

Baptist Progress

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Merry Christmas

from

Bro. Jerry Burnaman, State Missions Director
Bro. Jerry Fulton, Baptist Progress Editor
Bro. Eddie Marsh, Texas Baptist Home President
Dr. Mike Smith, Jacksonville College President

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:
and the government shall be upon his shoulder:
and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor,
The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."
Isaiah 9:6

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Family Matters

The focus of your thoughts is the focus of your life

By **DR. TRAVIS PLUMLEE**

We all have troubles in life. We all have our ups and downs. Some days are so happy. Some days are so sad. That is life in this world. But you choose your attitudes and emotions. And your attitude really sets the course for how well you function in life. Your attitude actually determines whether or not you enjoy life or not. It doesn't matter how much money you have, or how many degrees you have, or what your job title is. We can all find happiness, joy and contentment with Jesus and how we view life.

You think that if you are a Christian, and have Jesus in your heart; then you would always have a right attitude. You would think that even in the midst of trials, we would rejoice in the Lord. Multiple scriptures tell us this including John 16:33, 1 Peter 4:13, Philippians 4:4.

However, I encounter many Christians with such a negative, discouraged spirit and who spend their days focused on all the problems they have. This is why they are so discouraged and miserable. They are choosing to focus on their problems. They spend their mental energy thinking about family problems, financial issues, health concerns etc. You need to re-frame your thinking if this is you. It happens to all of us from time to time. We all need to some days re-frame our thinking. We have to focus on the good.

Here is what you do—go ahead and keep praying about the person, situation or yourself. The Lord hears you. God listens. The hand that moves the world has a heart that is touched by prayer, but the problem is when you don't let go of it. You keep on dwelling on it from time to time during the day. Many people not only think about it frequently, but they tell everyone about it. While it offers a sense of healing to tell your story, it is a double-edged sword.

Sometimes, we all need a friend or loved one to just open up to, and share our hearts. But if we are constantly worrying about something or someone; and we talk about it with others all the time; then that tends to just keep adding gasoline to the fire so to speak. And I don't mean that you spend all day and night thinking about this. I am saying that if throughout your day you think about this from time to time, then it will pull you down.

Start training your brain. This is why scripture tells you to capture your thoughts for the Lord. This is why scripture tells you to think on certain things. It is necessary to control our thought processes. You do have total control over what you choose to think about. It is a habit for most folks. You are the type of person that dwells on the negative, or you can let go of it and see something good even in a bad situation.

Ask God to help you break the habit of thinking negative draining thoughts. Ask the Holy Spirit to prompt you into thinking about the good things. Make a list of all the blessings you have right now in your life. Write them down



and keep them nearby. When you start with the energy zapping thoughts, pull out your list and read it.

Prayer also gets you into a different frame of mind. Memorize 5 powerful uplifting scriptures. Quoting these verses will renew your mind and set your thinking on a different pathway. This really works! It is so amazing. I use it all the time in my own life. When I start thinking about things I do not want to think about; I start quoting scripture. Scripture and negative thinking cannot occupy the same brain at the same time. The Word of God drives out the bad stuff. This is what it speaks of in Romans 12:2. Renew your mind.

You can dwell on all the negative things in your life. You can focus on all the problems you and your family are having. And all this will get you is discouraged, depressed, stressed, fretful and fearful in your daily walk. You can control your thought patterns. Think on some of the good things that God has done for you. Think of the good things the Lord has done around you. Either way will determine how you walk through your day. What you focus your thoughts on determines the focus of your life. Focus on problems- you have a problem life. Focus on the goodness of God- you have a good Godly life. Scripture cautions us to do this.

2 Corinthians 10:5 “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” Philippians 2:5 “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” Colossians 3:2 “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” Proverbs 23:7 “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he:...” Philippians 4:4,8 “Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, **THINK ON THESE THINGS**”. When you focus your thoughts on these things then verse 9 says you will have the peace of God upon you.

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



Church Health

Looking for leaders

By LARRY BARKER

There was a song a few years ago that said; “Looking for love in all the wrong places!” The reality is that we are often looking for leaders in all the wrong places or at least in the wrong ways. Quite often I am asked what characteristics should we look for when seeking new leaders? One important thing to remember is to take it slow in the beginning. Never elevate to a position without first observing how they handle small projects. Begin with entry level responsibilities and see how they handle them. A necessary core value in leadership development must be, **no one leads who does not first serve!**

Carey Nieuwhof recently wrote a blog on “5 Signs You Are an Insecure Leader.” The first sign he gave is that you are constantly comparing yourself to others. The second is when your sense of self-worth is driven by your latest results. Thirdly, you can’t celebrate someone else’s success. The fourth sign of an insecure leader is that you need to be the final word on everything. Lastly, an insecure leader is unwilling to make room for people who are more gifted or competent than them. We must refuse to hold on to everything for the sake of control and safety.

Carey says this about number five, “This is where your personal traits inflicts direct harm to your organization (not that the other traits don’t, but this one has a direct and lethal impact). The sign of a great leader is not that they are the most gifted or competent person in the organization. The sign of a great leader is someone who can attract and keep people more gifted and competent than themselves. The future will belong to people who can forge great alliances, make great partnerships and attract great people.”

This is why discovering and developing the right leaders is so important. We all need others to help and assist in the work of ministry. The challenge of 2 Timothy 2:2, “*And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also,*” is not only biblical but also effective. Here are a few other things to look for as you select individuals to invest your time in to develop as leaders.

When looking for leaders, **look for self-starters!** Watch for those who are already doing it and not just talking about it. You would rather have someone you have to say “whoa” to then someone you always have to motivate to do something. They are reading their Bible, studying, trying to share their faith, and actively pursuing God. They are making “rookie” mistakes but someone who never makes a mistake usually is not trying very hard. They do not need a title or a position because they already have a mind and heart to work!

When looking for leaders, **look for those who have a teachable spirit.** Carey says this in his blog, “insecure people end up being controlling people. You don’t need experts because you want to be the expert. Know-it-alls weren’t much fun in kindergarten; they are less fun in the adult world.” Look for those who desire the advice and counsel of others. Before elevating someone into a leadership role you need to ask these questions; “Do they value the counsel and input of others? Are they open to constructive criticism?”

When looking for leaders, **look for someone who is passionately pursuing God!** They are abiding and walking in Christ daily. They are not perfect but their hunger and

thirst for “righteousness sake” is apparent. They daily spend time with the Lord, they are the spiritual leader in their home, and they have a desire to help others live Godly lives. Because Jesus is Lord of their life they do not have a problem with submitting to those God has placed in their life to oversee them. You can see the zeal in their walk and whenever you are around them they want to talk about what Christ is doing in their life.

When looking for leaders, **look for someone who loves to worship at your church.** They have a burden to see the Lord’s name lifted up and praised in a worthy manner. They are not observers of worship but they actively participate. James MacDonald in *Vertical Church* puts it this way, “Our main job is to usher in the almighty—God forgive us when we settle for less.” This potential leader may not see it as his “job” but he desires God’s presence in every service. They are not “hung-up” on certain styles or methods but desperately want to praise Jesus!

Healthy churches are looking for leaders to develop in all the right places and in all the right ways!

Larry Barker is the operations director for North American Missions. For more information or to contact him, visit www.bmalife.com.



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From the Editor

Christmas: It's the most _____ time of the year

It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year is a popular Christmas song written by Edward Pola and George Wyle, first recorded by Andy Williams in 1963. Other artists, such as Johnny Mathis, Paul Anka, Amy Grant, Garth Brooks and most recently, Michael W. Smith, have released their own versions of the song. While the words of the song title are quite true for millions of people around the world, millions more might disagree.

The child living in war-torn South Sudan would probably view Christmas as anything but the most wonderful time of the year. In a young nation where more than 50,000 children face death from disease and hunger, who have never heard the name of Jesus, there will be no celebration this Christmas.

The childless widow who sits alone in her low-income apartment in some American inner city, barely getting by on government subsidies, will shed countless tears as she recalls happier times with her now deceased husband.

The child—however old he might be—whose parent passed from this life during the past year, will not exactly be jumping up and down with joy. Missing his mom or dad will be the foremost thought on his mind.

Celebration will not be on the mind of the single mother doing her best to raise four children while her husband is stationed somewhere in a hostile area of the Middle-East. Neither will the aged widower who has been placed in a nursing home and forgotten by his family be heard singing *Jingle Bells*.

As Christians in their suburban homes gather around the Christmas tree, drinking wassail, singing carols and opening

presents, some homeless man who was abused as a child, fought in a war or battles mental illness will shiver in a damp, frigid alley across town. And some little girl who was removed from her home because her mother was addicted to drugs and neglected her will wake up in a strange place wondering what tomorrow holds in store for her. And of course, the young parents whose child died from cancer in recent months will be full of sorrow instead of jubilation.

To be clear, for the born again child of God, sitting near his or her fireplace in Rural USA, thinking of the love of the Father who sent His Son to save lost sinners Christmas will be the most wonderful time of the year. And while Christians everywhere have every right to praise the Lord and celebrate the birth of the Savior, the best way to show appreciation to God might be to minister to the downtrodden, brokenhearted, bereaved, diseased, less fortunate, dying souls who need to feel the love of Jesus.

So, may the Lord's people reach out as His arms of love, use the riches He has entrusted to their care, invest the time He has allowed them for the benefit of another in need. Who knows? By being Jesus to those who stand in need of His love, the child of God just might make Christmas for them the most wonderful time of the year!



▲ Jerry Fulton

Changes Discussed for 2015 BMA National Meeting

BMA President, Dr. Jason Aultman, along with the directors of the four national BMA departments, are in the process of discussing changes to the agenda of the 2015 National Meeting in Springfield, Missouri. "We are seeking for ways to make our meeting more inviting, appealing and beneficial to our attendees," Aultman said. "Attendance to meetings such as our BMA National Meeting are on the decline across all denominations and the BMA is no exception. I, along with our department leaders, have been listening to suggestions from our pastors on how to make our meeting more meaningful to our people. We're hoping to hear from even more of them in the next few weeks."

Dr. Aultman was scheduled to speak to all of the pastors of

the BMA on *Tuesday Talks* to discuss several proposals Dec. 16. Some of the changes include options for investing in those in attendance through various workshops and focused training opportunities. In the *Tuesday Talks* webcast Dr. Aultman will be discussing how this new look for the National Meeting could work. He stresses that all of these ideas have come at the urging of the national directors and pastors across the BMA. "It has become apparent to many that the time to look at some new options for our meeting has come. I'm hoping to get as much input from our pastors as possible."

Tuesday Talks can be found on your web browser at www.bmalife/tv. This broadcast is produced monthly by DiscipleGuide Church Resources.

EVENTS

JANUARY 15, 2015

Liberty Association
State Missions Rally
@ Cherokee, Gilmer

JANUARY 17-22, 2015

The Great Escape
Youth & Children's Leaders
Conference Cruise
Go to discipleguide.org/thegreatescape

MARCH 12, 2015

Liberty Association
Texas Baptist Home Rally
@ Coffeerville, Ore City

MARCH 20-21, 2015

Texas GMA Houseparty
@ Daniel Springs Camp, Gary

APRIL 20-22, 2015

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

MAY 14, 2015

Liberty Association BMMI Rally
@ Concord, Gilmer

AUGUST 13, 2015

Liberty Association Lifeword Rally
@ Cross Roads, Pittsburg

OCTOBER 11, 2015

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

APRIL 25-27, 2016

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

PERSONNEL & POSITIONS

AVAILABLE MINISTERS

WILLIAM E. (BILL) JACKSON is available for pulpit supply. Contact him at 817-304-2572.

DAVID HAYES is available for pulpit supply or to serve as interim pastor or pastor. Contact him at 903-854-2930. *1/21/15*

AVAILABLE POSITIONS

PASTOR—Grace Missionary, Tacoma, Washington, about 35 miles south of Seattle, seeks a bi-vocational pastor. The church pays a housing allowance that covers housing and utilities. Attendance on Sunday mornings is about 60 and there are excellent volunteer staff who lead a youth group of about 20. The music program consists of hymns and praise music lead by a band with guitars, keyboard, piano, bass violin and drums. Tacoma is a large city with opportunities to expand. Please contact Terry Holcombe atjacquelyn13@comcast.net.

YOUTH—Sardis, Henderson is seeking a bivocational youth pastor. Send resume to jaccalmom@yahoo.com or to the church at 13174 CR 4187 South, Henderson, Texas 75654, or call 903-854-4521. *1/21/15*

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

YOUTH—South Park, Fort Worth is seeking a director of youth ministry. For information about the position and to submit a resume visit fortworthbaptistchurch.org/YouthDirectorSearch/. *TFN*



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The BMA Foundation provides that opportunity. Your gift is never spent, it is invested and only the earnings are used to support any or all departments of the BMA of America as you specify. Your gift keeps giving until the Lord returns. You may make a cash contribution or contribute through your estate plan. Checks should be made payable to BMA Foundation and mailed to P.O. Box 1188, Conway, Arkansas 72033. For more information, call the BMA Foundation office at 501-329-6891.



CHURCHES IN REVIEW

NOVEMBER 30, 2014

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Anthony Drive, Ennis	65	82	
Cedar Creek, Teague	17	23	
Farley Street, Waxahachie	414	544	2 By Letter, 1 By Profession
First, Blooming Grove	222		
First, Omen	43	63	
First, Palmer	37	61	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	27	44	
Jackson, Joaquin	74	122	
Long Creek, Sunnyvale	86	86	
Merriman Hills, Sherman	19	22	
New Harmony, Tyler	272	340	
New Haven, Dallas	34	55	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	39	54	
Pine Acres, Gilmer	25	61	
Rosewood, Gilmer	106	156	
Temple, Mexia	41	49	
Yellowpine Macedonia, Hemphill	16	17	

DECEMBER 7, 2014

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Cedar Creek, Teague	12	22	
First, Blooming Grove	222		
First, Palmer	41	109	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	18	41	
Harvest, Lufkin	20	25	
Jackson, Joaquin	85	153	
Little Flock, Lufkin	15	20	
Long Creek, Sunnyvale	84	102	
Merriman Hills, Sherman	13	16	
New Harmony, Tyler	293	353	
New Hope, Mineola	61	113	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	59	69	
Rosewood, Gilmer	94	147	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	18	42	
Temple, Mexia	45	53	

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

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A Great Year at DiscipleGuide

By **SCOTT ATTEBERY**

DiscipleGuide Executive Director

God has been so good to DiscipleGuide throughout the past year. Most notably, we have been able to begin working on several new “church investment” initiatives.

One of those endeavors is called Activate, a coach-driven process for helping churches overcome stagnancy and decline. Activate involves sending a trained coach onsite to spend time with the pastor, church leaders, and congregation over the length of eighteen to thirty-six months. During that time, the coach will help the church become healthy, on mission, and multiplying. The process is completely customizable to each church. It is not a “cookie-cutter” program. Each church receives personalized care and coaching. We are praying that God will use Activate as a means of revitalizing churches and sparking revival in our nation.

Other “church investment” initiatives being developed for the near future include a pastor’s helpline and an intentional interim program. The church investment initiatives are built upon the belief that every church has been given a Great Commission responsibility. By investing in churches, DiscipleGuide hopes to help each church pursue the Great Commission with greater fervor and vision so that more disciples are made among the nations.

Part of our church investment goals include increasing the effectiveness of the resources we provide for our churches. We continue to work diligently to improve our curriculum offerings. During 2014 we have spent time meeting with teachers to gather ideas for improving Sunday school materials.

In addition, our conferences are constantly being “fine tuned” to reinforce the principles and truths taught through our curriculum. Also, our *Tuesday Talks* simulcast trainings are providing resources for pastors and church leaders based upon the relevant needs of local congregations.

At the same time, our camp ministry at Daniel Springs in Gary, Texas, is undergoing some exciting transformations under the leadership of new Camp Director Jason Prewitt. We believe churches will be pleased with the updates we are making to facilities and programming for the coming years.

Also during 2014, we moved our offices to the BMA Global Ministry Center in Conway, Arkansas, where we enjoy working together with our BMA Missions Department and Lifeword Media Ministries. Our DiscipleGuide staff has worked hard to create a smooth relocation process.

Throughout the transitions of 2014, God has provided for DiscipleGuide. We are thankful to have a balanced budget going into 2015! God is so good.

Please continue to pray for DiscipleGuide as we work hard to help churches make disciples.

By **ROCKY GOODWIN**

Evangelistic International Ministries Director

I would like to share the activities of Evangelistic International Ministries. It is easy to report when God has been so good and lives have been changed by the power of the Gospel. As I have said many times, that is the purpose of the existence of our ministry is to win people to Christ, teach them the Word of God and to strengthen the believers.

Over the past few months we have been asked these questions many times:

- Is EIM a part of the missions program of the BMA of America?
- Are we a member of the BMA?

As founder and director of EIM for 18 years, I feel that we should be known by now by our BMA churches and brethren as to our affiliation with the BMA. In order to answer these questions for those we meet within the BMA that don’t know I’d like to answer your questions.

Yes! We are a member of the BMA of America. Our sending church is First, Magnolia, Arkansas. I personally have been BMA all of my adult life. I was saved and ordained to the ministry in a BMA church and always pastored BMA churches. I hope this answers some of your questions. And now to the report.

I realize that many do not like numbers, so all I will say is that God has reached down and touched the lives of countless thousands. Heaven has gained many souls because of churches that have given to the ministry of mission evangelism as well as individuals that have gone with us and shared the Gospel to those that we’ve ministered to. It is impossible to know exactly how many people have responded to the invitation to accept Christ as Savior. But I realize that it is our responsibility to share Christ and to make known the path that leads to Heaven and it is their responsibility to respond to the invitation.

The Shepherd Bags Ministry has proven to be anointed of God and we all stand amazed at how God uses such a unique tool to get the Gospel out. Thousands of lives have been touched by the Shepherd Bags Ministry. To all of our friends who have participated and supported us we say thank you.

The teaching ministry also known as *The Barnabas Touch Ministry* has been one of excitement and joy for all of those that have participated. Only eternity will reveal the great things that have been accomplished because preachers have gone and shared the Word of God with their brethren in different countries. Thank you men!

Our feeding program has enabled us to go into places that we never dreamed we would go. God has given us a tool to open the door for the Gospel to be preached. At this time, we are feeding between 20-25,000 children per day. To God be the glory.

God keeps opening doors for EIM to minister. I will ask that each one pray we will be sensitive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit as we enter those doors remembering that EIM is a full-time mission evangelistic ministry.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Spring Term Registration

January 12 from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
January 13 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Placement Testing

January 12 at 8:00 a.m.

Classes Begin

Wednesday, January 14

Homecoming 2015

February 6-7, 2015

For more information,
visit www.jacksonville-college.edu



OBITUARY

J.C. Henderson

Funeral services for J.C. Henderson, 95, of Gilmer were Dec. 2, 2014, at Croley Funeral Home Chapel in Gilmer with Bro. Charles Johnson, Dr. Ray Thompson and Bro. Ray Tenpenny officiating. Interment was in Sunset Memorial Park in Gilmer. He passed away Nov. 29, 2014. Henderson was born Oct. 16, 1919 in Pittsburg, to Ether Chaney and Myrtle Davis Henderson. He held a Master’s of Education Degree from Stephen F. Austin, was a retired minister, public school teacher and principal and instructor at Jacksonville College teacher and a member of Glade Creek, Gilmer. He became a minister at the age of 17 and was ordained in November 1940 at Friendship Missionary, Ebenezer Community in Camp County. In addition, he pastored 13 Baptist churches. The highlight of his ministry was when he organized Cherokee, Gilmer. Among survivors are a son, Elwyn Henderson of Gilmer; daughter, Carlene Needham and husband Guy of Porter; a sister, two grandchildren and two great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, Verdine, in 2007.



BMAT 2014 Annual Message

World vs. Church—Acts 26:12-18

By **GRADY CASHION**

Pastor of First, Blooming Grove

In the last year, I have spent a lot of time in the valley. My heart is heavy, and it is heavy over the church and church people! I long for folks to put God first in their life, and I am finding less and less people who are doing that.

The attendance in our church, like most churches, seems to be a roller coaster ride. Its up and down with no particular reason why. The fact seems pretty obvious to me, most folks just don't think church is all that important anymore, and most don't really care.

I have spent a lot of time praying and seeking God about this issue—praying for insight into what our churches need to do to begin to grow again, so folks will be reached with the gospel.

Friends, we need to realize that every 24 seconds, someone dies and goes to hell. That is the big reason that church is so important. Our job as a church is to reach the lost with the Gospel.

That is the reason that Satan and the world love to attack the church. One of the biggest ways Satan attacks the church is through attendance and offerings. Friends, we are in a war, not a skirmish, with the world! That is why I titled this message, "World vs. Church"

If Satan can keep folks away from church, he can control a lot of areas. He can take unfaithfulness and apathy and bring a church to its knees. And in the midst of all of this, one of the main areas of destruction is the pastor gets discouraged.

Often times Satan whispers and says, "Hey Grady, don't worry about folks not coming to worship. Fewer people means fewer problems."

But that is not what God says to me. God says, "Stand up! Don't let Satan whip you lying down! Stand up!"

I think God is shouting that same message to our churches. If that means we need new leadership to get it done, so be it! If it means we need new direction and changing the way it has always been, so be it! If it means all of us making a new commitment, so be it! One thing is for sure, our churches will die if we don't stand up.

Now I know this is meddling, but pastors, hear me on this. Have we become so concerned over the security of our jobs that we have forgotten our calling? Are we afraid to stand and preach the truth because we are afraid it might offend someone? We need to understand that Satan hates us. He is the enemy, so stand up! My

desire is for all of us as leaders of God's work is to stand up!

Over 2,000 years ago, Satan thought he had Paul defeated. But on the road to Damascus, the Lord took hold of Paul. Paul got saved, he stood up and the rest is history. And he was not ashamed to proclaim what Jesus had done.

In our text today, Paul is testifying of his conversion experience to King Agrippa. I believe in this text, we can get some insight into what it is going to take for us to stand up in the battle of the world versus the church.

We can continue to decline, continue to see church doors being locked for the last time and die a slow death, or we can stand up and tell Satan to get behind us. When we stand up, I believe we will begin to grow.

The question is, "Do we have what it takes to stand up?"

In order to stand up, we need God. We need the Holy Spirit of God to fill every member of our churches, starting with the preachers. Preacher, if you are not excited, no one else will be. We need God to speak to our hearts and move us in His direction, not ours.

In God's work, if God is not doing the empowering, there is no power; it is just futile effort. We cannot and will not grow and flourish for the Kingdom of God, unless we are Spirit led (Romans 14:17).

Righteousness, peace and joy are available only in God. We need to pray daily for God to fill us with the Holy Spirit.

If we are going to grow, we need revival. We need to get some excitement back in our worship, and that will only come when you are Spirit-filled. In our text, Paul tells King Agrippa with excitement what Jesus told him when he met Him on the road to Damascus. Paul was excited about what God had done in his life. What God has done and is doing is exciting. We don't serve a dead God, we serve a risen Savior. That should excite us.

I am not sure that Baptists will not be the first group to rise at the rapture. After all, the Bible tells us that the dead in Christ shall rise first. We need revival! If you can't get excited about being born again and being heaven-bound, you need to get saved. I want the church to be growing when Jesus comes back!

If the church is going to grow, we need outreach. God called Paul and us to reach out to the lost. The only way we will ever reach folks, is by telling them about Jesus.

Do you remember the story of the woman that Jesus met at the well? He began to tell her about her life, and she recognized Him as the Messiah. Do you remember what she did? She left her water pot at the well and ran to town to tell folks about this amazing Jesus. What a story she had to tell, and what a story we have to tell.

One day, I too was thirsty for the truth, thirsty for life, and Jesus met me at the well. He gave me a drink of living water! If you are saved, you have that living water—the same as the lady at the well. So, how many folks have you run to, lately, with the Good News?

If we are going to grow, we need willingness. We have to be willing to make a commitment to the greatest cause there is. It will take a desire to serve God with all your heart, without excuses (Psalm 42:1).

It will take dedication. We cannot expect to draw others to a place of worship if we are not faithful ourselves. Too many people are not committed to be faithful to the Lord and His church. Jesus died for the church, and He expects us to be faithful (Hebrews 10:25).

It will take a decision that you are going to serve God and lead others to serve. In doing so, you have to make some decisions in advance. You have to decide to obey what Jesus said was the greatest commandment (Matthew 22:37-38).

Church, the decision is ours. What is your pleasure? What do you want for your church? What are you willing to do to make sure it happens?

We need God. We need revival. We need outreach. We need willingness. The question is simple, "Do we die, or do we grow?"

The world versus the church...let's stand up for the Lord!



▲ Grady Cashion

Central Baptist College invites applications for Vice President for Finance

Central Baptist College in Conway seeks an innovative and experienced financial administrator and leader with a proven track record in the management of financial systems to serve as vice president for finance.

Reporting directly to the president, the vice president for finance serves as chief financial officer of the college. The vice president for finance will provide strategic leadership and oversight of the college's finance and accounting functions, business services and auxiliary enterprises, human resources and facilities and physical plant operations. As a member of the president's executive management team, the vice president will support the president and will contribute to the strategic

objectives and direction of the college by providing sound and ethical fiscal planning and financial management to ensure the long-term financial stability and growth of the college.

The successful candidate will have an MBA or Master's degree in business management, accounting or related field and a minimum of five years accounting/finance related experience in a supervisory or managerial role.

The vice president for finance is a 12-month full-time position with remuneration and benefits commensurate with experience. The Search Committee will begin reviewing applications immediately. The search will continue until the

position is filled.

Send letter of application, resume, and the names, addresses and phone numbers of three references to: Vice President for Finance Search Committee, c/o Terry Kimbrow, President, Central Baptist College, 1501 College Avenue, Conway, Arkansas 72034 or email tkimbrow@cbc.edu. Electronic submissions are encouraged.

Candidates must support the Christian identity of the college and demonstrate mature faith, Christian lifestyle, and a strong belief in Baptist doctrine. CBC will conduct a criminal background investigation as part of the hiring process.



Christian Living

The vast significance of the little flock

By PAUL GAUNTT

We see the large, downtown churches—the ones with multiple ministries, large cash flow, recreation buildings that would rival any world-class health club—a church with statewide or even world-wide notoriety and exclaim, “My hasn’t God blessed?”

But what about the small, struggling, country churches—the ones that only run a handful of people, and whose ministries don’t seem to be as far-reaching? What about the little stucco church with a gravel parking lot that won’t accommodate 15 cars, in a far corner of a small town, that can barely afford curtains for their ladies’ restroom. Aren’t they blessed too? The Father promised the “Little Flock” that the kingdom was theirs as well.

God has especially blessed, and called out smaller churches, and has given them an unique ministry of being the training ground for the young preacher. I’ll always look back on my first pastorate—Enon First, Iola, as one that recognized a God-given purpose of providing a safe haven—an incubation period for a young, struggling, ignorant pastor.

Oh yes, sometimes they had to cup their hands over mouths and quietly chuckle at some of the bobbles he made in the pulpit—like, for example, saying that Jesus, when He was going to heal the blind man, reached down, and taking

some clay and spittle, and anointing his eyes—only the young preacher didn’t say “clay and spittle”—he said “spit and whittle.” My beloved flock had a belly laugh over that one for years.

But they loved me through those pulpit bloopers—and perhaps misguided “visions,” like the time I got an architect to draw up a sign for the church—a sign which probably cost more than 15 percent of the auditorium.

They lovingly—and forgivingly taught me the importance of being equal pastor to all the people—they taught us how to put up corn and peas for the winter—and generally, how to live life and how to go in and out among them.

Then they’d sit in the congregation and lovingly watch the preacher boy struggle his way through a sermon.

They did this because they recognized their calling of God, to help and nurture young preachers. And I know there’s not a preacher reading this article whose memories don’t take them back to their first church—that training ground—that ministerial incubation period, and thank God for the grace He bestowed upon them and him through that experience.

Sometimes a young preacher boy remains at that struggling first church—perhaps for the rest of his days—and that little flock reaps the rewards of God by becoming a large, growing,

vibrant church and growing with that young preacher. Consider Grady Cashion at First, Blooming Grove—or John W. Greene at Harmony Hill, Lufkin. Cashion has been at Blooming Grove 21 years—and Greene is celebrating his 43rd anniversary at Harmony Hill. Both churches have grown phenomenally.

Little Flock—little struggling country church, you are just as significant in the Kingdom of God as the mega-church—maybe not world renown, with large, expensive, lavish pageants or a second-story jogging track, but just as significant. And one day, you may be watching that same struggling preacher-boy, whom you nurtured years ago, on television today, preaching to the entire world—and you can say, “We remember when he didn’t know the difference between ‘clay and spittle’ and ‘spit and whittle.’”

Paul Gauntt is the former BMA of Texas Department of Church Ministries director. He has served several churches as pastor, and is a correspondent and featured article writer for Baptist Progress. Contact him at paul.gauntt@att.net.



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Mission Life

My responsibility for revival

By **JERRY BURNAMAN**

When Martin Luther nailed his “95 Theses” to the door of the Wittenberg Castle on Oct. 31, 1517, he could not have imagined how it would change the world. Historians say he awoke spiritually and theologically when he realized that justification comes by faith not by works. After repeatedly reading the book of Romans, Paul’s words were indelibly imprinted upon his heart: “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith as it is written, the just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17; Habakkuk 2:4).

“The just shall live by faith” became the heart cry of the Reformation and gave impetus to the protestant movement. A revival occurred in the world during the 16th Century that has rarely been duplicated.

However, “the just shall live by faith” is an enduring message and can be the herald for revival in our day. Also, by carefully understanding the “I am” sayings of Paul in Romans chapter one, we can discover our responsibility for it to become a reality.

I Am Debtor

Feel the passion of Paul’s heart as he declared, “I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and the foolish” (verse 14). This debt which he so keenly felt is based upon three things: (1) his personal calling (v. 1); his personal Savior (vv. 2-4); and his personal responsibility (vv.5-7).

In this I, me and mine generation it’s common to think, “I don’t owe anyone anything. The world owes me.” Such

thinking is foreign to the Christ-life. The believer’s life is changed when he encounters Christ and trusts Him for salvation. It begins with the mind (Romans 12:1-2).

Paul refers to his calling as a “servant” of Jesus Christ. Literally this means “slave.” The natural man is dominated by sin and is a slave of sin. Through salvation the believer is no longer under the dominion of sin, but a servant of Jesus Christ.

As Paul was debtor to preach the gospel to every creature, so are we debtors to share the gospel with those in our society. May God burden our hearts; even break our hearts because of the multitudes perishing without Christ.

I Am Ready

Without hesitation Paul said, “I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are in Rome” (verse 15). A close analysis of verses 8-13 shows how he prepared for his ministry in Rome. He prayed for them”

- His prayer was definite and positive (9-11).
- His prayer was in secret (9). No one knew of his praying but God alone.
- His praying was persistent (9). He prayed as he wrote knowing that God would answer according to His sovereign work and will.
- His praying included surrender (10). Paul was not at all sure when God would answer his prayer, or how it would come. In the book of Acts it is recorded that he wrote the letter to the Romans in the spring of 58 A.D. while in Corinth. In the autumn of 60 A.D.

he sailed for Rome in chains, arriving in the early months of 61 A.D. and his prayer had been answered.

Effective praying that consistently gets an answer is grounded in a life fully dedicated to God. Therefore, as we pray today for revival, it’s essential to be completely surrendered and dedicated to God’s will and purpose. This may take some time for Bible study and meditation. Romans chapters 6-8 gives clear instructions how the believer can be victorious over sin and live a life to influence others.

I Am Not Ashamed

Paul often debated with the religious leaders of his day along with intellectuals like the ones on Mars Hill in Athens. He was not intimidated and declared, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel” (verse 16) and this statement involves three important facts.

First, the gospel is the “power of God.” It is God’s “dynamite,” because of what Christ did on the cross for the sin of mankind. The gospel convicts the sinner, and as a result the believer becomes a new creation, assured of eternal life and can live a victorious Christian life.

Second, it is the “power of God unto salvation.” Salvation is a personal matter, and the sacrifice of Christ on the cross makes it possible for every sinner to have a direct encounter with God.

Third, note the scope of salvation, “to everyone that believes.” There are many groups claiming different ways of salvation. We are obligated to be true to the Bible and declare there is only one way, and that is the way of faith in Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

This brief excerpt from Romans chapter one is heart wrenching, reminding me, and you, of our awesome responsibility to proclaim the gospel in its fullness. We are debtors to our neighbors, everyone in Texas, the United States and to the world. When we walk in the power of the Holy Spirit and rely on Him to supply wisdom as we share the good news with others, God will give us revival.

Remember the Revival in Texas Workshops designed to encourage one another to seek revival. You can go to <http://revivalintexasnow.com/calendar-of-events/> and find the schedule of workshops. If I can be of service to you, give me a call or send an email. It would be a joy to serve your church as we seek revival for all the BMA churches of Texas.

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



Auxiliaries

The Ashraf Sara Family Reaching the Arab world around you

By SHARON COLE

You don't have to go to Iraq and other Arab countries to find Arabic speaking people. They could be in your backyard. Arabic speaking immigrants and refugees have come to America seeking a better life. In American culture, we have the freedom to practice our religion or faith of choice, and because of that freedom, we are able to openly share the gospel with friends and family in a variety of ways.

However, the window of opportunity in the Arabic world is very small and constantly changing. From the Bible, and in history, we observe that persecution causes believers to move and the gospel spreads in pockets. The time of harvest is limited.

Now, because of the severe persecution in Iraq and other parts in the Middle East, refugees in crisis are making their way to this country of opportunity. As Christians, it is important that we take advantage of this window to reach Arabic people who are coming to America in droves. The proponents of Islam are taking the same opportunity.

There are over 9 million Arabic-speaking people and/or Muslims in the United States. Without a doubt, people in crisis are most open to the message of hope that comes from knowing Jesus. Jesus commanded the church to "Go and teach all nations..." If someone from another country or culture moves into your community; perhaps that is God's way of helping you fulfill the Great Commission without leaving home. Your mission starts at home and God has brought the world to your doorstep!

In 2011, God impressed upon Ashraf Sara, his wife, Jenny, and sons, John and Mark, to begin a work of God among the Arabic-speaking people in the Dallas/Fort Worth Area. More than 200 have surrendered their life to Jesus from different parts of this area. Because of work schedules and distance, their weekly service runs about 100 people on Sunday, but they also have five small groups meeting in different areas of the Metroplex throughout the week. Pray for these groups in Plano, Richardson, Allen, Frisco, McKinney and Dallas. Their goal is to disciple Arabic-speaking people so they can take turns and make disciples of other Arabic-speaking people. The families of Living Word Church are a diverse mix of Iraqi, Syrian, Egyptian, Lebanese, Jordanian and

Palestinian.

In addition to Dallas, they have started an Arabic work in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma with about seven Arabic-speaking families and another work with an Arabic group in New Orleans, Louisiana. They are also able to present the gospel through their website, www.lwdallas.org. Some of the services at their church have been broadcast over an Arabic satellite, which has a global reach. The broadcasts are free, but there is an expense for the technicians to come and make the recordings. This method of reaching Arabic people who can tune in from the privacy of their homes means they can hear about the love of God without fear of rejection from family or reprisal from their community.

For those who live in parts of the world where they have no religious freedom, this opportunity cannot be missed. The Texas WMA has chosen the work of Bro. Ashraf and Jenny Sara as the 2014-2015 Project. Our goal is \$15,000. They have many needs that God will supply and God wants to use us to fill those needs.

They desire your prayers. Every day lift them up to God. Pray for their safety in their travels, guidance and wisdom, and for the people they are trying to reach with the gospel. Other needs are a van to pick up people for worship services, funds for rent expense and travel expense to the new work in Oklahoma and Louisiana, a sound system to record and broadcast through Arabic satellite channel and Women's Ministry outreach. As a church, pray about partnering with them by providing meeting places for Arabic-speaking groups in your community. Pray for America and appreciate the freedom you have to worship and share your faith.

Look around your area and take note. Are there specific ethnic groups in your sphere of influence? As a born-again child of God, you have been given the Holy Spirit who will empower you to share with others what God has done in your life. It is your responsibility. Your home, your community, your town/city, your state is your mission field. When you hear the news of conflict and crisis in the Middle East, the first thing you should do is pray for those believers who are facing deportation and even death because they refuse to renounce Jesus Christ. The window of opportunity may one day close—even in this country. "We must work



▲ The Ashraf Sara Family

the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work." (John 9:4). You can support this mission work through the State WMA Project by sending your offerings to the Texas WMA Corresponding Secretary: Jo Strong, 149 NW Suzanne Terrace, Burleson, TX 76028.

Contact info: Ashraf & Jenny Sara, 1418 Timber Ridge Dr. Allen, TX 75002, 903-721-1882; 214-843-7811, iraqbp@aol.com.

Looking for a benevolent project?

At this time of year many WMA groups-local and district, individuals, and churches as a whole, think about helping others in need. It has been brought to our attention that Jacksonville College is in need of a variety of paper products to supplement the cafeteria supply. With the ever-growing student population (praise the Lord), the budget for cafeteria supplies is very slim. They are in need of 10 ½ inch divided foam plates, 16 oz. foam drinking cups, paper towels, industrial-type napkins, etc. For more information please contact: Sandy Jones at 870-838-9423.

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



Sunday School Lessons

The Triunity of God

By GARY HOUSE

DATE: December 21, 2014

TEXT: Genesis 1:1-28; Matthew 28:19-20

THE LESSON IN BRIEF: There is only one true God, existing as a single Being comprised of three Persons who are equal in every way, yet distinct in their tasks and relations to humanity.

The Bible says that God is one. More than 50 times, the Bible affirms that our God is one God. "Hear O Israel: The LORD our God is one God" (Deuteronomy 6:4). There is but one true God. There are not two, three or more. There is only one true God and many false gods (1 Corinthians 8:4-6). Because of this, some have denied the deity of Christ. Some have denied that The Holy Spirit is God. Some have even denied that the Holy Spirit is a person! They say that only the Father can be God because there is only one God, and if Jesus and the Holy Spirit were also God, that would make three. But the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are each referred to in the Bible as Jehovah. Each Person of the Trinity is distinct and yet they are also one.

The Bible says that God is plural. The word translated "God" (Elohim) is plural in form. This name is used more than 2,500 times in the Hebrew Bible. Add to this, the Hebrew word translated "one" is "echad." The word refers to a combined or united one made up of more than one part! Perhaps the most easily understood examples of how the word can be used, is found in the first two chapters of the Bible.

Genesis 1:5—Here, we have two parts (light and darkness) making up one day.

Genesis 1:26—God uses plural pronouns to refer to Himself.

Genesis 2:24—Here we have two persons becoming one. After doing so, are they no longer two distinct persons? They have not become mathematically one person. They are two individuals who have become united as one without losing their individuality. The point is this: Jehovah is one God. But this does not mean that He is one person any more than a husband and wife is one person because they are married.

The Bible says that each person of the Trinity is God. All are equal without any segregation of worth or divinity. Each is fully God, not one-third God.

THREE PERSONS ARE CALLED "JEHOVAH" IN THE BIBLE

1. Matthew 28:19 mentions three distinct entities united in one name, or authority. It is a fact that the Bible refers to each of these three as "LORD" or "Jehovah." **The Father** is referred to many times as "Jehovah" and there is little controversy here (1 Chronicles 29:10; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3).

2. **Christ, the Son**, is also referred to in the Bible as "Jehovah" For example, the LORD of hosts (the Father) will one day send the LORD (the Son) to this world to "dwell in your midst" according to one prophecy (Zechariah 2:8-11). Both the Sender and the One sent are referred to as "Jehovah" or "LORD." The Hebrew writer quotes several Old Testament passages which speak of "God" or "Jehovah" and apply them to Jesus, the

Son (Hebrews 1:6-12; especially vs. 10 and Psalms 102:1,12,24,25).

Jehovah identifies Himself to Moses as "I AM" out of the burning bush and Jesus identifies Himself to the people as "I AM" as well (Exodus 3:14; John 8:24,58). Many other examples such as Isaiah 44:6; 48:12 and Revelation 1:17-18; 2:8; 22:13,16 could be compared and cited. The point remains: Jesus is Jehovah.

3. **The Holy Spirit is also referred to as "Jehovah" in the Bible.** When Isaiah answered the Lord's call unto the office of prophet there was a pressing need in the land. "And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'" (Isaiah 6:8,9; cf. vs. 3,5). The Lord of vs. 8 is the LORD (Jehovah) of vss. 3,5). Jehovah spoke to Isaiah.

GOD SAID, "LET US..." "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our own image...' (Genesis 1:26). Who made man? God did! Who helped God accomplish that task? No one helped; God did it all by Himself! Who is God speaking to and why use the term "us?" Our one God consists of more than one person. If only Jehovah took part in the creation; and if Jesus is not Jehovah, then that means that the Son of God had no role to play in the creation of the universe. But to the contrary, the Bible says that He did, so the Son must be regarded as Jehovah as well as the Father (John 1:1-3; 14-17).

And further, we know that the Holy Spirit also had a role to play in the creation (Genesis 1:2). So again, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit each had roles to play in the creation of all things. The term Jehovah appropriately applies to all three, who are one God even as the husband and wife are one flesh.

If you cannot fully comprehend 3 in 1 do not despair. The Bible says that God is beyond our comprehension. The word *Trinity* does not appear anywhere in Scripture. However, the Word of God teaches the Trinity explicitly and through implication throughout the counsel of God. How can God be three in one? We think of a person as having a physical body, but the persons of the Trinity do not have bodies like ours. God is spirit (John 4:24). Our God is above the laws of the natural world and the spiritual world. As God, He is beyond our limited abilities to understand.

How can one understand this concept of three but one? In discussing the attributes of the eternal God, there are many things that mortal minds cannot comprehend. But to deny something that the Bible so plainly teaches is a lack of faith. One God in three persons—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Accepting the Trinity is one of the many acts of faith for the believer. Instead of worrying, try marveling at the depths of God's love expressed through the Trinity.

Gary House is the writer of the Sunday school lessons for Baptist Progress. Most recently, Bro. House served as pastor of Tundra Baptist Church in Canton for 13 years. Contact him at Tundraparson@aol.com.



The Immutability of God

By GARY HOUSE

DATE: December 27, 2014

TEXT: James 1:1-12

LESSON IN BRIEF: Constantly rely on God for He never changes.

IMMUTABILITY DEFINED. This big word simply means unchangeable. Immutability means that God is unchangeable, and therefore, unchanging, but it does not mean that He is immobile or inactive. God is actively involved in this world. Believers can rely on God's consistency, because He is not evolving, growing or developing.

God's divine nature remains constant. God's immutability reminds us that God's attitudes, toward sin for example, do not change. Therefore, God can never be coaxed, forced, or compromised into changing. Believers can also rest assured that none of God's glorious perfections will ever change. He is eternally consistent without any change in His nature or character. This is why the psalmist could say, "He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved" (Psalm 62:2). While we change with age and prevailing opinions, God remains forever the same.

Immutability Declared. If God were to change himself, then He would be neither immutable or sovereign. Most misunderstanding about God's immutability relates to anthropomorphism; that is, interpreting what is not human in human terms. We have a natural tendency to attach human emotions and actions to God, but to do so is to limit God. God cannot, nor will He, ever fit in a box of human design. God is immutable no matter the popular trends of thought, doctrine, or practice. In the unfolding revelation of God's nature, believers must resist the temptation to attribute human characteristics to the Lord. Why? Our Lord is above human limitations and weaknesses. He is more than mere mortals; He is divinely God. "God is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19).

The immutability of God is our foundation. Since God is unchanging, believers can build their lives around His unchangeable truth. At countless weddings, the bride and groom pledge their unending love for better or worse, in sickness or in health, and in poverty or in wealth until death alone shall part them. Evidence from today's culture proves humans may not always keep their vows, but God is a covenant-keeping God. Our Lord assures us that He is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). James declares that God is so certain to remain the same that there is not even the slightest shadow caused by turning in Him (James 1:17).

The immutability of God is our hope. He keeps His word. A powerful example of this truth is found in Malachi 3. God warns the people about their sin and His chastisement by saying, "I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (verse 6).

The immutability of God is our comfort. God promises to take everything that happens to us in our lifetime and to make it work out for our best (Romans 8:28). He will fulfill every promise. Think about God's purpose for you in Christ Jesus. God will bring it to pass. Paul said, "I know

whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Timothy 1:12).

Immutability Debated. Some people like to argue that the Bible talks about God changing. One text they refer to is the book of Jonah. God told Jonah to tell the wicked people of Nineveh that He was going to destroy their city (Jonah 3:4). Upon hearing God's judgment, the people repented and turned their hearts to God. Then the Bible reports that "God saw their works that they returned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not" (Jonah 3:10).

If God does not change, why does the Bible say that He repented? The expression God repented means that God was grieved and sorrowful. The text does not imply that God ever changed His mind or took a different course of action. God would have destroyed Nineveh had they not responded with repentance: however, when the people turned from their sins. God gave them grace instead of anger. In the final analysis, God did not change. The people of Nineveh changed because they turned their hearts back to God. Scripture repeatedly states that whenever people repent of their sins that God is 'faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness- 1 John 1 :9: For this very reason, God sent His Son into the world so that people everywhere might receive His gift of eternal life (John 3:17).

Immutability Demonstrated. God does not accept us on our performance, receiving us one time and rejecting us another time. The Lord is the same toward us as He was when we first met Him. Notice James description of God's goodness (James 1:12-18).

God is absolutely good. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life" (James 1: 12). The word blessed means happiness. Happy is the person who does not fall into temptation's snare because he will know the blessings of the Lord. Since God is unchangeable, He promises to bless those who walk in a right relationship with Him. God willingly shares His goodness with His children who walk in His ways.

God is consistently good (James 1: 17). In this age of up-and-down human emotions, we can rely upon God's faithfulness to us. We can rely upon God being the same, no matter the condition of the weather or the stock market. While we may worry about the actions of others, God will always act and react the same.

God is graciously good (James 1:18). God's gifts, especially the gift of being adopted into the family of God, are good and will always be good since He is immutable. Notice too, the source of these gifts from the first four words of verse 18: "Of his own will." Our Lord gives them to us because He chose to love and to care for us.

Have you answered Jesus' invitation? "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: For I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

Much of this material was previously written by Pastor Allen Tilley, to whom I am grateful for his permission to use in my commentary.



JACKSONVILLE
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*Merry Christmas and a Happy
New Year from the Jacksonville
College family! Thank you for
your prayers and support.*



The end of the year is the ideal time to give a gift to Jacksonville College. Pastor Andy Comer and the Davis Street Baptist Church in Sulphur Springs gave us a wonderful Christmas gift: a 25 passenger people mover. Pictured are Andy (left) and student pastor Dustin Barrett (right) after they gave the keys to Academic Dean Lynn Nabi (center).



The annual Christmas program featured the Music and Theater Departments



Christmas at the Jag Bookstore



JC student Joseph Allen plays "Silent Night" on the guitar



The Santa display in the JC library comes from Dr. Mike Smith's mother's large collection.

