

Baptist Progress

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BMA OF AMERICA NEWS

Merry Christmas



*May you have a wonderful Christmas!
from*

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JERRY FULTON, Baptist Missionary Loan Association Director & Baptist Progress Director/Editor

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JASON CURRY, Texas Baptist Home for Children President



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First, Carthage: A regional church with action team based ministry

By **PAUL GAUNTT**

Baptist Progress Correspondent

First Baptist Church of Carthage has a unique approach to ministry and outreach. Organized in 1858, the church has grown to be a significant force in not only Carthage, but throughout east Texas, and is a leading church in the association.

When asked what the secret was to the growth of First Baptist, Pastor Allen Tilley, who is beginning his 24th year of ministry, said, “It’s more in spite of us than because of us—it is totally by the grace of God.”

The church has followed some principles contained in a small book written by a Baptist seminary professor, Ken Hemphill, titled, “The Bonsai Tree,” who wrote that the typical church ministry model does more to restrict growth, like the caretaker of the Bonsai Tree who continually trims it back rather than permitting it to grow.

First Baptist has moved her ministry model from committee-based organization to an action team-based ministry, whereby every team has a job description and responsibility to do without having to report to the church.

“Committees give reports, but teams, on the other hand, do ministry,” Tilley said, explaining that each team establishes a budget for its particular ministry, and has a part in their respective budget, enabling them to know how much can be spent, and sometimes, if such a ministry warrants it, the church will go ahead and fund it. Each team is responsible to a staff member, which makes the team accountable.

Another great benefit of the action team is that not only do more people have the opportunity to be plugged directly into ministry, but it also gives each one a sense of ownership with the ministry and a sense of belonging.

“With teams and budget, it really freed us to help people to ministry,” the pastor said, noting that one of the disadvantages of a committee-based program is that committees have to report to a group and that group becomes a “bottle neck” and ends up becoming a “yes” or “no” body.

The ministry action teams relieved the administrative pressures from the deacon body, which freed them to devote their energies to serving the body caring for homebound and other physical needs of the congregation.

First Baptist Church also has an active missions action team, which is headed to a mission field in El Salvador soon.

“They go all over the world, participating in the work of the Baptist Medical Missions International,” Tilley said.

Another innovative approach to the outreach ministry of the church

has been to consider themselves more of a regional church than a city church. There is little mention of Carthage from the pulpit unless it is an announcement concerning a local event. The church’s focus for outreach includes not only Panola County, but Shelby County to the south, Marshall to the north and surrounding East Texas areas.

The church has two worship services on Sunday morning. Both are identical, using blended music, utilizing a 40 voice choir and orchestra. The early service will have 150-200 worshipers, and the late service will have approximately 400 in attendance.

James McWright is the executive pastor; David Yarborough - worship pastor; Richard Reed, a retired school teacher, is in charge of pastoral care; Adrean Seaborn is director of discipleship, and Joyce Tilley is financial administrative assistant.



▲ Dr. and Mrs. Allen Tilley



▲ First Baptist Church of Carthage



TBHC

FOSTER CARE & ADOPTION

I'm just sayin'

By **JASON CURRY**

Paul of Tarsus has always struck me as a leader. Imagining him as a CEO is not difficult when you read scripture, willing to part ways with people to accomplish what he felt was best to serve God and advance the gospel. Evidence of this is found in the purpose of Paul's life. He saw his purpose as more important to accomplish than the feelings of himself or those around him. He made that evident by demonstrating, time and again, that his life mattered little when contrasted to The Gospel.

In Acts 20, Paul heads to Jerusalem, but on his way stops at Miletus and then calls on the Church of Ephesus to meet with him one last time. He speaks to them about protecting the church and shepherding its people. It is very much a farewell address.

But he also gives words of hope entrusting them to God and not himself. Saying that God desires to build His church through His Word and grace. Through service and sacrifice of the church, the Lord sees fit to give an inheritance. Paul then points to himself as an example, sharing that he has worked hard in his calling to live out what Jesus said: "it is more blessed to give than receive."

This is not a Christmas story. It is a farewell to those Paul loved but with a call to live like Jesus would have us live. This time of year, it is easy to forget that "it is more blessed to give than receive." As Jesus would point out it is not simply giving gifts or money, it is a way of life for the believer.

Leaving an inheritance and a legacy behind is the joy of every Christian. Knowing that what we invested in will continue to flourish far beyond our lives gives us joy. Paul knew he would never return and spoke challenge and hope to those he entrusted to God's care. What more could any of us ask for than to leave what we have loved and cared for in the hands of the Lord.

As I prepare to see TBHC into a future that exceeds myself I know that the heritage and legacy I want to leave behind is simple: To Glorify God by Caring for Children. But on my 'way to Jerusalem,' I want to stop along the way and tell everyone how they can make an impact for generations to come.

If you have questions about how you can leave a legacy at TBHC and preserve a ministry for the generations that follow, please contact us. Share that you want to know more about leaving a legacy.

The resources that God has given us are not our own. They belong to Him and only He can dictate how we spend His resources. As you consider your last testimony, will it encompass your values, a challenge, and speak of hope to those you leave behind? To have what God wants to give will require selflessness and sacrifice for the sake of The Gospel.

Merry Christmas everyone. As you and I experience this season let us not forget "it is more blessed to give than receive."

I'm just sayin'.

Jason Curry is the president of the Texas Baptist Home for Children. Contact him 629 Farley St, Waxahachie, Texas 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 Nov. 1-30, 2022.

ENDOWMENTS

MYRA STOKES: Bill Stokes

HONORARIUMS

BERTHA CARROLL: Johnny & Phyllis Howell

BRIAN & MARY ANN MAUK: Stanley & Doris Allen

CHARLES & CHARLOTTE JOHNSON: Stanley & Doris Allen

ED SANDALL: Johnny & Phyllis Howell

HERBERT TRUSSEL: Johnny & Phyllis Howell

WILMA RECTOR: Jeanette Dorman

PALMER ANDERSON: James & Susan Anderson

HOLLIN ANDERSON: James & Susan Anderson

PAT & PEARL WILLIAMS: Nancy Edwards

JOANNA NOGGLE: Anonymous

MEMORIALS

BUDDY & LULU HASELL: Cheryl Briscoe

CHARLES MITCHELL: Gay Mitchell

DAVID STANLEY: Sue Stanley

DAWN MASON KEARBY: Larry and Pat Kearby

DOROTHY SEXTON: Thomas Jeter

EDDIE BYRD: Darinda Medcalf

GLORIA JEAN THOMAS: Rosewood Baptist Church

JOHN WOLCOTT: Gay Mitchell

KAY WOLCOTT: Gay Mitchell

KENNETH HAIRGROVE: Sarah Hairgrove

LARRY & ROSELLEN BOBO: James Bobo

LORENE TODD: Deborah Jay

LOVITA OUIMET: James Ouimet

LYNN MULLINS: Larry and Pat Kearby

MILTON MYNAR: Deidra Stewart

OPAL SELLERS: Charles & Charlotte Johnson

RACHEL MILES: Joan Seaman

ROBERT HARRIS: Carol Cline

TERRY SMITH: Margaret & Jim wolf

W.V RAY: Brenda Ray

WAYNE KEELING: Billy & Ida Keeling

WILLIAM T. "BILL" DENSON: Charles & Charlotte Johnson

memorials-honorariums



JACKSONVILLE COLLEGE

Education from an Eternal Perspective

By JOHN B. MANN, PhD

The primary reason Jacksonville College exists is to lead students to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. For the lost student, we seek to introduce them to the work of Christ on the Cross to make salvation available. I like to say Jacksonville College does evangelism through education.

For the saved student, we seek to deepen their walk with Christ as we help them to see every element of creation bears God's fingerprint. Whether we teach science, math or the arts, we are communicating what God has done within Creation to make Himself known. With the Psalmist, we believe "the heavens declare the glory of God," (Psalm 19:1).

Some may wonder whether education in math, science and the arts is truly a Christian endeavor. In response, I would offer the words of our Lord when He was asked to identify the most important commandment that God has given to us: "Love the Lord your God will all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind..." (Matthew 22:37).

As that command is true for those who originally asked the question, so it is true for us.

In this verse, Jesus indicates loving God involves the heart, soul and mind.

Most of us are accustomed to the idea that love flows from the heart, but Jesus indicates loving God also involves the soul and the mind. In other words, love for God is something that demands the totality of our lives.

As it relates to Jacksonville College and the Christian educational process, I would like to emphasize the command to love God with our minds.

In the Bible, the mind is not merely the seat of knowledge, but it is what motivates us to act upon the knowledge we have. In other words, true knowledge leads to obedience, which is the truest indication of love for God (1 John 5:3).

Many of us have lamented that culture is losing respect for the things of God. We live in a day when the sanctity of marriage has been compromised, the lives of unborn babies are threatened, and gender is questioned or outright denied. Indeed, the most embarrassing ideas of society are considered noble as the spotlight of cultural acceptance is shined upon them for all the world to see.

There are many ways we can combat the corrosion that is overtaking our society. We encourage Christians to vote according to biblical principles. We try to teach the children of our churches how to stand for those things which are right. Most importantly, we strive to be faithful to preach the Bible from our pulpits.

Each of these are good and necessary. However, an

additional way we can continue to address the societal ills that plague our culture is to educate students from a Christ-centered perspective.

This is the very thing that we strive to accomplish at Jacksonville College. This past week one of our math teachers told me of an assignment that she gives to students wherein they are required to write a paper that demonstrates how mathematical principles lead us to the knowledge of God. Even math points us to God!

In a course that I teach, *Introduction to Christian Ethics*, students are taught to think through ideas like abortion, homosexuality and justice from a Christian perspective.

Furthermore, each student is required to attend chapel for which they receive a pass/fail grade. Each student is also connected to a team leader who guides a small group in Bible study throughout the semester.

Over this past semester, we heard numerous testimonies of students who have either given their lives to Christ or have been encouraged in their faith. While preparing students to enter the workforce, we believe that a Christian education outperforms non-Christian education in at least three ways.

First, Christian education develops employees who recognize the value of hard work. For the Christian employee, work is undertaken in order to honor God. Colossians 3:17 says "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." Christian employees have a higher and nobler purpose for the jobs they do; they want to honor God.

Second, Christian education promotes a healthier society. David Dockery writes, "We need more than just new ideas and enhanced programs for our churches and institutions; we need distinctively Christian thinking, the kind of tough-minded thinking that results in culture-engaging living." [Dockery, *Faith and Learning*, 4].

People who have been educated from a Christian perspective are equipped to be witnesses in the workplace through being an example in order to be a consistent witness to Christ. When Christians are equipped with both the skills to do their job and the knowledge to tell someone else about Jesus, they are prepared to change the culture from where they work.

Finally, Christian education expands the Kingdom. History tells the testimony of many people who came to faith in Christ as they pursued knowledge.

Christian education can accomplish these objectives because it sees that all truth has an eternal perspective. Education is not merely about equipping students for

their vocation. It is also about equipping them to see that their decisions today impact eternity.

These objectives are not necessarily unique to Jacksonville College. George Marsden traces the history of the American university in his book *The Soul of the American University*. He emphasizes that, despite the Christian faith being largely responsible for educational development within the western world, the Christian faith is the very idea that is currently undermined in contemporary education.

Jacksonville College is committed to doing our part to combat the cultural corrosion of biblical values.

Your ongoing support of Jacksonville College is having a profound impact in ways that may not always be immediately visible. Students are being led to Christ and are being deepened in their faith. That is because Christian education teaches with an eternal view in mind. No deed done in the present is without impact for the future. For that reason, we are not merely trying to help students find jobs. We are helping them to find God's calling on their lives as it relates to their vocation.

Jacksonville College has a great opportunity to continue to teach Christian education. Your ongoing support of Jacksonville College is doing more than helping us to educate students. It is participating in the work of God to grow His Kingdom. We are teaching from an eternal perspective. We are doing evangelism through education.



Dr. John Mann is the interim president of Jacksonville College. Contact him at 105 B. J. Albritton Drive, Jacksonville, Texas 75766, 903-586-2518 or president@jacksonville-college.edu. For more information, visit www.jacksonvillecollege.edu.



Sovereign Life Fellowship, Longview

By **PAUL GAUNTT**

Baptist Progress Correspondent

The restarting, renaming and relocating of the former Liberty Baptist Church of Longview has been quite a journey, and everyone in the church agrees the move was obviously orchestrated and guided by the Lord.

Liberty was planted on Loop 281 in Longview 54 years ago, with Ray Pate serving as the church planter. The church thrived under some great leadership through those years, but like many churches, she suffered decline. But the elders of Sovereign Life Fellowship are quick to acknowledge that the original church planted by BMA state missions in 1968 lives on.

The long transitional process began when Preston Murchison, who was serving as pastor, commuting from Van in Van Zandt County, tapped a young former member, Jason Williams, who was reared in Liberty Baptist Church, and was visiting in the service one night, to dismiss in prayer. Later, the two met for lunch and Murchison asked Williams if he would come and teach a Wednesday night class.

“I told him I had a heart to see the church start over, and Preston asked me what it would take for me to come there,” Williams said.

Williams came on in 2015 as associate pastor, and with the help of Murchison, a ministry team began to be assembled, which resulted in BMA pastor Wayne McKay, who was with the church in its beginning, coming on board as pastor of congregational care, Lucas Wood as executive pastor, Keith Wilkerson as elder in charge of worship and Williams as lead pastor.

It took the men 18 months to agree on bylaws, a constitution, ministry philosophy and the church’s stance on doctrine.

“We wanted the church to be about the scriptures,” Williams said. “We want to have a grace centered discipleship ministry; every believer tends to be at different levels, (our purpose is) to give grace to people to learn, and grace to overcome sin—to struggle toward holiness, and to be a church about prayer, faith and missions—both local and international.”

Rather than the church being small group driven, they seek to be community driven. With these principles firmly in place, the church was ready for their relaunch.

Due to the condition of the original building on Loop 281, Williams threw out the idea of selling the church property. Within two days, a call was received from a representative from Braum’s, offering to buy the old property. They sold the building along with one acre for around \$800,000. Their first move was to a Longview hotel.

“This was really when the church began to grow,” said Williams. “During this time the church added about 30 people to the fellowship, which brought us to around 50.”

Due to the hotel feeling they could make more money off their property with other organizations, they terminated the church’s rent agreement which prompted them to contact New Life Baptist Church, located less than a mile from the Liberty property. They contacted Dr. John Hatch, who was serving as interim pastor of New Life. They agreed to rent the building to Sovereign Life Fellowship, without contract, which was the new name for the former Liberty congregation. Both congregations worshiped in different locations in the spacious church building.

About two months later, the New Life people approached the Sovereign Life Fellowship people about a merger. The two congregations met together for seven or eight weeks, without even one single disagreement. Both groups settled on the Sovereign Life Fellowship for a name.

“The Lord was so gracious to help us sell the property, and provide the money,” Williams said. “We didn’t know where we would go, but then He gave us a place, (resulting) in two Baptist churches coming together, without even one argument.”

Even in the midst of COVID, with churches all over the country in shut down, Sovereign Life Fellowship continued to grow. They were having services streamed to the members over the internet during that a time.

“We didn’t even know we were growing but our (online) viewership indicated that we were growing, and our giving also increased.” the pastor said. “When we came back from COVID, we were larger, and began growing pretty rapidly after that.”

The church is not only experiencing numerical growth, but the elders all agree that the depth of the church’s walk with the Lord and their willingness to serve truly defines the congregation. Attendance is between 140 and 150 each week.

“We have people who are so godly, and truly love the Lord, and have a desire to be a part of a church where they can be involved,” said McKay. “These are people any pastor would love to have—there are many with degrees, including seminary degrees.”

The pastor acknowledges that the people love expository preaching, and they have just finished a 6 1/2-month study in Ephesians, 11 months in Mark and 9 months in Acts.

“We are a simple church—no lights, no smoke, no fog machines—no ‘cool’ stuff—just the Word,” Williams said. “We sing songs that are old and new—lots of churches are trying to do something new—we’re not—we’re trying to do things that are old.”

McKay added that many new people are drawn to the church through the church’s website, but also through the expository preaching.

They reject the idea of elder “rule.” They are quick to say that they are “elder led” with limited congregationalism. They feel this is a biblical and healthy way to lead. The church has a vote, but with limited congregationalism, the church votes on fewer things than most churches. They eventually hope to have some unpaid lay elders as well as bivocational staff elders. Elders handle the majority of matters in the church, make decisions and the church votes on the budget, hiring and termination of any elder, and the church votes on the membership.

“Since we have covenant membership, people don’t just walk down the aisle and join the church,” the lead pastor said. “Candidates for membership go through a process like an interview by the elder team, attend a new member class, and then the church votes.”

Covenant membership means that every new member signs off on the requirements for membership.

The church also votes on any property that is purchased or sold, and the church votes on any item which exceeds 10 percent of the church’s budget. If the church acquires a youth minister, he would not be an elder so the church would not vote on him. Rather the elder team would select him.

“The four elders have an unwritten agreement—that we don’t proceed with any decision unless we are unanimous,” McKay said. “Nothing is taken to the church or put into practice unless there is 100 percent agreement.”

The elders work together as a team to plan out the preaching program.

The church practices church discipline, and thankfully no one has been disciplined yet.

For further information on Sovereign Life Fellowship, visit www.slflongview.com.



▲ Sovereign Life Fellowship, located on Hawkins Boulevard in Longview



▲ Sunday morning worship crowd at Sovereign Life Fellowship



▲ Elders from left: Jason Williams, lead pastor; Keith Wilkerson, worship; Wayne McKay, pastor of congregational care; and Lucas Wood, executive pastor.



A word from your Missions Office

By HEITH MITCHELL

As I reflect on our journey across 2022, I am so thankful to our God. He is faithful to call, equip, provide and protect. To follow Christ is to fellowship in his suffering. Everything does not go the way we anticipate but God is always working it out. It is a joy to walk with Him and see Him at work. God is about his redemptive mission and your missionaries are seeing God at work.

I want to remind you that December is a challenging month for your missionaries. New believers' attendance is often unstable in December as church activities are not yet their rhythm. Also, many of your missionaries are isolated and away from their family and friends. Remember them in your prayers and send them encouragement. You can connect with them on the web or app.

On behalf of your missionaries, mission staff and myself, we hope you have a merry and meaningful Christmas and a Happy New Year. I pray that God works mightily in your life and in the life of your church as you focus on the gift of Christ's coming and the new start of a new year. Let us not waste this holiday season. Let us reflect and commit to walk with God and to be faithful to His mission.

Merry Christmas!

sustaining us prayerfully and financially.

Prayer Needs: Please pray for the Lord to provide a place for our Sunday meetings in San Antonio.



A word from your missionaries

**JEREMIAH AKINTUNDE—
PLANTING IN DUNCANVILLE
AKINTOYEAKINTUNDE2@GMAIL.COM**

As missionaries (pastors), we should always listen to the commanding Master (Jesus Christ) and obey Him concerning His instructions for us. He leads, and we must follow Him. We will not be frustrated in the Kingdom's work when we listen to Him.

Prayer Needs: Pray for God's wisdom, insight and direction as I do His work.



▲ Jeremiah Akintunde

**CESAR LEAL—
NEW MISSION IN SAN ANTONIO
CESARLEAL2002@YAHOO.COM**

Hello my brothers! I am very grateful to God for your life and your great love for missions, especially for the Hispanic people residing in this great nation. We are making the greatest effort full of passion for souls, so that this population may be reached for the Kingdom of God. Thank you for



▲ Cesar Leal

**JAIME HENRIQUEZ—
FUENE DE VIDA ETERNA IN HOUSTON
DAIRYJENY@YAHOO.COM**

Here in the Lord's work, we continue to serve others, preach the gospel, baptize and disciple converts. The church moves forward, growing little by little in this new place where God has brought us. We thank all the churches that are part of the BMA of Texas who help us with their prayers and offerings. May the Lord bless you and let us continue to magnify the kingdom of God.

Prayer Needs: Pray that God will send a revival in our community, starting with believers who are spiritually cold.



▲ Jaime Henriquez



**BICHITRANANDA SATPATHY—
INDIAN PLANT IN FT. WORTH
BICHITRANANDA31@GMAIL.COM**

Let us enjoy the season of Christmas, remembering the purpose of His coming and the salvation we have in Christ, and share the joy of Christmas with others who do not know Christ.

Prayer Needs: Pray for two events this Christmas season as we share the message of Christmas to the students and the refugee families, Dec. 3 and Dec 24.



▲ Bichitrananda Satpathy

**HAITAO HE—
CORPUS CHRISTI MISSION
HAITAO.HE@BMATS.EDU**

Thanks for the support from the BMA churches, without your support, a missionary's work is impossible. We are very grateful for your prayers and thankful for all the support we received from you.

Prayer Needs: Pray that God will be with us in our prayer meeting next week and ignite the hearts of people for the vision of this mission.



▲ Haitao He

**RUDY VILLAREAL—
HOMETOWN CHURCH
RVILLAREAL1@GMAIL.COM**

We are seeing people in our small group stepping up as

we disciple others and start to reach others. We are going to go Christmas caroling in our neighborhoods a couple of times and share the true meaning of Christmas with others. We have had a great response from people who want to join us and sing carols. Our plan is to pray and share the gospel as we spread joy through song and bless them with cookies. Pray that God continues to open doors for ministry for us.



▲ Rudy Villareal

Prayer Needs: Pray that God opens doors for us and leads us as we go into the new year!

**CHRIS DRIVER—
OASIS MISSIONS LEVELLAND
CJDRIVER316@GMAIL.COM**

Howdy from west Texas! Well, in case you didn't know it, the holiday season is here. And like everyone, we are battling all the distractions that seem to come with all the joy. But we are pushing through and closing in on finishing our remodel. We have begun to integrate a simple song service into our weekly gathering in preparation for our upcoming public launch. It is awesome and overwhelming at the same time to see everything coming together and for the official birth of Oasis into the culture of Levelland to be so close! I love God's timing for us though. This holiday season is reminding us of the simple truth that Jesus's birth ushered in the incarnation of peace, hope and love...and now we get to picture that peace hope and love to a watching world as His church! Oh, how I pray Oasis will be faithful to that call here in west Texas. Thank you for all your love, support and encouragement and prayer! Merry Christmas BMA of Texas!



▲ Chris Driver

Prayer Needs: Please pray that God will give us favor with South Plains College, help us to finish our remodeling, multiply our groups, bless our upcoming public launch and gospel opportunities.

**CHRIS MINDI—
ANCHOR AUSTIN MISSION IN LEANDER
CHRIS.MINDI@BMATS.EDU**

It is easy for all of us to trust God when things are going well in our lives. But what about when things are tough and we do not understand what He is doing?



▲ Chris Mindi

This is what happened with us as a church planting family during the past half year. We went through a time of hard thoughts about what is God doing in the midst of our situation, only to realize that now, we look back and see why God did not let something happen for which we have been praying. God is so awesome and faithful! He is always looking for our good. Every step of the way, he is faithful in blessing in His own way and more than we could ask, think or imagine.

Prayer Needs: Pray especially in this season of Christmas that we boldly preach the gospel message with gentleness and passion to the unbelievers around us and that our members be committed in communicating it with boldness and ease.

**TIMOTHY ALBA—
THE BRIDGE IN SEAGOVILLE
TIMALBA1986@GMAIL.COM**

All I can say is that God has been faithful to our mission here in Seagoville. We are continuing to push and move towards the goals we set. We are encouraging our members to do the same as well and stay faithful. I encourage every planter to do the same and know that God will see us through whatever challenges we face.



▲ Timothy Alba

Prayer Needs: Please pray that our church will continue to grow as we have in our first year as a church plant.

**ADAREMI BADRU—
LIGHTHOUSE HOUSTON
ISAIASMJ1966@GMAIL.COM**

We are grateful for your support throughout 2022 and beyond.



▲ Adaremi Badru

Prayer Needs: Pray that God will draw people to Himself in our community as we preach the Gospel.



**JOSE TORRES—
TYLER HISPANIC MISSION
EMAILJOSETORRES@GMAIL.COM**

Our participation in the BMA of Texas is a rewarding experience. We feel like part of a big family.



▲ Jose Torres

Prayer Needs: Pray for the increasing opening of new Bible study groups in homes.



**ISAIAS MARTINEZ—
CONROE MISSION
ISAIASMJ1966@GMAIL.COM**

Prayer Needs: Pray for the City of Conroe, Texas.



▲ Isaias Martinez



BMA TEXAS MISSIONS continued on p. 8

BMA Texas Missions cont.



**RONNIE MILLS—
KINGDOM CHAPEL
IN FT. WORTH
RONNIE@KCHAPEL.ORG**

BMA Family, we are grateful for all the Lord is doing in you, and all that He is yet to do. Likewise, we know that you are us. I am reminded of Paul's statement to the Romans, "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world (Rom. 1:8)." We are in this together, and I'm grateful for the BMA family the Lord has given me. Please know that the mission is still being advanced here in Saginaw, and the work is still being done faithfully. We love you, continue to pray for us!



▲ Ronnie Mills

Prayer Needs: Continue to pray that the Lord will open doors for the gospel here. He is bringing new families to be a part of what we are doing and for that we could not be more thankful. Keep on praying for us in every way, we need it!

**ROBERT LEE—
HARMONY BAPTIST CHURCH IN NORMANGEE
BRO.ROBERT.F.LEE@GMAIL.COM**

Our church has had a great month. At the end of November, our church was able to participate in Panthers for Christ at our local school, an event where students gather to hear a message and eat breakfast before school. Dozens of donuts and many gallons of juice were fed to the students present and what was left over was passed on to the teachers there at the school. It was wonderful to share with the students about the love of Christ! We are blessed to have these kinds of opportunities to share the gospel in our community. I have also had the opportunity to transition to a bivocational ministry and work full-time in our community, leaving more of our resources available for ministering to our community. God is certainly good in providing for every need!



▲ Robert Lee

Prayer Needs: Pray for our church as we adjust to the transition into a bivocational pastorate.



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



GOD'S GIFT

HEAVEN IS A FREE GIFT!

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

Because . . .

MAN IS A SINNER.

"For all have sinned . . ." (Rom. 3:23) Because of this, man cannot save himself.

GOD.

On the one hand, God is merciful and does not want to punish us. Yet God is just and must punish sin. God solved this problem for us in the Person of . . .

JESUS CHRIST.

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

THE GIFT IS RECEIVED BY FAITH.

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

SO MAY WE ASK . . .

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

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



BMA of america



To the BMA Churches of America

By **DONNY PARRISH**

Lifeword Executive Director

Grace and peace to each of you from our great God and Savior Jesus Christ!

As you are preparing for the Christmas holidays and upcoming year, I wanted to let you know about our plans for the 2023 BMA annual meeting. This year we will be gathering around the theme of GO!

As churches self-described as Baptist, missionary, and associational, I think it is necessary for us to keep who we are front and center. With that in mind, on Tuesday night, for our opening session, we will be thinking along the theme of Go to the Word, and the need to be a strong doctrinal people. On Wednesday afternoon, Bro. David McMurray, pastor of Blackwood Baptist Church in New Jersey, will be preaching on the theme of Go to the World—our commission as churches. That evening will be a special night where Bro. Buddy Johnson will address our churches on the theme of Go Together, emphasizing how we fulfill the commission as an association.

I say that Wednesday night will be a special night because, for the first time ever, we are planning to have all our American Missionaries with us, in which we will be honoring them with a special dinner, and YOU ARE INVITED! This will be a wonderful time to get to meet, shake hands, speak with and hug those who carry the message of the gospel to the uttermost parts of the world.

The dates for the meeting are April 25-27, Tuesday through Thursday, at Antioch Baptist Church in Conway, Arkansas. Meeting on these days is a bit different than normal, but we wanted to allow all our people plenty of time to travel, instead of having to leave on a Sunday afternoon or evening. Accommodations will be announced in January, but you can go ahead and mark your calendars to be with us.

Be a Missionary Care Giver

By **HOLLY MERIWEATHER**

BMA Global Ministry Center

“Our prayer is that we can encourage and strengthen missionaries so they can spread the gospel as effectively as possible, to as many as possible, for as long as possible.”

Former International Director and Missionary Care Director Jerry Kidd established the BMA’s missionary care initiative years ago and has a great love for missionaries and their unique needs while on the field. During his time leading missionary care, he organized regional conferences, which involved a great deal of planning and outside support, but these conferences were so beneficial for our missionaries.

Brother Jerry has always dreamed of a global conference for all our missionaries. That goal will become a reality April 2023 as missionaries from around the world plan to come to the U.S. for the BMA National Meeting and Global Care Conference to follow.

Current Missionary Care Director Jonathan Montgomery has a passion for ministering to our missionaries so they can minister to others. He says, “You cannot pump water from a dry well, so our Global Care Conference aims to pour into our missionaries and their families and replenish their spiritual, mental, and emotional needs so they can return to their fields with a stronger passion for making disciples and planting churches.”

After the 2016 Asia-Pacific Care Conference, one missionary said that the conference came “just at the right time” for him and his family. He explained, “We were physically exhausted, spiritually down, and feeling all alone in ministry. The messages were encouraging, the songs were inspiring, and the fellowship with the other missionaries was exactly what we needed.”

Studies show that 70 percent of missionaries leave the field earlier than planned and for reasons that could have been prevented had there been adequate support and care while serving. Burnout is one key reason missionaries leave the field early, but if provided an opportunity to connect with their peers, there is mutual encouragement, immediate connection, and beneficial fellowship.

Our goal is to give every BMA Missionary the opportunity to attend this global conference by covering every missionary family’s expenses for this conference through donations, which will ensure that every BMA Missionary has an opportunity to attend. Expenses include international airfare, lodging, and meals.

Breakdown of expenses:

Average Meals – \$150

Average Lodging – \$500

Average Airfare – \$1,250

Expenses per family:

Individual – \$2,000

Couple – \$3,500

Family of Four – \$6,000

Overall estimated cost: \$250,000

We ask that you consider supporting this ministry and help cover the cost for our missionaries to attend this conference. If you would like to donate to this ministry, please visit bmamissions.org or mail checks to BMA Missions, P.O. Box 878, Conway, AR 72033, and in the memo line write “missionary care.”





Auxiliaries

WMA project report

By SARAH LOW

The Texas WMA is wrapping up their year and was able to send over \$12,000 to our missionary in South Asia. In addition to this financial offering, the district is working to support her with gift bags for her missions retreat in December.

The project for 2023 will be to provide study Bibles and materials to missionaries in Texas in their native language. Our project goal is \$15,000.

“We ask our missionaries to do the job of reaching the lost in their cultures and training them to walk the path of righteousness without the most important of tools, the Bible, God’s Holy Word,” wrote Jeannie Walker, project promoter for the state WMA. We ask our auxiliaries to help us provide that “most important tool,” the Word of God, to our non-English speaking churches in Texas.

The Texas Sunbeams have chosen Larry and Tammy Wood, our missionaries to Ukraine, as their project for 2023. Their goal is to raise \$2,000 to help build housing for Ukrainian refugees.

TASTE AND SEE

Our theme for the coming year is “Taste and See,” based on Psalm 34:8. “O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him” (KJV).

We would also like to remind our churches that any local women’s ministry can participate in our work and can send messengers to our state and national meetings.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- LakeRidge, Lubbock will host the 2023 Spring Retreat in Lubbock March 31 - April 1. Babbie Mason, Dove Award recipient, will be our special guest speaker and provide a concert. More information and registration forms can be requested from LakeRidge Baptist Church at springretreat2023@mylakeridgebaptist.org.
- Cherokee District will meet at Afton Grove, Jacksonville at 7 p.m., Jan. 10. A meal will be served at 6 p.m.
- Central Texas District will meet at Temple, Mexia at 6:30 p.m., Jan. 2.
- Central West Texas will meet at Central, at 6 p.m., Jan. 5.
- Liberty District will meet Latch, Gilmer at 10 a.m., Jan. 7. Lunch will follow.
- Mt. Olive District will meet at Old Center, Tenaha at 6:30 p.m., Jan. 24.
- Tryon District will meet at Northside, Conroe at 10 a.m., Jan. 14.
- Van Zandt District will meet at Tundra, Canton at 6:30 p.m., Jan. 12.
- Wood County District will meet at Hubbard Chapel, Quitman at 10 a.m., Jan. 14.

A PERSONAL NOTE

As the new editor for the Texas WMA, I wanted to take a moment to introduce myself. My name is Sarah Low, and I have had the pleasure of growing up in the BMA work as a pastor’s kid.

The WMA was always a little mysterious to me and the concept of being a “woman” always seemed to me an ideal to live up to.

To be a “woman” is to be a leader, a teacher and a servant in the work of the Lord. It is a high calling and something I feel, even as an adult, woefully unqualified to be. The women of the Bible were called upon to have great faith. Sarah was called to be a mother long after the time of childbearing. Hannah was given a child in answer to her prayer, then gave him up to the Lord. Ruth left everything she knew to follow her mother-in-law into an unknown place.

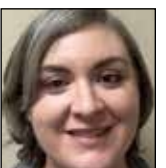
The woman of Proverbs 31 literally does it all. She provides

a home and food for her family and serves the poor; she works outside the home to earn an income; she rises early and works late into the night. In our current world, we are called to do these things as well.

There is no way that we can do these things without the support of other women, and the Texas WMA can provide support and encouragement to help us fulfill our calling as women of God.

“Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.” Proverbs 31:30 (NIV)

Sarah Low is the Texas Women’s Missionary Auxiliary (WMA) editor. Contact her at sarahbethlow@gmail.com. For more information about the Texas WMA, visit www.texaswma.com.



Register Now!

Created to
Worship

2023 Spring Retreat
LakeRidge Baptist, Lubbock

March 31 & April 1
Friday 6:00p - 9:30p
Saturday 8:30a - 3:00p

Psalm 95:6



Special Guest Speaker
and Concert
by 2 time
Dove Award recipient
Babbie Mason



Registration Fee: \$65

Online Registration: Use QR code or
<https://form.jotform.com/babz71/spring-retreat-registration>
For more information (or a paper form) contact:
springretreat2023@mylakeridgebaptist.org

All Workshop information, hotel information, agenda/schedule are on the registration form. If your church would like a “paper” form emailed so you can print it and mail it in with a check, please let me know! We’re so excited to host and have WMA ladies at our church. Please don’t wait to register...the sooner the better. ☺ God Bless Y’all! ~ Barbie Reynolds (806) 470-9384

CHURCH HEALTH

Resolving Conflict

By **LARRY BARKER**

Disagreements and misunderstandings are going to happen between friends, family, co-workers, and yes, even church members. The question is not will conflict happen but more importantly when will it happen and how will we address it. Never judge a congregation by whether they have problems but by how they handle and resolve those problems. Even godly friends can face a conflict of some kind that will require Biblical and spiritual navigation. Two good people who are both following Christ can and will disagree at some point and time.

Proverbs 27:5-6 says, “Better is open rebuke than love that is concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.” Paul and Barnabas disagreed over who could be on their team in Acts 15 and the outcome was the doubling of their missionary efforts. Paul confronted Peter over his flip-flopping on the issue of Gentiles being welcomed into the church. Galatians 2:11 states, “But when Cephas (Peter) came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned.” How will we confront when we do disagree?

Here is a process of confrontation to consider because at some point you will need a plan on how to resolve conflict.

First, carefully think through what behavior the person needs to change. It is not enough to only see the problem but you must also have in view a solution.

Second, you should prayerfully decide how you can best get through to them. It is hard but try to make sure that the confrontation is not confrontational. In other words, it is not a planned attack to set them straight. That may be necessary later but do not start the process there.

Third, before the meeting, make sure you rehearse what you are going to say. Think it through completely and pray for God to give you just the right words and attitude. Confrontation and criticism, depending on how it is delivered, can be priceless but it can also be costly. When done correctly, on both sides, it can be a win-win. The choice of words is crucial.

Fourth, decide when would be best to speak to them in person and not by text message and especially not on social media. Do not rush this but also do not delay too long. Be prayed up and prepared.

Fifth, once you have decided when you will meet the next thing to consider is where you will meet. Try to have a place that is as neutral as possible. No one likes feeling like they have been called into the principal’s office to be disciplined. Consider how you would feel if you were the one being confronted and how you would want to be treated.



Sixth, you must seek to be charitable and kind. Kindness means that you do not attack, you do not confront them at the wrong time or place, and your goal is always to seek resolution and reconciliation.

Seventh, the purpose of confrontation must be driven by a desire to help the person not humiliate them. Instead of putting others in their place, put yourself in their place and remember that a little criticism goes a long way. It is never easy but it is often required. Proverbs 28:23 says, “One who rebukes a person will later find more favor than one who flatters with his tongue. Make sure you are addressing the problem and not just criticizing the person. Be careful of over generalizing with phrases like “you always” and instead say, “My impression is.”

The eighth thing to consider is to not save up criticisms and dump them all at the same time. One time I was confronted and before the meeting was over, I had listed 33 items they had come to discuss. To be honest, I had checked out after nine or ten. Our goal should be to lovingly confront issues as they occur and not begin keeping score and making a list. Oh, by the way, I still have the list and they were right on many of the items that I needed to work on and correct. It was an unpleasant experience but a growth opportunity.

Ninth, resist the temptation to exaggerate to make your point. With exaggeration comes more emotion and can easily cause the confrontation to escalate. Galatians 6:1 says, “Brothers, if someone is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual should restore such a person with a gentle spirit,

watching out for yourselves so you also won’t be tempted.” Let me remind you that, “The art of being wise is the art of knowing what to overlook.” The real issue of discernment is making sure that you are not overreacting or underreacting.

Lastly, never make comparisons! One person was confronted by leadership in the church and all they heard was, “Why can’t you be more like so and so!” Make sure you use Biblical principles and not personal examples to be followed. Be humble enough to realize that it is possible you misunderstand or misjudged what happened. Make sure you pray, study relevant scripture; determine what you will say ahead of time, and that you remain calm during the confrontation.

The bad news is that even if you are right but you handle the situation wrong, they will not remember that you were right. They will only remember that you handled it wrong and then you can easily turn the offender into the victim. Navigating conflict resolution can be difficult and draining but it is extremely biblical and necessary.

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.



EVENTS

2023 BMA OF AMERICA ANNUAL MEETING

DATE: April 25-27, 2023

PLACE: Antioch Baptist Church, Conway, Arkansas

HEADQUARTERS HOTEL: To be decided

2023 SOAR

DATE: July 3-5, 2023

PLACE: Gaylord Texan, Grapevine, Texas

2023 BMA OF TEXAS ANNUAL MEETING

DATE: Nov. 6-7, 2022

PLACE: Crossroads Church, Rowlett, Texas

PERSONNEL & POSITIONS

AVAILABLE MINISTRY POSITIONS

CALVARY, ARLINGTON is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resume to Calvary Baptist Church, 2101 S. Davis, Arlington, Texas 76013 or resumes@calvarybaptistarlington.org. For more information, call or text 214-762-9807. ^{11/22}

YOUTH PASTOR/MINISTER—New Harmony, Tyler is seeking a fulltime youth director/minister. Send resume to the church at 10251 FM 724, Tyler, Texas 75704 or to Russ Jackson at rgjackson63@yahoo.

COM. TFN

YOUTH/STUDENT MINISTRY—Afton Grove, Jacksonville is seeking a biblically qualified candidate. This is a bivocational position. We are looking for a minister with a heart for God, a heart for students and who is ready to plunge into the work. The candidate will love the Lord and love and lead our students in a growing relationship with Jesus. Please send your resume to Eddie Richardson at fasteddie999elr@gmail.com. ^{TFN}

AVAILABLE MINISTER

JOHN BECK is available for pulpit supply or to serve as interim pastor. He is a member of Antioch, Gilmer. Contact him at 903-497-2073.

Christmas Blessings

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace...”

Romans 15:13 (NIV)

Warm blessings and good tidings to you this holiday season and always.

Merry Christmas from American Church Group of Texas!

Contact American Church Group of Texas today.

Call **844.400.2248** or visit **AmericanChurchGroup-Texas.com**.

Proudly serving the BMA of Texas



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CENTRAL
BAPTIST COLLEGE

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT Vice President for Advancement Central Baptist College, Conway, Arkansas

Reports to: The President

Mission Statement: Central Baptist College is committed to transforming lives through education that integrates Christian faith and academic excellence in a Christ-centered environment.

Candidate must support the Christian identity of the College and demonstrate mature faith, Christian lifestyle, and a strong belief in Baptist Doctrine.

Salary: Competitive and commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Application review will begin immediately and continue until position is filled

To be considered for the position of Vice President for Advancement, interested candidates must complete an Application for Employment at <http://cbc.edu/jobs> and send a cover letter, resume (including references), and statement of faith as PDF attachments addressed to Terry Kimbrow, President, at tkimbrow@cbc.edu. Electronic submissions only. Background check required.

Responsibilities:

The Vice President for Advancement is charged with supporting the mission of Central Baptist College and elevating the institution's profile through:

- Serving as the institution's chief fundraising officer
- Developing effective donor, community, and alumni relations
- Championing Central Baptist College through ongoing engagement with alumni, donors, and community leaders to continuously maximize the potential for revenue
- Provide leadership to the Offices of Development, Public Relations, Church Relations, and Alumni Services, working with them to design, implement, and direct an integrated and comprehensive development program, with special emphasis on identifying, cultivating, soliciting, engaging, and stewarding support to provide long-term financial sustainability for the College
- A voting member of the President's Executive Leadership Team

Qualifications:

- Minimum bachelor's degree; master's degree preferred
- Minimum of 7 years of supervision/team leadership
- Demonstrated leadership abilities and strategic thinking
- Ability to manage donor relations with a high degree of professionalism, integrity, and confidentiality
- Exceptional oral and written communication skills
- Ability to manage multiple projects/deadlines and possess a service-oriented, team player attitude
- Fundraising experience preferred
- Travel required, including weekends and evenings