many others as a place that cares for children at the highest level of quality care. With each change to policy or adjustments in practice, we are making our agency better equipped to care for kids.

In the midst of our crisis, it is children who are going to be most directly impacted. Family visits are being suspended in many counties. Children are being removed from parents who have possibly lost a job, hope and the willingness to do what is needed for a family's survival. A child may wonder if it's their fault they were taken from parents and now could it be *their fault* that they can no longer see them each week. Is their loss of a relationship due to a lack of obedience and being good? We all know this is not the case. It is the parent's choices (in good times and bad) that have dictated the loss of a relationship. The children have nothing to do with the brokenness but will experience all of the loss.

I don't know what we would do without a relationship with God. In Mark 6, Jesus watched His disciples from the hilltop struggling against the wave. Our God did not simply stand there and say I hope they will be okay. No, Jesus came and walked alongside the disciples rowing in the storm and if we will simply allow Him, He will join us in our

circumstances and bring His peace to it. As Christians, we are to be faithful to go where God has sent us, to a lost world. And it is in the midst of that calling that those storms come and Jesus is right there beside us, ready to bring the peace that only He can bring.

What do we have to do to maintain a relationship with God? The good news it's not dependent on us to follow regulations or rules. God never becomes distracted and neglects His children. No, Jesus did everything necessary to bring us into a relationship and keep us in a relationship with God. Today take time in the midst of your circumstances and do as Deuteronomy 6:4-7 reminds us, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD is one! ⁵You shall love the LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH. AND THESE WORDS WHICH I COMMAND YOU TODAY SHALL BE IN YOUR HEART. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."

Simply show God you love Him today!

Thank you for your continued prayer for TBHC kids, staff, and our growing needed resources. During this crisis, it is not a time to step back from caring for the ones who need it the most. It's time to step up. 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 Mar. 1-31, 2020.

ENDOWMENTS

MYRA STOKES: Bill Stokes

E ANN PACE: Karl & Martha Pace

HONORARIUMS

ALL THE HARDWORKING & DEDICATED STAFF AT TBHC:

Jason Lewis

CHILDREN OF TBHC: Earlene Crenshaw

CAMMY JOHNSON: Donna Johnson

MR. & MRS. DARRYL LOW ANNIVERSARY: Leon & Johnnie Ross

MY SISTER & BROTHERS- LOUISE, JAY & TOMMY: Earlene Crenshaw

OUR DAUGHTERS- ROBIN, REBEKAH & RACHEL: Margaret Wolf

RICKY & CANDY THOMPSON ANNIVERSARY: Duane & Charlotte Turner

MEMORIALS

WALTER BECKER: Dennis & Ilona Myrice

LARRY & ROSELEN BOBO: James Bobo

LAVEDA BROOKS: Leon & Johnnie Ross

LARRY CLARK: Carol Gray

RANDY COMER: Ray & Nell Dennis

CHANCE COX: Temple Baptist Church, Mexia

SOPHIA CRUZ: Jed & Glenice Whitaker

TOMMY FRAZIER: Jed & Glenice Whitaker

DOYLE GRANT: Charles & Charlotte Johnson; Caleb & Jami Davidson

BILLY RAY GREEN: Charles & Charlotte Johnson

WELDON HAND: Jed & Glenice Whitaker

DONA LEE HATTHORN: Welch Watt

HALEY JOHNSON: Donna Johnson

JOHN LANDRUM: Tom & Judy Connolly

KATHLEEN (BRAGG) MCDANIEL: Jeniene Taylor King

NOBLE HUGH MIDKIFF: Charles & Charlotte Johnson; Jesus & Brenda Gutierrez

JOHN MOORE: Jane Moore

MARGARET JO MOSS: Temple Baptist Church, Mexia

A.E. MUCKLEROY: Welch Watt

J.D. & MABLE ODOM: Henry & Renesia Wilburn

HARVEY PITTMAN: Temple Baptist Church, Mexia

IMOGENE POSEY: Margie Carrigan

MILDRED BERNICE POUNDERS: Jesus & Brenda Gutierrez

VALTON "W.V." RAY: James & Debbie Murphy, Charles & Charlotte Johnson, Caleb & Jami Davidson; Jed & Glenice Whitaker

CLIFFORD ROBERSON: Allen & Holly Cousins; Effie York;

BOB SCHOOLFIELD: Mary Frances Caldwell

LEE SHORT: Fay Short

C.B. & CLORA STANLEY: David & Sue Stanley

LOIS THOMPSON: Charles & Charlotte Johnson; Ricky & Rose Harrell

MARY WOLFINGTON: John Wolfington

JOHNNIE MAIE YOCOM: Charles & Charlotte Johnson

memorials-honorariums

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

An internal crisis in the church

By **PAUL GAUNTT**

DATE: May 3, 2020

TEXT: Acts 6:1-7

THE HOOK

Teamwork—that’s the buzzword of corporate America today—of retailers, educational systems and especially should be so in the church. CEOs, school administrators, retailers and corporate giants have recognized this principle, which the scripture has taught for ages. That is teamwork. Take note of Jethro’s advice to Moses concerning sharing the workload in Exodus 18.

We have probably wisely substituted the label “committee” for “team.” Yes, the administrator is in charge of all the organization, but a good administrator surrounds himself or herself with quality team members, and trusts them to carry out their tasks.

Donny Parrish once told me, when he was on staff at Temple, Little Rock, that the pastor Bro. Richard Walters, met with the staff on Monday mornings, and then insisted that he didn’t need to see them for the rest of the week because all had their

work to do. He trusted his staff to produce, and gave them room. That is how a good organization works. And that is what was about to happen at the Jerusalem Church. The disciples were bogged down in micromanaging tasks, which were not their first calling—to pray and meditate on the word.

If a church grows because the pastor micromanages every aspect of ministry, then when he leaves, or dies, what was built around him will not stand.

THE BOOK

An administrative problem (verses 1-2). It was customary during the infancy of the church to be engaged in the ministry of distributing food and other necessities to the two groups of widows of the congregation who had no other means of support. One group was the Hellenistic (Greek-speaking Jews) whose relatives thought the disciples were favoring the Hebrew widows. Jealousy and a fractured fellowship began to prevail.

An acceptable solution (verses 3-4). Notice the twelve did not ramrod their cronies through the system so they could have deacons they could control. No! They

trusted the church to seek the men out. The criteria for these new ordained brethren was not people skills, political clout, business acumen, or financial success. Rather, the qualifications were; good reputation, honesty, wisdom, and most of all, filled with the Holy Spirit. Shame on the church who selects men in order to confer honor on them. To be a deacon is not for honor—but an office of servitude.

An admirable conclusion (verses 4-7).

- The fellowship was restored “the saying pleased the whole multitude.”
- The Word increased because the spiritual leaders were free to study and pray.
- The church grew. “and the number of the disciples multiplied.
- Faith and obedience were increased.

THE LOOK

When everyone in the body of Christ knows what his or her spiritual gifts are, and begin to operate through them, then there will be joy and fulfillment in ministry, in fellowship, and God will give the increase. Acts 6:1-7 is a beautiful illustration of teamwork.

Full of grace and power

By **PAUL GAUNTT**

DATE: May 10, 2020

TEXT: Acts 6:8-15

THE HOOK

In most every aspect of life and society, whomever excels in their work are natural targets by some of the masses, whether it is in politics, church life, or any other entity. Jealousy and a fear of the unknown is the motivation factors. I recall a BMA church in the Port Arthur-Groves Area years ago, launching into an aggressive bus ministry. Unprecedented growth and evangelism became the results. But other religious leaders in the community voiced their skepticism and cynicism.

One day as I was having lunch with a staff member of that church, we overheard obviously two preachers in a nearby booth, making derogatory statements about the church. “Sure, they are showing big numbers, but the growth can’t be substantial.” Such response to what God is doing through His church is not new. The early church at Jerusalem experienced it as well.

THE BOOK

The manifestation of grace and power (verse 8). It was obvious that Deacon Stephen’s life manifested God’s grace and His divine blessing and favor. There was a strength in Stephen’s life which could not be explained in human terms. It was certainly nothing Stephen could glory in, of himself. It’s a sad day when an anointed man of God, through whom the power of Christ is manifested, suddenly feels his own self-importance because of it. This was certainly not the case in Stephen’s life.

The adverse reaction to grace and power (verses 9-10). Those who had been freed from slavery and were of the synagogues (organized religion) disputed with and tried to debate Stephen. But their words were no match with the man through whom the Spirit of God was manifest.

The plot against grace and power (verses 11-15). They worked undercover (secretly) to design an assault of accusations against Stephen. They were coaching these false witnesses to testify through slander and accusation, against him, taking

him before the Sanhedrin Court. They orchestrated lies and abusive language in order to slander and destroy the influence of Stephen. They portrayed Stephen as inciting riots and instigating the destruction of the temple. They, like all of those who continued to embrace the Mosaic Law, could not receive the new order of Salvation by grace through faith, and New Testament doctrine. Their old order was threatened.

The recognition of the power of God. Those on the Sanhedrin Court tried to convict Stephen, but all they could see, as they looked upon him, was the face of an angel. The Spirit of God was all over Stephen.

THE LOOK

Where God’s power is manifested, there will eventually be resistance from the skeptics. That’s why James could so confidently say, “Brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience. (James 1).

The church and martyrdom

By **PAUL GAUNTT**

DATE: May 17, 2020

TEXT: Acts 7:54-60

THE HOOK

I heard a preacher once quote an unknown writer who said, “The problem with Christians is nobody wants to kill them anymore.” The subject is sort of a “double-edged sword,” because not only is the “quote” accurate, scripture reinforces the truth that Christians who are on fire for God, have a target on their backs. And it’s Satan who longs to bring the believer down. So it begs the question, “Are you better off as a marginal Christian, safe from persecution—or one totally sold out to Jesus, witnessing His mighty power in your life, and thus arousing persecution?”

THE BOOK

Our text in Acts 8:54-60 describes a sold-out follower of Christ. Of course, we were permitted a glimpse of it in the final verse of Acts 6, as Stephen faced the Sanhedrin Court, and as they gazed upon him they saw “the face of an angel.” Stephen had a glow

in his countenance. Let us notice some characteristics of the Christ follower who is totally sold out to Him.

1. His message was saturated with holy boldness (verses 51-53). Stephen pulled no punches in preaching to a godless crowd citing their uncircumcised hearts and actively resistance of the Holy Spirit with hearts filled with disobedience. They were descendants of persecutors of the prophets. When a man of God preaches what God says to preach, he has no thought of pleasing men, but rather God.

2. His words were filled with conviction (verse 54). When a man is absolutely filled with the Holy Spirit, he will not mince words about the sinful condition of man, yet he speaks with a heart of love. The Word says these Jews were cut to the heart. They were livid, to the point they ground their teeth against Stephen. Holy Spirit conviction reaps many different reactions to the point of being animalistic. They even placed their hands over their ears because Holy Spirit conviction was unbearable to them.

3. His plight was martyrdom (verses 58-59). He was bodily dragged out of the city, and was beaten to death.

4. His entrance into Heaven was awesome (verses 59-60). The stoning of Stephen,

to me is second only to our Savior’s crucifixion, My heart breaks every time I read about Stephen, full of love and forgiveness, yet simultaneously being bludgeoned to death, while his angelic face was looking up into glory, seeing Christ standing at the Father’s right hand.

The stoning of Stephen may well have served as an object lesson to a young man named Saul, who witnessed the whole thing. One would suppose that during his ministry, he lived daily with the image etched into his heart of that first Christian martyr. I can imagine Paul and Stephen, with joy, embracing one another in Heaven.

THE LOOK

Our take-away from this lesson can be summed up in the words of Jesus in Matthew 10:28, “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

It’s infinitely better for one whose hope in Christ, to fall to the martyr’s sword, than for an infidel to live a life of sensual pleasure and safety in the world and fall into eternal flames.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

Scattering leads to sharing

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: May 24, 2020

TEXT: Acts 8:1-8

THE HOOK

Someone mentioned to me this past week how the Coronavirus pandemic seems to be used of God. It is serving a purpose. New Testament churches are being driven from their walls for a season, resulting in a vast number of churches streaming messages on social media. These messages have the capacity of reaching the whole world with the gospel of Christ. That might be a good illustration of the “scattering” of the gospel in the first century.

THE BOOK

1. Adversity is a good “scatterer” of the gospel. There was a great scattering of people in Genesis 10, when God prevented Nimrod from building his “tower to heaven.” God used confusion of language to scatter. In Acts 8, God uses persecution. Little did Saul of Tarsus, while persecuting the church, realize he was playing right into God’s hands, as God was preparing him to be the greatest church planter of all time.

2. The church becomes stronger in adversity. While devout men were carrying the body of Stephen to his burial, Saul was devouring the church body. As Saul was wreaking havoc on the church, the church was scattered

everywhere preaching the Word.

3. The gospel was introduced to Samaria. Samaritans were considered vile by the Jews. Verse 5 says that Deacon Phillip preached in Samaria, and bore much fruit. People received the Word, unclean spirits were driven out, and great joy came to the city.

THE LOOK

Persecution and trials of our faith are uncomfortable, and tragic. But trials and testings build up the saints (James 1) and opens other fields of labor. Is it any wonder James said to “count it all joy.”

A Divine encounter

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: May 31, 2020

TEXT: Acts 8:26-40

THE HOOK

Take a couple of moments to share a Divine encounter you have experienced. Those encounters are not merely coincidence—they are the result of God ordering our steps, and placing us where He wills—doing His bidding, and even preparing the hearts of the recipients.

In the summer of 1968, I worked for a company that was laying natural gas pipeline around Panola County. The work was grueling and hot. I spent hours in tick-infested ditches filling the ends of pipe for the welder. The crew was, in my opinion, horrendous and godless. They were also aware that I was going into the ministry.

One day, the foreman, in an effort to intimidate me, summoned me to get up during our lunch break and preach a message. I thought, “What do I have to lose?” So, I gave them a very brief message, commenting on John 3:16, (1) God loves you; (2) Christ died for you; (3) if you believe in Him, you’ll go to Heaven—if not, you will go to Hell.

When I sat down, there was silence. I don’t know if it was the Holy Spirit moving in them, or if they were dumbfounded by the action. Either way, today, 52 years later, I still smile at the notion that God may have used that encounter, which I consider a Divine encounter, to perhaps change a life—or more. I can envision that

foreman today being a leader in an evangelical church. That’s my hope anyway. We never know when those encounters may come, and we may not know until eternity, what fruit will be the result of those encounters.

THE BOOK

1. Often, the encounter is in an obscure place (verses 26-27). Did the Lord lead Phillip to organize a nation-wide crusade in Ethiopia? No, He sent Phillip to an obscure desert place where he had a divine appointment with a high-up official serving under Queen Candace of Ethiopia. God knows perfectly, how to make best use of time and energy. Are you ministering out in the country—or in small town USA? If so, take heart, those divine appointments God gives you there will result in the gospel ultimately being spread to faraway places.


2. Often, the Word gets to that encounter ahead of God’s servant (verses 27-35). The Ethiopian eunuch, was traveling along in his chariot, reading from Isaiah 53. He could not understand of Whom Isaiah spoke, but the Holy Spirit had his heart primed and ready for God’s servant to come along and explain the text—the reference to the One who was led, as a sheep, to the slaughter. Jesus did not utter a word, but willingly laid His life down. This obviously pierced the heart of the eunuch. Pastor, you may be discouraged by small crowds at church, but Phillip only had one in attendance in his preaching service (Acts 8:35) and the results of that service was the spreading of the gospel to Ethiopia.

3. Always, God gives the increase (verses 36-40). A genuine conversion was evident—the eunuch [a] could not restrain himself from being baptized (verse 36-37), [b] made a heart-felt confession (verse 37) “. . . I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God,” [c] was filled with joy in his heart (verse 39) “. . . he went on his way rejoicing.” All this could only be possible through the sovereign grace of God.

THE LOOK

Recognize when God opens the doors of your “divine encounters.” Ask Him to provide them. Take every opportunity to let God use you in them. You don’t have to be pushy and “preachy” when spreading the gospel. When God opens the doors to those appointments, He supplies the words and causes the response. It’s all of God. That makes the job of being a witness, much easier than we often make it.

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.



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BMA Texas Missions cont.

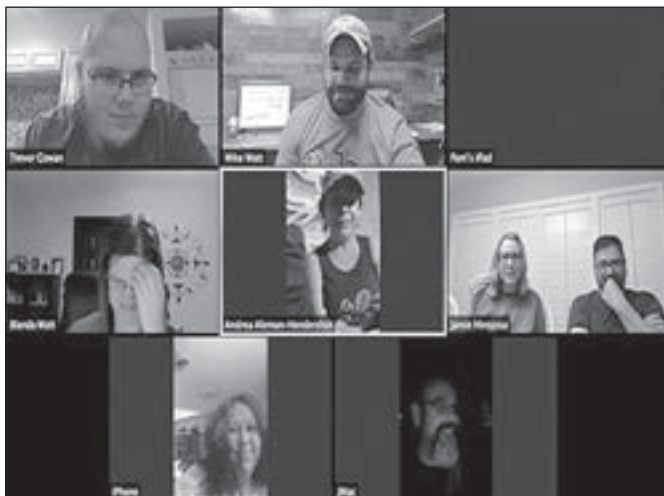
be like launching all over again. Pray that we will glorify God and not get discouraged by this. Pray that we will be equipping ourselves in this season and that our team will be ready to go when the sanctions lift.

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

It is time for the church to be innovative. Our “go to” tool has been removed from the toolbox and yet the task has not changed. We still need to equip the saints, to glorify God, to seek and save the lost, and to make disciples. Pray we continue to be faithful to the Great Commission through this Covid-19 situation.



▲ Mike Watt



**ISAIAS ROJAS OSECHAS—
CHURCH PLANT IN SPRING
ISAIAS.ROJA5299@GMAIL.COM**

Thank you for your support, morally, spiritually and financially in achieving the objectives we have set for ourselves. Please pray for us and the entire planter team. Continue to pray for us, to consolidate the results and achieve the goals set for the Glory of God.



▲ Isaias Rojas Osechas

**JESSE HALES—
STARTING POINT MISSION IN ROUND ROCK
HALESJESSE@GMAIL.COM
DUAL SUPPORT BMAA/BMAT**

Thank you for praying for us. God is opening new doors of ministry as we adjust to the new normal that the coronavirus has brought to us. We are excited to see the potential that these new opportunities bring for growing God’s church.

Prayer Needs:

Pray for wisdom as we continue to pray for God’s direction over some major decisions we are making right now. Pray for the uncertainty of the world’s situation to cause the hearts of those that have previously been hardened to the gospel to soften and be receptive.



▲ Jesse Hales

**GAMALIER LUNA—
NEW MISSION IN EL PASO
GAMALUGA@HOTMAIL.COM**

Brothers and sisters, pray for each other to remain faithful to the call God gave us.

Prayer Needs:

Please pray for my responsibility in El Paso.



▲ Gamalier Luna

**JAIME HENRIQUEZ—
FUENTE DE VIDA ETERNA MISSION,
HOUSTON**

For in just a little while, He who is coming, will come and will not delay.

Prayer Needs:

Pray for the saving of souls.



▲ Jaime Henriquez



**NEPTALY MOLINA—
IGLESIA BAUTISTA MISSION,
NACOGDOCHES
NRMOLINA23@GMAIL.COM**

We are preaching the gospel from my home on Facebook Wednesdays at 7 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m. Also, I’m thinking of broadcasting on Saturdays as well.



▲ Neptaly Molina

On March 28, three people from Lufkin came to see my wife in the hospital after her heart procedure. We both shared the message of the gospel and prayed for them. They told us that after this epidemic passes we will get together again in Lufkin. Let us hope that God glorifies Himself in these families.

Prayer Needs:

For the Spiritual Life of the Pastoral Family Molina Perdomo

2. For the total recovery of my wife Manuela (She had a heart attack and received stents this month.)

3. For the mission in Nacogdoches and the small Lufkin Group, and to resume such work promptly.

4. By the neutralization of the coronavirus, may God do His will, that many through this pandemic can reach the feet of Jesus Christ.

5. For Texas and the U.S., for protection to the entire U.S. population

6. U.S. and Venezuelan relations

**SPENCER SIMPSON—
REDEEMER’S LOVE MISSION, HOUSTON
SPNCRSMPSN@GMAIL.COM**

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



▲ Spencer Simpson

Prayer Needs:

Pray for our ability to be a light in southwest Houston during the COVID-19 crisis. 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.



EVENTS

BMA OF TEXAS ANNUAL MEETING

DATE: November 9-10, 2020

PLACE: Farley Street Baptist Church,
Waxahachie, Texas

pastor & staff changes

MICHAEL MOORE is the new pastor of New Bethlehem, Cut and Shoot.

JARED DOUGLAS has transitioned from executive pastor to lead pastor of First, Red Oak.

RICHARD KOONS is the new pastor of Emmanuel, Garland.

JORDAN TEW has resigned as pastor of Eighth Street, Grand Prairie.

AARON GREENWOOD has transitioned from worship pastor to children and family pastor at Farley Street, Waxahachie.

DANE GOODE has resigned as pastor of Lakeside, Trinidad.

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

personnel & positions

AVAILABLE POSITIONS

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

PASTOR—First, Springhill, Louisiana is seeking a pastor. Send resume to Daniel_Thomas@kinderhawk.com or mail to First Baptist Church, Attention: Rodney Tyler, P.O. Box 247, Springhill, Louisiana 71075. 5/20

PASTOR—Nat, Cushing is seeking a bi-vocational pastor. Send resume to the Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 630884, Nacogdoches, Texas 75963. 4/20

PASTOR—Lakeside, Trinidad is seeking a bi-vocational pastor. Send resume to the church at P.O. Box 471, Trinidad, Texas 75163. 4/20

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—New Harmony, Tyler is seeking a pastor. Send resume to Pastor Search Committee at the church at 10251 FM 724, Tyler, Texas 75704. 4/20

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

PASTOR—Central, Mineola is seeking a bi-vocational pastor. Send resume to Pastor Search Committee, 602 N. Line, Mineola, Texas 75773 or email to ccburke43@gmail.com. TFN

OBITUARIES

SIMON DAVID HAYES

Funeral services for Simon David Hayes, 74, of Henderson, formerly of Huntington, were in the Carroway Funeral Home Chapel in Lufkin March 14. Pastor Robert Dawson officiated.

Bro. Hayes was born April 27, 1945 in Lufkin to the late Zula (McGaughey) and Dave Franklin Hayes, and passed away in Henderson March 11, 2020.

He graduated from Huntington High School and was on the basketball team that won the state championship in 1962. He graduated from Stephen F. Austin State University, then received a degree in Theology from BMA Seminary in Jacksonville. He was a police officer for 20 years with the Lufkin and Center Police Departments.

Bro. Hayes also served as pastor at Glenfawn Baptist, First Ora Baptist, Pine Forest Baptist, Nat Baptist, as well as churches in Center and Carthage. He was a member of Nat, Cushing at the time of his death.

Survivors include his sons and daughter-in-law, Charles and Susan Hayes of Lufkin and Kenneth Hayes of Henderson; daughter and son-in-law, Christi and Glenn Brister of Apple Springs; grandchildren, Charles Kenneth "CK" Hayes, Cody Brister and Jaci Brister; great-granddaughter, Clara Brister; sisters and brother-in-law, Bobby Storey of Conroe, Joreen and Karl Bozeman of Texas and Mary Still of Lufkin; and a number of nieces, nephews and other relatives.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife of 46 years, Mary Hayes; and siblings, Tissie Beaty, Gene Olds, Rayburn Hayes, Ralph Hayes, Frances Runk and Lois Hebert.

RICHARD LUNNIE WALTERS

Richard Lunnie Walters, born on June 12, 1929, passed away April 2, 2020. He was born in Laurel, Mississippi, and at the early age of 18, felt the call to preach the gospel. It was then he began to prepare for a life in the ministry.

He attended Jones County Junior College, Jacksonville College and graduated from Mississippi College with a B.A. in Sociology and minors in English and Bible Studies. He received seminary training at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, BMA Theological Seminary and Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary.

Bro. Walters began his pastoral work at Bay Springs, Mississippi and pastored churches in Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas.

Walters met his wife, Lynn, at a revival meeting at her home church, First Baptist Church at Judson, Texas. They were married on May 27, 1952. He pastored Temple Baptist Church in Little Rock for 27 years. He completed his pastoral work at Collegeview Baptist Church in Magnolia, Arkansas in 2010.

He is survived by his wife Lynn, son Richard S. Walters, daughters Debra Compton (Kris) and Jill Gray.

Memorials may be made to BMA of Arkansas, 10712 Interstate 30, Little Rock, Arkansas 72209 or the charity of your choice.

Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, a private memorial service will be held.



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Dr. Voddie Baucham, Dr. Charley Holmes, Dr. Tom Buck



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