

Baptist Progress

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Grand opening of The Bridge

By **PAUL GAUNTT**
Baptist Progress Correspondent

A new congregation, co-sponsored by Texas State Missions and BMA of America Missions, the Bridge Church of Celina, Texas, held their grand opening service Sunday, Jan. 12 with a count of 94 in attendance.

A few friends and supporters of the work traveled hundreds of miles to witness the event including Marvin and Linda Mullen of Fairfield, where missionary pastor Matthew Prather served as student pastor of Calvary Baptist Church since 1998.

“Our daughter Sarah moved into this area and found a teaching job in McKinney just so she could help in this church,” said Mullen.

Prather’s father, Roy, who has been pastor of Fifth Street, Levelland for the past 14 years, traveled 400 miles to support his son in the grand opening in several ways—not the least of which was serving as a door greeter. When asked how he felt about what God was doing through his son, he had to choke back the tears.

“Awesome is the only word I can think of right now,” the elder Prather said. “I’m just so thrilled to see what God is doing here.”

The congregation is worshipping in the Celina Elementary school, and Missionary Prather says purchasing land and building their own facility is not an option at the present time.

“There is absolutely no land available to us, or any rental property,” he said. “It took a while to get the school system to agree to let us meet even once a month, but they just



▲ Worship in the cafetorium



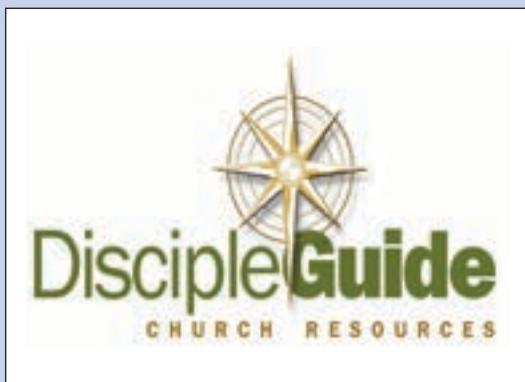
▲ The Prather family



▲ Cory Smith leads the congregation worship, which begins at 10:30 a.m.

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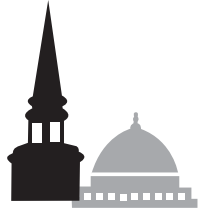
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Anti-Semitism

By **DR. JOHN M. ADAMS**

Moral Action Executive Director

The word “Holocaust” seemingly jumps off the page as one reads about or discusses anti-Semitism. This subject is described as a prejudice, hatred or discrimination against Jewish people for reasons connected to their race or heritage. A person or a group who holds such positions is called an anti-Semite.

God keeps Israel forever

In a Psalm that most of us have memorized, perhaps as children, Psalms 121 states: *“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: He that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.”*

This is an unconditional promise that is verified in history. There are over 3,500 years in history that verify God’s promise that He will keep Israel and protect the Jewish people.

The prophets avow that Israel shall remain a nation before God forever. Jeremiah 31:35-36: *“Thus saith the Lord which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and by the stars for a light by night, ...The Lord of hosts is His name: if those ordinances depart before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel shall cease from being a nation before Me forever.”* If you can blot out the sun and blot out the moon and change the eternal ordinances of God that one will shine in the day and the other will shine in the night; if you can do that, then there will come a time when the seed of Israel shall cease being a nation before God. But the same Lord God that made the

ordinance—that the sun shall shine in the day and the moon shall shine in the night—that same Lord God hath said: *“That Israel will be a nation before Me forever.”*

Historically, Satan desires to destroy Israel

In about 1400 B.C., the Egyptian Pharaoh said *“I shall destroy the Jews.”* His plan was to destroy the seed and then the Jewish nation would collapse. Pharaoh passed a decree that all male children born in every Hebrew family should be slain.

In 722 BC, Sargon, with his merciless and bitter Assyrians destroyed Samaria and the northern ten tribes. But God said: *“Israel shall abide before me a nation forever.”* In 586 BC, Nebuchadnezzar came with his Chaldeans and destroyed Jerusalem and Judah. But God said, *“Israel shall abide before me a nation forever.”*

In 70 AD, Titus came with his Roman legions and they leveled the holy city to the ground and destroyed the temple of the Lord. And they tried to destroy the nation utterly. But God said: *“Israel shall abide before Me a people forever.”* In the eighteenth chapter of the book of Acts and the second verse it says that Aquila and Priscilla, who later became friends to the apostle Paul were in Corinth because Claudius, the Roman Caesar had expelled all Jews from Rome. That has been the story of the Jewish heritage for centuries. Nation after nation has sought to destroy and to bury them.

In the law that Christopher Columbus wrote, dating it the first of August, 1492, Columbus observes that the port in which his ship is anchored and from which he leaves to find the New World is filled with Jews.

Why? Because Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand had made a decree to destroy all the Jews in Spain and they were driven out and expelled.

For centuries there were no Jews in the British Isles. They were not allowed in England. In 1948, for the first time in nearly two thousand years, a nation of Israel was born. But Nasser and the Arab said: *“It shall not exist.”* But God said, *“It will abide before Me forever.”* And in 1956, Nasser, the leader of Egypt, declared war against the little Israel and he was ignominiously defeated. Then in June of 1967, Nasser stood up and said, *“I have two billion dollars of Russian armament. I have one thousand Russian tanks. I have an armada of airplanes.”* And he inflamed the 50 million Arabs.

In June, led by Nasser, the Holy War of the Arab people attacked Israel from every side. To the amazement and to the astonishment of the earth, in six days Israel cut the Arab legions to shred. Isaiah 31:3-5 says *“now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses are flesh, and not Spirit. When the Lord shall stretch out His hand, they shall fail all together.”*

Adolf Hitler and his Nazi thugs tried desperately in World War II to eliminate the Semite/Jews but God halted this dastardly deed with the assistance of British and American allegiance to Israel.

The future Anti-Christ seeks to destroy the Semite

Satan’s program through the ages has been and will continue to be, the destruction of Israel. The ultimate and final dictator, the anti-Christ, will also fail. Front page

newspaper articles and television news coverage still focus on the Jewish nation of Israel. The tribulation period in itself will be about the Jewish people.

God’s Covenant with Israel

In Genesis 12:1-3, God states His covenant with Israel. This promise seals forever that Israel belongs to Him. But Israel’s existence in the Promised Land is always under the threat of annihilation from her Arab neighbors and surrounding foes. Five recent wars have evidenced Divine providence and preservation of the Jews.

Israel as a nation occupies a peculiar place in God’s economy. Ford Ottman (1859-1929) wrote in his book *The Coming Day*, *“The ability of the whale to swallow Jonah is no more wonderful than its inability to assimilate him. If God be not reckoned with, neither the one nor the other can be explained, neither can Israel nor her preservation be explained without reckoning with God and His covenant promises.”*

In Zechariah 2:7-8, the Lord says, *“deliver thyself, O Zion that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon. For thus saith the Lord of hosts; after the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye.”*

So individuals, politicians, and nations should consider carefully their opinions of the Jewish people. All should take heed of the warnings of Zechariah 2:7-8.

All Christians, churches, and governmental representatives should demonstrate support for the nation of Israel. Pray for Israel. Psalm 122:6, *“pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.”*

Special request for encouragement for former missionary Paul Robinson

Paul Robinson, a Houston pastor and former BMA of America missionary, is very ill. Pastor James Schoenrock, of Sheppard Drive, Eules, requests that prayers be made on behalf of Bro. Robinson, and as a means of encouragement that cards be sent to Bro. Robinson at the following address:

Paul Robinson
2920 Trenton Road
Houston, Texas 77093-3531



CONWAY, Ark.—Of the estimated 7.2 billion people on the earth today, over 2.5 billion of them have never heard of Jesus. An astounding fact considering that technology has allowed us to connect millions of people with just one keystroke.

How will we fulfill the command to reach those people, almost a third of the world’s population? On World Missions Sunday, churches will emphasize the need to support our missionaries through prayer and giving. Prayer is a powerful thing; that’s why missionaries always ask us to do that first. And, of course, giving is certainly a critical part of supporting our BMA missionaries around the world.

Plan to join us for World Missions Sunday on Feb. 23. Go to bmamissions.org/worldmissions for more information about this day of praying and giving. Paul urged the Ephesians to *“... be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.”* Will you pray for those 2.5 billion people and the missionaries who will tell them about Jesus?

DiscipleGuide editor plans retirement

TEXARKANA—In 1972, editor C. O. Strong invited Charles Reddin to join the editorial staff of Baptist Publishing House in Texarkana. In a 42 year career Brother Reddin's hand has touched such far-ranging projects as Girls' Missionary Auxiliary publications to adult Sunday school curriculum. Since 2000 Brother Reddin has filled the position of adult editor, supervising the publication of all adult Sunday school curriculum projects.

Brother Reddin has made the decision to retire from the publishing role he has filled for the past four decades. The scheduled date for his retirement is July 15, 2014. The timing of his retirement is based partly on his own eligibility for retirement and partly on the changes that are occurring at DiscipleGuide. Brother Reddin stated, "When the Board announced the decision to recommend closing the office here, I felt that the best time for me to retire would be when the move takes place."

DiscipleGuide Executive Director Scott Attebery expressed his appreciation for Brother Reddin stating, "Brother Charles is leaving a legacy behind. His work has shaped the faith of countless members of the BMA. Without a doubt, his ministry has reached the corners of the globe as pastors and missionaries—influenced by his work have influenced others for Christ."

DiscipleGuide has prayerfully begun the process of choosing a successor to Brother Reddin. Attebery explains, "Although it will be impossible to find another *Charles Reddin*, we believe God will provide another man to carry on his legacy of faithfulness."



▲ Charles Reddin

Online annual church letter form deadline February 15

By LINDA CARY
DiscipleGuide Information Services

DiscipleGuide Information Services supports all BMAA churches; departments; ministries; associations at the local, state, and national levels; and, all who serve God's Kingdom through the BMAA. The work of Information Services is compiled annually in the *BMAA Directory and Handbook*. The 54th edition of the directory is now in production. The 2013-2014 Annual Church Letter form is essential to produce the directory and it keeps your church's listings as current as possible. The statistics requested are used to evaluate the overall effectiveness and growth of the BMAA and its ministries.

Some state and local associations have chosen to use this form, enabling church clerks to complete one form one time and submit copies for those annual meetings. (Note: There is a different single-page BMAA Letter of Representation distributed before the annual meeting in April.) However, in order to update listings in the *BMAA Directory and Handbook*, the Annual Church Letter form must be submitted directly to Information Services.

If you have already submitted your church letter to us, we thank you. If not, you may complete it online at www.BMALife.com/churchletter until **February 15**, or mail your completed form to DiscipleGuide Information Services, 4613 Parkway Drive, Texarkana, Ark. 71854 by **Feb. 15**. The form also can be found in the back of the *2013-2014 Directory and Handbook*. A minimum offering of \$25 will reserve your copy of the *2014-2015 BMAA Directory and Handbook* and help cover publishing costs.

Serving as a valuable resource, the *BMAA Directory and Handbook* is only as accurate as the reports submitted to Information Services. Currently there are over 3,800 preachers listed in the *BMAA Directory & Handbook*. Over half of these have not reported for several years and we need your help. If you are aware of any changes in status or contact information, please call 870-772-4550 or email lcary@discipleguide.org. Thank you!

Spring DiscipleKids

By JEROME COOPER
DiscipleGuide Director of Publishing

Hard work and hope are the major themes kids will explore in the spring 2014 edition of DiscipleGuide Church Resources' *DiscipleKids* Bible study curriculum.

The first unit of six lessons will focus on hard work. The examples of work preschoolers will examine include Adam and Eve as they took care of the Garden, Noah as he built the ark, and Moses as he carried out God's instructions to build the tabernacle. Supplementing the theme of work, are lessons on giving (in order for the work to be done) and rest (as God's solution to the need to recover from work. This unit will teach the divine blessing on the work ethic.

The second unit of six lessons examines the concept of hope. Lessons on David's care of Mephibosheth, the prodigal son, Jesus' miracles, Peter's denial and restoration, and the healing of the lame man at the temple show the benefit and source of true hope. These lessons also challenge children to prepare to share the message of hope with others.

A final lesson to be used on Easter Sunday teaches children the great truth that Jesus is alive!

DisciplePoints coordinator Cindy Williams offers insight into these lessons and suggests methods that parents can use to incorporate what their children have studied into their home life.

For more information about the *DiscipleKids* curriculum call 1-800-333-1442 or go online at DiscipleGuide.org. To check out the DisciplePoints resource, go to disciplepoints.com.

DiscipleGuide Seeking Editor

Do you have special skills in writing and project development? Have you ever wondered how your editing skills could be used for God's kingdom? At DiscipleGuide, we believe that God does big things through small churches. Our mission is to provide effective resources to help churches make disciples.

Serving churches is serving Christ. That's why we are committed to the highest standards of quality in our curriculum. Has God given you a skillset "for such a time as this?"

DiscipleGuide Church Resources is seeking a full-time managing editor who will be responsible for producing the *Compass* curriculum products as well as other publications. The responsibilities call for a candidate who can fully support the doctrinal stance of the BMAA and assure that the curriculum products conform to the BMAA doctrinal statement. The position would report to the Director of Publishing. In addition, the following skills are necessary for the task.

- **Language skills.** The editorial responsibilities will require the candidate to have a mastery of grammar and usage.
- **Bible knowledge.** This editorial position primarily deals with the *Compass* Bible-study curriculum, thus a strong biblical background is vital to the task. Knowledge of biblical languages is a plus.
- **Strong organizational skills.** The editor will supervise the production of multiple products each quarter. The editor will also be responsible to recruit, train, and coordinate a team of curriculum developers and writers in order to meet house production schedules. Experience in publishing is helpful, but not necessary.
- **Business administration and marketing skills.** Skills that would aid in the production, sales, and marketing of DiscipleGuide products would be valuable for this position.

Duties of DiscipleGuide's adult editor include:

- Lead a committee of freelance writers in curriculum development.
- Edit manuscripts for publication with attention to grammar, doctrine, biblical content, readability, effectiveness, and length.
- Provide materials and guidance for typesetting and design as publications are assembled.
- Read proofs and verify corrections.
- Communicate with DiscipleGuide staff, writers, customers, church leaders, teachers, and readers as needed.
- Participate in evaluating and planning products.

Interested parties should send a resume to DiscipleGuide: Attn. Jerome Cooper, 4613 Parkway Drive, Texarkana, AR 71854. Applications will be received until job is filled.

FROM THE EDITOR

Mockery of God's Word and gay marriage at the Grammys

Imagine my shock and dismay Monday, Jan. 27, 2014 to read a FOX News report that a same-sex mass wedding had taken place at the Grammy Awards the night before. After all, the Grammy Awards is supposed to be a celebration of music, however secular it might be, but this year the awards program was about much more than music.

It seems that Queen Latifah, a hip-hop artist and actress, was deputized by Los Angeles County, California to perform a mass wedding for 34 couples—both homosexual and heterosexual.

In a blasphemous ceremony that took place on a stage set to resemble a giant chapel with stained-glass windows, Queen Latifah officiated as hip-hop duo Macklemore & Ryan Lewis sang their hit tune "Same Love," a song embraced by the LGBT community last year.

The words of their song include:

"The right-wing conservatives think it's a decision/And you can be cured with some treatment and religion/Man-made rewiring of a predisposition. Playing God, aw nah here we go/America the brave still fears what we don't know/And God loves all his children, is somehow forgotten/But we paraphrase a book written 3500 years ago."

Madonna later joined the ceremony wearing an all-white suit, singing a portion of her heyday hit "Open Your Heart."

An approving crowd stood to their feet, applauding the mass wedding. Country singer Keith Urban was even seen shedding a tear as the cameras roved about the room.

Responses from viewers twitting at home included: "so beautiful & so proud of couples not afraid to marry who they want... Straight, gay, black, white... Love is Love."

Others called ceremony inappropriate for a music awards show and a blatant attack on religious values.

My question is, "How long will the Lord refrain from exacting His judgment upon America." Our citizens have elected a president who approves of gay "marriage" which is no marriage at all, as God's Word clearly defines marriage as a sacred union between one man and one woman.

The Supreme Court of our nation and federal judges on lower

courts are legislating from the bench when it comes to social issues.

Pastors and churches are watering down the message of God's Word in order to attract the masses and become all inclusive.

It is absolutely imperative that the Christians of our nation fall to our knees, repent of our wickedness and ask the Lord for revival.

The late Dr. Adrian Rogers once preached,

"Now, my dear friend, may I tell you that it's not the secular humanist who needs a revival, he needs life. To revive is to bring something almost dead back to health. They don't need a revival, they need a vival.

"We're not talking about Hollywood. We're not talking about the pornographers when we're talking about revival. We are talking about the people of God. My dear friend, the problem in America and the cure for America is sitting in congregations like this across America.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the hope of America is not in the Pentagon or in the White House, it is in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"The need in America today is not eloquence, it's not energy, it's not enthusiasm, it's not influence, it is not intellect. It is intercession."

To Dr. Rogers' words I say, "AMEN!"

Please understand, as much as I find the broadcast of a gay wedding ceremony repulsive, I find it even more sickening cheers to a song that mocks the precious Word of God.

I ask that you join me in prayer for our nation. How desperately our world needs Jesus! But, all hope is not lost, for Scripture is clear in 2 Chronicles 7:14, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."



▲ Jerry Fulton



www.bmatexas.org

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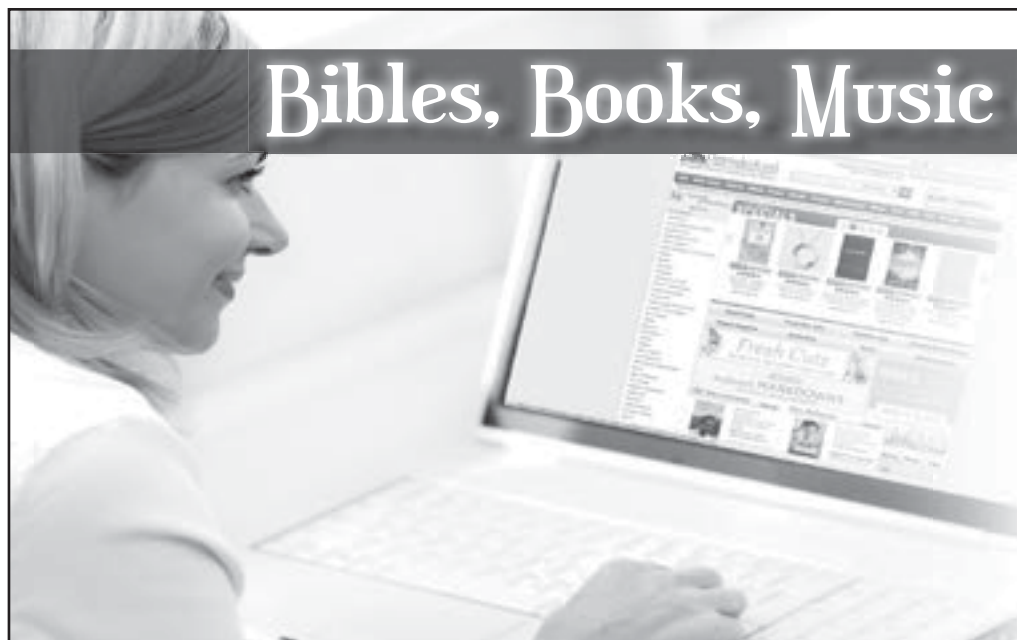
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Things that finally dawned on me

Part 2 - The proper motive for service

By **PAUL GAUNTT**

If you really want to know your actual motive for service, just let someone else get public acclaim for something you did in private.

Which begs the question, “Do you serve to be seen of men, or strictly for the glory of the Lord?”

There are several fleshly motives for service: some serve out of guilt, habit, recognition and duty. Some serve with a heart of exhilaration and satisfaction, while others serve grudgingly, or in a competitive spirit.

Many people would rather serve without recognition while others feel the need to be seen.

People with a giving heart, love to anonymously give to meet the needs of people, while others give, as my Daddy used to say, “holding the five dollar bill high in the air and letting it float into the offering plate.”

Scripture is replete with commands about what spirit to have to give finances or services in the church. We are not to give our gifts or service to be seen of men, otherwise we have no reward from the Heavenly Father. The “hypocrites” mentioned in Matthew 6 made great fanfare by blowing trumpets and bringing attention to their “acts” of charity. But scripture explicitly notes that any reward they receive will be from men’s applause and

not from God.

I believe motive will be the factor that determines the judgment of works at the Judgement Seat of Christ. That judgment will take place at some point immediately following the rapture of the saints. It is not the judgment of the lost because that will occur 1007 years later when God judges the lost at the White Throne Judgment. The saved will stand before Christ and we will be judged according to our works—not to determine whether or not we are saved, but to determine our standing in the coming Kingdom. According to I Corinthians 3, our works will be put to the test of fire. The works that have value will stand the test, but works done in the flesh will be consumed like wood, hay and stubble.

Works done to glorify self will not stand the test. Works performed with a sense of duty, or grudge, or for the purpose of promoting our agendas or our rank, or just for sheer attention will be destroyed, but Jesus says we will be “saved, yet so as by fire.”

Sometimes good works will not only go unnoticed by the crowd, but sometimes works that we may do which may be pleasing to God may not be recognized by us as good works. Could that be because the only good works are works that were

done by God’s Holy Spirit through us and not of our flesh?

Pastor, how many times have you felt that you brought the heavens down with a stem-winding oratory delivered by you, yet nobody responded? Then, how many times did your message seem to be nothing but stammering, stuttering and sweating from embarrassment because of an all consuming feeling of unworthiness? Those seem to be the occasions when God chooses to come down. I think God allows such to remind us that all the good work is performed by Him -- and He can do it through us - or in spite of us. He also reminds us that works that we do in the flesh, no matter how spectacular it may seem to onlookers, is a total failure, because God wasn’t in 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.



It takes more than one day a year

By **DR. TRAVIS PLUMLEE**

Valentine’s Day is just around the corner and most Christian married couples celebrate the holiday by giving gifts and being romantic on that day. Many choose to go out to eat, and give gift exchanges to represent the love they have for each other. I’m not going to say this is a bad thing. Acknowledging the love for one another is a good thing. Being romantic and affectionate is a healthy part of being married. But I have a challenge coming for you, so keep reading.

You may be the type of person who doesn’t have any expression of love towards your mate. If this is true, then you need to learn to show affection, romance and pay more attention to your mate. Love has to be shown and demonstrated. You can’t say you truly love someone, and not ever express it in anyway. You can’t blame it on the way you were raised. If you are a guy, you can’t blame it on being a man. At some point you have to stop blaming your past, or the fact that you just aren’t the romantic type, and start learning new ways to respond to your spouse with love, attention, affection and an occasional romantic act.

Here comes the challenge for all of us in marriage. Being considerate and affectionate one night a year on Valentine’s Day is nice, but we really need to push ourselves to grow much deeper than that. Before Valentine’s Day arrives, the two of you sit down and come up with some ways each of you would like to be treated. It doesn’t mean your spouse is doing a bad job at these necessarily. It doesn’t mean they are not doing it at all. It simply is saying, “I like it when you...” It can be words used. It can be kind deeds done. It can be romantic. It can be help around the house. It can be giving me some space and quiet time. The list is different for each couple and relationship. The point of doing this is to find out what each other desires in the relationship. Then, you can’t say that you were

unaware that your spouse needed these things. To not do them, or ignore them is to not be actively working on your marriage. You do know that you have to work on your marriage all the time if you want it to be successful. God does the uniting and He gives the love; but He wants us to seek Him and express His love to our mates. In other words, God does require us to interact with His love. He wants us to be available vessels of His love that we can express towards our mate. Marriage is the example of Christ the groom, and the church the bride.

If we go year after year without any plan, without ever discussing our needs, wants and desires; then it is quite likely our marriage will grow stale. We will drift apart. We will, in the long run, just be two people existing in the same household. This is not God’s desire for marriage. Many people will only express through a card or short verse that their spouse is a good parent on Mother’s Day or Father’s Day. They may only express affection on Valentine’s Day, or when they want something in exchange for romance. This is a sad marriage. It is a give and take. I will give you this, but you must give me that. This is not a giving marriage, which is how God designed it. So I challenge you—before the roses, before the candy, before the dinner out, before the kiss on Valentine’s Day, why don’t you two pray about, and commit and talk about letting February 14 be a kickoff day—a day where you promise not to show romance and kindness once a year. But you endeavor to seek God and live out His love in your marriage all the time.

To start that process, we will sit down and make a list of things we like, or we have need of. It doesn’t really matter whether you think it is a good idea or not. If your spouse says they would like it, then your job is to do more of it.

We don’t have to strive to be perfect. We can’t be. We don’t have

to strive to be lovey dovey every single day. That’s unrealistic. But we could shoot for the majority of the time to show respect for one another. We could work on listening better to each other’s point of view. We could practice forgiveness on a regular basis. We could learn to show value and respect even when we have disagreements.

We could work hard on trying to be kind and please our spouse. What did they write down that they like? Do more of it. Immediately throw out any thoughts of, “what do I get out of this?” That is a very selfish point of view. If you are like this, pray for God to change you. If you aren’t romantic, thoughtful, kind, considerate or anything else; then pray to the One who can do all things in you. Jesus can handle this. Jesus and the Father, through the work of the Holy Spirit can change you. God desires for your marriage to be successful.

It isn’t enough to be romantic once a year. All those gestures seem empty if from February 15 on, we ignore or disrespect each other. So before the day gets here; get your ducks in a row. Then when Valentine’s Day rolls around, it will just be the kick off to a new way of responding all year, and a better marriage for the glory of God.

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.



Grand opening of The Bridge cont.



▲ Children's worship in the gym.

released the building for weekly services.”

Small groups meet in homes on Sunday evening, Wednesday and Thursday with sessions including a question and answer review of the previous Sunday's message.

The Bridge Church began meeting in the Prather's home January 2013, and began to plan ways to aggressively connect with the community.

“We linked up with the community by becoming acquainted with our neighbors, we got involved with the Chamber of Commerce and we set up booths at community functions, gave out bottled water and just helped in any way we could,” Prather said.

When asked about his vision for building a church, He said he knew seven years earlier that God was dealing with him about it.

“It didn't matter to me where, I just had the desire to plant a church,” he said. “We traveled to several areas, and then finally we drove around Celina and saw the growth that was taking place and we knew this was it.”

Prather said Celina, located just seven miles north of U.S. Highway 380 near Frisco, has grown from a population of 1200 to over 10,000 during the past 10 years.

A preacher's son from East Texas, Stephen Newton, along with his family, have begun serving in the church. Newton divulged one of the factors in the church quickly becoming known in the community, saying Celina has hundreds of families that have become disillusioned with the established church as well as local city and school system politics which he says seems to have a stronghold in the tenured local congregations, making it difficult for a new church start up.

“I think that is the basic reason why just handing out flyers door-to-door has been so effective,” Newton said, noting that it's evident to a large sector of the population

that the new church isn't laden with all the trappings of long-time established congregations.

When asked about the future, Prather has a somewhat innovative approach, visualizing his church as an incubator to berth additional congregations.

“We have enough space here in the school building to grow to perhaps 700,” he said. “My vision is to train church planters here and send them out to other parts of North Texas to start other works,” he said.

Prather is thankful for his staff, which consists of a worship leader, Crockett native Cory Smith, and associate pastor Jonathan Stone, who was raised in BMA work, and his father is pastor of Life House Fellowship in the Van Zandt County town of Myrtle Springs. Prather met Stone at a retreat years ago, and the two hit it off, both realizing they had similar visions for church work.

Smith utilizes a state-of-the-art sound system and incorporates a mixture of tracks and accompaniment to lead the congregation in praise and worship, using contemporary music.

A welcome center, and a donut and coffee area helps to foster relationship building during the valuable few minutes before worship. An area has been designated and equipped for a nursery, and a children's worship is held in a portion of the school's gymnasium. The congregation meets in the cafeterium.

For further information, contact Texas State Department of Missions at 972-923-0757, or visit the Bridge Church website at www.discoverthebridge.com or write The Bridge Church, PO Box 1443. Celina, TX. Church phone contact number is 469-296-8557.

Letter to the editor



“And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:30-31).

Loving your neighbor does not always mean those out your front door. I am going to present to you and our churches a chance to love your neighbor beyond your front door.

In the home you see above lives a family in dire need of help. This is the Smith family home.

Here is their story:

Larry Smith surrendered to the ministry in 1972 at Woodlawn Baptist Church in Pascagoula, Miss. He and his family have served churches in Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, and Texas.

In 2009 Bro. Larry bought some land and a home with the intent to refurbish and repair it. He pastored a church an hour from the home's location and began working on repairs and cleanup of the property.

Shortly after Bro. Larry resigned his church and was offered a job in the county where his property was located, only he had to move his family immediately to secure the job. After a series of events, such as his mom moving in and dying and his son in law passing away, Bro. Larry was injured on the job and was no longer able to work.

One morning Bro. Larry drove into town and was gone for several hours. He returned home to pick up his adult son Terry, and together they went back to town. At this point Bro. Larry told his son, “I don't want to leave your mother and sister with any debt when I am gone.” This same day Bro. Larry paid off all the family debt and bought his wife and daughter a reliable vehicle. Some three months later Bro. Larry lost his battle with cancer, and went to be with His Lord.

While visiting the family to see about repairing electrical work we discovered the home was beyond repair. The structure is crumbling beneath them, beams under the home broken and rotting from termite damage. The mold is beyond manageable although the family have tried tirelessly. The home must come down

in order to build a new home for this family who has served so many over the years.

Mrs. Linda the mom stays home to help take care of her adult daughter who has medical issues and disabilities. The two do arts and crafts to try to bring in extra income for their family.

While in Texas my family formed a non-profit organization called LYNCO-Love Your Neighbor Community Outreach. The organization was formed for the distinct purpose of reaching out to elderly, disabled and those truly in need.

LYNCO along with several churches, family and friends have started fund raising events to raise money to build the family a new home by the end of summer 2014, as the house will not last beyond this time.

The building plans have been donated, electrical has been donated, and much more. LYNCO has been in contact with Classic Builders of Mississippi who if available will join in the building of this home.

We want to give our churches this mission opportunity to serve this family by setting aside a week in February or March as Love Your Neighbor Week. During this week we are asking our churches to take up a LOVE offering, conduct a fundraiser or simply pray for this family.

LYNCO's goal is to raise \$20,000 to buy materials needed to get this home built so the Smith family will be in a safe, healthy home. Will you help by loving your neighbor!

LYNCO is selling T-shirt for \$13.

Please, look us up on facebook LYNCO-Love Your Neighbor Community Outreach. You may contact LYNCO at 662-228-1240 or 662-228-1233. All proceeds are tax deductible and a tax id may be acquired by contacting the above number. All checks need to be made out to LYNCO. If you cannot help at this time please PRAY for this mission outreach.

Pastor Jimmy Daugherty
Ballardsville Baptist Church
Tupelo, Miss.

2013

UNITED THANKSGIVING OFFERING

Below is a list of contributions given by associations, churches and individuals to the 2013 United Thanksgiving Offering. Thank you from the departments of the BMA of Texas to all who gave.

Anthony Drive, Ennis	650.00	Holly Grove, Livingston	93.00
Antioch, Gilmer	563.00	Jackson, Joaquin	923.00
Antioch, Palestine	593.00	Lakeside, Trinidad	125.00
Bardwell, Bardwell	500.00	Landmark, Cushing	375.00
Beacon Hill, Waco	1,100.00	Lawrence Springs, Fruitvale	65.00
Beech Grove, Jasper	300.00	Leggett, Leggett	200.00
Bethel of White Rock, Dallas	705.00	Liberty, Henderson	500.00
Bethel, Groesbeck	230.00	Little Flock, Jewett	1,500.00
Bethel, Livingston	431.00	Little Mound, Big Sandy	500.00
Bethel, Port Arthur	194.00	Macedonia, Etoile	237.00
Bishop Chapel, Jasper	257.00	Macune, San Augustine	2,910.00
BMA of Smith County	1,000.00	Magnolia Springs, Magnolia Springs	250.00
Buena Vista, Tenaha	50.00	Mahl, Nacogdoches	606.00
Calvary First, Mesquite	1,001.00	Mt. Calvary, Carthage	325.00
Calvary, Amarillo	95.00	Mt. Lebanon, Grand Saline	250.00
Calvary, Centerville	100.00	Mt. Pisgah, Mineola	10,650.06
Calvary, Ennis	500.00	Myrtle Springs, Quitman	1,618.50
Calvary, Fairfield	2,647.82	New Hope, Mineola	850.00
Calvary, Gilmer	50.00	New Hope, New Waverly	100.00
Calvary, Midlothian	262.45	New Salem, Henderson	1,250.00
Camille Acres, Longview	500.00	Northside, Conroe	1,500.00
Cedar Creek, Teague	1,500.00	Northside, Garland	675.00
Center Hill, Oakhurst	1,357.00	Oak Grove, Canton	325.00
Central, Aspermont	1,000.00	Old Home, Joaquin	263.00
Central, Bronte	25.00	Omen, Arp	181.00
Central, Mineola	100.00	Pecan, Robert Lee	772.00
China Grove, Eustace	275.00	Phillips, M., Gilmer	1,000.00
Clover Hill, Quitman	100.00	Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	220.00
College Avenue, Levelland	1,165.00	Pilgrims Rest, Emory	691.00
Concord, Gilmer	200.00	Pine Brook, Tyler	4,470.00
Corinth, Jacksonville	210.00	Piney Creek, Kennard	500.00
CrossRoads, Rowlett	450.00	Red Springs, Tyler	415.00
Dallas Park, Dallas	180.00	Richland Heights, Grand Saline	86.00
East Mayfield, Hemphill	460.00	Rocky Hill, Huntington	281.50
Ebenezer Friendship, Pittsburg	436.00	Rose Hill, Mineola	345.00
Ebenezer, Huntsville	320.00	Rosewood, Gilmer	2,500.00
Emmanuel, Garland	200.00	Round Prairie, Fairfield	1,500.00
Enon First, Iola	1,255.00	Sand Flat, Grand Saline	435.00
Enon, Gilmer	2,219.00	Sand Prairie, North Zulch	1,500.00
Fair Park, Tyler	395.60	Sardis, Henderson	314.00
Farley Street, Waxahachie	1,217.37	Sardis, Waxahachie	120.00
Fellowship, Winnsboro	200.00	Shady Grove, DeBerry	143.00
First Missionary, Cockrell Hill	50.00	Sheppard Drive, Euless	625.00
First Missionary, Morton	160.00	Sheridan Terrace, Palestine	165.00
First of Providence, Livingston	25.00	Simmons Hill, Diana	25.00
First, Beckville	120.00	Soda, Livingston	1,372.90
First, Gary	30.00	South Park, Ft. Worth	1,718.00
First, Jacksonville	2,250.00	Southline, Cleveland	147.00
First, Judson	500.00	Suburban Wood, Humble	125.00
First, McAdoo	200.00	Sunset, Lamesa	500.00
First, New Summerfield	98.00	Temple, Mexia	315.00
First, Palmer	5.00	Union, Springtown	311.25
First, Talco	570.00	Victory, Centerville	67.00
Folsom, Tenaha	1,500.00	Walnut Springs, DeBerry	500.00
Freestone, Teague	310.00	Walnut Street, Winnsboro	755.00
Friendship, Jacksonville	592.40	Walston Springs, Palestine	60.00
Friendship, Mesquite	170.10	Ward Prairie, Fairfield	200.00
Glade Creek, Gilmer	1,025.00	Weeks Chapel, Jasper	1,500.00
Glenfawn, Cushing	425.00	Winterfield, Pickton	240.00
Greenpond, Como	500.00	Zion Hill, Jasper	500.00
Harmony, Normangee	400.00	Total	84,614.95



Hotel information for 2014 BMA of America Meeting

Baptist Missionary Association of America

April 28-30, 2014

Statehouse Convention Center

Little Rock, Arkansas

HOTEL ROOM RATES:

Marriott

(formerly Peabody) Single: \$119

3 Statehouse Plaza Double: \$119

(501) 906-4000 or Triple: \$129

1-877-759-6290 Quad: \$139

Cutoff Date: March 28, 2014

Comfort Inn

\$90

707 Interstate 30

(501) 687-7700

Cutoff Date: April 13, 2014

Holiday Inn

Presidential \$105.99

600 Interstate 30

(501) 375-2100

Cutoff Date: March 28, 2014

Is WMA for me?

By SHARON COLE

YES! WMA is for you! All ladies from the time you leave GMA until the Lord calls you home, there is a place for you in WMA. There is no stopping place in the Lord's service. We need the wisdom and experience of the older ladies as well as the energy, enthusiasm and new ideas of the younger ladies. Women's Missionary Auxiliary is a place that God has given to women to do a mission ministry in His church.

When we work closely with the pastor, WMA can be an outreach ministry that will be invaluable to the pastor and the church. The very heart of WMA is the "M" which stands for missionary. One of our objectives is to band together to help the church carry out the command of Matt.28:19-20. Other objectives in the WMA Plan of Work are Bible study, evangelism, benevolence and youth auxiliaries.

To study God's Word is a very important objective of WMA. A concentrated study of the Bible will lead to a more dedicated church membership. Evangelism is the part that concentrates on the spiritual growth of the church and those with whom we contact in the community. Benevolence is a natural part of a Christian's goal in serving the Lord. It is acts of kindness and sincere concern for others in need; spiritually as well as physically.

Some benevolent acts could be making lap robes for elderly shut-ins or nursing home, supplying needs for homeless shelter, taking food to a sick neighbor, preparing meals for the visiting evangelist and pastor's family during revivals, making welcome baskets for new residents in the community, etc.

Youth Auxiliaries is another part of our focus in WMA. We are the "parent" organization for Girls' Missionary Auxiliary and Sunbeams by providing encouragement to the leaders, materials for study, and showing our children that they are important.

Finding time for WMA meetings can be challenging in today's world with so many ladies working at public jobs. I've heard young mothers say, "I just don't know how I can fit another thing into my daily schedule." We find time to do what we really want to do. If it is a ballgame we really want to attend, we find time to do it. If it is getting our hair done, we make time

for that. So why not make time for WMA?

Joining a group of ladies who desire to serve the Lord, whether it is weekly or monthly, can do so many things to improve your life, strengthen your church, and let people outside your church know that you care. Who is a prospect? Every lady is a prospect! WMA ladies already involved, look around your church and think of the other ladies who are not. They may not be able to attend scheduled meetings at a certain time, but they can be used of the Lord if given the chance. They can bring a wealth of knowledge and ability such as: decorating, drawing, hosting socials and promoting the church where they work. The older ladies, perhaps unable to get around can still be of service by being "Prayer Warriors" and using the phone to be an encouragement to others in need. As I said in the beginning, there is no stopping place in the Lord's service.

To spark some interest in WMA, (1) make a "Blessing Box." Wrap a box with pretty paper and bow making an opening in the top. Print on the front, "You Are A Blessing To Me." Prepare 3x5 cards with the following: "You Are A Blessing To Me" Name of person: Date: and tell why this person is a blessing to you. Do not sign it. Place the card in the box and the box in an accessible place, perhaps in the foyer. Give each active WMA member a card to begin the process and place cards by the box for every lady to participate. Many times we fail to encourage and express appreciation assuming they know. This small act of kindness will enhance everyone's life by sharing God's love. (2) People will come where there is food! Plan a box supper. Have each active lady fix a special decorated boxed supper for two. Invite an inactive lady, or go get them, and bring them to the supper. Number the boxes; then let the ladies draw numbers to decide who they will eat with. (3) "It Isn't The Same Without You"... Assign each lady in the church an ingredient in a recipe. She must come to the meeting and bring that ingredient. When everyone is there, mix up the meal and enjoy...or better yet, take it to a shut-in and share your meal with her. (4) "Who Am I?"...Arrange to have one lady in your church to serve as special speaker for your WMA meeting. Find out some interesting facts

about her. For the month before the meeting, print some of these facts each week in the church bulletin. Never announce the name of your speaker and don't reveal her identity until you introduce her at your meeting. Keep interest up by talking and guessing in front of inactive ladies. (5) Special Missions Night—Have a menu of food from a country where we have BMA missionaries. Make posters with pictures from that country, decorate with items associated with the country and have the ladies who serve dress in native costumes of that land. Have one of the ladies prepare a program of interesting facts about the country and the missionaries serving there. How can all these things be accomplished? By getting busy; choose a leader or chairman for each part of the "Plan of Work." Each chairman should be responsible for one study or activity per month or however many times you meet.

The WMA theme song, "Reaching Out in Service" gives a guideline of what we are all about: to reach out; not sit at home wishing for something to do. We are to reach out in service, benevolence, witnessing and missions to everyone we meet and to our children. None of this is going to really be accomplished unless we bathe each part in prayer. Ask the Lord to use you. Ask Him to give you the desire to see your WMA grow, prosper, and be a light in your church and community.

GMA COUNSELORS: REMEMBER THE FEBRUARY 10TH DEADLINE FOR SENDING INFORMATION TO THE STATE PROMOTERS FOR THE TEXAS GMA HOUSEPARTY, MARCH 14-15, 2014.

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.



Right here at home

By JACKIE RICKS

National WMA Editor

Often when the average person thinks of missionaries, he thinks of someone who travels across the world to witness to someone of a different culture. Some missionaries do that. Sometimes the hardest thing is to witness to the people who are living right around us in a busy world that we know all too well. God calls all of us to witness to anyone we meet who may need to know more about Him. He does, however, call some to go specifically to areas where, for whatever reason, the Word is not reaching the average United States citizen. That's exactly what happened when God called Matthew Prather to

be a BMAA missionary.

Matthew grew up as a Baptist preacher's kid. While at Jacksonville College, he met Amy Taylor, a Baptist deacon's daughter. They married in May, 1996. Matthew had surrendered to preach when he was 18, and he became a youth minister at Calvary, Fairfield, Texas, in 1998. The Prather's now have two sons: Ethan, 9, and Jonas, 6. At the present time, Amy works as a substitute teacher in the Celina schools where her boys go. In that manner, she is available to assist Matthew at times when she is needed.

When Matthew and Amy Prather knew that God was calling them to the mission field, they began to pray about where He wanted them to serve. As they prayed, they realized that God was leading them to continue working in their own home state of Texas because it is the fastest growing state in the United States. After much prayer and checking out various areas around the state, God brought the Prathers to Celina, a relatively small but rapidly growing town north of the Dallas metroplex. Amy says that they have neighbors from many different states who have chosen to make this town their home.

Right here at home continued on p. 9

Mission Life

By JERRY BURNAMAN

Pastors and church leaders know 2 Corinthians 5:17 from memory: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

Every believer has a fresh start. There is something in all of us that loves a fresh start. You may have “Googled” some ideas about the New Year and discovered Top 10 New Year’s resolutions and the many hits come out nearly the same. I rarely do New Year’s resolutions because I get off track by the end of January.

Well, January 2014 is passed and there are 11 months left in the year. A good leader sets goals for the year and plans strategies for accomplishing them. What are your goals? Here are some popular ideas.

1. Laugh more. Pastor, when you conclude preaching on Sundays and stand at the door as people leave the building, people will ask for prayer and some of them have very difficult life situations that people face. The caring ministry can be heavy and relentless. It’s important for leaders to take time for rest and play and laugh often!

2. Lead boldly. No church will ever realize all that God has in mind without bold leadership. Taking risks is inherent in the very nature of leadership. Bold leadership is not reckless abandon, but a prayer based sense of faith that compels you to take the necessary risks for your vision to become a reality.

3. Exercise regularly. Losing weight and getting in shape is the number one New Year’s resolution in the US today. We all need to stay in shape. I recently went to the doctor for my check-up, and one of the first things he said was, “Jerry, you need to exercise more and lose 15 pounds. Your triglycerides are too high and your

blood sugar is creeping up. You certainly don’t want diabetes.” Guess what. I’m stepping up my exercise program a notch or two and having a healthy diet.

4. Love deeply. Jesus modeled this for us. Truly caring about people is at the very heart of what we do as Christian leaders. Sometimes it’s difficult to love when people resist change, complain, and even threaten church leaders. But nonetheless, we care! It’s not something we need to “work up,” it’s something that is in us and stirred by the Holy Spirit. Lean into love!

5. Pray fervently. Do you believe prayer is the most powerful force in the world? I do. It changes people’s lives and the circumstances around us. We often complain about the government, the economy, moral decline and the terrible shape the world is in. Let’s try praying fervently for God to change lives.

6. Listen attentively. One of the best ways to honor and value people, and lead them well is to listen carefully. We can’t understand those we lead if we don’t listen. Listening carefully is like a window into the soul of reality, and a stronger grasp of reality will help you love and lead better. Strong leaders most often are tellers and have to work on being empathetic listeners.

7. Read quickly. I don’t know about your reading goals but I have 24 books on my desk in line waiting for me to read. It’s crazy? I read pretty fast but all of us need to learn to read quickly. Reading quickly or practicing the classic speed reading process is not the same. Reading quickly is a new skill, first assessing if the book is worthy of reading, and second, finding the best parts of the book. Try it and see if it works.

8. Give generously. Generosity never gets old. This is not just about the financial stewardship of all that God

gives us, but a global approach to a generous life. Be generous with your time, ideas, church resources and every area of life. Never expect anything in return, but God has a way of blessing generous people.

9. Empower freely. Empower others is at the epicenter of a developmental approach to how you practice leadership. Whether for your staff or volunteers, there are few things more important than developing and empowering leaders to help carry the ministry load at your church. Raise up new leaders!

10. Serve joyfully. How long have you been leading? Do you carry the same joy as when you first started? Leadership can make you wary. It can discourage you and cause you to want to throw in the towel. However, believe that what you are doing is God’s calling and worthwhile to those in your church and community. Even on the very difficult days where “happiness” eludes you, you can still possess a sense of deep inner joy and peace. God never withholds this from faithful leaders.

It’s difficult to adopt all 10 of these goals, and you may already be doing well in many areas on this list. How about picking one or two that you haven’t been doing and work on them? I pray God’s best for you during the eleven remaining months of 2014.

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.



Right here at home cont.

After moving to Celina in September of 2012, Matthew and Amy started the first small group in their home in January, 2013. Throughout the year, they reached out to the community at every available opportunity. Some of their activities included diaper changing during city festivals, Easter egg hunts, movie nights, monthly worship services, Kids Camp, passing out water, cooking hot dogs, trick or treat, and Christmas on the Square. They also utilized about 100 students from SOAR in a SOAR Serves campaign. Through all of these activities, they have reached many people and started three new small groups, which they call community groups.

At first, they had trouble finding somewhere to meet as a church. As in many areas, they looked into using the school, but were told firmly that it would

not be possible. However, after all of their service in the community, God opened the door to rent the school cafeteria. They now show up early on Sunday to transform the usual lunch area into a worship center and the gym into a worship center for kids. When they finish, they again pack it all back into the trailer.

Prior to the Prather’s arrival in Celina, the town had only one Baptist church, among other denominations. The town welcomed them with open arms. In January, 2014, The Bridge, as the mission is called, launched weekly worship services, averaging 40-50, and they are currently planning their first baptismal service. They would like to thank everyone for all their support and prayers.

God may not be calling you to be a missionary

across the ocean or even somewhere else in the United States. However, He does command you to witness whenever you can. Then He also expects you to support others who are called to go elsewhere—sometimes with your time or money, but always with your prayers. Further prayer needs for the Prathers are:

Pray that they see more people come to know Christ as their Savior.

Pray for them to build new relationships with people in North Texas.

Pray for them as they continue the work of establishing a new church that will make a difference in the lives of people in North Texas.

Remember the Prathers and all of our missionaries, wherever they are serving.

EVENTS

FEBRUARY 9, 2014

Baptist Progress Rally
@ Rosewood, Gilmer
Message & singing
by Jerry Fulton, *Baptist Progress* Editor
11 a.m.

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 28-30, 2014

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

MAY 15, 2014

BMMI Rally
@ Willow Oak, Gilmer

AUGUST 14, 2014

Lifeword Media Ministries Rally
@ Woodland, Gilmer

AUGUST 26, 2014

Annual Business Meeting
of the East Texas Missions District
@ Center of Life Mission, Tyler

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

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.

Pastor—Beech Grove, Jasper is seeking a full time pastor. Send resume to Ronnie McBride at P.O. Box 1377, Jasper, Texas 75951 or joymartindale@rocketmail.com or call 409-382-3332.

Pastor—Desert Rose, Wittman, Ariz. Is seeking a senior pastor. Send resume to the church at P.O. Box 99, Wittman, Ariz. 85361 or lovejoy_x_two@g.com. For more information, call 623-451-5212.

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.

CHURCHES IN REVIEW

JANUARY 19, 2013

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Anthony Drive, Ennis	70	86	
Cedar Creek, Teague	13	22	
Ebenezer Friendship, Pittsburg	14	39	
Farley Street, Waxahachie	394	529	
First, New Summerfield	34	48	
First, Palmer	41	59	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	17	32	
Harvest, Lufkin	25	35	2 by letter
Jackson, Joaquin	71	106	
Little Flock, Lufkin		25	
Long Creek, Sunnyvale	61	74	
Merriman Hills, Sherman	16	19	
New Harmony, Tyler	273	325	2 by letter
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	62	74	
Pine Brook, Tyler	41	94	
Rosewood, Gilmer	89	158	
Sand Flat, Grand Saline	67	84	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	26	52	
Temple, Mexia	36	45	
Tundra, Canton	98	120	

JANUARY 26, 2013

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Anthony Drive, Ennis	77	108	
Cedar Creek, Teague	14	26	
Elwood, Wills Point	13	39	
Farley Street, Waxahachie	435	591	
First, Blooming Grove	221		1 by letter
First, New Summerfield	25	38	
First, Palmer	54	80	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	20	34	
Harvest, Lufkin	26	32	
Jackson, Joaquin	75	108	
Lighthouse, Rowlett	21	40	1 Profession of faith
Little Flock, Lufkin		25	
Merriman Hills, Sherman	17	17	
New Harmony, Tyler	276	367	1 Profession of faith
New Haven, Dallas	32	71	2 by Statement
New Hope, Mineola	63	123	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	54	61	
Pine Brook, Tyler	38	99	2 by Letter
Rosewood, Gilmer	98	178	7 by Letter
Sand Flat, Grand Saline	71	90	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	24	37	
Temple, Mexia	36	51	
Tundra, Canton	115	125	
Woodland, Splendora	48	69	

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

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

Oil and water

By GARY HOUSE

DATE: February 9, 2014

TEXT: 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

LESSON IN BRIEF: Exercise discernment as a Christian in your choice of friends. Avoid unguarded relationships with unbelievers.

The Bible warns about the danger of getting into relationships where we are spiritually mismatched with another person. “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers.” Most of us can’t relate to a yoke, because it was an ancient farm instrument. A yoke was a wooden harness in which two animals would be linked together and forced to function as one.

The background for this verse is found in Deuteronomy 22:10, “Do not plow with an ox and a donkey yoked together.” There were several reasons for this prohibition. For instance, to the Jews, an ox was a clean animal, but a donkey was unclean. An ox and a donkey have different natures. An ox is usually hard-working and cooperative, while a donkey was feisty and stubborn. Could you imagine how hard it would be to plow with an ox and a donkey?

Ray Stedman wrote: “It is a cruel thing to yoke together two things of incompatible natures. There are certain associations that Christians have with unbelievers that constitute a yoke, and these associations are a certain cause for misery and shame in a Christian’s life. We are to avoid them. They will hinder us, limit us, bind us and keep us from enjoying the fullness God has in mind for us. They

are like trying to mix oil and water.”

What does it mean to be “unequally yoked?”

(1) DOESN’T mean: Separating yourself physically from the world. Jesus said, “My prayer is not that you would take them out of the world but that you would protect them ... They are not of the world, even as I am not of it” (John 17:15-16). Believers are in the world, but not of it.

(2) DOESN’T mean: Refusing to have friendships with unbelievers. Jesus prayed: “As You have sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world” (John 17:18). In response to the criticism of some of the religious. “The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’” (Luke 7:34).

Jesus taught that we should have relationships with unbelievers; how else are we going to share the love of Christ with them?

(3) DOES mean: Avoiding partnerships with unbelievers. I like Eugene Petersen’s paraphrase: “Don’t become partners with those who reject God. How can you make a partnership out of right and wrong? That’s not partnership, that’s war. Is light best friends with darkness? Does Christ go strolling with the Devil? Do trust and mistrust hold hands?” (2 Corinthians 6:14 The Message.)

There’s an obvious reason why God warns us away from these kinds of mismatched relationships.

Proverbs is full of warnings about this, but here’s a simple one from 1 Corinthians 15:33, “Do not be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good character.’” To be “yoked” means to be tied to someone in a close, intimate, relationship; not just a casual friendship. Paul is urging the Corinthians to exercise discernment in the choice of relationships. It’s possible that Paul’s primary concern in these verses is in religious areas— that the Corinthian believers were joining unbelievers in some aspect of pagan worship. Paul points out the incompatibility between Christians and unbelievers; **righteousness and unrighteousness**. Christians generally try to do the right thing. Unbelievers, in contrast do not have the spiritual motivation to do right.

Light and dark: The two cannot exist in the same place. Once light enters darkness flees.

Christ and Belial (Satan) are as different as light and dark.

God’s temple and idols. Pagan temples were known for immorality. God’s temple stood for holiness.

This passage also tells us about another relationship—not a dangerous one, but a dynamic relationship. It’s the relationship we can enjoy with our loving Heavenly Father. In verse 18 God says, “I will be a Father to you.” Whenever God gives a prohibition, He also gives a promise. Our Father (Abba, Papa, Daddy) promises His:

(1) **Indwelling presence** “we are the temple of the Living God,” (verse 16). God dwells in His people both individually and collectively. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, we learn that God dwells within every believer individually. “Do you not know that your body [singular] is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you...Therefore honor God with your body.”

(2) Intimate fellowship. “I will live [walk] with them.” You’ll never appreciate a dynamic relationship with God until you understand the level of intimacy God wants to have with you.

(3) Infinite care. “...they will be my sons and daughters.” Your Heavenly Dad knows what you’re going through, and more than that, He cares. That’s why the Bible says, “Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

These three great promises of God should motivate us to want to avoid the dangerous relationships that are possible. Now, you could approach this by emphasizing the negative: I will keep away from the wrong kind of people. But a much better approach would be to focus on the positive: I will desire to have a dynamic relationship with my Father. As you desire to love God more and more, you’ll find the desire for the wrong kinds of relationships will naturally fall away.

Some of these thoughts were adapted from a message by David O. Dykes.

Pretend Preachers

By GARY HOUSE

DATE: February 16, 2014

TEXT: 2 Corinthians 11:1-15

LESSON IN BRIEF: Some preachers who claim to be of God have a perverted message and impure motives. Watch out for false teachers and preachers.

Outline for the Text as presented in the Compass Teacher.

False Teachers Preach a Different Gospel (11:4).

False Teachers Delight in Worldly Accomplishments (11:5-9).

False Teachers are empowered by Satanic Forces (11: 13-15).

Paul’s purpose (verses 1-4). The Corinthians’ acceptance of the false apostles’ claims forced Paul to set forth his own apostolic credentials as that was the only way he could get them to see the truth. Whatever it took for Paul to make them realize he has authority from God to teach them, is the argument Paul gave.

Jealousy (verse 2). This jealousy is not in the physical sense. Paul is saying, I have claimed you for the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul wants these Corinthians, who started out with him, to stay loyal to the Lord Jesus Christ. Being a “chaste virgin” is saying not to stray away from pure Christianity.

2 Corinthians 11:3: “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.” Paul does not want them to receive any other message than the simple message of the cross (Galatians 1:8-9).

The mind is at enmity with God. The mind will lead you astray. Christianity is of the heart. Even today, some of the doctrines that claim to be of Christ are not telling the truth. Many people, looking for something new, find something very old, a false doctrine. Christianity is simple. It is not complicated.

In verse 5, Paul is explaining to them that he had already brought them the gospel, and had even taught them of the Spirit. If this person or persons was teaching them a message better than the one Paul gave and one they had rather believe, then stay with them. If they are not, why break away? Why are they seeking for something else, when they already have Jesus as Savior and Lord? They also have been introduced to the Holy Spirit. There is no need to seek another.

Though the precise details of what the false apostle(s) taught are unknown and don’t matter, they preached “another Jesus” and “a different spirit”, which added up to “a different gospel.”

2 Corinthians 11:13: “For such [are] false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.” Paul was no longer speaking with veiled irony or defending himself, but bluntly and directly exposed the false apostles for what they were, emissaries of Satan. Not only was their claim to apostleship false, so also was their doctrine.

2 Corinthians 11:14: “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Not everyone in the church proclaiming Christianity is truly of God. Satan, himself, tries to mimic all the things the Lord does. He even many times pretends to be of the Light, when he is really darkness to the utmost. We are told to try the spirits, and see whether they are of God, or not (1 John 4:1). Since the Prince of Darkness masquerades as an angel of light, that is, deceptively, disguised as a messenger of truth—it is not surprising that his emissaries do as well.

The truth is that Satan is a counterfeit. He may appear, at a glance to be of God, but a closer examination will reveal who he is. He counterfeits the gifts of the Spirit many times.

HIS TARGETS. He targets three main areas of

our beliefs and then leaves us impotent and squabbling over them. The three main targets are: Jesus, the Spirit and the gospel (verse 5). Basically, he sends someone else (a Christian?!) along with some new teaching to get these guys off the target/scent and the Christians like it because it’s flashy and appears “light.” His strategy is stealth, subtlety, or here literally “cunning.” That is how he works with Christians. Friendly fire and subtlety, erosion (of belief), conflict and opposition. Anything more blatant and we’d know to stand against it.

He attacks or distracts from the uniqueness or deity of Jesus: “He’s not the only Savior” or “He isn’t really God in the flesh. Just ‘divine’ like you are! Don’t worry about Jesus, just focus on God.” And the result is they are distracted and soiled by it.

SEVEN MARKS OF FALSE TEACHERS:

1. False teachers are man pleasers. What they teach is meant to please the ear more than profit the heart. They tickle the ears of their followers with flattery and all the while they treat holy things with wit and carelessness rather than reverence and awe. This contrasts sharply with a true teacher of the Word who knows that he is answerable to God and who is therefore far more eager to please God than men.

2. False teachers save their harshest criticism for God’s most faithful servants. False teachers criticize those who teach the truth, and save their sharpest criticism for those who hold most steadfastly to what is true.

3. False teachers teach their own wisdom and vision.

4. False teachers miss what is of central importance and focus instead on the small details.

5. False teachers obscure their false doctrine behind eloquent speech and what appears to be

impressive logic.

6. False teachers are more concerned with winning others to their opinions than in helping and bettering them.

7. False teachers exploit their followers.

No one enriches hell more than false teachers. No one finds greater joy in drawing people away from truth and leading them into error. False teachers have been present in every era of human history. They have always been a plague and have always been in the business of providing counterfeit truth. While their circumstances may change, their methods remain consistent.

The really sad thing about false doctrines is that at a glance they appear to be real. A person, who is not well versed in the Scriptures, would quickly accept the teaching, because it is close to truth. One quick giveaway is that anything that elevates man up to the level of God is false. Also, any doctrine that denies that Jesus was Emmanuel [God with us] is false.

Jesus is God the Word who took on the form of flesh and dwelt among us, and anything less than that is a false doctrine. Anything, or anyone, who denies the power of the shed blood of Jesus is, also, false. The reason so many people, then and now, fall for this false teaching, is that it usually elevates man and brings God down to the level of man.

Gary House is the writer of the Sunday school lessons for Baptist Progress. He serves as pastor of Tundra Baptist Church in Canton. Contact him at Tundraparson@aol.com.



Jacksonville College Homecoming 2014 Schedule February 7-8

Friday Evening, February 7, 2014 Family Life Center of First Baptist Church 210 Philip St., Jacksonville, TX 75766

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| 5:00 p.m. | Registration
Visit with classmates
Meet the authors (Alumni who have had books published)
Bible ArtWords: Beautifully framed verses on display and available for purchase
Refreshments |
| 7:00 p.m. | Program
Recognize students who attended Spring of 1954, 1964, 1974, 1984,
1994, and 2004
Door Prizes
Introduction of Soccer Team |
| 9:00 p.m. | Dismiss |

Saturday Morning, February 8, 2014 Jacksonville College Campus

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| 8:00 a.m. | Purple and Gold Club Breakfast: Little Cafeteria |
| 9:00 a.m. | Jacksonville College Bookstore and Gift Shop, featuring JC merchandise and Bible ArtWords |
| 9:45 a.m. | Ensembles, Choir, Alumni Program and Brief Business Meeting: Buckner Chapel |
| 11:30 a.m. | Dismiss for luncheons (see website for details) |
| 2:00 p.m. | Lady Jaguars vs. Blinn College Lady Buccaneers: Curtis Carroll Fieldhouse |
| 4:00 p.m. | Jaguars vs. Blinn College Buccaneers: Curtis Carroll Fieldhouse |

Visit the college website for Homecoming schedule updates at <http://www.jacksonville-college.edu/homecoming-schedule.htm>. If you have questions or comments, please contact Alumni Liaison Neatha Cagle by email at ncagle@jacksonville-college.edu or by phone at 903-589-7143.

Jag-Mania for Prospective Students

Held on February 7-8 during Homecoming weekend, Jag-Mania is a new two day campus event designed to give high school seniors a taste of life at Jacksonville College. Students may opt to come for Friday evening and Saturday or Saturday only. Students may also choose to spend the night in the dorm with current students as hosts. Overnights need to bring a sleeping bag and pillow.

Current students will lead activities, answer questions about the college, and keep everything on schedule. Auditions and tryouts for choir, band, theater, athletic teams, and cheerleading are scheduled for those who are interested in participating in any of these groups next year.

Sign-in is from 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. on Friday and at 8:00 a.m. Saturday for those attending Saturday only. Dinner on Friday evening and breakfast and lunch on Saturday are provided. Admission to the Homecoming games is free, and students registering by February 2 will also receive a free T-shirt.

Register online no later than February 2 if you want to be assured of a T-shirt or if you plan to stay overnight in the dorm. Overnight stay is limited to the first 25 who sign up, so register quickly! A full schedule of events can be found by clicking on the Jag-Mania link on the Jacksonville College homepage at www.jacksonville-college.edu. For more information, contact the Office of Admissions at sclay@jacksonville-college.edu or (903) 589-7110.