

Baptist Progress

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Farley Street, Waxahachie hosts DiscipleGuide Town Hall Meeting

By **JERRY FULTON**
Baptist Progress Editor

WAXAHACHIE, Texas—Approximately 30 representatives from BMA of Texas churches met at Farley Street, Waxahachie for a DiscipleGuide Town Hall Meeting, Jan. 30. The purpose of the gathering was to provide information regarding proposed plans to move DiscipleGuide's publishing ministry from Texarkana to Conway, Ark.

Messengers to the BMA of America annual meeting last year, approved the integration of Lifeword Media Ministries and BMA of America Missions. Approval was given to authorize an integration study by the DiscipleGuide Board of Trustees. In light of their findings, the board will recommend relocating the publishing ministry to Conway, Ark. when the BMA of America meets in Little Rock April 28-30, 2014.

Scott Attebery, executive director of DiscipleGuide Church Resources shared an overview of his department's proposal to relocate at the Waxahachie meeting. Attebery said,



▲ **Scott Attebery**

“DiscipleGuide exists to support and resource the churches of the BMA. We believe that every church is vital to the Kingdom—regardless of size. For that reason, DiscipleGuide focuses on helping small churches through camps, conferences, curriculum and consulting.”

He continued, “For DiscipleGuide to progress as a viable ministry, three major balance points must be addressed: 1) unchanging values and relevant solutions, 2) ministry and business, and 3) publishing, conferences and camps.”

The executive director stressed how important it is for BMA churches to trust that DiscipleGuide is built upon core values the department shares with the churches: 1) scriptural authority, 2) local church autonomy, and 3) associational cooperation.

Attebery explained, “DiscipleGuide is first and foremost a ministry.” Continuing he stated, “There is a tendency to perceive ministry and business as mutually exclusive. However, this cannot be the case. DiscipleGuide is both a ministry and a business.”

He stressed, “If DiscipleGuide neglects ministry, DiscipleGuide will go out of business; and if DiscipleGuide neglects business, DiscipleGuide will lose its ministry.”

The director called attention to the 2006 merger of

camps, conferences and publishing into what is now known as DiscipleGuide. “Since approved,” Attebery said, “the merger has been on paper but not in reality.” Efforts are being made to bring the three divisions together in order to produce cross-divisional projects. One cross-divisional project underway involves youth literature that will prepare teens for SOAR, DiscipleGuide's annual youth conference later this year.

Attebery explained, “Relocating the Texarkana offices to Conway would be a major instrument for such change to occur. Being housed in the same location as Lifeword and BMA Missions would increase DiscipleGuide's ability to understand and recognize the current context of ministry opportunities and thus balance unchanging values with relevant solutions. The cost savings and shared resources available in Conway would strengthen DiscipleGuide's ability to balance ministry and business. Further, the combined presence of the publishing and conference divisions would help promote the balance of divisional integration.

He said, “Ultimately, the recommendation to relocate the Texarkana offices to Conway reflects DiscipleGuide's commitment to help churches by being good stewards of the ministry given to us by the local, autonomous churches of the BMA. “



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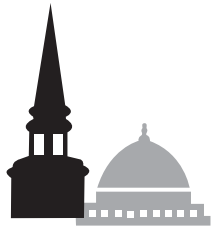
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Moral Action calls for Oscars boycott

By DR. JOHN M. ADAMS
Moral Action Executive Director

BMA family and pastors, please encourage your church family to refrain from watching Hollywood's secular entertainment and especially the March 2, 2014 Academy Awards (the Oscars). The decision by the Academy to rescind the song nomination, "Alone Yet Not Alone," by Joni Eareckson Tada is an affront to all Christians. This song is on the not yet released film, "Alone Yet Not Alone," by Bruce Broughton. Please do not watch this anti-God, anti-Christian event, but go see the movie when it comes out this year.

Visit the following web address concerning the boycott:

<http://www.onenewsnow.com/media/2014/02/03/retraction-of-jonis-oscar-nomination-labeled-prejudicial-not-professional#.UvDyB9Gx59A>

2014 BMAA Meeting Hotel reservations can now be made online

Individuals can now find hotel reservation information for the 2014 Baptist Missionary Association of America meeting in Little Rock at bmalife.com. Online reservations can be made at two of the hotels within the room block by clicking on 2014 National Meeting under the Latest News heading and then clicking on the appropriate hotel link. Phone numbers are also listed for those who prefer that method of making reservations.

The Little Rock Marriott has been designated as the primary hotel and is attached to the State House Convention Center where all meetings will be held. The deadline for taking advantage of the BMA discounted rate at all three hotels is March 28.



Sunday, Feb. 23 will hopefully be a day of "outward-looking" instead of "inward-looking" for you and your church. Especially during this chilly weather, it's easy to neglect the command to go out, even across the street, but World Missions Sunday is a day to emphasize those who have obeyed and are out there on the mission field.

Actions for today:

- Reserve your prayer calendars and download the video at bmamissions.org/worldmissions
- Pray about a church goal for 2014
- Pray for the millions waiting to hear
- Go to bmamissions.org/missionaries and look at the faces of our missionaries and their families

The general fund of BMA global missions needs you and your church...please give and join other churches on February 23.

Launch service at The Refuge, Terrell



▲ The Refuge in worship on official launch day

TERRELL, Texas—Since the start of The Refuge Church in Terrell two years ago, they have experienced blessing after blessing from The Lord. January marked their official launch. One week before the launch service, church members met together and distributed flyers promoting the church and inviting the individuals to attend. Also, *The Terrell Tribune* published an article on their cover page about the launch service. When the day finally came, The Refuge welcomed 73 people with 23 of those being first time visitors.

Pastors Todd Cox and Darren Lemons expressed how humbled they were to look out into the congregation and see so many new faces. Some of the individuals could be perceived as just ordinary church attendees, however, upon closer examination, the pastors found they are not just people with ordinary stories. It seems that the Lord sent individuals to The Refuge He had been working to restore. Cox and Lemons said that they are humbled that the Lord is allowing The Refuge Church be a part of the transformations of the lives of those in attendance.

One of the first transformations is taking place in the life of a soldier who returned home in December. His wife and family had been attending The Refuge since early September while he was stationed in Afghanistan. His wife revealed to church leadership that her husband was not a "church person," and she had been praying for over seven years he would attend church with her. She said, "A previous church she attended told her that their marriage would never last because he was an unbeliever, but she never stopped praying for him."

In fact, while her husband was away, she committed to serving at The Refuge and never missed a meeting. She spoke so highly of The Refuge to him over Skype, that he felt led to fly an American flag in honor of The Refuge in Afghanistan. When he returned in December he attended services for the first time.

After the first service, his wife was overjoyed that her prayers had finally been answered. He has since attended Life Group and has continued to come to services. The family has brought two other families with them who also have committed to serving at The Refuge.

Another transformation is taking place in the life of a man whose wife and two sons began attending The Refuge in the fall. The man's brother-in-law told Cox and Lemons, that if they got the man to step foot in the church one time they would be doing good. His wife and sons were committed to serve at The Refuge and came faithfully. The day he first attended a service, the pastors say they were in awe of God's plan.

"Here was a man that hadn't been the spiritual leader in his family walking into our service for the first time. After his first service, he showed up the next week to help pass out flyers promoting our church services. He has since attended The Refuge faithfully," they said.

His wife said that he is on the verge of accepting Christ and asked that prayers be lifted on his behalf that the Lord would work in his life. Following a motorcycle accident, which he was able to escape from with only minor injuries, while still in pain, he got up the following Sunday and came to church.

A transformation that has already occurred in the life of a man who was raised in a religious home. He was raised as a Mennonite. The expectations of him were so overwhelming that he eventually left his family and their Mennonite beliefs. Since he left, his family has shunned him, and he is no longer accepted as a part of his own family.

The man grew to distrust Christians and refused to have anything to do with church. When he

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Farley Street, Waxahachie hosts DiscipleGuide Town Hall Meeting Cont.

The executive director made clear that careful attention has been given to each of the Texarkana staff members' situations in order to provide the smoothest transition possible.

Attebery stated, "Every effort has been made to avoid uprooting families or disrupting personal lives. For that reason, if relocation were to occur, only one Texarkana staff member would move to the Conway location while four others would work from home. In addition, one Texarkana staff member will be retiring in June of 2014 and his replacement would be located in Conway as well."

He continued, "Although work from home is not the ideal situation, in this case, it seems like the best option for a gradual transition. This is a wonderful way to honor the staff that has invested decades of their lives in DiscipleGuide while making progress toward our goals."

In listing pros and cons for the move, Attebery mentioned a unified vision between departments and divisions, teamwork and communication, BMA relevancy and budget implications as pros. Two cons of the transition include transition costs and the emotional ties that DiscipleGuide (formerly Baptist Publishing House) has had for years with the city of Texarkana.

The director explained that costs will be saved for the department due to changes in warehouse inventory, order fulfillment, building maintenance, as well a number of other areas.

Following the move from Texarkana to Conway will mean Missions, Lifeword and DiscipleGuide will share general supplies, insurance, building and grounds maintenance services, property tax, repairs, telephone and utilities, saving DiscipleGuide a projected \$58,424 per year. The sale of the DiscipleGuide building should also result in the BMAA receiving around \$1.3 million.

Proposed integrated BMA of America departmental structure

Steve Crawley, executive director of Lifeword Media Ministries, was also on hand at the meeting to update church representatives on the BMAA integration progress. He explained that since the beginning of the year, accounting, human resources, informational technology, production services and development service teams have been established.



▲ Steve Crawley

Crawley said, "With the creation of the service teams, it became necessary from an accounting perspective to capture shared costs separate from the direct cost of the departments. To facilitate a structure approved by the messengers in the last annual meeting of the BMA of America, the directors of BMAA departments will recommend the establishment of a limited liability company (LLC) owned by the departments of the BMAA.

The director said, "Shared employees and shared costs will be captured in the LLC and then charged to each respective department based upon the activity performed, thus minimizing costs, maximizing productivity, maintaining transparency through clear record keeping and in handling the integration activities in a professional manner."

Crawley shared that it is a long-term goal of his to eventually step down as executive director of Lifeword Media Ministries and, if approved by the other directors, step into the role of service team leader, reporting to the departmental directors. The executive director of BMAA Missions would be the final point of decision for issues in question. Crawley stressed that he has several projects in place he wants to see through to completion. His switching roles will be something that would take place in the distant future. The director said that he feels he could better serve the BMAA in the role of service team leader with his background in business, thereby allowing someone with media expertise to become the executive director of Lifeword.

Question and answer session

A question and answer session was allowed by Scott Attebery of DiscipleGuide and Crawley. The first question was posed by James Schoenrock, pastor of Sheppard Drive, Euless. Schoenrock addressed Attebery concerning Sunday school literature. The pastor said, "It seems to me that we've gone mostly topical even in the adult quarterlies. Do we still have a five year plan?" Attebery answered, "Yes." Schoenrock went on to explain how the curriculum of the Southern Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Association (ABA) literature goes through the Bible.

The pastor said, "I feel like we are getting away from biblical curriculum and a lot of our people are lacking in biblical knowledge of how the whole comes together."

Attebery said that he would voice Pastor Schoenrock's concern to the adult curriculum editor Charles Reddin. He also explained that certain quarterlies might take a topical direction, but overall, DiscipleGuide's literature will remain expositional.

Dr. Edwin Crank, pastor of Ebenezer, Huntsville and former president of Jacksonville College urged that before integration goes too far, he would like for the BMAA Missions Department to stop and analyze what impact, if any, the new salary structure of BMAA missionaries, with missionaries having to raise a portion of their salaries from individual churches, has had on state departmental and other BMA work. Crawley encouraged Dr. Crank to voice his concerns to Dr. John David Smith, executive director of BMAA Missions, who was not present at the meeting.

Crawley stated, "The theoretical perspective is based on more of an abundance mentality that if someone feels led of the Lord to go to the mission field that the BMAA Missions Department will do everything within its power to get them there."

The Lifeword executive director continued, "I think I

know Dr. Smith well enough, although he felt led to go in this direction, if we see this direction is not working, he will, without hesitation, say, 'Let's take another look and go in a different direction, if needed.'"

Schoenrock asked a series of questions concerning how the renovation and addition to the Lifeword office building is being paid for in Conway, Ark. He mentioned that in last year's annual BMAA meeting, a recommendation indicated that donors were in place allowing completion of the facilities without church budget offerings or the use of debt. Crawley responded that it was his belief, although some details had changed concerning facility renovations and additions that what was recommended and approved was still accurate.

Pastor Schoenrock also asked for clarification concerning the sale of the BMAA Missions property in Little Rock, and called on BMAA departments to provide more detailed proposed budgets in the future, as the association mandated some years ago. Crawley explained that he was not aware of the mandate but would certainly comply with it.

Another topic at the meeting concerned recommendations to be presented by the BMAA Coordinating Council at the 2014 Annual Session of the BMAA in Little Rock, Ark. in April. The council will recommend the endorsement of the name change of the Lifeword Foundation to the BMAA Foundation. If endorsed, the BMAA Foundation will be established as an agency of the BMAA.

Furthermore, the current number of board members for the foundation will be reduced from 15 to nine with one board position being reserved for a representative to be nominated by the executive director of each BMAA department and/or agency participating in the association's estate planning program. The other five would be current board members who would complete their terms of service for the sake of continuity.

Jerry Fulton, editor of *Baptist Progress* and teaching pastor of Anthony Drive, Ennis, asked why it will be recommended that executive directors of BMAA departments nominate representatives for their departments to the board. He continued, to make certain local churches do not lose their voices, and to guard against the perception of directors nominating "yes men" to the board, it would seem wiser to have trustee boards nominate representatives for their departments to the board.

Dr. Charley Holmes, president of BMA Theological Seminary, shared that it was at his suggestion that the coordinating council decided on the recommendation that each department have a representative on the foundation board to look after the interests of each department. He further stated that he is fine with trustees, instead of executive directors, nominating the representatives, should someone make that motion.

Crawley and Attebery thanked church representatives for attending the town hall meeting, and promised more town hall meetings in the future to keep BMA churches informed.

FROM THE EDITOR

A day at Rosewood

A few months ago, Pastor Charles Johnson informed me that the church he serves as pastor, Rosewood, Gilmer, would like to host a rally day for *Baptist Progress*. He invited me to come and sing, talk about the ministry of *Baptist Progress* and preach God's Word. I accepted



▲ Pastor and Mrs. Charles Johnson

the invitation, and my wife and I were honored to be with the church Sunday morning, Feb. 9.

How great it was to witness Bro. Johnson baptize five individuals who had publically professed Christ as their personal Savior. The church's campus is located in the Rosewood Community, near Gilmer. Bro. Johnson has served as pastor of the church for several years, leading them to heights the congregation might never have dreamed possible.

Placed in a rural setting, the church built a beautiful sanctuary, complete with a number of other rooms a few years ago. The former sanctuary has been renovated for educational use, and another building, called The Filling Station, is used to house the student ministry.

Music Minister Bobby Trimble, with the help of a praise team of four singers and several instrumentalists, leads the congregation in singing hymns and songs of praise.

I was incredibly impressed with the information provided to guests about the church's ministries. Bro. Johnson and

his wife, Charlotte, by example, do a fine job of encouraging the Rosewood congregation to be involved in every aspect of BMA life. The pastor currently serves as president of the BMA of Texas and on the Texas Baptist Home Board of Trustees. Mrs. Johnson has served as president of the BMA of Texas WMA and is a member of the Jacksonville College Board of Trustees.



▲ Jerry Fulton

Any department of the BMA of Texas or the BMA of America can count on Bro. Johnson and Rosewood to fully participate in any promoted effort or offering for that department. In fact, I am convinced if every pastor in the BMA would lead his church to be as involved in our state and national associations as Rosewood, the BMA of Texas and the BMA of America would make great strides in further influencing the world for Christ.

Bro. Johnson is a pastor to pastors and departmental leaders. I have a file of cards and letters I have received from Pastor Johnson and Rosewood wishing me well when I was ill, informing me they were praying for the ministry of *Baptist Progress*, letting me know they were praying for me personally and congratulating me at certain milestones.

Having mentioned everything above, I was all but speechless when Bro. Johnson presented me with a check for \$4,048 to be applied to the ministry of *Baptist Progress* on Feb. 9. After 31 percent of Rosewood's mission giving was subtracted from their total offerings received on the rally day for *Baptist Progress*, the remainder of undesignated funds was donated to our department. To my knowledge, the offering is the largest one time donation *Baptist Progress* has received from a local church since I became editor in 2004. To say I am grateful would be an understatement.

At the same time, I am appreciative to every church, auxiliary, Sunday school class and individual for any amount given to *Baptist Progress* over the years. I love our associational work, and am glad God is using the BMA for His Kingdom's sake.

As Bro. Jerry Burnaman often says, "We really can do more together." Amen!



▲ Rosewood, Gilmer



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Things that finally dawned on me

Part 3-Working behind the scenes

By PAUL GAUNTT

Glenn Taylor, former youth and family consultant for the Texas Department of Church Ministries, once gave a definition of a servant's heart as "one who works behind the scenes for the purpose of making others shine."

What a tremendous description of one with a true servant's heart. It's been easy to preach about the merits of being a servant, and yet often the message gets tainted when it is preached through the lips of one who feels deserving.

Servanthood is a ministry gift of the spirit, and although many are more proficient in the use of the gift, we are all called to "be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another;" Romans 12:10. And we are all called to "use whatever gifts you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." I Peter 4:10 (NIV) The KJV renders it, "manifold grace of God" which denotes multi-faceted or multi-colored.

Ministering grace is the hallmark of a life dedicated to Christ. Grace is totally of God (Ephesians 2:8) and He has equipped each believer with a gift or gifts which, when functioning, will showcase His grace.

That demonstration of grace in the believer is to especially be displayed through the office of deacon. The very word deacon means "to serve." When churches set men aside to ordain to the office, sometime more emphasis is given to administrative skills and community standing rather than addressing his servant's heart.

Paul told the church in Ephesians 5:21, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of the Lord." There are two meanings of the word "submit" in scripture; One means "to militarily line up under others; and the other meaning is "to line up under as a slave." In this verse, Paul is using the military term. We are all to regard ourselves as subordinate to others in God's Kingdom. Everyone lines up under everyone, militarily. Such is the earmark of a servant's heart. Sometimes pastors have personal problems with it in these days when the pastor is often regarded as the corporate head.

The principle of the servant who works behind the scenes to make others shine, works very well in the workforce. Even in the corporate world, much emphasis is placed on teamwork.

The ultimate Servant was, of course our Savior. "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and

to give his life a ransom for many." Matthew 20:28. If Christ could give up His exalted place at the right hand of His Father in Heaven, and come to earth to serve a lost and dying world, it is certainly fitting that we likewise serve one another -- and in doing so, demonstrate the manifold grace of our Heavenly Father.

Pastor, I want to challenge you to try an experiment for just one month; rather than portraying yourself as the CEO of a corporation, for one month, try adopting a lifestyle of working behind the scenes, as a servant, in order to make your congregation shine. Rather than undermining your pastoral authority, you might be surprised how it will enhance it.

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.



Sounding an alarm

By DR. TRAVIS PLUMLEE

Some might say I'm an alarmist on this subject. Good. I am sounding the alarm, and I am not the only one. America needs to wake up, speak up, stand up and realize that our society is going to be destroyed by one thing. No, it's not a terrorist. No, it's not an economic down turn. It is the demise of the American family. The demise of the American family will be accomplished by ripping away the foundation of the family--the covenant of marriage.

I studied sociology for years, and then was blessed to teach on the subject of sociology at the university level. I state this, not to be prideful, but as a credential so that you will know that I do have some knowledge on the subject.

The nuclear family composed of a married mom and dad, with children, is the chief foundation for all world societies. As long as the family, marriage and procreation are in place, the society continues on with what the people collectively share as their common culture. However, historically, all great world societies collapsed when the family began to falter. You can study how the traditional family roles were laid aside, to follow whatever people wanted to do in their own lust. Soon after, those great societies lost their greatness and fell by the wayside. America is now doing the same thing.

God established the marriage and family as the first institution even before the church. He gave very specific guidelines and rules in the Bible concerning His will for marriage. Throughout the Bible, God also gave very specific warnings against anyone or any society that would try to change the guidelines for marriage.

Some may feel that allowing same sex unions is not a big deal. The media and politicians would have you believe it is a civil rights issue. It is only a biblical issue. Either we follow God and His ways, or we don't. Scripture teaches us that we will reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7).

You may think it is not a big deal. I see many Christians that are kind of hohum about the whole matter. They don't like it, but seem

apathetic about the outcome. This is just the start. Same sex unions are the starting of the unraveling of the American family. It is like rain on a steep hillside. The little eroded crack will eventually grow till the hillside washes away (Matthew 7:27).

Once marriage has changed; the American society will soon collapse. It won't be here for your children and grandchildren. Marriage is the glue that holds society together. Without biblical marriages, our society will be torn asunder.

It's not just same sex unions either. The federation of evil aligns itself under this banner, but it is just the beginning. Once they can get marriage to break away from the biblical mandate, then it will over the years allow other abominations of marriage to be established. It is imperative for their goal, to redefine what a marriage is.

Once marriage has been redefined, and it has now been done in this country, the barn door is wide open for the total destruction of the nuclear family and the demise of the American society.

The United States Attorney General Eric Holder has announced the new national policy of the Obama Administration, which is to recognize same sex unions as equal to true marriages in federal court. Filing for bankruptcy, not testifying against a spouse etc. are all things that are now afforded to same sex couples.

Even in states where same sex unions are not legal, in federal court this law will override the will of the people in those states. The policy follows on the heels of the United States Supreme Court ruling that same sex unions can be legal status in the states, and has now become part of our national law and protection under the constitution.

For the past few years the president has stated that he is against the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) passed under the Clinton Administration stating that marriage is between a man and a woman. Because of this small erosion of defining marriage, in a few years, the entire hillside of biblical families will wash away, and we will be living in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation

(Philippians 2:15). America will be a godless nation.

What can you do? Pray is the first thing. You might have more passion in your prayers if you always think about your children and little grandchildren and what type of society they will have to live in 30 years from now. It is frightening.

God can change hearts. He can change our nation. We must passionately and fervently seek Him. We must ask for divine intervention. The fervent prayers of the righteous avail much (James 5:16).

Don't pray in passing once or twice. Make it a part of your daily prayer life to save America and the biblical family. Stop voting based upon your tradition. Find out where candidates stand specifically on marriage, and vote according to our biblical laws.

For example, abortion must be a make or break issue for whom one votes. We have to quit voting for people, no matter how much we like them, who vote for things that God says are wrong.

Finally, we have to fight for our own marriages and make sure they are a good example of what God desires in the home. We then must teach the next generation that this is the way of the Lord, and this is right in His eyes. Most kids today in our youth groups have no clear understanding of biblical marriage. How often did Israel suffer because they ignored the warnings about leaving God's ways? Consider yourself warned (Psalm 33:12).

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.



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 Jan. 1-31, 2014.

ENDOWMENTS

RICKIE MARIE JOHNSTON: Bro. & Mrs. Duane Turner

E. ANN PACE: Mr. & Mrs. Karl Pace; R. T. Willis-Attorney at Law, P. C.

MYRA STOKES: Mr. Bill Stokes

HONORARIUMS

SEABORN BASS: Charlotte Morgan

AVERY CORLEY: Robert & Melanie Corley

DAN & MARY HOLMES 50TH ANNIVERSARY: Mrs. Pat Chappell

BOBBY & BETH MYERS: N. W. & Mary Sue Myers

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RALPH BACHELOR: Bro. & Mrs. Fred Morrow

WALTER BECKER: Dennis Myrice

THELMA BROWN: James & Linda Sockwell

BUFORD FOUNTAIN: L & L Transport

DB CARTER: Mr. & Mrs. Bobby Anderson

JAMES C COX: H. V. & Betty Minter

MR. HAROLD DICKSON'S SISTER: Tracy & Rose Moore

BILL FAIR: Buddy & Linda Burke

ZEFFIE FEATHERSTON: Calvin & Diana Morris

CECIL A. GRESHAM: Tim Gresham

ELAINE JULIET GRIMES: Bro. & Mrs. Charles M Johnson

CULLEN HARDIN: Mary K. Gilbert

MRS. LIBBY HARGIS: Anne Terry

NORMAN RAY JOHNSON: Bro. & Mrs. Charles M. Johnson

MY WIFE JOYCE: Mr. James D. Murphy

EVIE MAE LEE: Bro. & Mrs. Charles M. Johnson

TRACY MOORE: Mrs. Betty French; Tracy Bulin

JUDITH LYNN PARKER: Bro. & Mrs. Charles M. Johnson

RUSSELL PERKINS: Temple Baptist Church

BARBARA RALSTON: Earlene Crenshaw

HEATH RAY: Jimmy & Cynthia Green

ALMA JO ROBERTS: Bro. & Mrs. Charles M. Johnson

JOYCE ROE: Bobby & Wanda Skipwith; Tundra Baptist Church

GENE (V.E.) SEALE: Norma Seale

LEE SHORT: Fay (Florence) Short

SHERRY SMITH: James C. & Pam Moore

JANIE FENNEL SNIPES: Bro. & Mrs. Charles M. Johnson

MARY STANLEY: Mrs. Neva McLaughlin

MARY LEE STANLEY: Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Bass

ELIZABETH STEELMAN: Bro. & Mrs. Charles M. Johnson

PEGGY VALENTINE: Mr. & Mrs. C.A. York

PAT WEBB: Fifth Street BC Willing Workers SS

E. T. WILLIAMS: Minnie L. Williams

James McCarty ordained to ministry

Bro. James McCarty, of Palmer, was ordained to the gospel ministry at 2:30 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 19 at Farley Street, Waxahachie.

McCarty, who, along with his wife, Beth, and son and daughter Garrett and Chloe, has been active in Farley Street for several years. The church gave their blessings and licensed him to begin work with First Baptist Church of Itasca in June, 2013,

The church recently extended a call to McCarty who has begun his duties as a bi-vocational pastor of the Itasca congregation, which was established over 100 years ago.

Included in the crowd for the ordination services were members of Farley Street; First, Palmer; First, Rice; First, Itasca; along with a host of relatives.

Presbytery consisted of ordained deacons and pastors from the Ellis Hill Association, with Eddie Marsh, serving as moderator; Paul Gauntt - clerk, introduction of candidate - Boyd McKinsey; questioning - Joel Harris; motion to proceed, Mike Green; ordination prayer - Jerry Bell; presentation of certificate - Ron Craddick; presentation of Bible - Billy Walker; message - Richard Smith; and closing prayer - Carroll Brooks.



▲ Pictured are Pastor James McCarty, wife, Beth, and children, Chloe and Garrett.

Sardis, Waxahachie to celebrate 120 years of ministry



WAXAHACHIE, Texas—Members of Sardis, Waxahachie will mark their 120 year anniversary on Sunday, Feb. 23, 2014. Pastor Roy Brashear and the congregation invite all former members and pastors to join the church as they celebrate. A noon meal will be served with a special remembrance service to follow.

During the last two years, the church has built a new porch on the front of their building, installed two half glass doors, a 19ft. fiberglass steeple, new siding around the sanctuary, new windows in the sanctuary, plus a beautiful wooden cross above the baptistery.

On each side of the new porch the church has added a flower garden. The new porch has a ramp on one side and steps on the other side. The great thing is all of the improvements were paid for with cash. Future plans are being made to continue to improve the beauty of the Lord's House. Sardis, Waxahachie gives all the glory to God.



Launch service at The Refuge, Terrell cont.

first came to Life Group at The Refuge, he was hesitant. He sat back and observed the Bible study as if he was trying to find truth in what was being taught from God's Word. His wife said that he vowed to never step foot in a church again because of his experience as a child. Even so, she came to The Refuge as often as she could without him. After much prayer and building a trusting rapport with him, he finally attended services for the first time.

He and his wife were joined at the same service by her parents who came because of the door hangers that were placed in their neighborhood the previous week. Since the launch service, the man, his wife and in-laws have started attending The Refuge on a regular basis. He and his wife have also volunteered to help in the church's children's ministry.

One other transformation that must be shared has taken place in the life of a man who attended church for most of his childhood, but he eventually strayed from God. His lifestyle affected his marriage and resulted in a divorce from his wife, the mother of his two children. The man came to The Refuge by a recommendation of another BMA church in Gilmer. He had been singing a special at his parent's church when the pastor discovered he lived in Terrell. The pastor told him about The Refuge and he attended the following Sunday. The man hasn't missed a service since and is now serving on our worship team. His

ex-wife and daughter have also started attending church with him. His ex-wife told him that she sees a change in him and sees the Lord working in his life. Praise God, they are now dating again. The Lord has restored their relationship.

Cox and Lemons explained, "Life Groups are still the heartbeat of The Refuge." Life Groups meet every week in different homes and one apartment complex. The goal of the members at The Refuge is to meet people where they are as they go along the way, showing them the love of God and introducing them to a life-changing relationship with Jesus.

The pastors shared that the bottom line is great things are continuing to happen at The Refuge and they are so thankful for everyone's prayers and continued financial support. People are falling in love with God again and are enjoying the relationship with Him through Jesus! Lives are changing and disciples are in the process of being made. People are excited about studying their Bibles and getting involved in the community. Best of all, God is being glorified through changed lives at The Refuge Church.

With the official launch and growth come increased financial obligations as the church continues to meet weekly and reaches new people. In 2014, rent will triple due to an increase in the congregation's number of meetings and the addition of extra meeting space. To learn more about The Refuge, visit www.gototherefuge.com.



▲ The Todd Cox Family



▲ The Darren Lemons Family



▲ Worship at The Refuge



90TH BIRTHDAY

The family of

KATHERINE B. ARRINGTON

former missionary to Bolivia, South America,
invites you to celebrate her
90th birthday with us.

A reception will be held in her honor
Saturday, March 8, 2014 from 2 to 4 p.m.
at The Trinity Assisted Living Facility,
131 Zimmerman Drive in Jacksonville, Texas.

If you are unable to attend
please send cards or notes in care of:

Maryjane A. Mathis
1111 East Loop 456
Jacksonville, TX 75766

No gifts please. Hope you can join us!

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featured speaker
CHARLOTTE JOHNSON
"WALK IN FAITH"

Saturday, March 22, 2014 9 a.m.—2 p.m.
Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

Teaching sessions and catered lunch. This will be a time of spiritual
renewal with fun and fellowship with our sisters in Christ.

Bring a friend!
We hope to see you there.
Can also register at: <http://fberry@lhbcss.com>
NO NURSERY WILL BE PROVIDED

AUXILIARIES

Raising walls for Christ

By SHARON COLE

Are you looking for a blessing? I believe we all, as Christians, want the Lord to bless us. The way we are blessed is to be a blessing to someone else.

The way you can be a blessing to someone is to support the Texas WMA project, "The Master's Builders." Our goal is \$15,000. The Master's Builders are in need of a new, larger work truck to carry all the tools and equipment necessary to do the job that the Lord has called them to do. Their present truck isn't large enough and also requires constant maintenance because of its age.

The Master's Builders is a fellowship of retired/semi-retired BMA men and women with recreational vehicles who are willing to travel at their own expense and are committed to honoring the Master by assisting missions and churches in building construction programs. Priority is given to Interstate and State Mission building projects. Assistance can be provided to other BMA church building projects as time and workers are available.

The group is in their twenty-second year of service and has finished 125 projects, 57 of those being in Texas. Eligibility for membership in this organization includes, but is not limited to the following: (1) Retired/semi-retired persons with experience in carpentry, electrical, plumbing, air conditioning and other building skills, (2) Retired persons who are willing to help those with building skills, (3) Persons willing to spend vacation or other extended time on a building project. (4) Persons willing to use days off on a building project within driving distance of their home.

The men and women receive no salary or pay of any kind. They strictly do it to the glory of God. If a church or mission needs help in building projects there are a few requirements that the church or mission must furnish: (1) Electrical, water and sewer hookups for RVs on the building site, (2) Building foundation and floor in place when the work crew arrives, (3) Framing materials on the site when the work crew arrives, (4) One hot meal per day for the work crew (if possible), (5) One person designated as Church Coordinator to work with the Work Crew Coordinator.

The men and women of the group are a blessing and inspiration to be around as they conduct their own devotionals each day and love to fellowship with the church members on the work site, especially at meal time. Now you're asking, "How can we raise enough money to buy a truck?" Well,

the answer is clear, we can't on our own, but the Lord can! Pray, asking God to guide you in planning creative ways to raise the funds to help them "raise walls for Christ." Plan a simple dine-in/carry-out meal on a donation basis for after Sunday morning services at the church. Place a large clear container in the foyer of the church for people to place loose change. You will be amazed at how quickly it will fill up. The possibilities are endless; make it fun. Send all donations to Texas WMA Project: Jo Strong, 149 NW Suzanne Terrace, Burleson, TX 76028.

District News

Mt. Olive District WMA met Jan. 28, 2014 with Antioch, Carthage with a total of 16 present. After a delicious meal, provided by the ladies of Glenfawn, Cushing, business was conducted and the program was led by Shawn Norris. Our theme for the year is "Seasoned By God for a Purpose." Bibble Pepper presented special music, "I Was Born to Serve the Lord." "The Seed of Winter" was the focus of the program. Even though there seems to be no life or growth in the winter, there is a seed that will bloom in the warmth of spring. So it is with our spiritual life. When we are in a season of spiritual winter, we must remember that winter is needed to bring new growth. In winter plants rest and wait for warmth. We must take time to rest, reflect on what God has done in our lives and wait for Him to renew us spiritually. Our project for the year is Bro. Tommy Rose, missionary to Mexico, who is finishing up language school in Costa Rica. Our next meeting will be at Antioch, Carthage April 22, 2014.

Van Zandt District WMA met Jan. 9, 2014 at China Grove, Eustace. We enjoyed a delicious meal and good fellowship prior to the meeting. Our president, Lola House, opened the meeting. Our project for the quarter was Mission Ecuador. For the next quarter, we will help with mission trip expenses for one of our GMA girls, Makaye Key. She will be joining a group of National GMA in presenting a girls' conference in Ukraine this summer. Normal business was conducted and our attendance banner went to Oak Grove, Canton. Door prizes were given and prayer requests were shared. It is always a joy to hear each of the officers' reports throughout the evening. The China Grove ladies presented a skit, "The Lord's Prayer," bringing to light what it might be like when we pray if God actually talked back to us! Do we

just say words? Or, do we actually mean what we say? Our next meeting will be April 10 at Lighthouse Baptist Church, Mabank.

Van Zandt GMA met for their annual Houseparty Jan. 17-18, 2014. We started the evening with Mexican food and some games. Later we gathered in the sanctuary for our meeting led by President Nancy Key. We recited our Watchword, Aim, Allegiance and Star Ideals. Song Leader Courtney Rutledge led us in our GMA song. District Promoter Cheryl Hughes, recognized our 2013 Junior Miss GMA, Mary Kate Key and Miss GMA, Rebekah Holmes. They assisted with presenting awards to our 2014 Jr. Miss GMA, Hannah Manry, and our Miss GMA, Mikaela Holmes. We are excited to see these girls represent our district at the 2014 Texas GMA Houseparty. Our district project is to help Makaye Key with funds as she is planning to attend a girls' conference in Ukraine this summer on a National GMA mission trip. With the Lord's help, we raised \$1,450. The rest of the evening and night consisted of games, fun, fellowship, and no sleep! The next meeting will be at Tundra, Canton in April.

Ellis-Hill WMA met at First, Red Oak in January. Following a delicious meal by the ladies of Red Oak, President Lynda Marsh called the meeting to order at which 15 were present. The Ellis-Hill WMA has begun an evening format in an attempt to encourage more attendance. Teel Witt brought a brief devotional then introduced special guest Jerry Fulton, editor of *Baptist Progress*, who sang, spoke about the ministry of *Baptist Progress* and presented a message from God's Word. Also in attendance was Eddie Marsh, president of Texas Baptist Home for Children. Following a brief business meeting, the attendance banner was awarded to Anthony Drive, Ennis, and door prizes were given. The next district meeting will be April 14 at Anthony Drive, Ennis.

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.



Mission Life

By JERRY BURNAMAN

Recently I met with our church planters and some interested pastors in San Antonio. We met for a whole day Jan. 30 and for about one-half day on the Jan. 31.

Our purpose and objective focused on sharing stories about mission life, talking about what ministries are working and those that are not, learning from one another and getting new ideas. It was an exciting time! I wish I had the words to convey to you how thrilled I am to be associated with such talented and creative people who are working hard to impact communities with the gospel.

You can see and hear some of their stories on our website, changedintexas.com. We would also like to have some stories from our pastors and churches. Kent Cox manages the website for us, so if you are interested in providing a story about a changed life in your church, send Kent an email message, kentcox@crossroadsrowlett.com, and he will give you instructions how to upload the video message.

Pray for our church planters because they face enormous challenges. They work on the fringe, where many unchurched people are not interested in church. It takes time, hard work and perseverance to build relationships and influence to the point where they can share the gospel.

New Church Planter

Will and Kelly Hutchinson and their three children are moving to Hutto to lead the mission there. Since Kyle Sears left, we have been praying and working to discover God's man to lead this work. We are grateful God spoke to Will and Kelly about Hutto and their response.

As soon as they get settled, we will inform you about their contact information so you may contact them with words of encouragement. We have only one other church in the area, Pastor Mitch Friedman and the Journey at Leander. The mission and this congregation would appreciate hearing from you.

The population of the Austin metropolitan area is about 1.5 million. We need to start several churches in the area. In fact there are unlimited opportunities to start in churches in the DFW area, San Antonio and Houston, and places in between. Pastor, place this need on your prayer list and pray consistently for us to discover more church planters.

Renewal Centers

We're working to have four Renewal Centers: Suburban Wood, Humble; First, Livingston; DFW area, and Nacogdoches. There will be a time of information and

exposure about how to develop effective ministries, and a time to share stories from the churches to encourage one another.

These are just some activities and exposure ideas provided by State Missions. I'm working on more ways to communicate with our churches to let you know we value you and your ministries. I'm praying for churches in our local associations each week, beginning with the Angelina Association. A list of the churches is sent to all the churches on our email list and I ask you to pray with me for these churches.

Yes, it is an exciting time to serve the Lord because the world is in a sin-darkened mess and the light of the gospel is shining brighter than ever before. It would be a joy for me to share with your church, auxiliary group or local association what God is doing through State Missions, an extension of your church's mission.

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.



2014 Texas Galilean Explosion

By GENE MATHIS

State Galileans Coordinator

The Texas Galileans would like to invite all Galileans and interested boys ages 9-18 and sponsors to come to the annual Texas Galilean Explosion. The Explosion will take place 7-8 March at Jacksonville Baptist College. This year's theme is Treasure Hunters and taken from Matthew 6:19-21. All you need to bring is bedrolls, an eager attitude and yourself! Come and enjoy yourself while meeting with other Galileans from around the state. For further information please contact:

A. Gene Mathis, State Adult Sponsor
1111 East Loop 456
Jacksonville, Texas 75766
texasgalileans@yahoo.com

We look forward to seeing you there!

2014 Texas Galilean Explosion
7-8 March 2014
Jacksonville Baptist College
Jacksonville, TX

Treasure Hunters

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and

where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" Matthew 6:19-21.

Friday, March 7, 2014

7:30 p.m. (Curtis Carroll Field House)
Recognition of Mr. Galilean Candidates
Recognition of Galileans by Church & Rank
Guest Speaker, Dr. Mike Smith, president of Jacksonville College

8:15 p.m. Business Meeting
Election of 2014 Officers

8:45 p.m. Mr. Galilean Interviews
Boys Free Time (stay in Gym)

9:30 p.m. 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament

11:00 p.m. Dodgeball
Sponsors Meeting

Saturday, March 8, 2014

12:30 a.m. Lights Out & Quiet Time

6:30 a.m. Up & At 'Em
Prayer

7:00 a.m. Little Cafeteria
Breakfast

7:45 a.m. Curtis Carroll Field House
Challenge from President Nathan Turner
Revealing of 2014 Mr. Texas Galileans

8:15 a.m. Dismissing Prayer
Get on out of here!
Have a safe trip home!
SEE YA NEXT YEAR!



EVENTS

FEBRUARY 23, 2014

World Missions Sunday
@ New Harmony Baptist Church, Tyler
North American Missions Operations
Director Larry Barker, guest speaker
Morning Service @ 10 a.m.
Missions Banquet @ 11:30 a.m.
Evening Service w/several missionaries
speaking @ 6 p.m.

MARCH 13, 2014

Texas Baptist Home Rally
@ Brumley, Gilmer

APRIL 7-11, 2014

Revival
@ Woodland, Gilmer
7 p.m. nightly
Messages by:
Monday: Jack Hoffpauir
Tuesday: Hugh Casey
Wednesday: Kenneth Montgomery
Thursday: Rily Pate (age 13)
Friday: Jim Crump
David Mayhan, Pastor

APRIL 28-30, 2014

Annual Meeting of the BMAA
@ Statehouse Convention Center,
Little Rock, Ark.

MAY 15, 2014

BMMI Rally
@ Willow Oak, Gilmer

JULY 22, 2014

Smith County District Brotherhood
& WMA Meeting
@ Omen, Arp
Jerry Fulton, editor of Baptist Progress,
guest singer & speaker
Meal @ 6 p.m.
Meeting @ 7 p.m.

AUGUST 14, 2014

Lifeword Media Ministries Rally
@ Woodland, Gilmer

OCTOBER 13-14, 2014

Annual Liberty Baptist Association
@ Little Mound, Big Sandy

NOVEMBER 4-5, 2014

Annual Meeting of the BMA of Texas
@ Keltys First, Lufkin

PERSONNEL & POSITIONS

AVAILABLE POSITIONS

Youth—Smyrna, Winnsboro is seeking a part-time youth director. Send resume to smyrnabaptistchurch@yahoo.com.

Pastor—First Missionary, Terrell is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resume to Ray Harvey c/o First Missionary Baptist, P.O. Box 728, Terrell, Texas 75160 or sparkle7usmc@yahoo.com, or call 972-563-3076 for more information.

Music or Music & Youth—First, New Caney is seeking a bivocational music or music & youth minister. Send resume to Pastor Jonathan Fitzgerald, P.O. Box 1027, New Caney, Texas 77357 or to fbcnewcaney@att.net, or call 281-399-9930.

Pastor—Piney Creek, Kennard, located at 7015 Farm Market Road 2781 in Kennard is seeking a bivocational pastor. Contact Billy Don Davis at 936-655-2938 or send resume to Billy Don Davis at 822 County Road 4615 Kennard, Texas 75847.

College President—Southeastern Baptist College, Laurel, Miss., is currently seeking applications for president. For more information please contact: Matt Hudson, trustee chairman, 662-260-0244 (cell) or 662-862-2510 (home). You may also send an e-mail to mlhudson85@yahoo.com. Applications for this position will be received through March 30, 2014.

Music & Youth—First, Springhill, La. is seeking a minister of youth and minister of music. These are two separate positions. Please send inquires or resumes to: Search Committee Chairman Dave Thomas, 225 Thomas Rd, Springhill, LA 71075 or call at 318-422-0593.

Youth—Soda, Livingston is seeking a full time youth pastor. Send resume to the church at 8135 US Highway 190 East, Livingston, Texas 77351 or to youthguywayne@yahoo.com.

AVAILABLE MINISTERS

James Bickley has retired as pastor of Piney Creek, Kennard, after seven years of service. He is available for pulpit supply. Contact him at 936-853-2409.

ORDINATION

Lakeside, Trinidad will ordain their youth minister Dane Goode, who will become assistant pastor at 2:30 p.m. on March 16, 2014.

OBITUARY

Mitchell E. McRight, 74, of Jacksonville went to be with the Lord Feb. 3, 2014. Funeral services were Feb. 7, 2014 at Autry Funeral Home Chapel in Jacksonville with Bro. Donnie Sadler and Bro. Larry Smith officiating. Interment followed at Corine Cemetery in Jacksonville. McRight was born Feb. 15, 1939 in Lufkin and made his career as a mechanic for over 50 years. He was ordained to the Gospel Ministry in 1974. McRight served as pastor at Lakeside, Jacksonville and Travis Street, Jacksonville. He also provided pulpit supply in numerous churches. Mitchell was a member of Friendship, Jacksonville. He is survived by his beloved wife, Judy McRight of Jacksonville; sons, Carlton "Skipper" and wife Teressa McRight of Jacksonville, Steve McRight and wife Tamara of Omaha, Sean McRight and wife Lori of Jacksonville; brother, Joe McRight and wife Earline of Jacksonville; eight grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

PRAYER REQUEST

Thomas Ayres, pastor of Camille Acres, Longview requests prayer for his mother, Bernice Ayres, who has cancer and diabetes. She is presently taking treatments at OU Medical Center. Her illness is stage three and level three which means it is invasive and the fastest growing. Thankfully, it is also the most treatable and is only invasive by moving from the tumors to one lymph node. The Ayres faithfully serve at First, Alex, Okla. Please keep them in prayer. Mrs. Ayres and her husband, Pastor Bobby Ayres, have been in the ministry of the BMAA for 50 plus years.

CHURCHES IN REVIEW

FEBRUARY 2, 2013

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Anthony Drive, Ennis	68	104	
Cedar Creek, Teague	14	19	
Elwood, Wills Point	22	47	
First, Blooming Grove	214		1 By Letter
First, Palmer	40	60	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	13	25	
Harvest, Lufkin	29	32	
Little Flock, Lufkin		25	
Little Mound, Big Sandy	45	61	
Long Creek, Sunnyvale	57	64	
New Harmony, Tyler	304	390	
Pine Brook, Tyler	36	99	
Rosewood, Gilmer	111	182	
Sand Flat, Grand Saline	70	91	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	23	51	
Temple, Mexia	31	36	
Tundra, Canton	86	110	

FEBRUARY 9, 2013

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Anthony Drive, Ennis	68	114	
Cedar Creek, Teague	13	21	
Ebenezer Friendship, Pittsburg	29	40	
Elwood, Wills Point	15	24	1 By Letter, 1 By Baptism
Farley Street, Waxahachie	438	552	
First, Blooming Grove	213		1 By Letter
First, New Summerfield	29	44	1 By Letter
First, Palmer	46	83	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	15	42	
Harvest, Lufkin	29	40	
Jackson, Joaquin	68	116	
Little Flock, Lufkin	25		
Little Mound, Big Sandy	38	64	
Long Creek, Sunnyvale	61	76	1 By Letter
Merriman Hills, Sherman	16	16	
New Haven, Dallas	22	36	
New Hope, Mineola	61	128	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	49	71	
Pine Brook, Tyler	37	102	
Rosewood, Gilmer	117	198	4 By Baptism
Sand Flat, Grand Saline	70	84	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	17	39	
Temple, Mexia	39	44	
Tundra, Canton	94	115	
Woodland, Splendora	44	61	

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

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

Check out your salvation

By GARY HOUSE

TEXT: 2 Corinthians 13:1-5

DATE: February 23, 2014

LESSON IN BRIEF: Your life validates or challenges the claim of your salvation. Examine yourself to make sure your salvation is genuine (2 Corinthians 13:5).

“The unexamined life is not worth living.” Socrates

Paul asks the Corinthian Christians to consider a sobering question: “**Am I really a Christian?**” Bogus Christians abound. You better make sure you’re the real thing. In this day of satanic counterfeits, it is important that professing Christians know they are saved. Your eternal destiny hangs in the balance. Please don’t rely on a feeling or an experience. Right now, honestly ask God to reveal to you your true condition. Are you in the faith and in the family, or are you a counterfeit?

Examine--“to make proof; subject to trial, put to the test”

The word “examine” literally means “go right through yourself.” The test isn’t asking how often you go to church, how well you say your mealtime prayers or how many verses you’ve memorized. It goes

right to the bottom line—Are you even in the Christian faith? If those in the church chronically reject God’s Word and ways, checking to see if they’re saved isn’t just wise, it is essential.

Why should we examine ourselves? It is possible we may have fooled ourselves (Matthew 7:21-23). It is possible we may not understand how to become a Christian. Paul indicates by the use of the present tense of the verbs “examine” and “prove” that it is to be an ongoing activity.

Note the emphasis on yourself. Before we examine someone else’s life, we are encouraged to examine our own first. We are often very ready to examine and test others. But first and foremost we must examine and test ourselves. The trouble with the church at Corinth was that they criticized Paul and failed to examine themselves.

The standard by which we judge ourselves is not by the estimate of self or the estimate of men. We cannot compare ourselves with others, or trust their approval. The standard by which we judge ourselves is in trying ourselves by the

standard of God’s Word. The Bible was written for this purpose, that we might know we are in the faith. “*These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life*” (1 John 5:13).

Some exam questions are:

1. Do you have a personal relationship with Christ? In verse 4, Paul refers to two essential truths that genuine Christians must accept--Jesus was crucified, and He lives today.
2. Have you experienced any significant changes in your life through knowing Him?
3. Do you experience His leading, His presence, His peace, & His joy?
4. If you were to die today, do you have the assurance of eternity with God? (See Roman 10:9-10 and Acts 16:31)
5. How would you “prove” you were a Christian? Our claims must be backed up by our actions (1 John 2:3).

Let’s take a Practical test to see if we are truly saved. Can you show evidence

you are really a changed person? How different are your thoughts? Your habits? Your goals? Your relationships? Your feelings?

1. Are you getting easier to live with?
2. Are your attitudes any different now than they were in the past?
3. Do we love the brethren? (1 John 3:14)
4. Do we practice righteousness? (1 John 2:29; 3:9)
5. Have we overcome the world? (1 John 5:4)
6. Do we have the Holy Spirit? (Rom. 8:9)
7. Do I have the attitude of those who were true disciples?

Consider the sad plight of those who are “reprobate,” “disqualified.”

Paul describes some of them in Philippians 3:18-19, “*Because they set their mind on earthly things, their end is destruction.*” How much better to be like those described in Philippians 3:20-21!

To ensure that you will not be “disqualified,” then frequently “examine yourselves” in the light of God’s Word!

Running on empty

By GARY HOUSE

DATE: March 2, 2014

TEXT: Ecclesiastes 1:1-11

LESSON IN BRIEF: Life viewed from an earthly perspective can seem futile. Reject the vanity of a godless life and embrace the abundant life Jesus offers you.

Israel’s King Solomon, the writer of Ecclesiastes, possessed a reputation for extraordinary wisdom (1 Kings 3:12). This survey of Ecclesiastes is applicable to all who would listen and benefit from the principles he drew for life today. While people today are more educated than any other generation in the history of humanity, wisdom—especially from above—is sorely lacking. This series of lessons embarks on the adventure of a life worth living.

Solomon, the son of David, the great king of Israel, makes an honest confession that he often dealt with feelings of emptiness. He called it vanity—meaning, “empty or full of nothing figuratively; something transitory and unsatisfactory.” Satan’s lie is that if you could only have this one more possession or this one more

pleasure or this one more bit of worldly wisdom, you would be happy. Ecclesiastes is a journal of a man who seeks satisfaction out of life. He concludes his quest was meaningless. Simply stated, life without god is vain and meaningless.

Have you ever dealt with that emotion? What is the cause of it? How can it be overcome and replaced with the fullness of joy in making God the chief aim of your life?

Four reasons why life without God is empty:

1. Because life is temporary (Ecclesiastes 1:4, Psalms 90:10, James 4:14b). If you are 35, you only have 12,000 days left. But what is that compared to eternity?
2. Because knowledge brings no peace (Ecclesiastes 1:16-17). A knowledge that does not recognize God brings “vexation of spirit.” Intellectualism brings no peace because for the most part it ignores God’s wisdom and therefore sin remains (1 Corinthians 1:20-24).

3. Because pleasure, wealth and works bring no lasting satisfaction.

a. Pleasure (2:1). At the end of life, those things we thought so important at the time, seem empty because they brought no lasting satisfaction. 1 John 2:-16-17, “*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*” How much of our lives are spent pursuing the things in verse 16, but verse 17 tells us it is all passing away.

b. Wealth and Works (2: 4-11). “*Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun*” (verse 11).

4. Because of sin (Ecclesiastes 7:20). Sin is universal and we are all

affected by it. Men think they will not be caught (Ecclesiastes 8:11). But judgment will come, therefore do not waste your youth and make your life empty (Ecclesiastes 11:10).

Application (Ecclesiastes 12:11-14). The preachers’ conclusion is worthy of your consideration. If you find Christ, you are immediately successful in life, but if you gain all this world has to offer and do not find God through Christ, your life is empty and unsatisfactory.

Bring God into your life and obey Him because your life is being recorded and will be revealed. Do not wait until you are old, and like Solomon, look back on an empty life.

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JACKSONVILLE COLLEGE HOMECOMING 2014



Alumni showing the JC spirit at the homecoming game



Gathering for fun and fellowship in the FBC Family Life Center



Homecoming Royalty, Bob and Glenda McMakin



Fun shopping in the Jag Bookstore



Homecoming Queen 2014, Alyssa Willis



The JC Choir performing under the direction of Tim Timmons



Enjoying pictures from the past



Sharing memories of Jacksonville College



Faithful Jaguar supporters recognized at halftime: Paul Galyean, Alonzo Sherman, and Laura Smith



Bonner-Gaylor alumni chapter



Jaguar Homecoming game



Jag Band promoting school spirit with lively music