

Baptist Progress

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Cruz begins GOP bid; social issues percolate

By **DAVID ROACH**

Baptist Press

With Ted Cruz becoming the first Republican to officially announce his candidacy for the White House in 2016, social conservatives are beginning to assess potential candidates' stands on abortion, gay marriage and other social issues.

Cruz, a first-term senator from Texas, announced his candidacy March 23 by tweeting, "I'm running for president and I hope to earn your support!" He launched his campaign with a speech at Liberty University, the Christian school founded by the late Jerry Falwell. In the speech, Cruz "signaled that he will cast himself as a principled social conservative and align himself with the evangelical voters who play a critical role in the early primary states," Politico reported.

Other potential Republican presidential candidates include, alphabetically, Jeb Bush, Ben Carson, Chris Christie, Mike Huckabee, Rand Paul, Rick Perry, Marco Rubio, Rick Santorum and Scott Walker.

Cruz, a member of First Baptist Church in Houston, told his audience at Liberty, "I believe God isn't done with America yet."

Cruz has introduced a bill in the U.S. Senate that would allow states to define marriage as only between a man and a woman. As solicitor general of Texas, he successfully helped defend a federal ban on partial birth abortion before the U.S. Supreme Court and successfully defended a Texas law prohibiting groups that provide abortions from receiving state funds, according to Cruz's website.

Among the positions of other candidates on traditional pro-family issues:

—Bush, former governor of Florida, supported



a federal constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage a decade ago but drew criticism from some social conservatives more recently for seeming to soften his stance on gay marriage and hiring high-level advisers who are either homosexual or gay-affirming, according to MSNBC.com. BuzzFeed's McKay Coppins called Bush "2016's Gay-Friendly Republican."

As governor, Bush signed pro-life legislation including

a bill that attempted to save the life of a paralyzed woman named Terri Schiavo when her husband sought to have food and water withheld. Bush converted to Roman Catholicism 20 years ago and continues to practice his faith, The New York Times reported.

—Carson, former director of the pediatric neurosurgery division at Johns Hopkins Hospital, opposes same-sex marriage and abortion. He has criticized abortion advocates

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Authentic Christian Living

By **JERRY BURNAMAN**

His name was Justin, and for all practical purposes he was an atheist. His parents were wealthy, so Justin was able to afford a prestigious education and pursue his favorite subject—philosophy. But by age thirty, he had no inner peace. Every philosophical system seemed more bankrupt than the last.

One day while walking on the beach, he met an older man whose demeanor seemed happy and peaceful. The two struck up a conversation, and the older gentleman began talking about Jesus. He explained how Christ had fulfilled Old Testament prophecy and had come as a sacrifice for sin. The man urged Justin to turn to God in prayer.

Justin was not only saved; he went on to become a powerful apologist for the truthfulness of Christianity. His background had prepared him perfectly to convince a skeptical world of the reality of Jesus Christ. He wrote books, traveled widely, started a school, and lectured about Jesus with great power. At length he was arrested for his faith and challenged with this question: “If you are killed, do you suppose you will go to heaven?”

“I do not suppose it,” Justin replied. “I know and am fully persuaded of it.”

His accusers took him at his word, and Justin was beheaded along with several of his students in Rome about A.D. 165. History has given him the name Justin Martyr.

Interestingly, the New Testament word “martyr” is a term for anyone whose faith was so authentic they would rather die than abandon it. The word is often translated “witness.” For example, in Acts 1:8, Jesus said, “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses (martyr).”

We may or may not be required to die for Christ, but it is essential that we live for Him.

Authenticity is Unselfish Living

At the moment a person becomes a Christian, pride and unselfish living are not automatically eliminated. We’re infected with the Adam-Eve disease called sin, and it takes enormous faith and constant yielding to the Holy Spirit to conquer selfish living. The only way to learn about unselfish living is to study the Bible every day and apply its truths to every life situation.

Jesus said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:25-28).

Let’s admit it, ours is an age of gross selfishness and it often influences our thinking. We even get uncomfortable when God makes demands on us. The sarcasm of Wilbur

Rees’ words picture our selfish living:

“I would like to buy \$3 worth of God, please, not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep, but just enough to equal a cup of warm milk or a snooze in the sunshine. I don’t want enough of Him to make me love a black man or pick beets with a migrant. I want ecstasy, not transformation; I want the warmth of the womb; not a new birth. I want a pound of the Eternal in a paper sack. I would like to buy \$3 worth of God, please.” (Wilbur Rees, *When I Relax I feel Guilty* by Tim Hansel, p. 49).

We want just enough of God to keep our guilt level relegated to almost nothing. However, if we’re going to impact our world with the Gospel, then forget self, life like Christ, and let your light shine in this sin darkened world.

Authenticity is Living Generously

When we forget self, we will generously use our talents, our time and our resources for the cause of Christ. Look at these probing words: “Give and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you” (Luke 6:38).

You’ve heard the old saying, “You can’t out give God!” Then why do we hold back and refuse to allow God working in every area of life? It’s that old Adam-Eve disease that must be dealt with on a daily basis.

Authenticity is Learning Constantly

The servant student begins with a renewed mind (Romans 12:1-2). Don’t let the world squeeze you into its mold; let God remold you from the inside to think like Christ. Living differently begins with thinking differently. A life that is characterized by serving others begins in a mind that is convinced of such a life. Then we constantly study the Bible and allow the Holy Spirit to give us power to live like Christ.

Many people have a twisted picture of Christianity because they’ve been disillusioned by so-called Christians who don’t live accordingly. A recent poll by isidewith.com asked the question, “If Jesus suddenly came back to earth today, would He approve or disapprove of modern Christianity?” Those who responded, 87 percent said “disapprove.”

“If we’re going to replicate the power of the Apostolic Age, it requires an unbroken, undaunted, undiluted commitment to Christ.” (David Jeremiah)

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



EVENTS

APRIL 6-10, 2015

Revival
 @ Woodland, Gilmer
 Monday: The Hamptons
 Tuesday: Trent Preuninger
 Wednesday: Wade Maberry
 Thursday: Rily Pate
 Friday: Jim Crump
 7 p.m.

APRIL 20-22, 2015

66th Annual Session
 of the BMA of America
 @ University Plaza Hotel
 and Convention Center
 Springfield, Missouri
 Headquarters Hotel:
 University Plaza Hotel

MAY 14, 2015

Liberty Association BMMI Rally
 @ Concord, Gilmer

JUNE 2, 2015

Administrative Committee Meeting
 @ Rosewood, Gilmer
 10 a.m.

AUGUST 13, 2015

Liberty Association Lifeword Rally
 @ Cross Roads, Pittsburg

OCTOBER 11, 2015

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

NOVEMBER 10-11, 2015

115th Annual Session
 of the BMA of Texas
 @ Champion Forest Baptist Church
 15555 Stuebner Airline Road, Houston

APRIL 25-27, 2016

67th Annual Session
 of the BMA of America
 @ Gatlinburg Convention Center
 Gatlinburg, Tennessee
 Headquarters Hotel: Glenstone Hotel

PERSONNEL & POSITIONS

AVAILABLE MINISTERS

ELDON BUSENITZ is available for pulpit supply or to serve as interim pastor. He has 46 years of experience as a pastor, with a passion for clear, practical Bible teaching. He is a member of Heritage, Waxahachie. Contact him at 214-399-9522.

AVAILABLE POSITIONS

PASTOR—Pine Acres, Gilmer is seeking a bivocational pastor. Email merrillgl@aol.com for more information.

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

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

OBITUARIES

BILLY JOE HENRY

Billy Joe Henry, 83, of Pocola, Oklahoma, passed away March 22, 2015. He was born November 7, 1931 in Fort Smith, Arkansas. He was a retired minister from First, Roland, Oklahoma. He served as a BMA of Texas missionary. Henry was also a veteran of the United States Air Force. Funeral services were March 24, 2015 at the First, Roland, Oklahoma with burial at U.S. National Cemetery in Fort Smith with Military Honors under the direction of Edwards Funeral Home in Fort Smith. Henry is survived by his wife of 63 years Lou Ellen Henry, daughter Deborah Wood of Roland, Oklahoma; son, William Robert Henry; brothers, Jerry Henry of Fort Smith and Benny Henry of Arkoma; and one grandchild. Memorials may be made to the First Baptist Church, 203 Carson Road, Roland, Oklahoma 74954.



IDA WADDELL

Ida Mae Stitt Waddell went home to be with the Lord March 11, 2015. She was born May 31, 1927 in Glen Rock, Pennsylvania. Services were March 15, 2015 at Eubank Funeral Home in Canton, with Bro. Billy Smith and Bro. Richard Smith officiating. Her life was shaped by her unwavering faith and trust in Jesus Christ. This faith led her hundreds of miles from her childhood home of Bristol, Tennessee to Jacksonville College in Texas where she met her husband, Bro. Ira Waddell. For 55 years they planted, watered and harvested seeds of faith throughout churches in Texas and New Mexico. Mrs. Waddell was a talented seamstress, carpenter, emu farmer, Sunday school teacher, VBS leader and housewife. However, she is perhaps best remembered for her candid remarks, devotion to her husband and family and her love of God's word. Even in her last years, as her mind and body were weakened by age and disease, her godly character shaped by years of following her Savior were a testimony to all who met her. Mrs. Waddell is preceded in death by her husband, Ira, her parents and three brothers. She is survived by five children: Lynda and husband, Eddie Marsh, of Waxahachie; Shelba and husband, Mike Tolon, of Wills Point; Carl and wife, Debbie Waddell, of Fruitvale; Laura and husband, Gary Lee, of Terrell and Glen and wife, Debbie Waddell, of Houston; sister, Hazel Hoyle of Russellville, Arkansas; 16 grandchildren and 17 great grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Hope Pregnancy Center.



GERALD LEE FULTON

Gerald Lee Fulton, 73, of Simsboro, went to be with his Lord on Tuesday, March 24, 2015. He was born Jan. 26, 1942. He worked as an accountant throughout his career. Gerald served as a deacon and Sunday school teacher, and was active in his community. He was preceded in death by his wife of 51 years, Ann Bozeman Fulton; his daughter, Traci Leigh Fulton; his parents, Arthur and Eunice Fulton; and a brother, James Fulton. He is survived by his son, Gerald Lynn (Jerry) Fulton, Baptist Progress editor and teaching pastor of Anthony Drive, Ennis, and wife, Cassie, of Waxahachie; and a host of other relatives and friends. Funeral services were at Calvary Baptist Church in Mexia on March 27, 2015 with Bro. Jerry Fulton, Bro. Paul Gaunt and Bro. Gaylan Henry officiating. Memorials may be given to Baptist Progress, P.O. Box 2085, Waxahachie, Texas 75168 or Anthony Drive Baptist Church Improvement Fund, P.O. Box 9, Ennis, Texas 75120.



CHURCHES IN REVIEW

MARCH 15, 2015

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Anthony Drive, Ennis	64	98	
Cedar Creek, Teague	13	21	
Farley Street, Waxahachie	461	536	1 By Letter
First, Blooming Grove	203		1 By Baptism
First, Crandall	69	109	2 By Baptism
First, Palmer	40	73	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	22	53	
Little Mound, Big Sandy	35	47	
New Harmony, Tyler	299	370	1 By Letter, 1 By Baptism
New Haven, Dallas	20	34	1 By Baptism
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	49	56	
Pine Brook, Tyler	26	73	
Rosewood, Gilmer	137	251	1 By Baptism, 2 By Profession
Security Calvary, Cleveland	14	28	2 By Baptism
Temple, Mexia	44	57	

MARCH 22, 2015

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Anthony Drive, Ennis	64	121	
Farley Street, Waxahachie	501	554	2 By Statement
First, Blooming Grove	223		
First, Palmer	32	46	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	22	42	
Harvest, Lufkin	10	15	
Jackson, Joaquin	73	134	
Little Flock, Lufkin	8	15	
Little Mound, Big Sandy	44	52	
Merriman Hills, Sherman	20	23	
New Harmony, Tyler	332	459	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	40	54	
Pine Brook, Tyler	29	66	
Rosewood, Gilmer	120	216	2 By Baptism
Security Calvary, Cleveland	15	47	
Temple, Mexia	39	56	
Woodland, Splendora	39	68	

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

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JACKSONVILLE COLLEGE

21 Days to Easter

In preparation for Easter, Jacksonville College produced *21 Days to Easter*, a devotional guide covering the last week of Christ's life on earth. The devotionals in the book were written by Jacksonville College faculty, students, and family and was intended for personal use

or for families to read together. The book was available for donations, and all proceeds went to the Jacksonville College Ministerial Alliance to purchase three crosses and a large display of the Ten Commandments for the College. The B. J. Albritton Ministerial Alliance is an

organization for ministerial students that emphasizes spiritual growth and training.

The following devotional, "Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection," is the first devotional in *21 Days to Easter*.

Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection

"They didn't get it!"

By DR. MIKE SMITH

"Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken" (Luke 18:31-34).

Have you ever known anyone who just didn't get it? One of my favorite social media clips is of the dumb blonde. She walks into a library and shouts, "Double meat burger, fries, and large coke!" In silence, everyone looks up, and the librarian says, "Lady this is a library." The dumb blonde in a whisper says, "Double meat burger, fries, and large coke." She just didn't get it!

Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem to die. He is soon to begin Passion Week, the week of His death and resurrection.

This period occupies a large portion of the gospels and should occupy a large portion of our attention.

At least three times, Jesus had told His disciples, "I am going to Jerusalem to die and rise again." They didn't understand His death and resurrection. Each time Jesus talked of death, the disciples wanted to talk about an earthly kingdom.

Before we judge the disciples too harshly, how often today are people more interested in earthly things than eternal biblical truth?

Reflection

1. List what will be some people's focus at Easter, or list the following in order of priorities:
 - a. New clothes
 - b. Meal
 - c. Egg hunt
 - d. Trip to visit relatives

- e. Skiing trip
- f. Days off school
- g. Death and resurrection of Jesus

What can we do to prepare for a special Easter where the focus is on remembering the death, burial, and resurrection of a savior—Jesus? Don't miss celebrating the Resurrection.

Prayer

God, help me not to miss the real celebration of Easter. Help me to faithfully read Your Word daily. M. S.

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



Travel Schedule for Choir and Overcomers

JC Representatives	Date and Time	Location
Choir, Overcomers, Bro. Mike	Sunday, April 12 at 10:00 a.m.	Shiloh Baptist Church in Mesquite, TX
Overcomers	Sunday, April 12 at 6:00 p.m.	First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, TX
Overcomers	Saturday, April 18 at 10:00 a.m.	North Side Baptist Church in Conroe, TX
Overcomers	Sunday, April 19 at 10:15 a.m.	First Baptist Church in Crockett, TX
Choir, Overcomers	Monday, April 20	BMAA National Meeting in Springfield, MO
Overcomers	Sunday, April 26 at 11:00 a.m.	Hilltop Baptist Church in Frankston, TX

UPCOMING ANNOUNCEMENTS



Easter Break
April 3-6: Offices closed

Annual Academic Awards Night
April 9 at 7:00 p.m. in Buckner Chapel

Spring Concert
April 14 at 7:30 p.m. in Buckner Chapel

**Region XIV Regional Tennis Tournament,
hosted by Jacksonville College**
April 16-17 at the Jacksonville ISD Tennis Complex
Tournament Director: Lynn Nabi (903) 589-7137

Spring Show: A Little Theater
April 23-25 at 7:30 p.m. in the new Performing Arts Center
on the Joe Wright campus

Donkey Basketball
May 1 at 7:00 p.m. in the Curtis Carroll Field House/Gymnasium
Jacksonville Fire Department vs. Jacksonville Police Department

Jaguar Day Across Texas
(annual day of giving for Jacksonville College)
May 3

Commencement
May 8 at 7:30 p.m.
in the Curtis Carroll Field House/Gymnasium



DiscipleGuide Offers New Book

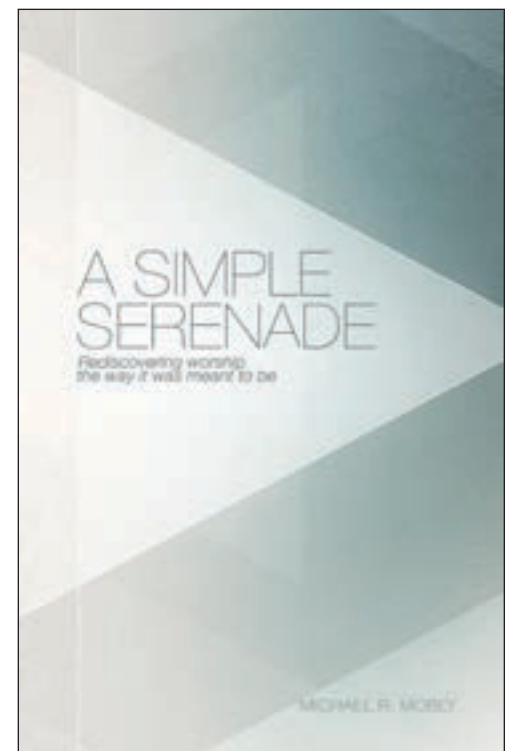
DiscipleGuide is pleased to offer a new book from BMA author Michael Mobly, *A Simple Serenade*.

Today's church has been told that worship of God is all about an experience. Did I feel something I've never felt before? Was I "moved?" But true worship, according to Mobly, is not about a feeling. It cannot be based on the moment, the music, or the motivator. It is based upon a relationship with Christ. The believer seeking that kind of worship, the kind that exalts the Father, must develop a relationship with Him.

Mobly writes, "Step into His throne room, kneel before the God of the universe. Bow your head in humility, and allow Him to gently lift your face and gaze lovingly into His eyes. And with all that is in you, let your voice soar, as you serenade the Creator of everything, and the Savior of everyone who will hear his voice. It really isn't very difficult to understand or to do. Just sing!"

Michael Mobly has served on staff at Southgate Baptist Church in Moore, Oklahoma for more than 20 years. Michael held the position of student pastor for many years and currently serves as the pastor of teaching and church ministry. He has written numerous biblical studies. Michael's passion is teaching and helping others discover the truths of God's Word. It is his hope that this book will guide you to a deeper, more satisfying worship experience.

To purchase *A Simple Serenade* you can visit discipleguide.org or call 800-333-1442.



Cruz begins GOP bid; social issues percolate cont.

for characterizing pro-lifers as waging a "war on women," according to LifeNews.com. "The war is on their babies," Carson, a Seventh-day Adventist, said.

—Christie, governor of New Jersey, opposes abortion and same-sex marriage. However, in 2013 he dropped his appeal of a court decision legalizing gay marriage in New Jersey. Also in 2013, Christie signed a bill banning state-licensed counselors from trying to help children under 18 reduce or eliminate same-sex attraction.

Christie, a Roman Catholic, does not believe being homosexual is a sin or a choice, Religion News Service reported in 2013.

—Huckabee, former governor of Arkansas, has pastored Southern Baptist churches in Arkansas and served as president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. He is a former student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Texas. Huckabee opposes abortion and same-sex marriage.

—Paul, a libertarian-leaning first-term senator from Kentucky, opposes same-sex marriage but says the issue should be settled by state governments rather than the federal government, the Washington Post reported. The GOP ought to "agree to disagree"

on issues like gay marriage to welcome a broader coalition into the party, Paul said according to the Post.

Paul introduced a bill in the Senate that would declare a fertilized egg a human protected by law, but he told a University of Chicago forum his personal belief that "life begins at the very beginning" does not reflect the views of many Americans. Paul is a Presbyterian.

—Perry, former governor of Texas, supported a Texas constitutional amendment defining marriage as "only a union between a man and a woman," but in 2011 he affirmed New York's right under the Tenth Amendment to legalize same-sex marriage. Perry was a United Methodist until he began attending a non-denominational evangelical church in 2010.

—Rubio, a first-term senator from Florida, defends states' right to define marriage as between one man and one woman and believes "the right to life outweighs the right to choose an abortion," National Review reported in 2014.

Rubio has drawn criticism for identifying himself at times as Roman Catholic and at times as evangelical. In 2010, The New

York Times published an article on his denominational affiliation titled "Marco Rubio: Catholic or Protestant?" Rubio has been a regular attendee of Christ Fellowship, a Southern Baptist church in Miami.

—Santorum, a former senator from Pennsylvania, is pro-life and opposes same-sex marriage. Santorum is a Roman Catholic.

—Walker, governor of Wisconsin, is the son of a Baptist pastor. He told attendees at the National Religious Broadcasters convention in February he supports "strong

marriages" and seeks to protect innocent life, according to an NRB news release.

As governor, Walker signed a bill requiring women seeking abortions to view ultrasound images of their babies. He opposes abortion even in cases of rape and incest and has defended Wisconsin's ban of same-sex marriage, Milwaukee's Journal Sentinel reported in October.

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Auxiliaries

The game of life

By SHARON COLE

The cool, rainy weather did not dampen the spirits of 115 girls and counselors who attended the Texas GMA Houseparty March 20-21, 2015 at Daniel Springs Encampment. Each year the GMA officers and Promoters do an excellent job in planning, decorating and conducting this meeting. The theme: "The Game of Life" and song: "It's Your Life" emphasized the theme scripture: Matthew 7:13-14. The decorations illustrated the broad path that leads to destruction and the narrow path that leads to life. New Harmony, Tyler GMA was recognized as the VIPs for giving the most to the project: The Bridge: Ministry of Matthew and Amy Prather in Celina. Over \$4,000 was given to this project. After all the introductions of special people, Cornerstone GMA, Jacksonville sang a special song: "Open Up the Heavens." Guest speaker, Stacie Bostic of Gun Barrel City, spoke on the Power of Our Words. She admonished the girls to be careful of the words they say because they cannot be taken back; they can build up or tear down, and they create the outcome of our daily lives. In Saturday morning business, the new project was chosen: 90% Chris and Holly Huson, missionaries to Ecuador and 10% GMA General Fund. The goal is \$8,000. Each girl was challenged to give \$80 which averages out to approximately \$1.67 per week. Officers elected for 2015-2016 are: President-McKenna Wilson; 1st Vice President-Rebekah Holmes; 2nd Vice President-Patricia Hernandez; 3rd Vice President-Nancy Key; Secretary-Alaina Verhelle; Adult Secretary-Carol Taylor; Project Promoter-Abigail Verhelle; Adult Project Promoter-Kendra Verhelle; Historian-Chloe Key; Adult Historian-Christy Arnold; Song Leader-Cheyenne Collard; Adult Song Leader-Kim Cade; Treasurer-Jeannie Walker; Assistant

Treasurer-Nancy Cranney. Advisory Council members: Teel Witt, Jayna Williams, Aimee Holmes, Amanda Burch and Lisa Maynard. Installation of officers was conducted by Texas WMA President, Diana Morris. She reminded the officers that they are "Daughters of the King," using Psalm 45: 13, "The King's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold." She encouraged them to dress, think, talk and act like they are a princess, a daughter of the King. The officers then were given a crown and treated to ice cream sundaes. Everyone was then treated to sundaes hosted by Texas WMA ladies. Certificate awards were given to all GMA groups and churches who gave toward the project. Camille Acres GMA sang a special song: "Hope Now." Guest speaker, Stacie Bostic, blessed our hearts again with an inspiring topic of "Let It Go." She related that we can't see what God has for us when we hold too tightly to things. We have to Let Go of the Past; Let Go of Non-Christian People Who Pull Us Down; Let Go of Worry; Let Go of Bitterness; and Let Go of our Flesh, what we want that may not be the best for us. The Miss-Jr Miss GMA Presentation was conducted by Cheryl Hughes, Assistant GMA Promoter. Each district promoter recognized their girls for passing a step this year. Sparkly necklaces were given to each one. Queens were presented, carrying a sparkly letter representing the first letter in their name. Mary Kate Key sang: "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus." Chosen at Texas Miss GMA is Alaina Verhelle, Cornerstone Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Cherokee District. She was presented a \$1000 scholarship from Jacksonville College and a Bible from the Baptist Progress. Texas Jr. Miss GMA is Kaitlynn Crudgington, VanZandt District. She received a Bible from the Baptist Progress.

National WMA-Besides Still Waters

National WMA President, Janet Widger, encourages all ladies, WMA or not, to make plans to attend the National WMA meeting April 21, 2015 and receive numerous blessings. The meeting will be in the ILLINOIS Room of the University Plaza Hotel and Convention Center in Springfield, Missouri. Registration begins at 8:00 a.m. and the meeting begins at 8:30 a.m. Special music will be presented by Doug and Diane Lee, missionaries to the Philippines. Guest speaker will be Pat Quesenbury. Her deep commitment as a pastor's wife led to extended ministry opportunities with women in personal counseling/mentoring, seminars, writing and through service as president of both the Texas and National WMA. She is founder of Creative Living, an organization of ministry through which her seminars: The Feminine Touch, Portrait of a Lady and other Bible studies have been taught nationwide. For 21 years she directed New Life Celebration, a national women's conference held in Dallas. Her book for teen girls, What's A Girl To Do? has been translated in the Romanian language. Vocationally, she is a Director with BeautiControl Cosmetics. Come hear this precious, godly lady who has allowed herself to be used of God to bless so many people. A special lunch honoring Pastor's Wives and Widows is being planned at 12:15 p.m. in the COLORADO B Room. All Pastor's wives and widows are encouraged to attend and enjoy a meal prepared just for you who have given so much by being a faithful helpmeet. A wonderful day is planned and you will go away blessed for being there.

People Are People

Are you looking for a missions study book? People Are People by Jackie Ricks is an excellent study about Dr. John and Shirley Ladd, former missionaries to Mexico. It gives personal details about the ministry of the Ladds and is a study book that can help you in your daily life to make choices that will honor God. It also contains many quotes from Bro. John and Shirley, family members and others who have been part of their lives through the years. This book is good for personal study as well as for groups. If you want to be inspired to greater things, get this book about a dedicated couple who gave a major portion of their life to help others physically as well as spiritually. Order your book today from Jackie Ricks, 612 FM 49, Mineola, TX 75773, jdbricks@att.net, 903-569-5548.

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



Sunday School Lessons

Watching Jesus Die

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: April 5, 2015

TEXT: John 3:16; Matthew 27:33-44

THOUGHT PRIMER

Great communicator/self improvement expert Dale Carnegie once said;

"Two men looked through prison bars,
One saw mud, the other saw stars."

The context with which Carnegie coined this phrase was dealing, no doubt, with the contrast between one with a positive outlook and one with a negative one. Yet, I believe this brief quote adequately sets the stage for our thoughts on this weeks lesson, "Watching Jesus Die."

THE STUDY

There was such a wide array of "watchers" of Jesus' crucifixion on the cross, and the list below by no means represents all. Some were scoffers, others were unconcerned, and yet, there were those who believed.

The legalizers -- namely the Jews who were steeped in the law of Moses, saw Jesus as a blasphemer, and a rebel Who simply sought to interfere with their "organized religion." Their envy spurred them to despise Him; (Matthew 27:18) When Pilot asked the crowd if they wanted him to release Christ or Barabbas, he was aware of the hatred the religionists had for Him. After all, they could never catch Him in an inconsistency, and they could never withstand His knowledge -- and could never successfully defend their traditions to Him or win a debate.

His disciples, who had followed Him closely for over three years, were feeling twinges of hopelessness that all they had been striving for -- studying for and being discipled for - to be a part of the ground floor of the New Testament church and Christ's Kingdom, had begun to see their hopes dashed as they watched their Savior die. They momentarily forgot that He had once told them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." John 14:12

Others no doubt experienced the fear and sickening feeling down in their stomachs of the likelihood of, themselves, being martyred for their faith, as Peter demonstrated the night before as he denied his Lord three times.

Some with guilty consciences: One was Pilot's wife who sent word to him to release Him because of the nightmares she had been having about him. (Matthew 27:19) Then of course, Judas, who had sold Jesus out for 30 pieces of silver, suddenly was smitten with a dose of remorse after Jesus was condemned to die.

Sympathetic toward Jesus, yet feeling there's much to lose. Even Pilot tried to release him, but he knew it would jeopardize his own political career: John 19:12

Some were mercenary: The death of Christ meant to some Roman soldiers, that they had a chance at gambling for His garments. John 19:23-25

His mother: We can only speculate what was going through Mary's mind as she saw Him as not only the Savior of the world, but as her precious Baby Boy. She went through birth pangs one night in that dirty stall in Bethlehem, to bring give physical birth to Him; No doubt, her mind wandered back through their happy lives in hers's and Joseph's home in

Nazareth; Her memory no doubt went back to one of those annual trips to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. She probably recalled the panic in her's and Joseph's hearts when they thought they's lost their boy -- only to find Him at the Temple, lecturing to the religious leaders. She probably wept as she recalled what a precious baby, child, and young man He was. Now, she was watching her Son -- God's only Begotten Son -- with tears of anguish because of His pain, and yet with a realization that this was, by far, the most pivotal incident in all of world history -- this was His destiny in life -- to be the Savior of the world and the propitiation for sin.

The two thieves: One thief hanging on one side of Jesus scoffed, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us." Luke 23: The other thief, with a soft, repentant heart and with a correct view of his own sin said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

That illustrates a repentant heart and a hardened, sinful heart. Like the Pharisee and the publican. The pharisee was satisfied by how he practiced his religion and felt no need of a Savior, but the publican was repentant -- "Lord be merciful to me a sinner." Luke 18:13

Many motives came together to bring about God's eternal plan. In Matthew 27:1, we find the priests and elders met to take "counsel against Jesus to put Him to death:" While their plans were sinister and self-serving, God, the Father, had perfected that plan in eternities past. Revelation 13:8 calls Him "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." God's motive was perfect and pure.

APPLICATION:

What does Jesus' death on the cross mean to you? Today, are you numbered with the mercenaries, and Jesus is nothing more than just an opportunity for material gain? Have you only just had a guilty conscience because of the torture and suffering He endured on the cross, like Judas or Pilot's wife?

Like Pilot, do you have too much to lose in this life to be identified with Him?

Are you resentful to Him because His ways are perfect, and your own man-made religion falls woefully short?

Or do you find yourself overwhelmed with His goodness toward you that He would suffer on the cross for your sin, and you have been drawn to him in repentance, confession and faith in Him? When Paul preached to the pagans on Mars Hill in Athens, he preached about the altar constructed "to the Unknown God." Paul said, "Him declare I unto you." Acts 17:23. The results were that "some mocked, and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. . .Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed." Acts 17:32-34.

CHALLENGE:

1. Spend some time going back and re-living your experience of salvation. Weigh your confession of faith against that of the thief who received the Savior.

2. Vow that you will engage in at least one conversation with an unchurched friend or relative about having a relationship with this Savior, Jesus Christ.

3. Take time to read the accounts of the crucifixion in the four gospels: Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, and John 19. Read them aloud with your family if possible.

Father, forgive them

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: April 12, 2015

TEXT: Luke 6:28; Luke 23:227-34

THOUGHT PRIMER

As we discuss the blessed words of Jesus, "Father, forgive them," may we be mindful that as He forgave those who were killing Him, we, today who live in the 21st century, have that forgiveness extended to us. Let us also remember, Jesus, the Master Teacher, was modeling His attribute of forgiveness to believers as well.

Perhaps class members have testimonials as to how extending forgiveness to others or asking for forgiveness enriched their own personal lives. Remember these thoughts about forgiveness.

1. You are enslaved to a person whom you refuse to forgive.

2. A forgiving spirit is essential to a healthy life. To lie down at night with a heart of forgiveness toward those who abused you, is to have a good night's sleep.

3. The self-loathing of persons who refuse to forgive themselves, will be manifested in disdain toward others. Sadly, a great number of God's own people are walking in unforgiveness toward themselves, for sins which God has already forgiven them.

4. Total forgiveness is the key to genuine forgiveness. When we forgive, we no longer hold the person liable for their offense. Psalm 103:12 "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." God never again remembers those offenses against Him which He has forgiven.

THE STUDY

1. Jesus' motive for forgiveness

Jesus' motive for forgiving was not to salve His own conscience. He was not enslaved to anyone - He was not driven by guilt to forgive them; According to scripture, Jesus could sleep soundly because His conscience was clear. His sound sleep while tossed in a storm at sea (Matthew 8:24) is indicative of that.

His motive for forgiveness was the fact, he saw the peoples' need for forgiveness through Divine eyes.

Forgiveness was just as natural for Jesus as breathing is for us. He desires to forgive, and the injustices done to him on the cross could never cause Him to harbor hatred or resentment to those who caused Him great suffering.

2. Jesus' refusal to defend Himself was another factor in His divine ability to forgive unconditionally.

Have you ever known of two people who were mortal enemies -- but could easily become friends if they each had you as a common foe? That's a scenario that's hard to take -- and also a common one in life. Herod and Pilate had been enemies, but became friends as they each turned their hostilities toward the Savior. Luke 23:12

3. Jesus faced persecution and ridicule from all sides.

a. He was accused of failure to give tribute to Caesar; (verse 2)

b. He was accused of claiming to be exactly Who He was -- the King of the Jews; (verse 3)

c. He was accused of perverting the doctrines

of the Jewish religion (verse 5)

d. The crowd rejected Him by choosing a hardened criminal, Barabbas to be released instead of Him. (verse 18)

e. Even the soldiers gambled for His clothing (verse 34)

f. One of the malefactors next to him accused him. (verse 39)

4. His forgiveness was driven by His willingness to do only the Father's will.

In the mind of Christ, there was a monumental issue which far exceeded His own suffering. That was to tackle the task, which had been prophesied from the creation -- to pay the penalty for the sin of all mankind. He never lost His focus on that task. Rather than being saddened for Himself, He was saddened for the people. "But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children." Luke 23:28

Stephen, an evangelist, one of the deacons in the New Testament church and the first martyr in the Church age, also possessed this same unconditional forgiveness of Christ when he told those stoning him, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Acts 7:60.

Joseph, who was persecuted and rejected by his brethren, told them years later after God had victory in his life, ". . . Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." Genesis 50:19-20 Rather than dwelling on his own persecution, Joseph saw the bigger picture -- and reckoned his brethren's treatment of him as merely a vehicle to bring him into God's divine purpose.

APPLICATION

What does Jesus' unconditional forgiveness spoken on the cross, to that angry crowd mean to you?

Have you scoffed at His offer for salvation?

Have you followed a crowd that exuded indifference toward Him?

Like the Jews, have you considered Him as One Who has sought to destroy your religion?

His forgiveness, as spoken from the cross speaks volumes to us -- that in Him, and only Him, is there forgiveness for sin.

That forgiveness is unconditional, it is complete, and removes your transgressions from you "as far as the east is from the west." Psalm 103:12. That means He never remembers it again, and you will never be held accountable for it again.

Now, because He has demonstrated Divine forgiveness, you and I have a model to follow as we forgive one another. And by the way, we experience His forgiveness as we are willing to forgive those who trespass against us. Matthew 6:15.

CHALLENGE

Perhaps you have nursed a grudge against a friend, family member or other acquaintance for years. Ask God about giving you the courage to call, write, e-mail or text them and make that conflict right, not by saying, "we were both wrong," or "if I have done anything to offend you." Claim responsibility, be totally remorseful, and ask for forgiveness -- and confer unconditional forgiveness.

UPCOMING EVENTS *at* TBH

Texas Baptist Home
Change for Children 2015

Celebration Day



Date: June 27, 2015
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Goal \$75,000
Goal per can \$55

HOME
Texas Baptist Home
Change for Children 2015
829 Farley St. - Waco, TX - 76785
www.tbhc.org (972) 937-1821

Change for Children

Join us June 27th for Change for Children!
Bring your filled Change for Children Cans and come and celebrate with TBH families and staff. We are so thankful for your donations and we hope to see you and your family at our fun family event!

Homecoming

Join us June 13th for Homecoming!
It is a great time to reunite with old friends and staff from TBH.



Summer Fun and Back to School



Donated items are needed for summer fun at TBH. Our kids will be wanting to go to some pretty fun places and you can help! Any Six Flags, Hurricane Harbor and any other fun places that provide gift cards or season passes are welcome to be donated.

Back to School supplies need to be donated by August 3rd. Most needed items are large manilla and construction paper, kleenex, hand sanitizer, and lysol wipes.