

Baptist Progress

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Association of Baptist Students at Stephen F. Austin State University shares Jesus

By JOHN SHACKELFORD

SFA ABS Director

The goals of the Association of Baptist Students (ABS) Ministry at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) are to share the gospel message with the students of SFA on a daily basis, work with those who express interest in the gospel but who are not ready to accept Jesus Christ and make disciples who are committed to living for Christ, sharing their faith and discipling other believers. The ABS is committed to being part of the Baptist Missionary Association through church membership, involvement.

During the Fall Semester 2015, the ABS began an aggressive strategy of sharing the gospel message to a broad audience, being actively involved with students who expressed interest in spiritual matters. A core group of disciples who have expressed a desire to follow Christ as disciples and to reproduce themselves spiritually by sharing their faith and discipling other believers were further developed.

The strategy was not designed by a New York marketing firm, but it was laid out in the Scriptures. It is the strategy commanded by Jesus Christ and followed by the apostle Paul and the group of early Christians who “turned the world upside down.”

Men in the core group who are being disciplined are trained to share the gospel on

a one on one basis. They actively look for opportunities to witness. Through all of this, hundreds of students will hear the gospel over the course of the current school year.

On Mondays, the ABS hosts dinner and Bible study at the ABS house that is strategically located right across the street from the campus. Approximately 19 students take part in the Bible studies. The ABS strives to have events that have the potential of reaching the entire campus.

Prayers were answered when God opened doors for the gospel at SFA when the ABS was asked to be part of the SFA Wellness Fair. The ABS was specifically asked to represent the spiritual side of wellness. ABS members took the opportunity to share the gospel with many students and explain how the Bible had the answer to all of life’s problems. Pamphlets were distributed on how to handle problems biblically.

Pastor Jerry Browning of Keltys First, Lufkin, agreed to assist at the Wellness Fair. As pastor of biblical counseling and outreach and trainer of Nouthetic Biblical Counselors, he was especially well suited to address how the Bible and Jesus Christ truly are the answer to all of life’s problems. He made a convincing case that there is no problem too big for Jesus



▲ ABS Students prepare to share the gospel

Christ. Over 300 SFA faculty, staff and students attended the fair.

Another noteworthy outreach occurred in conjunction with Phi Theta Gamma Sorority. They were looking for a place to have a fundraiser for autism. The brother of an ABS student has severe autism, so members were more than happy to offer the ABS house for the fundraiser.

A spaghetti fundraiser was held the ABS house on Nov. 12. Forty students served at the event. Over 75 people came to the ABS center and had a plate of spaghetti. More than 90 plates were served. Since then, six of the ladies from the sorority have attended our Bible study and meal.

It is very exciting and rewarding to see God moving in a powerful way through the ABS ministry, but as plans are being made for the future, the ABS building is in dire need of repair. Prayers are appreciated as efforts are made to make the building more appealing to students. The porch is rotting, ceilings have water damage, walls need to be painted and carpet needs to be replaced. The goal for the project is \$15,000. Money for a new roof has been raised and the roof should be in place by Christmas.

If you or your church would like to support the ABS, mail offerings to Association of Baptist Students, 119 E. College Street, Nacogdoches, Texas 75965, or visit the ABS Facebook page.

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From the Editor

Baptist Progress to offer workshop on handling church conflict

By **JERRY FULTON**

Baptist Progress Editor

Conflict is serious and needs the church's serious attention.

- Every eight hours a pastor is terminated.
- Every year over a thousand churches disband; often because of conflict.

Supported by over 30 years of academic research and based on real-life experiences in ministry, Dr. Mike Smith, president of Jacksonville College, has written a book and conducts a workshop called **Conflict: Causes and Cures**.

Baptist Progress will debut its 2016 series of Ministry Connection Workshops with **Conflict: Causes and Cures**, on Thursday, Jan. 21, 2016.

Come and hear Dr. Smith present practical perspectives, solutions and resources for dealing with conflict in churches.

Dr. Smith shares the top 10 causes

of conflict in a lively case study format and discusses three necessary approaches to conflict-education, mediation and restoration.

The workshop will be conducted in the BMA of Texas Building in Waxahachie, beginning at 10 a.m., Thursday, Jan. 21, 2016. The workshop will conclude at 12:30 p.m. Any pastor or church leader may attend the workshop, but seating will be limited to 20 participants. There is no cost for the workshop. Each participant will receive a free copy of Dr. Smith's book, **Conflict: Causes and Cures**. Information on more Ministry Connection Workshops will soon be provided.

If you would like to reserve your place for this workshop, please email editor@baptistprogress.org or call 972-923-0756.



▲ Jerry Fulton

Merry Christmas

from
*Editor and Mrs. Jerry Fulton
and the staff of Baptist Progress.*

*Joy to
the
world*

Rejoice!
The Lord has come!

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,
that whosoever believeth in him should not perish,
but have everlasting life."*

—John 3:16

Church Health

Slow to speak

By LARRY BARKER

In James 1:19 we are given three commands: Be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath! These are given to us in the context of our willingness to receive God's word with a submissive heart. We are challenged in verse 21 to "humbly receive the word God has planted in your hearts." How do you receive God's Word? Is it the absolute authority in every area of your life? The real challenge is not just to hear His Word but to also do what it says.

The Word of God is able to transform our lives and because of that fact we are to continually remain submitted to its truth. It begins by listening closely, quick to hear, to His voice in our lives through scripture and the Holy Spirit. In the *Message* I love how it words Proverbs 3:5-7, "Trust God from the bottom of your heart: don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track. Don't assume that you know it all. Run to God! Run from evil!"

The second command, slow to speak, is tied directly to the first. Once we are placing ourselves in the position to hear from God that will enable us to speak correctly when the time comes to speak up. There are two things your speech should accomplish.

First, it should edify those who hear it.

Second, it should honor the Lord!

How wonderful it would be if every time we spoke those two things were true? Jesus was full of grace and truth. Our language must be controlled by a heart that is grace-giving and truth-telling. Here are a few guidelines as you embrace this truth of being slow to speak:

Say what you mean and mean what you say! Matthew 5:37 says, "But let your 'yes' be 'yes' and your 'no' be 'no.' Anything more than this is from the evil one." If you tell someone you are praying for them it means that you are actually praying! You don't have to swear on a stack of bibles to convince people you are honest because your life has demonstrated that your word can be trusted.

Listen more and talk less! The simple truth is that if you are talking, you are not listening. But when you do talk you should make sure that you choose your words wisely. Make sure they are centered in His word and controlled by the Spirit. Proverbs 17:28 says, "Even a fool is considered wise when he keeps silent, discerning when he seals his lips." When you speak to quickly you may win the battle but lose the war.

Your opinion is just that, your opinion! All too often we speak of absolutes that are not absolutes but rather just our personal preferences. We get all hung up on things that really do not matter while people need to hear the gospel. Think about this, what is distracting you from



fulfilling the Great Commission? We say we love the lost and have a burden to share the love of Christ with them. Are we regularly doing that?

Telling it like it is does not necessarily mean that is how it is! This is closely related to number three but there is usually a greater arrogance here. This individual presents themselves to be the only who has figured it out and the only one who has been able to detect the real truth. They see this "telling it like it is" as their spiritual gift and no one else really sees it as a gift. Remember we are admonished to speak the truth in love!

Just because you sincerely believe it does not mean that you are correct! It certainly appears that James is addressing some people in the church who were saying and teaching whatever happened to come into their minds. This is why in James 3:1 he says, "Not many should become teachers, my brothers, knowing that we will receive a stricter judgment, for we all stumble in many ways." You may be sincere in what you believe but have you studied the scriptures on the matter?

We have a tremendous responsibility to speak correctly in a way that is consistent with the Word of God and directed by the Holy Spirit. We should be careful about the advice we give, how quick we are to give our opinion, and how convinced we are that we know what needs to be said. James spends all of chapter 3 explaining the importance of the proper control of the tongue and our need for God's help in controlling it!

"Your speech should always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person." Colossians 4:6.

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.



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, in turn, notifies the appropriate person. Listed in capital letters are those honored or remembered from Nov. 1, 2015 – Nov. 30, 2015.

ENDOWMENTS

E ANN PACE: Mr. & Mrs. Karl Pace
MYRA STOKES: Mr. Bill Stokes

HONORARIUMS

JERRY & LAVERNE ASHLEY 58TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY: Jimmy & Meredith Mobley; Jerry & Denise Gaston; Jim & Alesia Jones; Mike & Reggenia Ashley
BRO. MIKE & ROSE BOWEN: Harold & Jocie Lewis
OUR GRANDCHILDREN: Berenda Memborn
GREG & STARLA GREEN: John McNeeley
CHARLES & CHARLOTTE JOHNSON: Larry & Pat Kearby
E.T. & BETTY LEWIS: Virginia Dyson
BRO. EDDIE & LYNDA MARSH: Ronnie & Alicia Johnson
PASTORS & MISSIONARIES EVERYWHERE: Roy & Elizabeth Talbot
ANITA MYSKE: Walt & Tina Johnson
MY SISTER AND BROTHERS: Earlene Crenshaw
TBH STAFF & BRO. EDDIE: Beatrice Conn
POLLY TOWNLEY: H.V. & Betty Minter
ALEX & ANDI YOUNT: Danny & Diane Yount

MEMORIALS

CHARLIE ADAMS: Delores Adams
HATTIE EUGENE ALLMOND: Darrell Wolcott
HAZEL ANDERS: Peggy Lewis
MONTY ANDERSON: Mr. & Mrs. Harlin Anderson
MR. & MRS. JAMES SEABORN BASS: Charlotte Morgan
WALTER BECKER: Dennis & Lola Myrice
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MARY B WHITT DENNIS: Ray Dennis
CECIL DOWNEY: Carlie Downey
JANIE DUNAVANT: Dianne Allen
OWEN DRY: Dorrell Freeman
LUCINLENA GARCIA: Charles & Charlotte Johnson; Rosewood Baptist Church
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BILLIE GRIMES: John Grimes
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ROBBY HASTY: Brent & Tammy Swanner
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SHERRY CORBELL MEEKS: R.A. Corbell
SID MOUGHON: Peggy Moughon
SUE MORRIS: Clover Hill Baptist Church
PAUL & JEARLENE MIZE: Jerry & Sheree Mize
DONALD NUNN: Virginia Nunn
DAISY PARKER: Annie Melton; Kelly & Pam Melton
ELAINE PARKER: Temple Baptist Church
BRITTANY PARISH: J.C. & C.A. Sullivan
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MARY RABB: Wesley & Kelly Allen
CHARLES ROUSE: Concha Rouse
SIDNEY A SHARP: Ida N Sharp
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Palmer church comes home



By **JERRY FULTON**

Baptist Progress Editor

PALMER—It had been almost four years since members of First, Palmer worshiped in their old Victorian/Gothic worship center, but following a soft opening on Nov. 29, 2015, they were finally home on Dec. 6, 2015.

Located at 200 South Sherman Street in Palmer, the historic building had set vacant for much of the time the church worshiped in their remodeled former daycare center across town. The move did not prove to be what some had hoped, so members decided to try to sell the daycare property and move back to their former location.

Before returning, the Sherman Street property was

vandalized. But what the vandals meant for evil, the Lord used for good, as insurance money was made available to refurbish what had been damaged and destroyed. Next to the sanctuary are two buildings that were remodeled inside and painted so their exteriors would match that of the sanctuary.

On the day of their coming home celebration, a large crowd had gathered by the time the old church bell rang to alert the community that it was time to worship. The sanctuary's bottom section was full, and others occupied seats in the balcony.

Voices were probably singing louder than usual, as those

gathered were filled with the excitement of being home. A beautiful Hanging of the Green service was conducted following congregational singing. Following the service, lunch was served and great fellowship was enjoyed.

Pastor Paul Gauntt said, "Our special 'coming home' service was everything we had prayed for and more with a full house, one addition by letter and many other moves during the invitation. It was totally due to God's provisions and grace—and a people who have a mind to work. I've never felt a greater sense of fulfillment or the hand of God any more vividly than here in Palmer."

Rowlett church making Christ known in their community

By JASON COLLINS

Lead Pastor of Crossroads, Rowlett

ROWLETT—Crossroads Church has been going through some changes over the last few months. One major area of change has been with our vision. We believe that God wants to use our church to do amazing things in very simple ways. In order for us to see this become reality we have boiled our vision down to two components.

First we want to embody the word “known”. We want people to be known by us, us to be known by them, and them to be known by God. It is a focus on relationships with those inside and outside the church. We want our members to take the risk of being known in our connect groups and in our community, and by doing that, we believe that the gospel can be shared one person at a time. It is in this relational environment that discipleship was designed to thrive.

Second, we WILL be missional. We exist to bless the community we live in, not the other way around. Many people see the church as a drain on a community, asking for money every time you walk in the doors. They see little to no value for the church because they don’t ever see the church in action outside our walls. In turn, they apply the same feelings toward God. We can complain about that, or we can change their perception.

Crossroads is working to become such a strong part of our area, that people could not imagine our city without Crossroads. In turn, we hope they one day reach a place where they cannot imagine their lives without God. We want to serve alongside people we do not know, in an effort to know them, and help them know God. Recently, we were able to put this in action with our community as the entire town worked together to build a huge new park area called “Kid’s Kingdom.” It was a seven day project with Parks and Recreational Staff working side by side with hundreds of volunteers in four hour shifts. Our church worked with and provided dinner for hundreds of workers. We met new people, and had a wonderful time. We worked to create a safe and amazing place for families in our community to go with their children and play—another place we might be able to get to know them in the future. In doing this we were able to live both our visional elements. We were able to know people that we can point toward God, and bless our community to change their perception of Christ followers. Now we are looking for our next area to serve, and we hope others do too.



Former Texas church planter begins new church plant in Georgia

By **JERRY FULTON**

Baptist Progress Editor

CUMMING, Georgia—Todd Cox, former co-church planter of The Refuge, Terrell, has hit the ground running as he is being used of the Lord to plant another church near Atlanta, Georgia. Since October, the new plant hosted their first vision casting/informational meeting and started their first Life Group Bible Study.

After just two months on the field, Cox said, “We have made several connections and many people had shown great interest in what we are doing so we started planning on our very first Vision/Info meeting.

“Although we had done this once before in Texas, this was all new territory for us in Georgia and with different circumstances.

“So, when Oct. 18 came, as we prepared snacks, set up chairs and the presentation, we weren’t sure how many would show. We ended up having a total of 13 people and all were very interested in hearing more and coming back. There were several more that wanted to come but couldn’t make it.”

The very next Sunday, October 25, a Life Group made necessary by the expressed interest of those at the meeting and others Cox had met, was conducted. Fifteen people attended the Bible study.

Cox and his family continue to meet new people every day and look forward to what the Lord holds in store for their church plant, StonePoint Church. Of course, with opportunities, come challenges. The church planter has an immediate need to finish raising support for his salary so focus can be placed on reaching people in North Georgia. Also, additional work funds to support the overall mission is needed.

Perhaps your church or local association would prayerfully consider partnering with Todd Cox and StonePoint Church by

helping to meet their financial needs. Prayers are also needed that God would bring people into contact with the Cox Family and StonePoint.

Immediate Financial Needs:

- \$1,200 per month—salary support
- \$1,000 per month—work funds

Prayer Needs:

- That new people will be encountered and that StonePoint can impact their lives for Christ and they connect with the group
- That God would raise up leaders who want to be part of the StonePoint Launch Team and Leadership Team
- That more financial and prayer partners will invest in the mission
- Direction as next steps are taken toward multiple Life Groups and StonePoint’s next

Vision Meeting

- For other churches, associations, businesses and individuals to advocate to others behalf of StonePoint

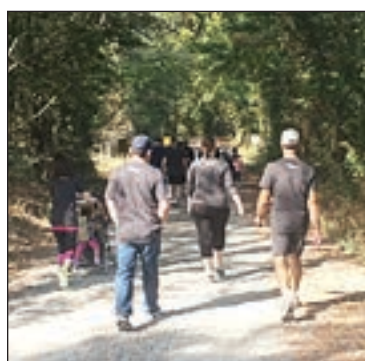
Ways to give are as follows:

- Mail offerings to BMA Missions, P.O. Box 878 Conway, AR 72033
- Designate to Missionary Todd Cox—StonePoint GA
- Give online at www.bmamissions.securegive.com, scroll down and select Todd Cox
- Mail directly to StonePoint Church, P.O. Box 3029 Cumming, GA 30028



▲ The Todd Cox Family

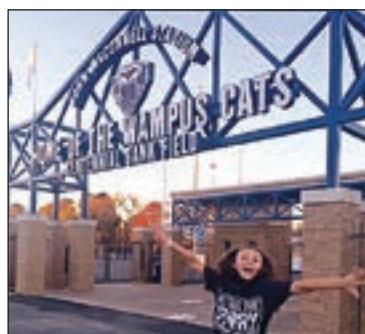
2014 Walk top-giving churches



▲ Hall Summit had their traditional Walk and cookout in 2014 and 2015



▲ 2015 Spring Creek and Kewanee had 50s-themed fundraisers



▲ Antioch’s top fundraiser, Landri Aultman, is ready for the Central Arkansas Area Walk.



The 2014 Walk for the World/Lifeworld Sunday season (July 1 through June 30 of the next year) officially ended June 30, 2015, and we’d like to thank the top-giving churches for their efforts on behalf of Lifeworld. Here are the top five donating churches, in order, for 2014: Spring Creek in Springdale, Arkansas; Hall Summit in Hall Summit, Louisiana; Kewanee in Kewanee, Missouri; Antioch in Conway, Arkansas; Rosewood in Gilmer, Texas.

A few churches hold their Walk events as early as August, so we have been receiving 2015 Walk offerings since early September, and the mail brings more every day. If you need to send in your church’s Lifeworld Sunday or Walk donation amount, the address is P.O. Box 6, Conway, AR 72033 and should be made out to Lifeworld.

We appreciate all the churches who held 2015 Walks/Walk events or had special offerings on Lifeworld Sunday. Mark your calendars now for 2016 Lifeworld Sunday on October 23rd. (To receive Lifeworld’s electronic newsletter, email holly@lifeworld.org.)

Christmas party for foster children at Texas Baptist Home



By **KRISTEN LINDSEY**

Texas Baptist Home for Children

The first Christmas party of 2015 at Texas Baptist Home for children was Dec. 1. The party was sponsored by the Ellis County Sheriff's Department, Waxahachie Police Department and Texas Department of Public Safety. The departments organized toy drives throughout Ellis County that provided several Christmas gifts for the over 50 foster children in the care of Texas Baptist Home, along with other children in foster care throughout Ellis County.

The Waxahachie Fire Department also participated as Santa rode in on a fire truck to the cheers of the children gathered to see him. The children ate pizza, opened gifts and had a great time. Texas Baptist Home is very grateful to the outpouring of love and generosity from the departments that organized the event as well as the community that came together to make it happen.



Buddy Johnson

*It's been 50 years since ordination day,
Lots of churches and missions along the way.*

*Souls won for the Kingdom, preachers prepared,
Suffering divided, rejoicing shared.*

*Please join us to celebrate; you're someone special.
Your presence will mean our event is successful.*

*Don't bring a gift, but do bring a laugh.
If you cannot be present, send your memory to Taff.*

Saturday, January 2, 2016

1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Heritage Baptist Church
1000 Butcher Road
Waxahachie, Texas

Taffy Johnson, taffyhabla@gmail.com

Christmas

IS ALMOST HERE!

.....

CHOOSE YOUR GIFT:



Larka Center
THE NEED: 800 PEOPLE
EACH DONATING \$500



Syrian Refugees
THE GOAL: \$25,000
FOR RELIEF WORK



Safe Haven
THE GOAL:
\$25,000

.....

SEND YOUR TAX DEDUCTIBLE GIFT TO BMA MISSIONS DEPARTMENT
P.O. BOX 878, CONWAY, AR 72033

10 Things About the Christmas Story You May Have Missed

By **JOE MCKEEVER**

They were not “kings” from the east and there weren’t three of them. And when they arrived in Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary and Baby Jesus were not still in the stable, but in a house, contrary to half the Christmas cards that will be arriving at your house. And there’s no indication there were cattle in that stable or anywhere nearby. In fact, the only thing that leads us to believe Jesus was born in a stable is that Luke 2:7 tells us Mary laid the Baby in a manger, a feeding trough.

But you knew all this.

And you knew that all of this was predicted through the centuries by God’s prophets. We particularly treasure the promises of Isaiah 7:14 (“Behold a virgin shall conceive....”) and 9:6:7 (“For unto us a child is born....”), as well as Micah 5:2 (“Bethlehem...out of you shall come forth One to be Ruler over Israel...”).

And you knew that, contrary to the Christmas hymn “The First Noel,” the shepherds in Bethlehem’s fields did not look up and see a star shining in the East beyond them far (modern hymnals have revised that line to read “For all to see there was a star...”).

But, allow me to point out some aspects of this wonderful story it’s possible you might have missed. There is no particular order intended.

1. Joseph has no speaking lines. This man who was to become the earthly father of our Lord Jesus was a man of action. He heard and he obeyed. I recall hearing of a mother calling the school to inform the teacher that her son had a bad cold and would be unable to play Joseph in the Nativity play later that morning. It was too late to replace him, so they did the play without Joseph. No one missed him.

2. Mary is a deep thinker. Twice we read that she “pondered” these things. Once when Gabriel made the original announcement to her (Luke 1:29) and then when the shepherds entered the birth chamber (whatever it was, stable, etc.) to tell of the visitation of the angels (Luke 2:19). The contrast between Mary and Joseph is fairly strong. He seems never to question a word from the Lord, but goes immediately to obey. Mary thinks it through, and even deigns to ask the angel of God how such a thing could be.

3. After the angels made their announcement to the shepherds, they did not command them to do anything. Since the shepherds dropped everything and ran into Bethlehem to “see this thing which has come to pass,” we might have expected the angels to have instructed them to go. Instead, the angel of God did something far superior: He informed them how to recognize the Christ-child once they found Him. “This shall be a sign to you: you will find the Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths.” God knew those He had chosen as the welcoming committee for His Son. He knew, that even though they were lowly shepherds a category we would call unskilled labor they were wise enough to come to Him as soon as they knew how.

4. There is great intrigue in this story. A great cosmic drama is taking place here. On the one hand, we see Heaven opened and angels heralding the arrival of God’s Son on earth. And on the other, hell’s forces marshal to oppose Him and if possible, to kill Him and put an early end to this redemptive mission from Heaven. Angels in the outdoors and Herod’s soldiers entering homes to crush the skulls of infants. The battle was joined and has raged ever since. Readers wishing to explore this further should google “How God Fooled Satan at Christmas,” my article on this subject.

5. Head knowledge is not sufficient. In Matthew 2:3, all Jerusalem was abuzz with talk about the foreign visitors who had arrived in town, naively inquiring at every service station and convenience store, “Well? Where is He? Where is the One born King of the Jews?” They figured that this wonderful news



would be the talk of the city. Instead, no one else seemed to know anything about it. Then, when Herod called the religious leaders to ask where the Messiah was to be born (Matthew 2:4), these doctors of theology informed him that the Old Testament prophet Micah had said Bethlehem was the place. What we wonder is why they didn’t go to Bethlehem. It’s not like it was in the next hemisphere. Bethlehem lies some 5 miles south of Jerusalem, an easy walk for a healthy person. The clear conclusion is that these religious leaders had the Bible knowledge but no real interest in God or the promise of Scripture.

6. The prosperity gospel stumbles at this story. Mary and Joseph are poor. There is not a word in the text to indicate otherwise. When they presented their Baby in the temple for the prescribed dedication of the firstborn, unable to afford a lamb for an offering, the young parents gave a couple of birds (Luke 2:24; based on Leviticus 12:2).

7. The gold from the Magi had a very practical purpose. Immediately after Matthew tells of the visit of the visitors from the East and their wonderful gifts, he tells how the Lord’s angel spoke to Joseph in a dream, informing him that Herod was on a killing jag and he should take the family to Egypt. Doubtless, the gold was provided by the Lord to finance this unexpected trip.

8. Notice the crossing of human lines and barriers in this story. We have the young and the old (Mary, Joseph, the Baby, and Simeon and Anna in the temple. Luke 2). We have the rich and the poor (the Magi and the young family. Matthew 2). We have the Jews and the Gentiles (the Magi were the non-Jews). We have the highest (angels) and the lowest (shepherds). This wonderful story is clearly for “whosoever” and “all the world,” as John 3:16 informs us.

9. Telling the story is a privilege. It would appear that Mary and Joseph’s account of the angels’ appearances were so personal and so unbelievable that they either told no one at first or very few people. The shepherds heard the message from the angels, left those miserable sheep to fend for themselves and raced into Bethlehem to see the Christ-child, then went out and told everyone what they had heard and seen. Poor Zacharias. After questioning

the angel inside the Temple (Luke 1), he was not allowed to tell what he had heard and seen until his son John was born. Telling others of Jesus is a privilege many of us take for granted. I think of the leper in Mark 1 whom Jesus healed. Then, the Lord instructed him to show himself to the priest and do what Moses commanded, but to otherwise keep the news to himself. However, he was just not able to do that. He went out and began to “blaze abroad” the matter. Jesus tells you and me to tell everyone and we go home and sit down. Something is way wrong here.

10. Jesus did no miracles in His boyhood. By all reports from Luke 2, Jesus had a normal childhood in Nazareth. In fact, John 2:1 informs us that the turning of water to wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee was His first miracle. Lest we are tempted to temper that by saying, “It was the first miracle of His ministry, but not the first one He had done,” I submit the following. Had the boy Jesus been doing miracles in Nazareth like an early “Superboy of Smallville,” the world would have taken note of Him and beaten a path to His door. Satan would have noticed also and come running, ready to abort God’s plans for His Son. That did not happen because Jesus was not doing miracles, was not teaching, and was not distinguishing Himself in any way during his youth. That’s why, when He did start to preach and heal and work wonders, His neighbors were astonished. Where did this man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? Are not his sisters here with us? (Matthew 13:54).

Dr. Joe McKeever is an itinerant preacher who served five years as director of missions for the 100 Southern Baptist churches of metro New Orleans, and several years as a pastor. Visit www.joemckeever.com.



Auxiliaries

Building walls or building bridges

By SHARON COLE

WMA Editor's Note: The following is a District Officer Installation program written by Mrs. Polly Maines. It can be adapted to any level.

"As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (John 17:18).

As the scriptures tell us, we have been sent into this world to share the message of God's love. Sometimes this is done by building walls like Nehemiah did when he led the people in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. Walls are needed for protection from the elements or from the enemy. But if we aren't careful, those same walls will separate us from the ones we are trying to reach. Therefore, it is vitally important that we are diligent in building bridges.

The Bible tells us that we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and that the penalty for that sin is an eternal separation from God. But thankfully God loved us enough to send His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sin. This act of love built a bridge so that we could have eternal life.

Disconnected church members also need a bridge (2 Corinthians 5:18; Hebrews 10:24-25). The hurting church member needs a bridge as well. Our district Women's Missionary Auxiliary is to strengthen the spirit of Christian cooperation among local auxiliaries. In other words, we are to be a bridge.

If we are going to build a bridge, we are going to need some special tools, and those tools are our officers. Each officer plays an important part in building the bridge and requires commitment if we are going to build a strong bridge.

The first office is president. The president is to preside

over all meetings. She should lead the district auxiliary with plans, programs and projects. She must be a strong leader. She is to be the "Hammer." A hammer is strong and usually used for driving nails. Without the driving leadership of the president, we could never put the pieces of our bridge together. () is the incoming President of () District WMA. Please accept this hammer that represents your office. A nail is useless and cannot connect material without the driving force of the hammer.

The next office is 1st vice president. The 1st vice president must be prepared to step in when the president is absent. She is also the enlistment chairperson and should work to encourage and enlist new auxiliaries from churches in the district with no active WMA. The 1st vice president is the "Screwdriver." She must be strong like the hammer. A screwdriver is used to turn screws in an effort to connect material together. Her leadership will help connect new auxiliaries to the district. () is the 1st vice president. Please accept this screwdriver as a tool of your office.

The next office is 2nd vice president. The 2nd vice president serves as the "Blueprint." A blueprint is extremely important in any building project as it gives you not only a picture of the project, but the step by step plans on how to achieve the goals. She is to fill in during the absence of the other presidents and she serves as the program chairman. She selects the theme for the year and prepares programs to carry it out. These programs will be the spiritual highlight of the meetings. () is the 2nd vice president. Her programs will be the blueprint that guides us through the next year. Please accept this blueprint as a tool of your office.

The next office is secretary/treasurer. She is the

"Wrench" in our tool box. A wrench is used to tighten or loosen bolts and screws. The secretary/treasurer must keep accurate records and give advice on when to loosen or tighten the purse strings. Her record keeping will help ensure that we have the financial resources to finish our building project. () is the secretary/treasurer. Please accept this wrench as the tool of your office.

Next we have our project promoter. She is responsible for setting goals and advertising the district project. She is the "Nail" in our tool box. Nails come in all sizes to hold things together. She will be responsible for bringing all the local auxiliaries together for one project just like a nail holds different materials together to create one project. () is the project promoter and will be serving as the nail in our tool box. Please accept this spike nail that represents your office.

Our last office is the sunbeam promoter. She is responsible for overseeing the total scope, purpose and activities of the district Sunbeam auxiliaries. She will keep open lines of communication between the WMA and the district Sunbeams. She is a very important tool in our tool box. She is the "Flashlight." The Sunbeam motto is: "Ye are the light of the world," taken from Matthew 5:14. The work of the Sunbeam Promoter with our children ensures that the future stays bright and that we remain the light to the lost world around us. () is our Sunbeam Promoter and she is our flashlight. Please accept this flashlight that represents your office. If our district is going to build a bridge to a lost and dying world, we will need all of the tools in our tool box. We will need for each of you to be committed to your office and the responsibilities that they entail.

DISTRICT NEWS

The Houston-Anderson District WMA met Sept. 12, 2015 at Piney Creek, near Kennard. Vice President Vicki Fort presided at the 10 a.m. meeting. After a welcome from Dianne Smith, Lorena Hill gave her testimony for Share Time. Guest speaker was Mrs. Johnnie Ross, Texas State WMA 2nd Vice President. Being a public school math teacher, Mrs. Ross spoke about Bible lessons that contain numbers. She explained the meaning of the numbers and how it applies to us. She said whatever it is we do, we can see God in it. Our district WMA recommends Mrs. Ross as an excellent Bible teacher with a friendly, delightful personality. The next meeting will be Jan. 9, 2016, hosted by Ephesus Baptist Church, Latexo.

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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.



EVENTS

JANUARY 21, 2016

Ministry Connection Workshop
Conflict: Causes & Cures
@ BMA of Texas Building, Waxahachie
Speaker: Dr. Mike Smith,
Jacksonville College president
10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

APRIL 25-27, 2016

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

OBITUARY

LENA CHAMBERLAIN, 90, of Gilmer, went to be with the Lord Dec. 1, 2015. Funeral services were December 3, 2015. She was born on Dec. 18, 1924 in Gilmer to Benjamin Franklin Haney and Maggie Lee Newell Haney. She was a member of Latch Good Neighbor Club, a correspondent for Latch News for over 30 years, and a published crochet designer. Mrs. Chamberlain is survived by her sons, Donny Chamberlain and wife, Paula, Robert Chamberlain and wife, Glenda; daughter, Evalena Lambert and husband, Roland; grandchildren, Felecia Hux, Jeffery Youngblood, Paul Chamberlain and wife, Kelli, Chrissy Flinn, Kyle Chamberlain and wife, Lindsay, Cory Chamberlain and wife, Brooke, and seven great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, BMA Pastor Fennis Edward Chamberlain; grandson, Jayson McHenry; numerous brothers and sisters, and a special friend, Joe Jordan.



PERSONNEL & POSITIONS

AVAILABLE POSITIONS

PASTOR—Round Prairie, Fairfield is seeking a fulltime pastor. Send resume to Round Prairie Baptist Church, 932 E. Main Street, Fairfield, Texas 75840 or rmcadam1@luminant.com. 12/17

PASTOR—Myrtle Springs, Quitman is seeking a pastor. Send resume to Myrtle Springs Baptist Church, 2185 FM 2225, Quitman, Texas 75783.

PASTOR—Eighth Avenue, Teague is seeking a fulltime pastor. Send resume to 201 S. 8th Avenue, Teague, Texas 75860 or eabccw@sbcglobal.net.

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

MUSIC—First, Crandall is seeking a bivocational music leader. Salary negotiable. Mix of contemporary and traditional. Call Bro. Mike Waits for more details: 214-697-7998 or mbwaitssr@att.net. Visit church website at firstbaptistcrandall.org. TFN

YOUTH—Antioch, Gilmer is seeking a bivocational youth/student minister. Send resume to the church at P.O. Box 688 Gilmer, Texas 75644; Contact person—Michael Pool, pool-michael@hotmail.com. 903-315-6822. TFN

SPEAKER FOR SPECIAL EVENTS

STACIE BOSTIC is available to speak at women's luncheons, youth retreats, adult conferences, seminars, Bible studies and other events. She has a powerful testimony that focuses on the art of surrender, walking by faith and rising above circumstances. Her message resonates with a wide range of listeners. She has the ability to tailor her message to fit a group's unique event theme. Stacie is a member of Liberty, Gun Barrel City. Contact her at Stacie@claypotworks.com or 903-603-8597. Also, visit www.claypotworks.com or connect with Stacie on Facebook at <https://facebook.com/claypotworks>. 12/15

PASTOR & STAFF CHANGES

LARRY BARKER is the new pastor of Cornerstone, Jacksonville. The BMAA Missions Advisory Committee is working on a proposal for Bro. Barker to continue with the BMAA Missions in coordinating BMAA church planting efforts.

CHURCH NEWS

GLADE CREEK, GILMER, after viewing a DVD about the work Sean and Jinny Richards are doing in New Guinea, decided to send them \$1,000.00 at first, then send a monthly amount of approximately \$200 to further support their effort. The church is issuing a challenge to other churches to do the same. While all churches are not financially able to give as much as Glade Creek, but any amount will help the Richards to reach people for Jesus in New Guinea. Offerings may be mailed to BMAA Missions, P.O. Box 878, Conway, AR 72033 or you may give online at www.bmamissions.org.

CHURCHES IN REVIEW

NOVEMBER 29, 2015

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Anthony Drive, Ennis	47	93	1 by letter, 1 by baptism
Antioch, Gilmer	41	82	
Farley Street, Waxahachie	452	547	1 by statement
First, Blooming Grove	203		
First, Crandall	62	85	
First, Omen	37	57	
First, Palmer	40	80	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	21	33	
Jackson, Joaquin	68	137	
Little Flock, Lufkin	6	10	
Lost Prairie, Groesbeck	17	29	
New Harmony, Tyler	280	339	2 by letter
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	38	57	
Pine Brook, Tyler	28	61	1 by baptism
Rosewood, Gilmer	105	179	1 by baptism
Security Calvary, Cleveland	16	28	
Yellowpine Macedonia, Hemphill	14	20	

DECEMBER 6, 2015

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Anthony Drive, Ennis		117	
Farley Street, Waxahachie	502	553	2 professions of faith
First, Blooming Grove	210		
First, Omen	38	57	
First, Palmer		130	1 profession of faith
Glade Creek, Gilmer	18	46	
Jackson, Joaquin	71	123	
Merriman Hills, Sherman	14	15	
New Harmony, Tyler	303	382	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	46	58	
Pine Brook, Tyler	29	41	
Rosewood, Gilmer	115	215	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	13	35	
Temple, Mexia	32	47	
Yellowpine Macedonia, Hemphill	12	16	

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



What Happens To Your Gift to the BMA Foundation?

All gifts to the Foundation, except those designated for operating expenses, are placed in an endowment fund and invested for one or more of the BMA departments or agencies as specified by the donor. Income from the investments provides supplemental funding for those ministries until the Lord returns. Gifts of cash should be mailed to P.O. Box 1188, Conway, Arkansas 72033. Call the Foundation office at 501-329-6891 for more information on other ways to give.

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Sunday School Lessons

Esther: Preservation

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: December 27, 2015
TEXT: Esther 2:2-4,, 8; 15-17

The book of Esther is a story of a servant of God being at the right place at the right time—not because of happenstance, but because of the providential hand of God. That servant was Esther.

God engineers circumstances to protect His people

Mordecai, and his young cousin, Esther, probably fugitives of the Babylonian captivity, found themselves and some of their people living in Persia -- and more specifically, in Shushan (or Susa) the palace of king Ahasuerus.

During a six-month long festival hosted by the king, the queen, Vashi, refused the command of her husband to appear before the king in a private “men’s party,” (1:11) He was then obliged to grant her a divorce or else it would cast a reflection on his authority. (1:17)

The king then hosted a “beauty pageant” of all the beautiful young women of the kingdom, (2:2) and his eyes were quickly affixed to the beautiful young Esther. (2:17) Through the providence of God, the young Jewess was married to the gentile king and suddenly was queen of Persia.

Two of the king’s chamberlains (eunuchs) plot to assassinate the king, (2:21) was overheard by Mordecai. He reported it to Esther, she reported it to the king, and they were promptly executed. Mordecai’s name, and his service to the king was inscribed in the king’s book of chronicles. (2:23)

Haman’s Plot to destroy the Jews

Haman, second in command in Persia, had a bitter hatred toward the Jews, especially Mordecai for his refusal to bow to him, (3:5) and being an Agagite, probably had a vendetta toward the Jews over Samuel hacking Agag to pieces. (I Samuel 15) Haman contrived a story to the king, (3:8) of their plot to overthrow him, and asked for an edict to have all Israelites in Shushan exterminated, and to set the date for Mordecai’s execution on gallows which Haman would build.

God turns the tables on Haman 6:1-12

One night, the king noticed the entry of Mordecai’s good deed in the chronicles. When he asked Haman how such a man should be rewarded for rendering a great service to the king, Haman, thinking the king was referring to him, told him to take his finest horse, place a robe on him, and lead him through the streets shouting, “Behold the man whom the king delights to honor.” The king commanded Haman to honor Mordecai in such a manner.

Esther—the instrument of God’s plan 4:13-16

After learning the threat by Haman to destroy the Jews, Mordecai appealed to the queen, saying, “For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall their enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another. . .and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

Esther comes to that resolve of total dependence on God saying, “. . .so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.”

She reported Haman’s plot to the king, (7:6) the king had Haman executed on the gallows which had been prepared for Mordecai, on the very day Haman had scheduled Mordecai to die. (7:9-10)

APPLICATION:

1. God uses unlikely people and methods to accomplish His will, allowing a Jewish girl to marry a gentile king, thus placing her in a strategic place to be His instrument.
2. God proves to us that He is well able to fight His people’s fight through humiliating the enemy.
3. Esther was willing to disregard her own life in order to be God’s instrument to save her people from annihilation.
4. God uses His children to accomplish His will.

Paul Gauntt is the pastor of First, Palmer. He served for a number of years as the BMA of Texas Department of Church Ministries director. He has served several churches as pastor, and is a correspondent and featured article writer for Baptist Progress. Contact him at pop.gauntt@gmail.com.



Job: Adversity

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: December 27, 2015
TEXT: Job 1:6-12; 2;11; 42:1-3, 10

In the book of Job, we find these truths:

Satan is an equal opportunity accuser—he accused God to Eve “Ye shall not surely die: Genesis 3:4; He cast subtle aspersions on Jesus in the wilderness; “If thou be the Christ. . .” and he accused Job to God; “Doth Job fear . . . God for nought?” Job 1:9. Satan is in the business of discrediting, slandering, casting doubt, fostering fear, using half-truths, lies, and innuendo.

Sometimes the good suffer: Job 1:1 tells us that Job was “perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed (rejected) evil.”

Why do the good suffer? I believe in the case of Job, one reason was for the purpose of having a biblical record of God’s victory over satan. How effective when God gives an object lesson to satan for our benefit, in order to show us how He can provide victory over him even when devastating peril is permitted to come upon a “perfect and upright man.” (2) We have a biblical record of God’s sovereignty over satan and evil. “. . .Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand.” God granted the devil temporary power over Job’s

life, but stopped him from killing him.” Job 1:12

Suffering often brings out the truth about those we thought were friends:

Their weeping in chapter 2 was proven later to be insincere. Job referred to them in 16:2 as “miserable comforters.” Some scholars say Eliphaz represents the biblical (rabbinic tradition—Job is being punished for sins; Bildad expresses the view that Job is being tested to receive a greater reward; and (3) Zophar presents the view that Job is suffering because of God’s arbitrary will.” (4) Elihu rebukes the other three friends (Chapter 32); Elihu focuses on God’s greatness rather than human response to problems.

Suffering brings out the dross in a life such as Job’s

35:1-2 “Elihu spake moreover, and said, Thinkest thou this to be right that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God’s?” Although Job was an upright man who feared the Lord, he was not without sin.

The Lord restored Job (chapter 42) Job acknowledged that there was a depth to God’s grace which was not understood by him. (42:3) Job was able to pray for his friends; and Job was restored two-fold.

OBITUARY

JAMES BARNETT HARDY, 88, of Longview, formerly of Wills Point, went to be with the Lord Nov. 26, 2015. Funeral services were Nov. 30, 2015. He was born on April 21, 1927, in the Hiram community south of Wills Point, the son of Eldridge Franklin Hardy, Jr. and Junia Mae Barnett Hardy. He pastored several Baptist churches, the last one being Locust Grove Baptist Church at Hiram. He followed in his father’s footsteps as his father also had pastored this church. He is preceded in death by his parents, Eldridge Franklin and Junia Mae Hardy; daughter, Sharon Sue Hardy and granddaughter, Heather Lynn Kent. He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Bonnie Faye Hardy, of Longview; two daughters, Janis G. Kent, of Galveston and Vicki L. McNew and husband, Daniel, of Longview; brother, Kenneth W. Hardy and wife, Jackie, of Hiram; two granddaughters, Jennifer N. Hammond and husband, Jeremy, of Holland and Hannah L. Kent, of San Marcos; four great-grandchildren, Autumn, Treylyn, Jessalyn and Morgan Hammond, of Holland; numerous nieces and nephews. Donations may be made to Locust Grove Baptist Church, 14226 Hiram Road, Wills Point, TX 75169, Heartway Hospice of Northeast Texas, Longview or to the Texas Baptist Home for Children, 629 Farley Street, Waxahachie, TX 75165.



Merry Christmas from your
Texas Baptist Home for Children staff and children.



May God pour out His blessings
on your families and loved ones,
as we share in the celebration
of our blessed Lord's birth.



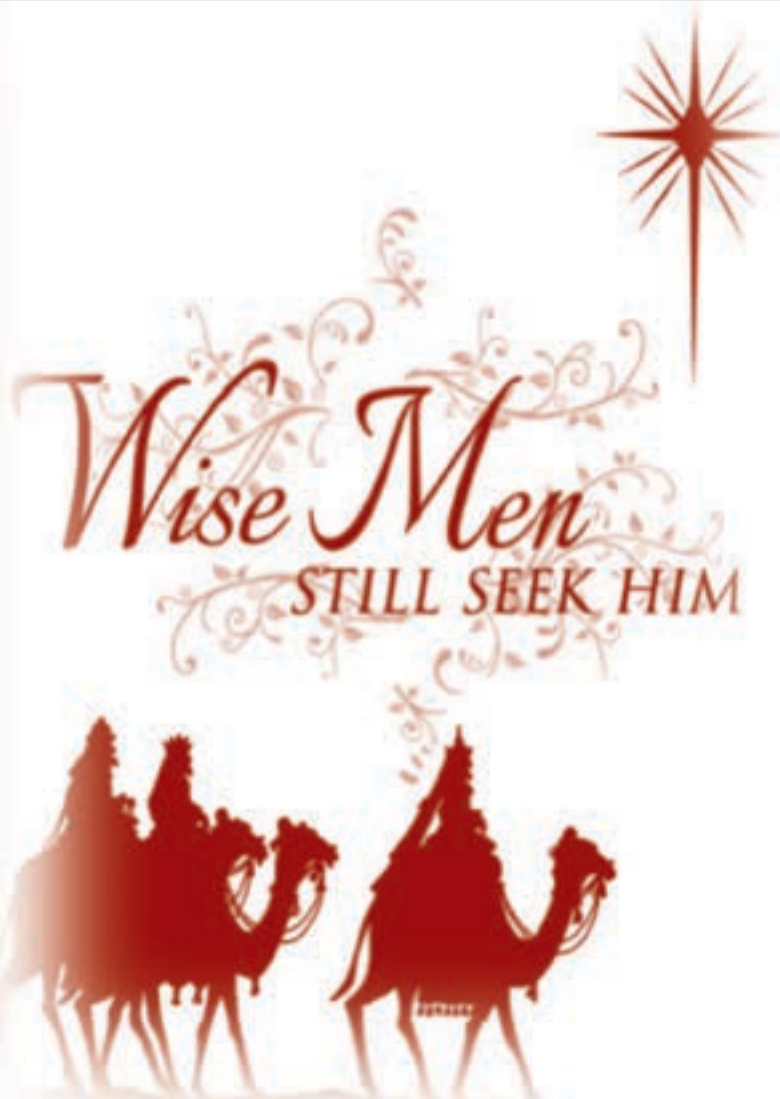
Merry Christmas from Jacksonville College

Silent Night

There are many beautiful Christmas carols: "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" by Charles Wesley, "Away in a Manger" by Martin Luther, "Joy to the World" by Isaac Watts, and "O Little Town of Bethlehem" by Phillips Brooks. The lyrics to "Silent Night" were written by Joseph Mohr. Mohr was from the little village of Oberndorf, a little Austrian Alps town that Susan and I had the privilege of visiting years ago. Mohr was thinking about the birth of Christ one Christmas Eve in 1815 when he wrote the verses to this song. He then went to a local school master, Franz Gruber, who wrote the music. On Christmas night, the choir, accompanied by guitar since the organ was broken, sang "Silent Night" for the first time.

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child,
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace . . .
Christ the Savior is born!

I can sleep in peace because Christ is my Savior. For this to be a Merry Christmas, Christ must be your Savior.
If He is not, turn from yourself, and trust Him as Savior.



Merry Christmas

May you see His love in every kindness, find His joy in every part of your celebration, and feel His presence in the quietness of our heart.

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