

# Baptist Progress

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# Merry Christmas

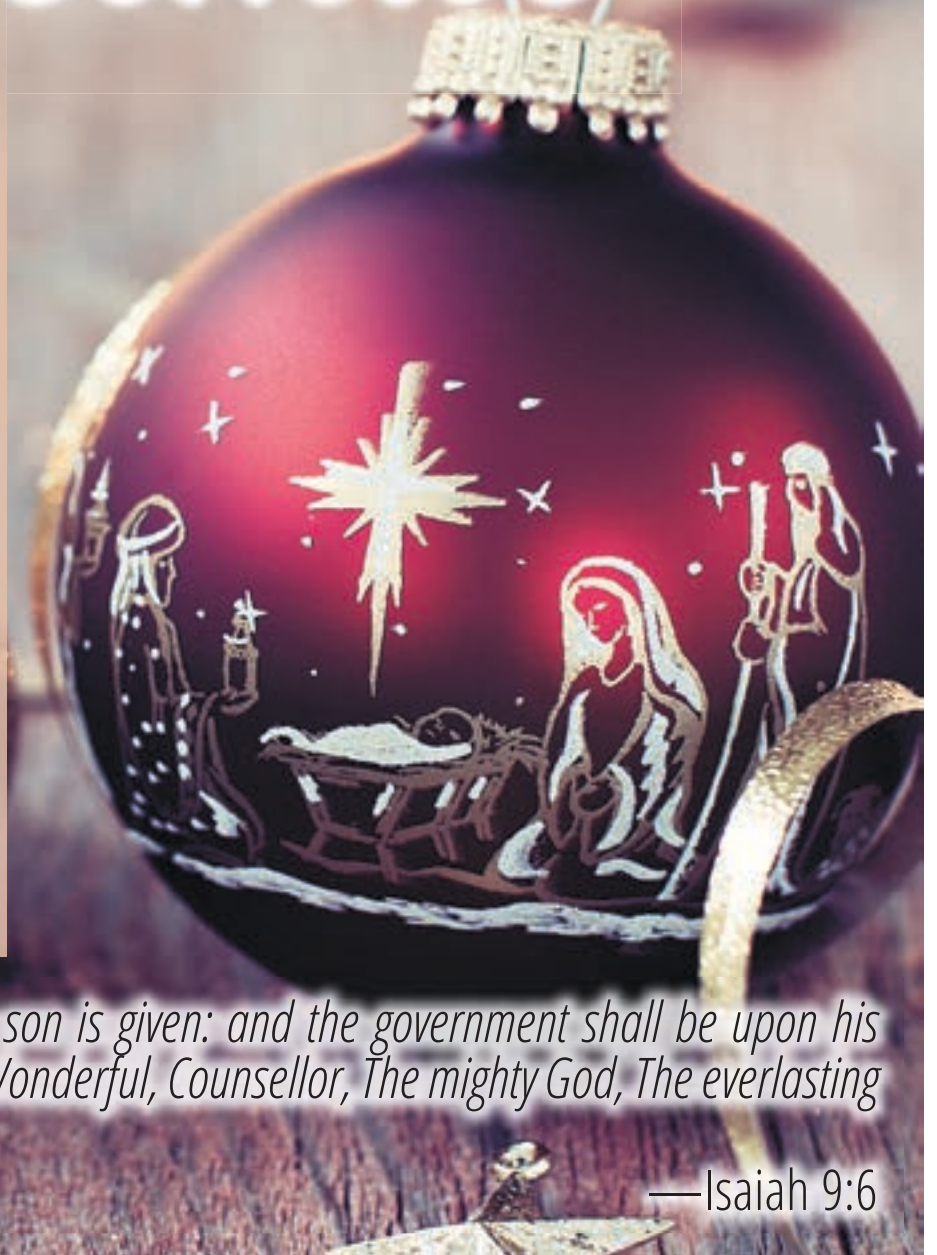
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*"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."*

—Isaiah 9:6



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# making progress

## Premiere of 16-page paper

By **JERRY FULTON**

The issue you hold in your hands is the first ever 16-page issue of *Baptist Progress*. Instead of receiving two 12-page issues, you will now receive one 16-page issue each month. The reason for the change is budget cuts. By printing one larger paper per month, *Baptist Progress* will save thousands of dollars each year.

In the new 16-page issue, we are reviving the *Insights for Pastors* column, written by Dr. Allen Tilley, pastor of First, Carthage. Mrs. Pat Quesenbury will write a column for each issue called *The Heart Connection*. Also, Paul Gauntt will be writing some special interest stories for our publication. Other columns and articles may be added in the future. I appreciate each contribution from these writers.

**CHRISTMAS IS ALMOST HERE**

Have you ever stopped to think about the real meaning of Christmas and why we celebrate it? Lee Strobel, in his book *The Case for Christmas*, wrote that the true meaning of Christmas is love. John 3:16-17 says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” The true meaning of Christmas is the celebration of this incredible act of love.

The real Christmas story is the story of God’s becoming a human

being in the Person of Jesus Christ. Why did God do such a thing? Because He loves us! Why was Christmas necessary? Because we needed a Savior! Why does God love us so much? Because He is love itself (1 John 4:8). Why do we celebrate Christmas each year? Out of gratitude for what God did for us, we remember His birth by giving each other gifts, worshipping Him, and being especially conscious of the poor and less fortunate.

The true meaning of Christmas is love. God loved His own and provided a way—the only Way—for us to spend eternity with Him. He gave His only Son to take our punishment for our sins. He paid the price in full, and we are free from condemnation when we accept that free gift of love. “But God demonstrated His own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

May you have a wonderful celebration of God’s love this Christmas!



▲ Jerry Fulton

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# HIGHWAY 84

(A PASTOR’S STORY)

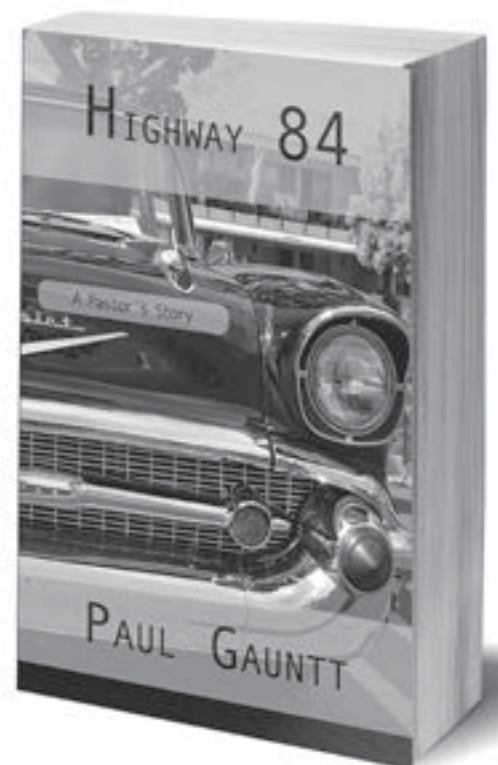
By **PAUL GAUNTT**

Follow the twists and turns of an ordinary life - in a world as seen through the eyes of a Baptist preacher’s kid (and later, pastor) growing up in east, central and west Texas in the 1950s and 1960s on, or near the 90-year old asphalt corridor – U.S. Highway 84.

I pray this volume will cause you to come away with the realization that it’s not a long procession of successes that make life abundant and joyful – but it’s the spiritual growth that occurs through a long procession of difficulties and failures, which usher God’s working into your circumstances – and that’s what brings victory and joy.

pre-publication price – \$16 plus \$4 shipping & handling to order, e-mail [pastorpaul@fbcpalmer.org](mailto:pastorpaul@fbcpalmer.org), call 972-935-6352, or log on to [www.facebook.com/paul.gauntt.7](http://www.facebook.com/paul.gauntt.7)

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# Q & A Christian

GOT QUESTIONS?

## Question:

“HOW SHOULD CHRISTIANS RESPOND TO THE ‘WAR ON CHRISTMAS’?”

## Answer:

**M**any people perceive a modern-day “war on Christmas” being waged in the public square. Those who believe in the reality of a war on Christmas see a concerted effort to eliminate the word Christmas from public discourse. Stories confirming a war on Christmas seem to be coming more frequently: a grade-school choir sings “We Wish You a Happy Holiday” instead of “We Wish You a Merry Christmas” for their “Winter Concert.” A library invites “holiday displays” from the community provided the displays have no religious connotation—the stable may have animals in it, but no people. And major shopping chains forbid their employees from wishing anyone a “Merry Christmas.” It is possible to do all one’s Christmas shopping and never see or hear the word Christmas in the stores.

Of course, there’s nothing wrong with saying “Happy Holidays” or “Season’s Greetings.” But if someone says “Happy Holidays” for the sole purpose of not saying “Merry Christmas,” then we are right to question what’s going on. Is there truly be a cultural “war on Christmas?” “Why is the word Christmas censored?” we wonder as we wander through the malls. Why do some public schools celebrate everything from Kwanzaa to Labafana the Christmas witch, and ban the Nativity, all in the name of “inclusion” and “tolerance”?

One reason put forward by those seeking to avoid the word Christmas is that it offends non-Christians. But, according to a recent Gallup poll, only 3 percent of adults in America say it bothers them when a store makes specific reference to Christmas. This fact gives the “war on Christmas” a more sinister twist. The exclusion of Christmas is less about sensitivity and more about censorship. Expunging all mention of Christmas from society is not

really a way to “adapt” to a more diverse culture but a way to engineer a more secular culture.

Many times, the arguments against Christmas programs and displays are couched in political terms, but the bias against Christmas goes much deeper than that. The war on Christmas is primarily a spiritual battle, not a political one.

How should Christians respond to the war on Christmas and the ubiquitous use of “Happy Holidays” to the exclusion of “Merry Christmas”? Here are some suggestions:

**1) Celebrate Christmas!** War on Christmas or not, let the joy of the season show in your life. Teach your family the significance of Jesus’ birth and make the Christmas traditions meaningful in your home.

**2) Wish others a Merry Christmas.** When confronted with a “Happy Holidays,” get specific and wish the greeter a “Merry Christmas!” You may be surprised at how many respond in kind. Even if you’re met with resistance, don’t let it dampen your cheer. In Dickens’ A Christmas Carol, Ebenezer Scrooge wages a personal war on Christmas, and his nephew feels the brunt of his uncle’s attacks year after year, but it doesn’t stop him from wishing his humbug of an uncle a Merry Christmas and inviting Scrooge to Christmas dinner.

**3) Speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).** The Christmas season is a wonderful opportunity to share Christ’s love and the gospel message. He is the reason for the season!

**4) Pray for those in positions of power (1 Timothy 2:1–3).** Pray for wisdom. Pray for revival so that Christmas, instead of being “offensive,” would be honored by all. May we each be a peaceful warrior in the cultural war on Christmas.

*Reprinted by permission from GotQuestions.org*



By PAT QUESENbury

“Mrs. Quesenbury, you’re going to have a baby,” the doctor announced.” What? No! That can’t be! Those were my thoughts. What I actually said was: “I already have a baby.” He smiled and said: “It looks very much like you are going to have another one.” Clearly, he did not understand. So, I explained that I was the Texas State WMA President (I knew he would be impressed!) with places to go and people to see, and that I was also planning a trip to the Holy Land next summer. He had to know that this would not be a good year for me to have a baby. What was the doctor thinking?

Actually, what was I thinking? And where was this loud, demanding voice coming from? Surely not from me! I’m the one who never wants to say anything foolish or look dumb, and this sounded a lot like someone who had just scored big on both points! It definitely did not sound like me. And yet it was!

For almost six years I had prayed to hear these words. Now all I could think about was my four-month-old baby at home. Our prayers had already been answered! And it was this same doctor who began the process when he suggested we consider adoption. We considered it. We also prayed and felt this was God’s answer. And six months later we welcomed our precious six day old baby boy into our hearts and into our home. More good news! The adoption agent had enthusiastically agreed to help us find a brother or sister for John when we were ready. A perfect plan with a happy ending!

So, what happened? I had prayed for one baby—not two! And certainly not in 13 months! Here’s what happened. My not-so-perfect plan had just been snatched away from this overwrought, controlling mom by a loving God who had a PERFECT plan. It didn’t take long for this truth to settle into my heart, for Scripture to flood my mind, and for the rejoicing to begin. Somehow I knew we would survive. But not without one more big surprise!

When baby David was 3 weeks old, I was back in the hospital—this time for an emergency appendectomy. This wasn’t my plan either. But with no major problems I was soon back home with a new resolve to tackle the task in front of me. Determination I had, but the energy I needed was nowhere to be found. Our first night home brought that clearly into focus. Was this my new life? Two hungry, crying babies, a barking dog who did not understand her recent “home invasion,” and piles of dirty laundry on the floor by the sofa where I lay feeling sorry for myself. As I pondered my new NORMAL, a sudden knock at the door jarred me back to the present.

**THE HEART CONNECTION** continued on p. 6

*Pat Quesenbury has been active in ladies’ ministry for years. She is a pastor’s wife, mother and active member of the Women’s Missionary Auxiliary. Contact her at [pquesenbury@gmail.com](mailto:pquesenbury@gmail.com).*



# BMA of america



## The gift that gives back

By CHARLES ATTEBERY

BMA Foundation Executive Director

Charitable Gift Annuities are often called “The Gift That Gives Back” and they are available now through the BMA Foundation. They will be issued by The National Christian Foundation on behalf of the BMA Foundation.

Here’s how they work. An individual makes a gift to the Foundation and then receives the following in return:

A fixed amount of income for the remainder of their life

A federal income tax deduction in the year the gift is made (if they itemize deductions)

Part of the annual income received is tax free

The following are examples of rates a donor can expect for a single life annuity:

Age	Rate
65	4.7%
75	5.8%
85	7.8%

The fixed payments you receive are backed by the general resources of the National Christian Foundation and are typically reinsured. Reinsurance not only provides you with a higher level of certainty payments will continue for life, it also provides various BMA ministries the option to benefit from the charitable gift annuity at the onset as opposed to the time of the donor’s death.

Since gifts to the BMA Foundation are never spent and the annual earnings are distributed to various BMA ministries, proceeds from a Charitable Gift Annuity will help spread the gospel around the world until the Lord returns.

BMA Foundation Executive Director Charles Attebery stated, “We are very pleased to be able to offer this opportunity for individuals to secure income for life in exchange for their gift to the Foundation.”

Contact Bro. Attebery by e-mail, charles@bmaamerica.org, or by cell phone at 501-472-2183 for additional information.

## The Daniel Springs Investment

By JASON PREWITT

Camp Director

Daniel Springs invests in young lives. Since 1965, countless children and teenagers have attended camp with over 10,000 professing faith in Christ! Many BMA pastors and missionaries have surrendered to ministry under the roof of the main tabernacle. The investment Daniel Springs has made into the lives of our young people has produced great fruit.

Now, the camp is in need of investment. Over the past two years, lower-than-expected income has resulted in a difficult financial position. Most likely, the camp will be forced to borrow money to cover operating expenses this year.

The camp belongs to BMA churches. That’s why I want to make the need known to you. We need an increase of \$13,000 in monthly support. We are asking churches and individuals to prayerfully consider helping.

The need is urgent and the cause is great. If Daniel Springs has invested in your life, would you be willing to invest in the life of Daniel Springs? With your help, we can ensure a great

camp experience for BMA young people for years to come.

You can give online at [danielsprings.com/give](http://danielsprings.com/give) or by sending support (marked “Daniel Springs”) to P.O. Box 1749, Conway, AR 72033.

Thank you in advance for your Daniel Springs investment.



## Senior Adults Enjoy Annual Conference

By SCOTT ATTEBERY

Senior adults from BMA churches around the country gathered in Branson, Missouri, for DiscipleGuide’s annual Senior Adult Conference. This year’s gathering featured the music of Dallas Holm, The Harper Family, and The Haygoods.

Dr. Allen Tilley, pastor of First Baptist Church in Carthage, Texas, delivered a series of messages entitled “Heroes Reborn.” Larry Wood, minister of music at Farley Street Baptist Church in Waxahachie, Texas, led congregational singing.

The highlight of the conference was the family atmosphere. Attendees genuinely loved one another and enjoyed the fellowship with members of sister churches.

Next year’s Senior Adult Conference will take place November 13-15, 2017 at the Branson Hilton Convention Center Hotel.



# BMA of america



## Lifeword Blessings in 2016

By STEVE CRAWLEY

**B**MA churches have been a great blessing to Lifeword during the 2016 Lifeword Sunday season, and we are very grateful for those who have given so generously to the ministry.

For pastors who registered their churches for Lifeword Sunday and sent in their contributions by Monday, Dec. 12, there will be a drawing for a 60-inch TV on Wednesday, Dec. 14 at 11 a.m. on Facebook Live.

Because of the support partnership of BMA churches and their members, four languages have been added this year, bringing the total language count to forty and the total program count to fifty-nine. (There were thirty-six languages and fifty programs at the end of 2015. The following languages, broadcast areas, and programs have been added in 2016:

Vietnamese—Lifeword Community Radio (LCR) broadcast in Phnom Penh, heard in Cambodia and Vietnam and called *Children for the Great Commission*

Jarai—broadcast heard in Vietnam and Cambodia and called *The Rich Earth*

Swahili—broadcast heard in Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda and Burundi (98% Muslim area) and called *Word of Life*

Leemeh—LCR broadcast heard in West Africa (99.9% Muslim area with fewer than twenty-five known believers)

New formats added in 2016 were a Fante-language (Ghana) program, a Khmer-language Bible reading format and the “Day by Day” Facebook daily devotional. Also, twelve new Lifeword Community Radio stations were installed in Asia, Africa, and Central and South America.

Please join us as we praise the Lord for his provision through Walk and Lifeword Sunday giving, and join us in prayer for wisdom as we seek his will in other opportunities to spread the gospel.

Steve Crawley is the executive director of Lifeword Media Ministries. Contact him by email at [steve@lifeword.org](mailto:steve@lifeword.org). Visit [www.lifeword.org](http://www.lifeword.org).



## Activate workshop held at Farley Street

By PAUL GAUNTT

Baptist Progress Correspondent

**T**aking the local church on a journey to discover “who she is, where she is, and where God wants to take (her)” spells out one of the main thrusts of a relatively new program in BMA work, sponsored by DiscipleGuide of Conway, Ark., designed to assist the local church in leadership, organization, outreach and a myriad of other issues confronting the church.

Todd West, pastor of the Oasis, Maumell, Ark. and Larry Barker, pastor of Cornerstone, Jacksonville, Texas were the facilitators of this workshop, held at Farley Street, Waxahachie Nov. 29, 2016 and was attended by 30-35 pastors and church leaders from several Texas local associations, one pastor from Oklahoma and one from Michigan. Heith Mitchell, director of missions for the BMA of Texas and some of his church planters were on hand for this workshop.

“We need to develop a greater awareness of where we are as a church,” West said. “Until that happens, nothing will get done. This program is not just for churches that are about to close their doors, but churches that desire to be more healthy.”

All churches and pastors are encouraged to use the tools provided by the program as an aid to leadership and vision casting.

Clinton Everitt, who, for 23 years, has led the Beacon Baptist Church, Bryan, has been actively involved in the Activate program for his church.

“One of the great benefits of taking my church through this initiative is that I no longer have to push anymore,” he said. It has caused me to discover that God could work on the hearts of our members too — as well as the pastor’s.”

Everitt added that since Beacon has been doing the program, the church has a clearer idea of where they need to go for the future.

Texas church planter Darren Lemons agreed, saying the program has caused his people to “buy in” to the ministry.

“Our church has changed from one which is totally led by the (church planters) to a church being led by the total church,” Lemons said. “Now, every Sunday, we celebrate not only the ministries our people are conducting within the fellowship, but ministry they are doing ‘outside’ the church.”

One of the many issues Activate guides pastors and churches into is the Church Lifecycle, which consists of three primary stages; From initial organization, the church experiences incline, recline and decline. When the church continues to decline without a ministry to reverse the trend, the church will eventually close her doors.

Another aspect of the Activate ministry is what West called the “Pastor’s Huddle.” Pastors in local associations, or pastors who are within driving distance of each other meet together for mutual encouragement.

“These pastor’s huddles are not for the purpose talking about problems, but finding solutions.” West said. “One such pastor’s huddle is done electronically for pastors who live in fringe areas to meet together periodically, on line.”

West said Everitt is the facilitator for this internet pastor’s huddle.

For further information about the Activate program, contact West at [todd@discipleguide.org](mailto:todd@discipleguide.org), or visit the website at [www.discipleguide.org](http://www.discipleguide.org).





# insights for pastors

## A successful pastor

By DR. ALLEN TILLEY

I love being a pastor. It's not only my calling, but my passion for over thirty-five years. I also love pastors. Being a pastor, especially in today's culture is not easy. Over the years, I've had young men ask me what it takes to be a successful pastor of a large church. I tell them it is the same thing for any size church: Jesus. While the success of a good pastor can never be measured by numbers, here are some things that can help us be effective in ministry.

**Love your congregation unconditionally.** If they know you genuinely love them, they will overlook a plethora of mistakes and inexperience.

**Make sermon preparation and delivery a priority.** Start planning your sermons months in advance. As Joe Pendleton, my preaching professor at the BMA seminary once said, "Never tell your people that you didn't have enough time to study, because once you open your mouth, they will know."

**Model Christian living.** Letting others see how Christ lived, by watching your life, is more effective than any sermon.

**Don't be lazy.** Every morning, even if you work from home, set a time to go "to work." Then stick to your schedule faithfully.

**Seek and then share God's vision for your church.** Let God set your agenda. Always remember, He wants every church to succeed.

**Lead like Christ.** Jesus wasn't a dictator. He led by picking up a towel and water basin. Like Jesus, be a servant leader.

**Learn from criticism.** No one is perfect, including pastors. Criticism can be a great tool for personal and pastoral growth.

**Laugh often.** The work of the ministry is demanding, but don't let it rob you of your joy. People love to be around people of joy.

**Be a lifelong learner.** The only time we stop learning is when we die; meanwhile, get as much education as you can.

**Be real and transparent.** Whenever people see you are just like them, they will give you a hearing. Let them in on your struggles.

**Be a prayer warrior.** Your greatest asset is your prayer life. Just as Jesus needed time alone with the Father, so do you.

**Be a soul winner.** The Great Commission commands

reaching people with the gospel. Never expect more from your people, than you are willing to do yourself.

**Train leaders.** Your effectiveness is multiplied when you involve others in your ministry.

**Cherish your family.** Never sacrifice your family, even for ministry. If you should gain the world and lose your family, you are still a failure.

Pastors, over the next several months, I will expand these suggestions in more detail, helping apply them to our lives. Meanwhile, if you have a suggestion for a future article, or would like me to address a specific topic, drop me an email at [allen@firstbaptistcarthage.com](mailto:allen@firstbaptistcarthage.com).

*Dr. Allen Tilley is pastor of First Baptist Church of Carthage, Texas. He has over 30 years of pastoral experience, and God has continually blessed his ministry with dynamic spiritual and numerical growth. Contact him at [allen@firstbaptistcarthage.com](mailto:allen@firstbaptistcarthage.com).*



“Model Christian living. Letting others see how Christ lived, by watching your life, is more effective than any sermon.”

## *The Heart Connection - A gift cont.*

Fear that someone might actually witness such chaos in my home gripped my heart until I heard a familiar voice saying: I've come to get John Mark. Then it didn't matter. I was desperate and someone who loved me had just shown up for duty! This would not be her last time to knock on my door. More times than I can count, my special friend, Vera Holdaway, was there for me with a smile and a helping hand, making a difference in my life.

I hope this story from December 1971 causes us to re-think our own Christmas gifts and will direct our focus to the One whose birth we celebrate this Christmas season. It's easy to feel overwhelmed and expect more from ourselves than we can deliver. Whether it's the search for a perfect gift or desire for an elaborate dinner, the rush of the season can sap our energy and break our budget. Maybe we need to stop the chase and settle for better! According to James, we may be shopping in the wrong place. Chapter 1, verse 17 of that book says all perfect gifts come down from our Heavenly Father, and the price has already been paid! Because God loved and gave His Son to us, we can love

and share with one another. (1 John 3 and 4)

Talk about the perfect gift! It's a matter of allowing who He is to show up and shine through what we have to give. Vera's gifts to me did not come from a department store, and they were not wrapped in shiny paper with a bow on top. She gave herself and that was exactly what I needed. That was 45 years ago, and I still remember what they meant to me. Our gifts can do that too. We can share SMILES, give HUGS, cook FOOD, speak WORDS of encouragement and much more! So, let's stay alert. Be creative. And enjoy every gift-giving moment we have. And as we do, pray for opportunities to BECOME a GIFT that will make a difference!

On a personal note: Thank you Editor Fulton for the opportunity to share through this column. I am honored and grateful for the privilege. I appreciate my good friend, Fran Hoover, for suggesting our title, for the art work, and for her encouragement. Praying we will be stronger together through this "heart connection."



## Be a generous church

By LARRY BARKER

**2** Cor. 9:15 gives us one of the richest statements in scripture; “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift.” Christmas is all about the greatest gift ever given. The word indescribable literally means too wonderful for words. The words in this verse are the concluding comments of chapters eight and nine. They tell the story of the generosity of a people who display their appreciation through their generosity. This unspeakable gift is the basis, foundation, and motivation for all Christian giving.

Your church is never more like Jesus than when you live generous lives. Every church is there to help people find and follow Jesus. Notice the “helping people!” True biblical prosperity equals generosity. When Paul was headed to Jerusalem with a love offering from the believers in Macedonia and Achaia he said they were pleased to make a contribution to the poor. They were not just willing but saw it as a blessing and privilege to help. They were thrilled to have an opportunity to be a blessing.

We need to be mindful of those who may struggle during the holidays. This time of the year is wonderful but to many it reminds them of their loneliness, their losses, and their lack of hope. They need a little extra giving of our time and attention. Their hearts are breaking and they should not have to face this season alone. We can be generous with our love, encouragement, prayers, and other expressions of kindness. They need to be reminded that they may struggle and suffer for a season but God’s purposes will prevail.

We must make sure our motives are pure in our generosity. What we do is very important but why we do it is even more important. Remember, God loves a cheerful giver who gives out of their appreciation for Him as the indescribable gift. Paul told the Corinthians that the key to their giving was their eagerness and had nothing to do with how much they had. The Gentile believers felt a debt to the Jews who had brought the gospel to them. Generosity to others comes out of His generosity to us.

Here are some things to consider, as your church desires to be a generous church.

**First, make sure you are not defined by what you have but rather by what you give.** People see our nice buildings and wonder if we have placed too much emphasis on what we possess rather than how we can help those who are less fortunate. There is nothing wrong with nice things but materialism can cause so much focus on what we have that we are then unable to focus on helping others. Do people see your church as a generous church?

**Second, make sure you are not defined by how much you**



**give but by your willingness to give.** Corinthians 8:12 says, “... it is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.” The principle is not equal amount but equal willingness. God does not ask us to give what we do not have. It is not about the size of the gift but the size of your heart in doing what you can to help others. Proverbs 3:27 says, “When it is in your power, don’t withhold good from the one it belongs to.”

**Third, make sure you are not defined by what you do personally but by how it glorifies God.** If you do it for recognition or to be noticed, you already have your reward. God blesses it the most when we do not care who gets the credit. You should be more concerned about Jesus getting the credit than you or your church. We are not in a competition with other churches but rather with the devil. Praise the Lord when someone turns to Christ because the love of Christ was displayed to him or her in a practical way.

**Fourth, make sure you are not defined by how you look but by how you live.** If you are going to help people you will have to help them where they are and that can be very messy. They are often broken and looking for someone who cares about them. People want to know that you are real and authentic without pretense. They are not impressed by outward appearances that are not backed up by your daily practices. Matthew 6:1 says, “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of people to be seen by them.”

**Fifth, let’s not be defined by a tight grip but by an open hand.** Your church should always be eager to help and ready to respond to the needs of others. Sometimes we hold on too tightly to what God has given to us. God told Abram in Gen. 12:2, “I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great and you will be a blessing.” You are blessed so that you will be a blessing to others. Open your hands and see what God has given your church in order that you might bless your community.

Your church may say it values lost people and wants to be a blessing to the people in your area but that must be backed up by regular practices that show you really do care. It is not just monetary but is a combination of investing your time, talents, and treasures. God is not asking you to give out of what you do not have but instead is looking to see if we are eagerly excited to be generous with what He has entrusted into our hands. Live with open hands and do not hold on too tightly!

Healthy churches are always generous churches!

*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](http://www.bmamissions.org).*



# 116th Annual Session OF THE BMA OF TEXAS CONCLUDES IN WAXAHACHIE

By **JERRY FULTON**

*Baptist Progress Editor*

The 116th Annual Session of the BMA of Texas was held at Farley Street, Waxahachie Nov. 13-14. BMA of Texas President Wes Pratt preached a challenging message titled the same as the meeting's theme, "Following Jesus, Focusing on Others."

Three new churches petitioned the association including Emmanuel, San Antonio; Olde Tyme, White Oak and Bible, Robert Lee.

The first ever Ministry Connection Conference sponsored by *Baptist Progress* and the Ellis-Hill Baptist Association followed with messages from Jerry Jolly, pastor of Fairview, Jonesboro, Arkansas; Dr. John Bisagno, retired pastor of First, Houston and Jonathan Falwell, pastor of Thomas Road, Lynchburg, Virginia.

Tuesday, the association got down to business with reports from the following:

## TEXAS BAPTIST HOME FOR CHILDREN

A highlight of the report was the beautiful testimony of a mother, who with her husband adopted three children through the Home. She shared how the Lord put things in motion and brought together her family.

## JACKSONVILLE COLLEGE

The report from Jacksonville College was one of celebration as Dean of Students Marolyn Welch spoke of an exciting nursing program offered by the college. Dr. Blanton Feaster, vice president for executive affairs, shared that the college has witnessed 22 professions of faith this past academic year, began small groups on campus and in homes and saw 40 responded to BMAA Volunteer Student Missions. He spoke of how the college is a mission field with 36 students from 20 different countries enrolled at the college. The vice president also challenged the association to help the college to become "Debt Free in Three," that is, retire the college's debt in



▲ Wes Pratt

three years. Finally, Randy Decker, the new choir director at Jacksonville College pleaded with parents to send their children to Jacksonville College, and more specifically, allow them to become members of the Jacksonville College Choir.

## BAPTIST PROGRESS

This editor shared how it was now necessary to begin publishing once per month a 16 page paper instead of the twice per month 12 page paper due to decreased subscriptions and increased paper and publishing costs. More Ministry Connection Workshops were promised for 2017.

## BMA TEXAS MISSIONS

The state missions department director, Heith Mitchell, challenged the association to partner with the department in order to have 16 new Texas missions underway at one time and an Hispanic mission work to come alongside every BMA of Texas church that is willing to reach Hispanic people in their community.



▲ Heith Mitchell

## BAPTIST MISSIONARY LOAN ASSOCIATION

BMLA Manager Jerry Burnaman told messengers that the loan association has tripled in the last eight years. He shared that the BMLA now has over \$12 million in assets. The BMLA offers loans to missions and churches who are in building programs.



▲ Jerry Burnaman

## ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

The administrative committee nominated Wiley Dorman and Tad Traylor to the nominating committee. Elected to serve on the administrative committee were Paul Gothard, Nick Kerry, Mike McEuen, Devin DiGuilio, Billy Sheets and Timothy Fish.

## WOMEN'S MISSIONARY AUXILIARY

Texas WMA President reported that the auxiliary chose Daniels Springs Camp as their project for the coming year and raised over \$20,000 in 2016 to purchase a new tractor for

Jacksonville College. For more on the WMA Meeting, see page 12 of this issue.

## ELECTIONS

Dr. Blanton Feaster, of Jacksonville College, was chosen to preach the annual message in 2017 when the association meets with New Harmony, Tyler. Dr. Mark Livingston, pastor of Keltys First, Lufkin was chosen as the alternate to bring the annual message. Wes Pratt, pastor of Northside, Conroe, was elected to a second term as president of the BMA of Texas. Robert Easterling, pastor of Mahl, Nacogdoches was re-elected as first vice president. Leon Ross was elected as second vice president. Reelected to serve as clerks were Wayne McKay and Eddie Ballard.

A message from David Snelson, pastor of Landmark, Cushing was preached at the conclusion of the BMA of Texas Annual Session. His sermon was titled, "Keep Calm, Preach On."

A first ever missionary commissioning service was held at the close of the annual session in which all church planters, including the newest to be elected were introduced to the association.

The 117th Annual Session of the BMA of Texas will be held at New Harmony, Tyler November 14-15, 2017.



▲ David Snelson



▲ State Missionaries





# BMA TEXAS

## MISSIONS

Your Church's Mission Movement in Texas



# Most of your BMA of Texas Missionaries at the BMA of Texas Meeting

## ARNULFO MALDONADO – TEXAS HISPANIC MISSION COORDINATOR

**M**y most recent and exciting piece of news is that my third son challenged me to train him for the ministry. Please pray for him. Pray for Jaime Garcia, that we can find him a good fit in a church where he can start a new Hispanic work. Pray for George Martinez, for God to help him in his adjustment to his new job and ministry. Pray for each of the missionaries coming off support.



▲ Arnulfo Maldonado

After the BMA of Texas Annual Meeting, lots of opportunities came. This means traveling more and farther. Pray for me and for the ones who are working and planting, that God would use us.

## WILL HUTCHINSON – RESONATE COMMUNITY MISSION, HUTTO

In November we were extremely busy with Orange Santa. This year we are sharing toys and meals with over 300 needy families in Hutto. We have a great partnership with the school district to accomplish this enormous task. Each elementary school provides can goods and local businesses help with the toys and gift cards. This allows us so much time to spend with people and we have added so much for the families. Anything from dental visits, haircuts, books... and lots more. Please pray for our volunteers as they meet with the community.



▲ Will Hutchinson

## JOHN HARRIS – FOUNDATION COMMUNITY MISSION, BENBROOK

God has really allowed us to explain grace to several folks this month as we have shared the Gospel. Many folks here understand they have offended God's holiness, but they fail to understand how grace applies to them. It has been wonderful to see hope begin to come into their eyes as they hear that they don't have to earn their way back into God's favor.



▲ John Harris

## DARREN LEMONS – THE REFUGE MISSION, TERRELL

We just want to say thank you for all of the prayers and support. God is moving in our church through a process the BMA has launched called Activate to help us plan for the future. We have seen



▲ Darren Lemons

great insights into where we are strong and weaker as a church. We recently had a five year vision retreat which helped us know where we are going as a church. Please pray as we go on full support and for many new people God has been placing at our church in the last few months.

## GARY SOUTHARD – THE CHURCH AT VALLEY RANCH, PORTER

November is a time we all share in reflecting and giving thanks to God for his many blessings. Rhonda and I are thankful for the BMA of Texas churches. We have had the privileged to be in your churches, local associations and to meet the pastors. We are blessed to be a small part of what God is doing in the BMA of Texas Missions.



▲ Gary Southard

Above all else we are grateful for the opportunity to meet new people, find out where they are in their walk with the Lord and assist them in their spiritual growth to the next level.

Here is an example: we met a young professional lady at one of our new member's birthday party for their son. After engaging her in conversation and two other young ladies in our mission ministering to her over a few weeks, she finally attended one of our Sunday services.

I contacted her through different ways and then via email to check on her. Here is what she replied... "We will be attending our home church for Christmas and I was inspired to do so from your service."

God might not do what we want sometimes in building our churches or missions but He does use us to move His people where He wants them and for that I am thankful.

## CECIL LINKE – JOURNEY COMMUNITY MISSION, ALLEN

Journey is incredibly grateful for the support of the BMAT churches. As we roll off of support, we look forward to continuing the legacy of getting healthy and putting our full effort into multiplying for the sake of God's kingdom.



▲ Cecil Linke

## MATTHEW PRATHER – THE BRIDGE MISSION, MIDLOTHIAN

November was a busy month as we continue making progress to starting a new church in Midlothian. It was an exciting month for The Bridge. We had our first Sneak Peek service with 65 in attendance. We saw several new families that day. Please continue to pray for us as we build relationship with these



▲ Matthew Prather

families and that we could reach them for Christ. Also, we had our first baptism this month. I love seeing people come to the Lord and be baptized. It allows us to talk to many other families about what baptism is and why we do it. We celebrate that we were able to do this at our first Sneak Peek Service. Thank you for your continued prayer and support. Pray for more to come to Jesus as their Savior. Pray that we would add five more families to our launch team over the next 2 months.



## BRANDON DURHAM – REDEEMER'S LOVE MISSION, HOUSTON

November finished on a strong note. We escaped the city to a remote beach house for a weekend intensive where we trained 19 people in evangelism. Redeemer's Love Houston is committed to cultivating a "Culture of Evangelism," to see our people equipped and committed to sharing the Gospel! Some of our people have already used their training in recent weeks, and we celebrate every victory, as our group grows in this area! Praise God, this month God added several new members to our team, including a Vietnamese man with a passion for evangelism! We've set a goal



▲ Brandon Durham



BMA TEXAS MISSIONS continued on p. 15

# Conference on Hispanic Ministries

By **PAUL GAUNTT**

*Baptist Progress Correspondent*

The Leadership Conference held in conjunction with the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas, Nov. 14, dealt with the Hispanic ministry, under the auspices of our BMA Texas Missions, headed up by Heith Mitchell.

Arnulfo Maldonado, who is the Hispanic Ministry Coordinator for our state work, along with Michael Hight, who is the Hispanic Coordinator for the national association, facilitated the conference Tuesday morning of the association, held at Farley Street, Waxahachie.

The general thrust of the seminar was to encourage local churches to begin a Hispanic ministry in their local area.

“My goal is to eventually have a Hispanic congregation in every city in Texas,” Maldonado said. “It is an honor and privilege to be a part of this movement — I put about 31,000 miles on my car each year visiting churches, and I hope to partner with them in this movement.”

Maldonado spoke in a video shown to the group, saying he can see future “multi-language” church plants wherever he travels.



▲ Arnulfo Maldonado



▲ Michael Hight

He spoke briefly of his experience of being called to this ministry.

“It was while I was attending the seminary in Jacksonville, and studying the English language, that the Holy Spirit laid it on my heart to reach my people with the gospel,” he said.

Michael Hight shared the different models of Hispanic ministry an Anglo church can be involved in, citing the “Rent-a-Church” system where an established church only rents their facilities out to a Hispanic group but has little or no hands-on responsibilities to the group.

“The rent-a-church model is probably the easiest one to do, but it’s not the most effective,” said Hight.

He also mentioned the other models — Anglo church partnering with the Hispanic group serving together as co-laborers; then the Anglo parenting church, where the Anglo church is truly linked in to the Hispanic ministry; and finally, the blended service ministry, where both groups worship and minister together.

“There are no guarantees — the devil fights all these mission works,” Hight said. “To have an effective ministry, it begins at the top with strong pastoral leadership, and strong pastoral cooperation between the Hispanic and Anglo pastors. When this happens, conflict can be avoided.”

He said that it is important that people be empowered to claim ownership in this ministry, but often this is difficult for the sponsoring church because of feeling uncomfortable with the ministry.

Hight cites a need for the sponsoring church to be patient, especially when dealing with the reality of cultural differences between the two groups.

“There are going to be some difficulties, and that is okay,” he assured his audience, adding that Caucasians have to recognize the fact they have been grounded and schooled in ministry in ways other cultures have not.

## UNIQUE MULTI-CULTURAL MINISTRY IN NORTH HOUSTON

During the Hispanic ministry session, Dean Renfro, lead pastor of Suburban Woods Baptist Church located in Humble, and church member Richard Murray, shared their ministry.

Like many urban congregations, which once flourished in a predominately white area, Suburban Woods experienced the “white flight” phenomenon, and found themselves torn between moving out, or reaching the culture(s) that were locating in their area.

Renfro, who has many years of church planting, church restart and church consulting, was sent to Suburban Woods for basically a “restart” ministry.

“We were in a disastrous situation,” said Murray, noting that facilities were run down and needed much rebuilding and repair.

The leadership discovered that the Hispanics had many men who were skilled in construction, and their talents were put to good use in refurbishing the facilities.

As a result of their outreach in the area, five congregations meet at different times during Sunday and some during the week. Groups are Anglo, Hispanics (Mexico) Central Americans, South Americans, and a Puerto Rico group.

“We have a combined attendance of over 200 each week,” said Murray.

Recently there were 10 professions of faith from the different groups, and to his surprise and delight, Renfro (the lead pastor over all groups) said each group wanted him to baptize each of them. Hight is planning a forum in the near future to try to discover how his department can partner with local congregations and hopefully chart a path.

“We want to help churches in this process, and we have put a team together to help walk churches through the process,” he said.

# Todd West gives tips on how to avoid pastoral burnout

By **PAUL GAUNTT**

*Baptist Progress Correspondent*

Selecting 1 Kings 18 for his basis, Todd West, shared principles, using the experiences of Elijah, to help pastors who are suffering from burnout and other hazards associated with the ministry.

West is the founding pastor of Oasis Church, Maumelle, Ark. and also a ministry consultant for DiscipleGuide. He spoke to a group of pastors during the annual BMA of Texas meeting, held at Farley Street, Waxahachie.

West cited some “triggers” that contributed to burnout, including fear, exhaustion, fatigue, disappointment.

“Another thing to be careful of are mountaintop experiences,”



▲ Tom West

West told his audience. “Sometimes we have a hard time managing ourselves on the mountaintop.”

He noted that one of the great hazards of being on the mountaintop is the danger of becoming addicted to adrenaline — always seeking for the mountaintop experiences.

One of the warning signs of burnout is isolation.

“Some preachers say, ‘well, I’m just not going to get involved anymore—I’m going to stay home and take care of my people,’” West said, pointing out that many pastors withdraw.

Another sign of burnout is what West called a loss of reality.

“You can walk up to a pastor and ask him how things are going in his church—and he answered, ‘Never been better—we’re doing wonderful’—and I know good and well that’s not the case—I can just ask some of his church members and get the truth.”

He expressed the need for the pastor to “recharge” himself—and one way is through rest.

“You know, I remember some of the older generation of

preachers went home in the afternoon and took a nap,” he said. “What I do often is go home for lunch, and then I like to sit back and watch Gunsmoke.”

He explained that different pastors have different ways to rest.

“Some like to take a nap—others like to get out on their motorcycle, while others like to work in the garden, or take mini-vacations,” he said. “Whatever method you use to rest, remember, it’s a time to recharge.”

One of the ways to avoid burnout is what West referred to as the “release.”

“I’m talking about getting honest with God,” he said. “Elijah told the Lord in 1 Kings 19:10 exactly how he felt.”

He then encouraged the men to refocus and get back to what they’ve been called to do.

For further information about West’s ministry, visit his website at [www.insideoasis.com](http://www.insideoasis.com)

# Falwell, Bisagno and Jolly speak at first ever Baptist Progress Ministry Connection Conference

By **JERRY FULTON**

*Baptist Progress Editor*

**J**onathan Falwell, pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia; Dr. John Bisagno, retired pastor of First Baptist Church in Houston and Jerry Jolly, pastor of Fairview Baptist Church in Jonesboro, Arkansas each brought inspiring messages from God's Word at the first Baptist Progress Ministry Connection Conference during the 116th Annual Session of the BMA of Texas. The meeting, held at Farley Street, Waxahachie, was a highlight of the annual session.

Falwell speaking from Galatians 5:14-26, said that following Jesus and focusing on others—the theme of the meeting—joy should be experienced by Christians, but some allow circumstances, situations, conflicts etc., to crowd out any room for joy. He said, “The focus is on here rather than on Him!”

“The book of Galatians was written by Paul to encourage believers to let go of the burdens of the past and of sin and cling to the freedom that comes from Christ. As a result of living in this way, all will be able to experience the joy that Christ came to give,” he said.

He urged those in attendance to speak, walk and act in love, and thereby experience joy. He encouraged everyone to allow the fruit of the Spirit to be evident in their lives and to remember that they belong to Christ and should strive to point others to Him.”

Bisagno, speaking primarily to ministers said, “Many who enter the ministry do not last,” Bisagno said. He said “hundreds of ministers from various Christian denominations leave the ministry every month and that only a minority of seminary graduates will remain in the ministry eight years after graduation.”

Those who quit the battle or find themselves disqualified, he said, and subject America and



▲ Jonathan Falwell

the world to an ever-quickening spiritual decline—a decline that he said has led Islam, Mormonism and the occult to become the first, second and third fastest growing religions in the United States, respectively.

The decline of Christianity and the disappearance of those once committed to the ministry do not have to continue, Bisagno said. He offered four areas of focus: moral issues, money, people and a realistic understanding of success in ministry.

As for moral issues, Bisagno told ministers to guard their eyes, love their wives and maintain correctly ordered priorities. Concerning money, he said to follow Matthew 6:33 in seeking first the Kingdom of the Lord before anything else. Specifically, he told them not to touch church money and never to discuss the amount of an honorarium or salary.

Discussing people, Bisagno challenged pastors to be wary of the legalists, the faithless, the doubtful and the “self-appointed church bosses.” He counseled pastors to remember their commonality, avoid their discouragement and not to respond combatively. Instead, listen closely and lead wisely, he said.

Through it all ministers must finish the fight and finish it well, Bisagno said.

Jerry Jolly spoke of the Master of ministry, the Lord Jesus Christ. Speaking from Psalm 23, Jolly said that the Good Shepherd guides, provides and protects His servants. He shared a personal experience of how the Lord has done these things for Him following his wife's death over a year ago.



▲ Jerry Jolly

Also part of the conference was national recording group Brian Free and Assurance. They were a crowd favorite as they sang songs from their new album, timeless classics as well as award -winning hits such as “Say Amen.”

Numerous requests have been made for a second Baptist Progress Ministry Connection Conference to coincide with the 117th Annual Session of the BMA of Texas scheduled to take place at New Harmony, Tyler Nov. 14-15, 2017.



▲ Dr. John Bisagno



▲ Brian Free and Assurance

## 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, 2016 – Nov. 30, 2016.

### ENDOWMENTS

**MYRA STOKES:** Mr. Bill Stokes

**E ANN PACE:** Karl & Martha Pace

### HONORARIUMS

**LUKE & ANDREA LAMMINACK'S WEDDING:** Charles & Charlotte Johnson

**IMOGENE POSEY:** Robert & Brenda Beeler

**KASSLYN TORRES:** Dennis & Ann Bennett

### MEMORIALS

**JOE ABLEMAN:** Kenneth & Carol Cline

**BETTY ADAMS:** H.V. & Betty Minter

**AGNES ALEXANDER:** Virginia Alexander

**HASEL ANDERS:** Peggy Lewis

**BILLY ANDERS:** Peggy Lewis

**VIVIAN MARIE ARNOLD:** New Salem Missionary Baptist Church

**WINNE BARNUM:** Gail Parsons

**ERNEST BEAM:** Neta Hicks

**WALTER BECKER:** Dennis & Ilona Myrice

**EUGENE & WILMA BISHOP:** John & Betty Langford

**GARY BOCKMAN:** Sheppard Drive Baptist Church

**LORENE BURNS:** Jan Holcomb

**RUBY CARWILE:** Westside Baptist Church

**RYDER B. CHANEY:** Mr. & Mrs. Glen Saxon

**MARY CLARK:** Carol Collins & Barbara Shank

**GEORGE COLLUM:** Buddy & Linda Burke

**JEFF CONN:** Beatrice Conn

**MRS. LOIS CRANE:** Regina Crane

**A.V. & DORIS CREASY:** Harold & Jean Jacobs

**CECIL DOWNEY:** Charlie Downey

**LANCE DUDLEY:** Sally Dudley

**OWEN DRY:** Dorrell Freeman

**BILLIE GRIMES:** John Grimes

**MELVIN & DARLENE HARRELL:** Charles & Charlotte Johnson

**HEATH:** Jimmy Ray & Cynthia Green

**MARGARET HITT:** Jim & Kathy Usrey

**BILL HOLCOMBE:** Ronny & Melinda Dupree

**J.R. & FLORENCE JOHNSON:** Charles and Charlotte Johnson

**WAYNE KEELING:** Ida Keeling

**BILLY KING:** Margaret King

**BILLY H. KING:** Margaret King

**MR. GREGG KNUCKOLLS:** Danny & Becky Miller

**JUNIOR LANSDALE:** Don & Susan Ross, Jed & Glenice Whitaker,

Duane & Charlotte Turner, Charles & Charlotte Johnson

**NANCY LAURENCE:** Robert & Mary Fudge

**ELVIN LAWSON:** Alva Stinson

**J.B. LIGHT:** Joan Light

**MRS. LULA MARTIN:** Regina Crane

**BOBBIE FLOYD BROWN MATTINGLY:** Linda Hipp

**ELAINE MCKINNEY:** Fifth Street Baptist Church

**JUNE MCCELLON:** Merlene Loyd

**PALMOUR "MACK" MCCOOL:** Lauren Carter, Leora Johnson, Rosewood Baptist Church, Timothy Thompson, Charles & Charlotte Johnson

**JERLENE MIZE:** Jerry & Shree Mize

**PAUL MIZE:** Jerry & Shree Mize

**REV. JOHNNIE M. POLLARD:** Terry & Debbie Brooks & Jane Pollard

**ALICE RAMSEY:** Mary Gilbert Hunt

**HELEN LORENA RAY:** Bonnie Ray, Pamela Evans

**LOIS CLARK ROSS:** Carlton & Karen Shamburger

**LEVERETTE SANDIFER:** Rose Hill Missionary Baptist Church

**ADELA SMITH:** Mary Gilbert Hunt

**MILDRED TACKETT:** Duane & Charlotte Turner

**JIMMY TANKERSLEY:** Margaret Tankersley

**THE CHILDREN:** Mr. & Mrs. Casey Lloyd

**FRANCIS WADE:** Duane & Charlotte Turner, Charles & Charlotte Johnson

**JO WHITE:** Jerry & Shree Mize

**ALVIN WILKERSON:** Timothy Thompson, Charles & Charlotte Johnson

**MARY E. WOLFINGTON:** John Wolfington

**SUSAN WRIGHT:** Regina Crane

**JOHN ZITEK:** Alton & Sheena Butler

MEMORIALS - HONORARIUMS



# auxiliaries

## Highlights 2016 Texas WMA meeting

By SHARON COLE

**A**pproximately 78 ladies registered for the Texas WMA annual meeting at Farley Street, Waxahachie Nov. 15. Ladies from all over the state enjoy getting together for fellowship, renewing acquaintances, making new friends, singing, praying and getting spiritually refreshed through our programs, plus taking care of the Texas WMA business.

Johnnie Ross, second vice president, planned with the Lord's help, a wonderful program continuing the yearly theme of "Open Homes-Open Hearts." She introduced the program by defining the specific theme of hospitality and discussing "God's Hospitality Toward Us" and how God shows us hospitality by example. He showed it by His creation of the world, mankind and providing for us and giving us mercy through a way of salvation and forgiveness of sin. Throughout the whole Bible, God shows us hospitality in saving the most unlikely and unlovely and included us as Gentiles in His plan. All He asks of us is love in return and obedience.

Pat Quesenbury spoke on "God's Hospitality Toward Others." She related her life story of desiring to be a mother and was finally blessed with a child through adoption. A few months later she learned that God had answered her prayer and gave her a biological child. She experienced hospitality from a friend who came to help by taking her oldest baby for a while as she recuperated from an emergency surgery. Pat reminded us of the story of how Abigail showed hospitality to David by taking him and his army food in order to save an attack. She didn't know what would happen, but was courageous and generous and trusted in God to protect her. Hospitality is doing whatever is needed, showing sympathy, offering fellowship, and sharing what you have without expectations. Be that gift that makes a difference.

Charlotte Johnson spoke on "God's Grace Wins Through Hospitality." Grace is the voice that causes us to change. People in Bible times went to homes for hospitality, not restaurants. Sharing a loaf of bread can lead to sharing the bread of life. Hospitality is a sacrificial love and having fellowship with others no matter what your house looks like. Charlotte related the story of Zacchaeus who was a tax collector despised by the people because of his unethical business practices. But Jesus showed him hospitality by telling him to come down out of the tree so He could go to his house. Jesus invited himself to Zacchaeus' house because He wanted to invite him into eternal life. This is the ultimate in hospitality. It is about inviting people into

“Love is loyalty, faithfulness, forgiveness, sacrifice, self-denial and commitment. Love is grace. Love is enduring. Love is more than just a feeling. Love is an action word. It isn't love until it is given away. Pray about who you can be a blessing to this Christmas, then Christ will bless you.”

our lives in order to show them Jesus' love. Visitors come looking for something. What do you show them? Grace is to be given freely. His grace wins with us showing hospitality.

Cheryl Hughes, assistant GMA promoter, introduced Texas Miss GMA, Patricia Hernandez, who sang, "Trust In You." Karo Buck, Texas Junior Miss GMA then presented a devotional about "Approaching Problems."

The total received for our project this year to this date was \$15,072.77. Offerings can still be received for the project until the end of the year. The new project for 2017 is Daniel Springs Encampment Improvements.

Installation of new officers was conducted by Glenda Chamberlain, using Matthew 5:16. She stated that when we love the Lord we are to shine His light through us to everyone. The new theme for the year is "Shine For Jesus." The following officers were installed: President-Sherry Decker; 1st Vice-Cindy Allen-2nd Vice-Glenda Chamberlain; 3rd Vice-Ann Pugh; Corresponding Secretary-Jo Strong; Asst. Corr. Sec.-Charlotte Johnson; Editor-Sharon Cole; Historian-Alicia Johnson; Project Promoter-Diana Morris; Recording Secretaries-Jane Meyers & Elizabeth Midkiff; GMA/YLA Promoter-Kendra Verhelle; Asst. GMA/YLA Promoter-Cheryl Hughes; Sunbeam Promoter-Vera Koonce; Asst. Sunbeam Promoter-Shirley Hoffpauir; Song

Leader-Sherri Walker; Project Selection Committee-Pat Quesenbury, Claudie Thompson, Johnnie Ross; Nominating Committee-Johnita Wintters, Jackie Ricks, Shawn Norris. Advisory Council-Charles Johnson, Leon Ross, Thomas Ayres.

### WHAT IS LOVE?

**L**ove is expressed in many ways and forms and to some people has different definitions. But the ultimate form of love is expressed by Jesus when He stretched out his arms on the Cross and allowed the soldiers to put nails in his hands and also His feet. We don't have to show love to others in this manner because Christ did that so we don't have to. But we can show love to others in many other ways.

Christmas is coming soon and most people begin to show others love more at this season than any other. Buying gifts is one way, but giving someone, even children, your time is a gift that never gets old, it doesn't wear out, isn't broken and thrown away and is treasured more than anything else. It has been said that children spell love T-I-M-E. This Christmas spend some TIME with a child.

If you have no children of your own, find someone else's child, perhaps at your church or in your community. Show them how to do a craft, read them a book, take them to the mall, or something else that would be helpful. Is there a child in your church or community whose parent is sick and cannot provide Christmas presents, or better yet-TIME?

As 1 Corinthians 13 says in part: "Love is kind and patient, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, never haughty or selfish or rude. Love doesn't demand its own way, is not irritable or hold grudges and hardly even notices when others do it wrong." Love is loyalty, faithfulness, forgiveness, sacrifice, self-denial and commitment. Love is grace. Love is enduring. Love is more than just a feeling. Love is an action word. It isn't love until it is given away. Pray about who you can be a blessing to this Christmas, then Christ will bless you.

Sharon Cole is the editor for the Texas WMA. Contact her at [S9Co@aol.com](mailto:S9Co@aol.com). For more information on the Texas WMA, visit [www.texaswma.com](http://www.texaswma.com).



# EVENTS

## 2017 SESSION OF THE BMA OF AMERICA

**DATE:** May 1-3, 2017  
**PLACE:** Arlington Convention Center, Arlington, Texas  
**HEADQUARTERS HOTEL:** Sheraton, Arlington, Texas

## SOAR

**DATE:** July 5-7, 2017  
**PLACE:** Gaylord Texan Hotel, Grapevine, Texas

## SENIOR ADULT CONFERENCE

**DATE:** November 13-15, 2017  
**PLACE:** Branson Hilton Convention Center, Branson, Missouri

## BAPTIST MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION 117TH ANNUAL SESSION

**DATE:** November 14-15, 2017  
**PLACE:** New Harmony Baptist Church, Tyler, Texas

# pastor & staff changes

**TREVOR MORRIS** is the new pastor at Union Hill, Brownsboro.

**FORREST REYNOLDS** is the new pastor at Bethel Missionary, Livingston.

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# PERSONNEL & POSITIONS

## AVAILABLE MINISTER

**ROGER MANNING** is available for pulpit supply, interim pastor duties, or a permanent call as Senior or Associate Pastor. He is ordained and has over nine years of preaching experience. Resume and past sermons are available at [www.rogermanning.com](http://www.rogermanning.com). Roger lives in Waxahachie and can be reached at [roger@rogermanning.com](mailto:roger@rogermanning.com) or at 402-510-3019.

## 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 [claypotministries@outlook.com](mailto:claypotministries@outlook.com) or 903-603-8597. You can also view her promo video on Godtube: <http://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=19MMCJNU>. Connect with Stacie on Facebook at <https://facebook.com/claypotministries>.

## AVAILABLE POSITIONS

**PASTOR**—Hill Creek, Whitehouse is seeking a pastor. Send resume and recorded sermon to Hill Creek Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 1287, Whitehouse, Texas 75791.

**PASTOR**—Lost Prairie, Groesbeck is seeking a bivocational pastor. Send resume to 514 FM 3371, Groesbeck, Texas 76642. TFN

**PASTOR**—Bethany Missionary, Burton, Michigan is seeking a pastor. Send resume to the church at 2350 E. Hemphill Road, Burton, Michigan 48529. 1/17

**ASSOCIATE PASTOR**—First, Maydelle is seeking a bivocational associate pastor. The primary focus of his duties will be youth ministry. Music leading abilities a plus. Contact Pastor Rusty Sherman at 903-262-5395. 1/17

**PASTOR**—O'Quinn, Pollok is seeking a full-time pastor. Email resume to [MLArnold1860@yahoo.com](mailto:MLArnold1860@yahoo.com) or mail to Marilyn Arnold, 6630 FM 843, Pollok, Texas 75969. 2/17

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

**PASTOR**—Blackjack, Troup is seeking a bivocational pastor. Send resume to the church at [blackjackbaptistchurch@gmail.com](mailto:blackjackbaptistchurch@gmail.com) or PO Box 605, Troup, Texas 75789. 12/16

**PASTOR**—Enon, lola is seeking a bivocational pastor. Parsonage available. For information, call 281-731-7850. TFN

**PASTOR**—First, Rice is seeking a pastor. Send resume to [fbricegale@yahoo.com](mailto:fbricegale@yahoo.com) or call 214-799-9244. TFN

# Churches in review NOVEMBER 20, 2016

CHURCH	SS	WORSHIP	ADDITIONS
Anthony Drive, Ennis	66	96	
Calvary, Ennis	27	35	
First, Blooming Grove	217		1 by baptism
First, Omen		87	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	19	36	
Jackson, Joaquin	76	136	
Little Flock, Lufkin	10	16	
Merriman Hills, Sherman	16	17	
Nat, Cushing	19	20	
New Harmony, Tyler	300	366	
Olde Tyme, White Oak		56	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	47	59	
Pine Brook, Tyler	34	54	
Piney Creek, Kennard	21	23	
Round Prairie, Fairfield	73	162	
Rosewood, Gilmer	146	230	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	35	61	

## NOVEMBER 27, 2016

CHURCH	SS	WORSHIP	ADDITIONS
Anthony Drive, Ennis	30	68	
First, Blooming Grove	202		
First, Omen	24	58	
Jackson, Joaquin	65	123	
Little Flock, Lufkin	15	15	
Olde Tyme, White Oak		54	1 by Letter
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	48	60	
Pine Brook, Tyler	40	50	
Round Prairie, Fairfield	55	160	
Rosewood, Gilmer	144	234	2 by baptism
Security Calvary, Cleveland	30	47	

## DECEMBER 4, 2016

CHURCH	SS	WORSHIP	ADDITIONS
Anthony Drive, Ennis	46	81	
First, Blooming Grove	211		1 by baptism
First, Crandall	76	106	1 by statement
First, Omen	40	68	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	19	37	
Jackson, Joaquin	85	129	
Little Flock, Lufkin	6	10	
Nat, Cushing	13	14	
New Harmony, Tyler	315	368	1 by letter, 1 by statement
New Hope, Mineola	61	136	
Olde Tyme, White Oak		48	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	43	47	
Rosewood, Gilmer	131	318	2 by baptism, 7 by letter
Security Calvary, Cleveland	28	60	

## DECEMBER 11, 2016

CHURCH	SS	WORSHIP	ADDITIONS
Calvary, Ennis	16	26	
First, Omen	19	56	
First, Palmer	62	153	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	15	34	
Jackson, Joaquin	68	105	
New Harmony, Tyler	287	375	1 by letter
Olde Tyme, White Oak		65	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	48	57	
Piney Creek, Kennard	9	15	
Rosewood, Gilmer	137	268	1 by baptism

# Obituaries

**KENNETH RAYMOND BRADY**, 84, former missions director for the BMA of Oklahoma, passed on to Glory Nov. 14. Bro. Brady was retired from from ECU in Ada, OK. He spent many years teaching, including two years at Central Baptist in Conway, Arkansas. He served as bivocational pastor for the majority of the BMA of Southeast Oklahoma churches during his 66 years of ministry. Services were in Ada, Oklahoma Nov. 18. Bro. Brady is survived by his wife of 58 years, Beverly, and two daughters: Karla Massingill, Hurst and Susan Davis, Warner, Oklahoma. Memorial offerings may be made to the BMA of Oklahoma Memorial Fund.



**GERALD PEPPER**, 82, of passed away Nov. 29. Funeral services were conducted in the chapel of Crawford-A. Crim Funeral Home in Henderson Dec. 2. Bro. Pepper was born March 31, 1934 in Rusk County to the late Joseph T. and Sarah Pepper. He pastored for 53 years in 11 different churches, and also taught and coached. He served his country in the US Army. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a sister, Betty Walker. Survivors include: his wife of 59 years, Isabel "Bibble" Pepper of Laneville; son, Tom Pepper and wife Lavayne of Oklahoma City; daughters, Paula Pepper of Laneville, and Martha Gresham and husband Chuck of Cushing; seven grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. Memorial contributions may be made to the Alzheimer's Alliance of Smith County, 211 Winchester Dr., Tyler, Texas 75701.



# Sunday School Lessons

## Are you haughty or humble

By PAUL GAUNTT

**DATE:** January 1, 2017

**TEXT:** Luke 18:9-14

No greater rebuke was ever conferred upon any person by the Savior, Himself than when He was addressing the pharisees.

They were steeped in the rituals of the old law, they were dismissive of Christ as the Messiah, they were self-satisfied, and they were condescending to others.

In our text, Luke 18:9-14, Jesus draws some stark comparisons between an “unworthy” publican (tax collector). He was hated by society, and furthermore, he had a realistic view of himself.

The pharisees were both politically and religiously astute in society. They were proud, they trusted in themselves, and were self righteous. They lauded their ability to give tithes and “pray” regularly.

But their prayers were boastful and ceremonial. It is interesting to see who the pharisee was praying to. (verse 11) He prayed to himself. He was not addressing God. He was what one might view as a first century humanist. Humanists deny embracing religion, but humanism is a religion - a religion of self-worship. Such was, in reality, the religion of the pharisees.

The tax collector, on the other hand, possessed a broken spirit, an accurate view of his own wickedness, and a deep sense of sin and unworthiness. He did not lift his eyes up to Heaven, but pleaded for God’s mercy.

The tax collector became justified in God’s sight -- not the self-righteous pharisee.

Jesus explained in Matthew 18:2-3 that it is the pure, simple, humble faith of a little child that enters into God’s Kingdom.

### APPLICATION:

Hebrews 11:6 says, “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. That pertains not only to saving faith, but in the way we live. To embark upon trying to serve the Lord in the energy of the flesh, is to have the same faithlessness as the pharisee. But to truly please the Father, one must be an empty vessel, and have a broken spirit -- then God will use us.

The pharisee was not seeking God -- he was basking in his own self-made goodness. The publican knew he was nothing -- and he went away justified, and a part of God’s Kingdom.

## The wheat and the weeds

By PAUL GAUNTT

**DATE:** January 8, 2017

**TEXT:** Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43

The most visible manifestation of the Kingdom of God is illustrated in the New Testament Church.

According to Matthew 13:37, Jesus Christ is the Planter of the good seed. (Matthew 16:18 “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, (petros-a tiny pebble) and upon this rock (petra- the Foundational Stone) I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Verse 25 - The enemy (Satan) has always had an agenda of infiltrating God’s Kingdom

Verse 29 - The uprooting of the weeds will also uproot the wheat also. One may ask if this contradicts Jesus’s formula for church discipline in Matthew 18. Church discipline is for the purpose of correcting the saints who stray off course. Paul referred to two men, Hymenaeus and Alexander in 1 Timothy 1:20 whom he cast out of the church “that they may learn not to blaspheme.” Church discipline is for the edification of the wayward member of God’s Kingdom. If they truly belong to the Lord, the Holy Spirit living in them will not let them tolerate being separate from the fellowship - they will seek restoration.

Tares, or weeds, never belonged to God. According to Hebrews 12:8 God does not engage in disciplining those that are not His own. “But if ye be without

chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards (illegitimate children) and not sons.”

One day, God will sort out the wheat from the tares, during that great harvest at the end of the world. The evil ones (the tares) will be cast into the furnace (eternal torment)

### APPLICATION:

Paul said to the Corinthians, “Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.” One of the functions of the Lord’s Supper, is not only to remember the shed blood and broken body of Christ on the cross, but for God’s people to examine themselves. John’s first epistle was especially written to believers in order to help us to know that we have passed from death unto life.

- Do you have a hunger in your heart for God and His Word?
- Do you have an unflinching love for the brethren in the fellowship?
- Do you have a sensitivity to sin when it invades your life, and are driven to sorrow and a desire to confess your sin to God?

To answer these questions with certainty can help you to know whether or not you are a wheat or a tare.

# Online giving

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# Sunday School Lessons

## Lost and found

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: January 15, 2017

LUKE 15:1-10

In the parable of the lost sheep, the crowd to which Jesus addressed, could not look beyond Jesus's attitude about sitting and eating with sinners. Therefore, they could not comprehend the love the Good Shepherd has for His sheep - and whole-heartedly pursues the lost sheep.

Not only could the pharisees not comprehend Jesus' love for the lost sheep, but His rejoicing in finding the sheep. He calls friends and neighbors to tell them the good news.

And most of all, the Pharisees could not comprehend how there is rejoicing in Heaven over one that repents, much more than over 99 who do not see the need for repentance.

Did you notice the scripture text says "there is joy in the presence of angels of God over one who repents"? (verse 10)

That would be the saints in glory, who experienced redemption. Angels were never in a lost state, therefore, they would not rejoice as the saints would.

Jesus made certain the pharisees understood the

significance by using the parable of the lost coin.

### APPLICATION:

God's people should celebrate every time a lost person comes to the Savior. We should also celebrate our loving Father who aggressively seeks for His lost sheep, and we should be touched by His mercy. Verse 5 says "He layeth it (the sheep) on his shoulders, rejoicing."

We cannot begin to understand the joy of the Lord when a lost sheep is found.

## The cost of compassion

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: January 22, 2017

TEXT: Luke 10:25-37

Jesus was always confronted by detractors and those who sought to shrewdly catch Him in an inconsistency -- but could never be debated. And His answers to legalists of that day were through stories that were simple, yet delivering eternal principles.

His answer to the lawyer who tried to de-rail him, was the sum total of the believer's walk -- to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.

Then Jesus delivered a profound truth about the characteristics of one who loved his neighbor. The Good Samaritan.

Samaritans were despised by the Jews - and the Jews likewise despised by the Samaritans. So it was most unlikely that a Samaritan would stop and render aid to a Jew who had been beaten and robbed while traveling.

1. There was no love exercised by the priest. He saw the plight of the Jew and passed by on the other side of the road. Organized religion is not enough to change one's heart into one of compassion.

2. There was no love exercised by the Levite. Not even one of the victim's own kind -- a Jew, and a descendent of the Levitical priesthood bothered to stop and render aid.

3. But a Samaritan -- Samaritans were despised by the Jews - and the Jews likewise despised by the Samaritans. So it was most unlikely that a Samaritan would stop and render aid to a Jew who had been beaten and robbed while traveling.

But this Samaritan stopped, rendered aid, placed the victim upon his donkey, took him to the nearest hotel, and paid for the care of the man from Jericho.

### APPLICATION

God delights in sending blessing through the most unlikely

means. He did not choose the intellect of Alexandria, or the wealth of Laodicea, or the champions of the Isthmian games to have His gospel spread -- He chose "the foolishness of preaching." 1 Corinthians 1:21 He chose a little lad with five barley buns and two pickled fish to feed thousands. He chose a serial killer, struck him down on the road to Damascus, and made him the most effective planter of New Testament Churches in church history.

## BMA Texas Missions cont.

to take 40 people on our next weekend intensive (May) to be trained in our Discipleship Method. Lord willing, in February, to accommodate growth, we'll move our Sunday gathering to a new venue, at the College of Biblical Studies. Keep us in prayer that Christ would continue to send workers into our mission field. Merry Christmas!

### RICK SYDNOR – LIFE CHANGE MISSION, LINDALE

God's grace is amazing. When you are dealing with big circumstances or little circumstances, God's grace will fill you with His supernatural power to handle all situations, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

It's important, as churches and as an association, that we stay focused on the right things. It is equally important that together we celebrate the right things. One of the things worthy of celebration is the establishment of new, self-sustained, Bible believing, BMA churches with a heart to reach the lost and make disciples. This month three BMA of Texas Missions come off support and take their first independent steps. Praise the Lord! I can only imagine how thrilling and scary a moment this is in the life of these congregations.

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](mailto:pop.gauntt@gmail.com).



You have been an important part of each of these churches reaching this milestone. Will you help them mark and celebrate it? You could send them a card, or a written prayer, or a gift, or a lot of cards. I ask you to take the time to celebrate this victory with them.

Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. (Romans 12:15)

The Refuge Mission -Pastor Darren Lemons  
PO Box 2068  
Terrell, TX 75160

Journey Community Church – Pastor Cecil Linke  
1712 Grand Canyon Way  
Allen, TX 75002

Community Life  
Church – Pastor  
George Martinez  
1693 Niagara  
Falls Blvd  
Lewisville, TX  
75077



Merry Christmas from your BMA of Texas Missions!



# Jacksonville College Hires Vice President for Executive Affairs

By **DR. MIKE SMITH**  
*Jacksonville College President*

Jacksonville College is pleased to welcome Dr. Blanton Feaster as our Vice President for Executive Affairs and instructor in the Department of Religion. Blanton comes to Jacksonville College from Farley Street Baptist Church in Waxahachie, Texas, where he served as Education and Administration Pastor for more than four years. Blanton joins the JC family with a minister's heart and a strong background in education and leadership.



▲ **Dr. Blanton Feaster**

After graduating from Dallas Baptist University with a bachelor's degree in Christian Education in 2002, Blanton received a Master of Arts in Christian Education in 2006. He has since earned a Ph.D. in Leadership Studies from Dallas Baptist University, where he has also worked as an adjunct instructor in the Graduate School of Ministry.

In 2004, Blanton married Jaime Rosulin Parrish, and in 2008, God blessed them with the birth of their son, Parrish Blanton Feaster.

Blanton has served in various churches throughout the state of Texas, including Wichita Falls, Sherman, Euless, Garland, Avalon, and Waxahachie. Throughout Blanton's life, God has equipped him to minister to others. According to Blanton, "God has used a combination of personal spiritual growth, family and personal relationships, life experiences, academic training, and ministry experiences to teach and shape me for this purpose. As a minister, my heart's desire is to make certain that my personal walk with Jesus Christ is what it should be. I am committed to serve those who want to make an eternal difference in their community and in places across the world for the cause of Jesus Christ."

Blanton feels that he has been called to lead in the areas of administration and education, both in the local church and in the academic arena, for the purpose of equipping believers to serve in their respective ministries. As he joins the Jacksonville College family, Blanton will be able to use his strengths to help the College grow. His role will be to assist the President in administrative efforts to bring cohesion among all departments of the College. Blanton explains, "I will be working alongside each department to strengthen collaboration in order to enhance productivity. My philosophy is ministry=relationships. I look forward to interfacing with every department to strategize initiatives for future growth."

We are excited to see how God plans to use Blanton at Jacksonville College as we continue to provide a quality education from a biblical worldview that challenges minds, transforms lives, and equips students for servant leadership and lifelong learning.



◀ On November 2, Dr. Jobe Martin presented a lecture series at Jacksonville College about his transformation from an evolutionist to a creationist, the scientific problems with evolution, and the evidence for a young earth.



▲ At the end of the JC Christmas program, Bro. Mike recognized retiring choral director Tim Timmons for his faithful service to Jacksonville College and the Music Program.



▲ During the JC Christmas program, Randy Decker directed the choir as they sang O Come, All Ye Faithful. In January of 2017, Randy will become the new Chair of the Music Program.

**2020**

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is the reason for  
the season...

Matthew 1:21-23

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rdecker@jacksonville-college.edu,  
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