

# Baptist Progress

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## A homegrown pastor

By **PAUL GAUNTT**

*Baptist Progress Correspondent*

Traditionally church pulpit committees tend to believe a man must live hundreds of miles away before he is qualified to come serve as their pastor, but Antioch Missionary Baptist Church near Gilmer has taken exception to that tradition.

Antioch is not on a major thoroughfare—in fact, it seems rather remote—being located on the narrow county road called Giraffe Road. Built into the bend of the road, the church has a sprawling, well equipped plant and paved parking that many churches in town would envy, and they are poised for a great future of outreach and growth.

Sometimes God chooses to tap a homegrown man to be pastor in his home church—including relatives. Antioch gained such a pastor in 2015 when they extended a call to Michael Pool, who along with his wife, Kirby, was raised in the church.

“Not only am I pastor of the church I was raised in, but my dad and father-in-law are deacons in the church,” Pool said, noting that the arrangement is working well.

Pool was saved, and called of God to the ministry and Antioch can thank God that He used them in the process.

“I was called to the ministry at the age of 19,” the pastor said. “God had dealt with me for several years while being active in the church and Galileans, and during a revival in our church. I just couldn’t deny it anymore.”

Pool noted that his perceptive pastor, the late Larry Lansdale, who was Antioch’s pastor for many years, sensed his troubled spirit.

“Bro. Larry called me into his study—this very study we’re sitting in now, and just simply asked me, ‘Michael, tell me what’s going on.’”

It was soon after that encounter



▲ Antioch Baptist Church, Gilmer



▲ Pastor Michael Pool



▲ Iglesia Bautista Nueva Vida Mission worshipping

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**BAPTIST PROGRESS**

Jerry Fulton, Editor/Business Manager  
P.O. Box 2085, Waxahachie 75168  
972-923-0756 • www.baptistprogress.org

**BAPTIST MISSIONARY LOAN ASSOCIATION**

Jerry Burnaman, Manager  
PO Box 73, Waxahachie 75168  
972-923-0758

**BMA OF TEXAS MISSIONS**

Heith Mitchell, Director  
PO Box 73, Waxahachie 75168  
972-923-0757

**JACKSONVILLE COLLEGE**

Dr. Mike Smith, President  
105 B. J. Albritton Drive  
Jacksonville 75766  
903-586-2518  
www.jacksonville-college.edu

**TEXAS BAPTIST HOME**

Jason Curry, President  
PO Box 309, Waxahachie 75168  
972-937-1321 • www.tbhc.org

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**Jerry Fulton, Editor/Business Manager**  
editor@baptistprogress.org  
P.O. Box 2085 • Waxahachie, Texas 75168  
972-923-0756 (office) • 972-923-3534 (fax)

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# MAKING PROGRESS

## Welcome to the Year 2021

By **JERRY FULTON**

Welcome to 2021! We thought 2020 was a wild year, and we all looked forward to this new year. However, it seems that things keep getting stranger in this world. Who would have thought that as I celebrated my fiftieth birthday, Jan. 6, a mob would storm the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.? As I write these words, I wonder if more violence will come between now and Inauguration Day, Jan. 20. Will there be new strains of the coronavirus, perhaps more deadly than the one that caused a pandemic in 2021? Will a radical political agenda be made law this year? Will there be some unforeseen war with another country or perhaps between our own nation's citizens? My finite mind can only predict what might be lurking around the corner, I certainly have no way of knowing for sure.

However, I am so thankful that I know the One who holds all things in His hands, and better still that I am known by Him. Nothing happens without His knowing it beforehand, and nothing occurs unless He approves it or allows it. My God is in control and my hope is in Him.

I have been reminded in the midst of the crises we have endured the past several months that a new world is coming. Someday, perhaps sooner than think, we will enter God's Heaven. In the place the Lord has gone to prepare for us, there will be peace at last, no more viruses or other illnesses, no more death, no more pain and no more strife. We will live in a wonderful world at last.

In the meantime, I hope that we all will dedicate ourselves to praying and diligently sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ in person, on social media and by every other possible means. I have decided in addition to making prayer and sharing the gospel greater priorities, that I will not cast pearls before swine (Matthew 13:45-46). I will refuse to be drawn into arguments on social media or elsewhere with people who are totally antagonistic to the things of God, have no appreciation for that which is holy and righteous and view the pearls of God's Word as foolishness and insulting. Sometimes, it is best that we shake off the dust on our feet, walk on, and dedicate ourselves to ministering to those who will welcome the Lord's message.

Christ has called us to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16). As such, we should remember that as individuals, we can change no one, that is the work of the Holy Spirit. All we can do is

present the truth of God's Word. Whether others accept it, is up to them.

So, then let us walk worthy of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and be careful not to entangle ourselves with the affairs of this life, that our Lord may be pleased with us (2 Timothy 2:4). May we all be savory and shiny for the glory of our God and King in 2021!



▲ Jerry Fulton

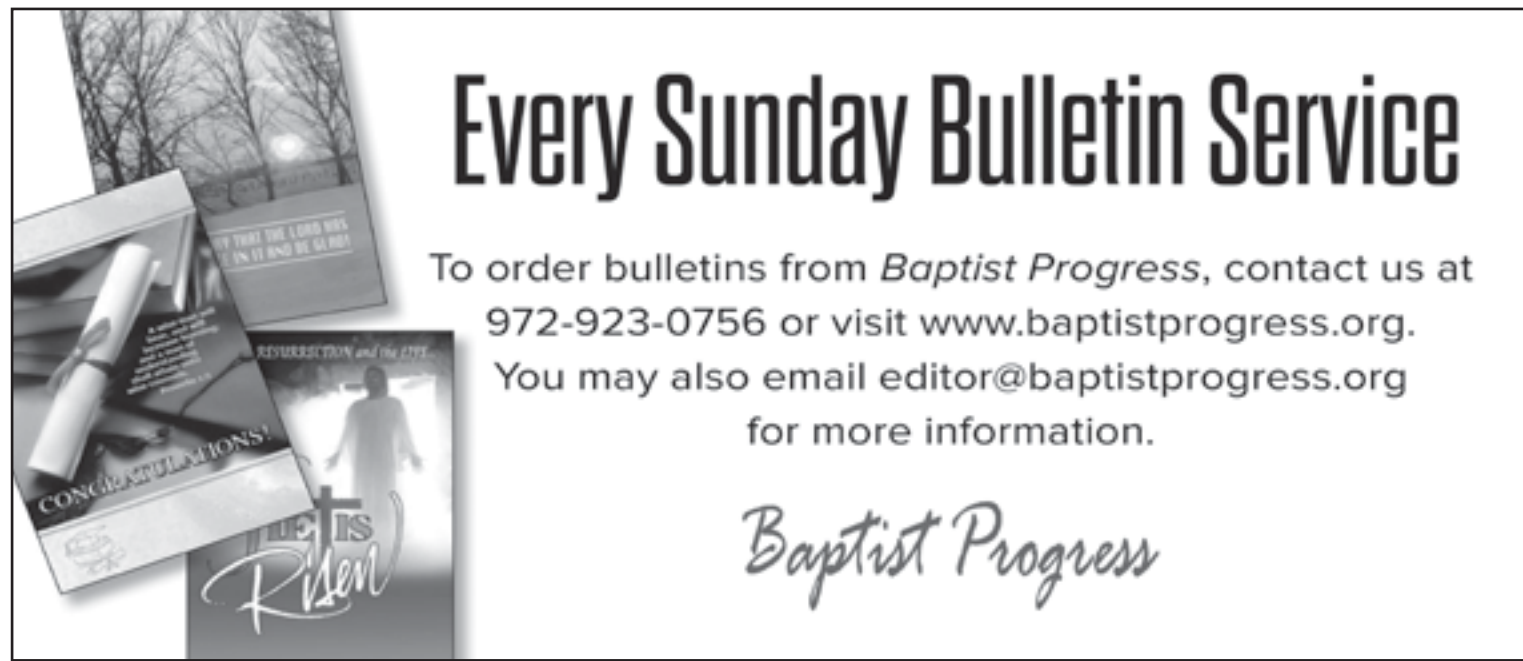
**THE INFORMING AND EQUIPPING MINISTRY OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS, NEXT MINISTRY CONNECTION WORKSHOP PLANNED**

Please remember that *Baptist Progress* is no longer just a newspaper, but has now become the informing and equipping ministry of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas. In addition to providing you with a newspaper by mail or email each month, an *e-News Update* on most weeks we do not publish a newspaper, updates by email as well as on our website, we now offer Ministry Connection Workshops each quarter and various resources you can learn more about by visiting our website, [www.baptistprogress.org](http://www.baptistprogress.org).

Our next Ministry Connection Workshop is scheduled for March 23, 2021 at CrossRoads Church in Rowlett. Pastor Jason Collins will present the workshop, *Gospel Impact Through Community Involvement*. For more details or to register, visit our website. Pre-registration is required for attendance.

**NEW WEBSITE**

By the time you receive this issue, our brand new website should be online. If not, check back soon. I appreciate Matthew Prather, pastor of The Bridge, Waxahachie, for creating the new website for us ([www.baptistprogress.org](http://www.baptistprogress.org)). He is currently building a new website for the BMA of Texas. It will be online within the next few weeks ([www.bmatexas.org](http://www.bmatexas.org)).



**Every Sunday Bulletin Service**

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*Baptist Progress*



# TBHC

## FOSTER CARE & ADOPTION

### TBHC to debut podcast, Bringing Kids Home



TBHC Foster Care and Adoption is releasing a podcast called *Bringing Kids Home*. It will be a monthly show that tells stories of adoption and foster care. The hope is that while sharing stories of foster families, adoption families and kids, the platform will continue to spread the word, so more people know how to support children in need. Subscribe so

you do not miss any of the episodes, which will launch each month starting January 2021 on the third Monday of each month.

The TBHC podcast will be on Amazon Music, Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Overcast and Stitcher. <https://tbhc-bringing-kids-home.castos.com/>.

## I'm just sayin'

By **JASON CURRY**

As many know, TBHC is one in a million with our values and wonderful heritage of faith and caring for the fatherless! There are few places that represent the gospel more clearly than our ministry where caring for children and Christ conversations collide often. Some kids may never have been given the opportunity, until coming in contact with TBHC's families, to hear and understand that the God of the universe created them and that they matter! It is our hope that every child hears the story of a loving heavenly Father when most earthly fathers could care less.

Just like our children's identity matters, so does who TBHC is and has been. We are constantly changing to do and be the best we can in order to care for children. Our mandate is clear from our founding Articles. Article 2: The Objects:

*"The objects of this institution shall be: to find, take care of, feed, clothe, properly rear, educate and defend orphans and homeless children against all ancient and modern species of crime. 'Homeless' meaning those who have no home, having been deserted by their parents, or children of a mother who cannot support them."*

This ministry that so many BMA of Texas churches and individuals have loved and cared for, for so long, is constantly

refining our organization to deal with our world's attempt to care for kids. I say attempt because it is the churches' job to care for orphans and widows, not the government.

James 1:27 tells us what pure and undefiled religion is before God: "to visit orphans and widows in their trouble" and if that is all it said, anyone could do it. However, James continues to include a reequipment in order to accomplish that work, "and to keep oneself unspotted from the world".

I hope that this series of articles and others will communicate where we have been as an orphanage, where we are as a foster care and adoption agency, and where we are going as a ministry to children. Join me as we explore TBHC's current yet timeless imperatives that have been molded by our wonderful heritage!

I'm just sayin'.

Jason Curry is the president of the Texas Baptist Home for Children. Contact him 629 Farley St, Waxahachie, Texas 75165, 972-937-1321 or [jcurry@tbhc.org](mailto:jcurry@tbhc.org). For more information, visit [www.tbhc.org](http://www.tbhc.org).



### An expression of everlasting love

Many of our friends choose to honor or remember a family member, a friend or an associate with a gift for the children of the Baptist Home. Texas Baptist Home for Children, in turn, notifies the appropriate person. Listed in capital letters are those honored or remembered from Dec. 1-31, 2020.

#### ENDOWMENTS

**DUSTIN COE:** Ron & Lourita Coe  
**MYRA STOKES:** Bill Stokes

#### HONORARIUMS

**MELINDA ARMITAGE:** Stephen Peyton  
**CHUCK CARSNOR:** L.O. Hallonquist  
**JASON CURRY & FAMILY:** Betty Simmons  
**MARY DUNAVANT:** Mike & Cindy Dooly  
**JOHNNY RAY DUNN:** Jeanne Hand  
**MR. & MRS. MICHAEL ESHELMAN:** Jean Eshelman  
**DENISE GASTON-CHRISTMAS PROGRAM DIRECTOR:** Rosewood Baptist Church  
**RETA HALLONQUIST:** L.O. Hallonquist  
**MR. & MRS. TOM HUCHALA:** Jean Eshelman  
**BRO. CHARLES & CHARLOTTE JOHNSON:** Elizabeth Stokes  
**CHARLOTTE JOHNSON-CHRISTMAS PROGRAM DIRECTOR:** Rosewood Baptist Church  
**KARL PACE:** Kelly Penick; Carrie Houston  
**SOUTH PARK BAPTIST FAMILY:** Robert Rainey  
**MARGARET TANKERSLEY:** James Colvin  
**LENA WILLIAMSON'S RETIREMENT:** Charles & Charlotte Johnson

#### MEMORIALS

**LEON & OLLIE ALEXANDER:** Stan & Terry Mann  
**HAZEL ANDERS:** Peggy Lewis  
**JERRY LOYD ASHLEY:** Charles & Charlotte Johnson; Brian & Mary Mauk  
**FLORENCE A. BAKER:** Tommy Blackshear  
**WALTER BECKER:** Dennis & Ilona Myrice  
**SANFORD BOARDMAN:** Neta Hicks  
**LARRY & ROSELEN BOBO:** James Bobo  
**ERNESTINE CLEVINGER:** Mr. Rolfe  
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**CECIL DOWNEY:** Carlie Downey  
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**JESSE HARTLEY:** Dickey & Kathy Hartley  
**BOBBY GENE HOOD:** Pecan Baptist Church  
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**WANDA YOUNG HUTCHINS:** Charles & Charlotte Johnson  
**RAYMOND JAMES:** Mary Dunavant  
**CHARLENE MCDANIEL JOHNSON:** Carolyn Miller; Julie Thames  
**JOE JOHNSON:** Mrs. Joe Johnson  
**AGNES JONES:** Clarence & Patsy Thompson  
**ELVIN & DOROTHY LAWSON:** Darlene Mageors  
**MARCIEL LINDSTROM:** Andy & Nell McCuiston  
**JOY COLENE LINTON:** Brian Bernhoft; Wayne Spray; Julie McCown;  
**BILLIE SUE MARTIN:** Terry & Sharon Martin  
**ROY MERRILL:** Latch Missionary Baptist Church, Gilmer; Michael & Karin Harrell  
**LOVITA LOU OUIMET:** James Ouimet  
**HOMER PHILLIPS:** Mary Dunavant  
**JUNIOR PIERCE:** Benny & Linda Lewis  
**ROBERT PIPER:** Charles & Charlotte Johnson; Rosewood Baptist Church  
**JAMES RODNEY RICHEY:** Charmel Richey  
**LARRY ROGERS:** Central Baptist Church, Mineola  
**PHILLIP L. SCHIRICO:** Debbie Schirico  
**JACK SETTLES SR.:** Charles & Charlotte Johnson; Jed & Glenice Whitaker  
**LONNIE GLENN SHIVERS:** Ralph Hendricks  
**SHIRLEY SITTON:** Jed & Glenice Whitaker  
**DEWRELL 'DOOD' CLAY SPECK**  
**MARGARET SPERRY:** Larry & Carol Brock  
**HUGLENE STOKES:** Charles & Charlotte Johnson  
**DAVID STROUD:** Westside Baptist Church  
**PAULA VALENTINE:** Brenda Ray  
**JAMES WATSON:** Glee Hutson  
**BETTY WEBB:** Jed & Glenice Whitaker  
**ROSALIE WHITE:** Dorothy Taylor  
**RODNEY P. WILLIAMS:** Jane Zuegel  
**JIMMY & THELMA WOLF:** James & Margaret Wolf  
**OMEGA WOOD:** Lexa Adams

memorials-honorariums



# Daniel Springs Camp 2021 goals and dreams

By **JASON PREWITT**

When I look back on 2020, I have much to be thankful for as God has been so good to us. I took the holidays to slow down and enjoy more time with my amazing wife and our three boys. I also took some time to really take a good look at the needs of the camp facilities and to reflect on the dependable young men and women that live locally with whom God blessed to be able to invest in groups as host pool parties, small events and church group retreats during the summer and fall.

Now the question is what is God going to do in 2021, and how do we get to be a part? Here are some of our prayer needs and goals.

**First, pray for us to continue to make facility improvements in anticipation for not just the summer camp season, but to continue to allow the camp to be used all year for retreats and activities.** A couple of the big projects we are working on are some much needed pool and lake renovations. Both of these, are major parts of the camp experience and both of these projects are needing some much-needed work. The pool was constructed in 1966 and over time, as we all know, everything needs some work done to it. The lake is a beautiful part of the campus and with some work it can allow for more activities.

**Second, pray that God will build up the ministry partners and volunteer groups who continue to help make improvements and updates to the facilities.** One of the most exciting things that I have seen over the last six years is the overwhelming support for Daniel Springs Camp. The churches, groups and individuals who have financially given over the many years, whether through a one-time gift or by being a monthly ministry partner, continue to help this ministry be a place where God changes lives. The other part of this amazing partnership is the groups who come and volunteer their time, knowledge and resources. It is very relevant to say that it is not what you know, it is who you know. I am thankful that we serve a Savior who has all the people and resources we could ever need or want, and that He continues to send those needed people to invest in the camp. Some have known specific trades like carpentry, plumbing, electrical and painting, but many have just been willing to help in any way necessary. We are setting aside March as our Mission and Volunteer Month. If your church, family or just you would like to come and spend a few days investing your knowledge and willing hands at Daniel Springs Camp as a volunteer partner, we would love to host you. We have many different projects around the campus that we need help with in anticipation for this year and many years to come.

**Third, we want to continue to be an extension of the local, state and national departments by being a facility used for all different kinds of events and retreats.** It was and continues to be exciting for groups to come to the campus not just for summer camps, but for retreats and activities all through the year.

Our desire is to help churches and our local, state and national works with events by partnering with staff needs for retreats or events. It has been a blessing to connect some of the summer staff with church groups that need help with events they are hosting at their facilities.

What a privilege it is to visit churches to share about what is happening here at Daniel Springs Camp. The great thing is that when we get to share about what is happening at the camp, it is not just a camp story. Daniel Springs does not exist to be a ministry by itself. We are so blessed to be an extension of the local church and what God is doing there.

If you would like to hear more details about some projects, March Mission Month or would like me to come share about Daniel Springs Camp, please let me know by calling the office, 903-685-2433 or emailing me at [jason@danielspringscamp.com](mailto:jason@danielspringscamp.com).

*Jason Prewitt is the director of Daniel Springs Baptist Camp. Contact him at P.O. Box 310, Gary, Texas 75643, 903-685-2433 or [info@danielspringscamp.com](mailto:info@danielspringscamp.com). For more information, visit [danielspringscamp.com](http://danielspringscamp.com).*



# Liberty Association hosts seminary rally

Liberty Baptist Association met at Olde Tyme, White Oak for a rally for Baptist Missionary Association of America Theological Seminary Dec. 17. There were eight churches represented.

Following a business meeting led by moderator Michael Pool, Jordan Tew represented the seminary work. He brought an inspiring message from Matthew 28:18-20 concerning The Great Commission.

Bro. Tew explained this is not a suggestion, but a commandment, given to the Lord's New Testament churches. He stated that we are to evangelize to all nations, baptize those who believe and make disciples of them by teaching the precepts of Christ's instructions. He encouraged the audience with the promise from Jesus, "He is with us unto the end of the world."

Bro. Tew then gave his personal testimony of how the seminary has helped him in leading spiritual growth to churches as a pastor. A generous offering from the Liberty churches was collected for the seminary.

The next meeting of Liberty Association will be at Pine Acres, Gilmer at 7 p.m., Jan. 14. This will be a rally for BMA Texas Missions. Heith Mitchell, director of BMA Texas Missions, is the scheduled to speak.

# 2021 BMA of America Meeting Postponed

By **JEFF SWART**

*President of the BMAA*

A Zoom meeting was held with the officers, department directors, auxiliary leaders and production team of the BMA of America as well as Richard Smith, host pastor of the 2021 BMA of America Meeting Jan. 12. The purpose of the virtual meeting was to discuss the feasibility of holding the national meeting at the regularly announced time in April 2021.

The decision to move forward with hosting a physical meeting of the national association in April 2021 was made the third week in October 2020. Since that time, things have changed. In the state of Arkansas, and in and around Waxahachie, the number of new COVID-19 cases are setting a record almost every day. Our utmost desire is to protect the messengers of our churches and so, we felt that we needed to explore other options.

After more than an hour of discussion, it was clear that our mutual desire was to host a physical meeting of the BMAA in 2021 if possible. Therefore, the 2021

national meeting of the churches of the BMA of America will be delayed until Aug. 2-4, 2021, at the Farley Street, Waxahachie. The elected officers of the BMA of America will decide by June 1 if holding a physical meeting of our national association in August is still a viable option. If it is deemed necessary that we cancel our meeting together in August, plans for a Zoom meeting of the BMA of America will be implemented and announced through our state papers.

I personally appreciate your patience with me during this unprecedented time in our nation's history. I believe that my desires, and your desires, for our association are the same. I may take a different route to get where we all want to be, but I assure you that in time, we will all get there. The best thing that you can do is pray for your officers and if you do, I am convinced that we will do a better job. It is a great joy to serve such a fine group of pastors and churches!





## Shipwrecked? Trust in God's saving grace

By **KRISTI KEY**

2nd Vice President of Texas WMA

Our theme for this year is Shipwrecked ~ “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 106:1)

If you go with me to the book of Acts chapter 27, we will go on a journey with the Apostle Paul.

Paul and some others were taken prisoner and were being relocated. They set out on the waters and there was smooth sailing. Our life is like this. We set out toward a destination, so to speak, and everything seems to be going well.

In verse 4, we read, “Putting out to sea from there, we encountered strong headwinds that made it difficult to keep the ship on course, so we sailed north of Cyprus between the island and the mainland.”

We have times in life that we encounter “strong headwinds.”

Personally, these past two months, I’ve encountered some pretty strong headwinds that have made it very difficult to stay on course—illness, death, fear...

If we keep pressing, in Acts, we see where the ship continues for days to experience some hard, slow sailing. The ship captain continued to stay the course among the times that seemed impossible. We have times in our lives where we must just, “Stay the course.” Slow, dangerous waters may come upon us, but we have to continue to listen to the ONE who calms the seas.

“The terrible storm raged for many days, blotting out the

sun and the stars, until at last all hope was gone” (Acts 27:26)

“So, take courage! For I believe God. It will be just as he said. But we will be shipwrecked on an island” (Acts 27:29)

We will have difficulty, pain, illness and grief. The storms will rage around us. We will be tossed. Our journey may seem slow or delayed. Of these things, there is no doubt. And there are times in life when we must have our faith shipwrecked so that we can, “Be still and know that He is God.”

Listen to the voice of God. Allow Him to guide you on your journey. If you are shipwrecked, allow yourself to grow in Him. Learn from Him. Shut out the noise around you and find out what great things He has in store for your life.

## Why should we read our Bibles daily?

By **D’ANDRA SMITH,**

3rd Vice President of Texas WMA

D’Andra Smith, Texas WMA 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President, comments on the importance of reading our Bible every single day.

The Bible is the written Word of God. It has been passed down through the years. Reading the Bible daily helps us find direction in our daily lives. The Bible gives us spiritual nourishment to handle difficulties that come. Matthew 4:4 says, “It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

Reading our Bibles daily will help us to grow in our faith, trust God more, realize our need for Him, seek forgiveness, safeguard against the false teacher and know what is true. God’s Word is a weapon against the enemy. Jesus used scripture to fight Satan when he came to tempt him. In Ephesians 6:17, the word says, “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.” This verse tells us that the Word of God is our sword.

We become fruitful by reading the Word daily. Psalm 1:1-2 says, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night.”

Studying His Word requires careful and prayerful attention. Do not read scripture just to read, but ask God to give you direction as you study. Read the Bible so that your life reveals more of Christ.

Jesus tells us in John 8:31-32. “If ye continue in my Word, then ye are my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Studying the Bible is an important tool for believers. Through praying and asking God to give you the guidance

you need you will have a desire to study more. There are many resources to help in Bible study. The Sunday school literature, *Baptist Expositor* published by Baptist Publishing House, gives a study guide for daily reading. Online Bibles are also available.







## A word from your Missions Office

By **HEITH MITCHELL**

This time last year, we were moving forward with many plans assuming the days that lay ahead would be like the days that laid behind. They weren't. The world, not just Texas, has changed so much. I am not presuming upon 2021. I do not know what it holds. I do know that God has it mapped. I know that He is good and faithful and cares for His own. I also know that His mission for His church is alive and well. Before March, your missionaries were setting salvation and baptism records nearly every month. That is no longer true, though they are working just as hard. This month they saw 19 saved which is outstanding in this closed down and distanced climate.

The mission requires that we adapt and adjust to a changing environment. I am really beginning to wonder if our gradual slide into a post-Christian western culture was instead a cliff we fell off of last year. Is "come and see" attractional church over forever? I don't know. I know that our mission always instructed us to "Go" and make disciples. We can't rest on a COVID excuse. Jesus is coming back! The fields are currently white unto harvest.

Harvest work was never easy. Right now, I see it as a spring garden harvest. Most of a spring garden harvest takes place in the 100 degree days of summer. It's miserable, but worth it, just like gospel sharing in a pandemic. Come to our Multiplication Workshop at the BMA of Texas Office Building at 9 a.m. Jan. 19. We can wrestle with this topic further.

BMAT family, we love you. It is a joy to serve you and serve beside you. Thank you for your faithful support in prayers and giving. If we can assist you, we want to. We have trainings you can come to or we can bring your way. We can partner with you or share with you. Let's partner for the Kingdom and pursue:



- That we see an aggressive multiplication movement of churches who make disciples, equip and release leaders and start churches for the glory of God and the advancement of his Kingdom mission
- That each new mission begins with a plan to begin three new churches in their first 10 years
- That pastors and churches of the association be encouraged and equipped to start new churches
- That we connect, evaluate, identify and train new prospective church planters

I would love to come and share Texas Missions with your church or association. I have open dates and look forward to hearing from you.

## A word from your missionaries

**RONNIE MILLS—**  
**KINGDOM CHAPEL MISSION, SAGINAW/NORTH FORT WORTH**  
**RONNIE@KCHAPEL.ORG**

**PRAYER NEEDS:**  
 Please pray for Bro. Ronnie Mills as he continues to battle a serious case of COVID-19. Ronnie has been released from the hospital and is home. He continues to improve every day. He continues to improve every day. Join me in praying that his lungs will completely heal. We are praising the Lord for answered prayer on his behalf. Bro. Heith



▲ Ronnie Mills

**CESAR CANTU—**  
**CARPENTER'S HOUSE CHURCH IN OYSTER CREEK**  
**CESARHCANTU42@GMAIL.COM**

**PRAYER NEEDS:**  
 Cesar and his wife are both recovering from COVID. They have both spent time in the hospital but are home and doing better. They have lost a sister-in-law to the virus. Pray for their family. Bro. Heith



▲ Cesar Cantu

**ROBERTO MARCELLETTI—**  
**ANTHONY DRIVE MISSION, ENNIS**  
**ROBBYPATTY@HOTMAIL.COM**

Pray for the Lord to place grace and favor toward the Hispanics of Ennis. Also to get a part-time job.



▲ Roberto Marcelletti



**JAIME HENRIQUEZ—**  
**FUENTE DE VIDA ETERNA MISSION, HOUSTON**  
**DAIRYJENY@YAHOO.COM**

The Lord has been moving among us. Our mission is standing strong together even though this pandemic has

slowed the work, but we continue to witness to the lost in every opportunity.

**PRAYER NEEDS:**

Please pray for the Lord to provide our own building or land on which we can construct a building for our church.



▲ Jamie Henriquez



**MATTHEW PRATHER—THE BRIDGE MISSION,**  
**MIDLOTHIAN/WAXAHACHIE**  
**MATTHEW@DISCOVERTHEBRIDGE.COM**  
**DUAL SUPPORT BMAA/BMAT**

As I write this, I find myself looking back over the past year as we start the new year. I am reminded what a year it has been. It was a year that most of us did not see coming. As we started last year, we could have never predicted that COVID would happen and churches would go online only. This year has had its challenges for every church I know. However, as I look back I see the opportunities it has also provided. During the early stages of COVID, we saw six saved because of our online services. We have had hundreds of conversations that would have never happened. We were able to serve our community in ways that were desperately needed. As we start this new year, I am thankful God has used The Bridge in spite of the pandemic we are going through. Please continue to pray for us as we lead and minister during this time.



▲ Matthew Prather

**NEPTALY MOLINA—**  
**IGLESIA BAUTISTA MISSION,**  
**NACOGDOCHES**  
**NRMOLINA23@GMAIL.COM**

The Year 2021 has arrived. It is my prayer that it will be a year of growth, spiritually, emotionally, professionally and ministerially. It is also my prayer to the Almighty



▲ Neptaly Molina



# BMA Texas Missions cont.

that our goals and objectives are achieved with the help of Jesus Christ. I pray for my family, friends and fellow church planters that we can do everything in Christ Who gives us the strength. I pray that we serve Him with determination in 2021, and that He gives us courage.

**JERRY BINGHAM—  
JOURNEY MISSION, LOOP  
ANNELOVEBINGHAM@GMAIL.COM**

Whatever the question, prayer is the answer. We have lost several community members to COVID, and for such a small community, that is a big hit. People don't know where to turn and are afraid to get together. You know if people in small town west Texas do not get together for football or basketball, something major is happening.



▲ Jerry Bingham

## PRAYER NEEDS:

Please pray for people to feel comfortable to come back into church buildings. We need physical contact and fellowship with each other.

**CESAR LEAL—  
NEW MISSION IN SAN ANTONIO  
CESARLEAL2002@YAHOO.COM**

We must overcome the pandemic situation we are experiencing. It is difficult to bring people closer as they avoid contact, but there is also a greater spiritual need which we must take advantage of to bring them the gospel of salvation.



▲ Cesar Leal

**ISAIAS ROJAS OSECHAS—  
CHURCH PLANT IN SPRING  
ISAIAS.ROJAS299@GMAIL.COM**

Thank you very much for joining with me to plant new Baptist churches. It has been my passion to do so since the Lord called me to the ministry at a very young age. Thank you for your offerings and great moral and spiritual support as we serve our Lord Jesus Christ.



▲ Isaias Rojas Osechas

**KINGSLEY NDUKA—  
LIGHT HOUSE MISSION IN HOUSTON  
KINGEDU700@GMAIL.COM**

Let us all be ready in season and out of season to defend the Gospel at all times.



▲ Kingsley Nduka

**ROBERT LEE—  
HARMONY BAPTIST CHURCH IN NORMANGEE REPLANT  
BRO.ROBERT.F.LEE@GMAIL.COM**

As we come out of the Christmas season and enter a new year, it is interesting to look back on what the past year held. Although no one could have ever expected what 2020 had

in store, I know beyond any doubt that God knew exactly what would happen. So often, we try to lean on our own ideas, but this past year has been a reminder to lean on God instead. As we move forward in this new year with the replanting process, I look forward to seeing what God is going to do here in Normangee.



▲ Robert Lee

## PRAYER NEEDS:

Pray for the health of some of our older members and for the small group Bible study I am working toward starting in our home.

**SPENCER SIMPSON—  
REDEEMER'S LOVE MISSION, HOUSTON  
SPNCRSMPSN@GMAIL.COM**

The Lord has been faithful and gracious. Please continue to pray for the Arabic speaking families that are now joining us. This area of ministry is new to us but has been a great joy to begin being a part of. Your prayers further the work the Lord is accomplishing here as well as our motivation and desire for southwest Houston. Your prayers, relationships, and financial support blessed us tremendously during a very difficult year. We are excited for 2021 and all the Lord will continue to do!



▲ Spencer Simpson

## PRAYER NEEDS:

Please pray for the Arabic speaking families and individuals that are now joining us. We are overjoyed that the Lord has connected us with them and we ask that you would pray that by the power of God those who do not know Him would be saved. Also, pray for those that do, that we would be able to be used by God to adequately shepherd, teach and disciple them in order to make a further impact for the gospel here in southwest Houston.

**WESLEY BURKE—  
REDEMPTION BAPTIST MISSION, NACOGDOCHES  
WESLEYDAVIDBURKE@GMAIL.COM**

My heart aches for the lost of Nacogdoches more than it ever has before. I don't have an admonishment for the churches of the BMA of Texas, rather I have an earnest plea. Please beat down the door of Heaven with your requests before our God to raise up mature, disciple-making Christians. Set visions of mass-evangelism aside and embrace the model of our Lord. Invest deeply in a few and teach them to do it with others. This is our heart at RBC, I pray it is yours as well.



▲ Wesley Burke

## PRAYER NEEDS:

Our first plan for evangelism right now as a church is to leverage every single aspect of our daily lives for gospel opportunities. Pray that this will bring authentic conversions to the Christian faith among our work. Please.

# BAPTIST MISSIONARY BMLA LOAN ASSOCIATION

## How to fund your church building project



### By JERRY FULTON

So, your church has decided to build. Congratulations! At this point, you probably have a lot of questions, not the least of which, how do we pay for it?

It is important to be a good steward of that with which God has entrusted you. Before contacting contractors and architects, you should determine a plan for funding your project. Once that decision has been made, it will be imperative to stay within the budget you set.

There are a number of ways to fund your church building project, but below are three of the most common methods to consider.

#### 1. CASH

It could be that your church has an existing building fund with enough money to cover the full cost of your building project. If this is the case, there is no problem, as long as your church stays with budgetary guidelines.

#### 2. PLEDGES

Pledges are contributions given by members of your church for the sole purpose of financing a building project. Securing pledges is also called a capital stewardship campaign. Sometimes a church will raise all needed funding from existing building funds and pledges alone without having to apply for further financing or incur more debt.

#### 3. FINANCING

The third option to fund your building project is to finance through a trusted lender. That's where the Baptist Missionary Loan Association (BMLA) comes into the picture. You can apply for a loan directly with the BMLA and we can take you step by step through the process and help you determine your church's borrowing capacity. BMLA rates are competitive and we require no closing costs. To apply, visit our website, [www.bmla.org](http://www.bmla.org).

The Baptist Missionary Loan Association (BMLA) is a ministry of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas.

*Jerry Fulton is the director of the Baptist Missionary Loan Association. Contact him P.O. Box 73, Waxahachie, Texas 75168, 972-923-0758 or [jerry@bmatexas.org](mailto:jerry@bmatexas.org). For more information, visit [www.bmla.org](http://www.bmla.org).*



BMA TEXAS MISSIONS continued on p. 5



## A homegrown pastor cont.

when Pool surrendered his life to the Lord in the gospel ministry in 1998. The church licensed him a couple of weeks later, and for the next eight years, he served the church as minister of youth.

He resigned the position and he and his wife, Kirby, two sons, Eli and Ethan and their daughter, Elyssa, joined Enon, Gilmer, not too far from Antioch. Later, the family returned to Antioch, and in 2015 he was called to be Antioch's pastor.

In response to the question about the benefits of a man being pastor of his home church, Pool said, "I already know the people, and where they live and I sat under the teaching of many of them in years past. As the new pastor, I was able to hit the ground running and knowing where all the people lived made it easy. I know what they believe and they know what I believe. So, the learning curve simply wasn't there."

Although Pool is into his sixth year as pastor, he is quick to acknowledge that it is his first pastorate, and he still has "a lot to learn."

Pool has had the best of all worlds—being raised in a loving family, and in a loving church that called him to be pastor, and attending Harmony School where he enjoyed the influence of school superintendent and also a BMA pastor, Dr. Ray Thompson, who was pastor of Enon, Gilmer for nearly 50 years, and Bro. Charles Johnson, another longtime pastor of Rosewood, Gilmer, who has taught at Harmony while serving as a pastor.

"I have known Bro. Michael all his life," said Johnson. "Our daughter Mary Ann Mauk and Michael and his twin brother, Jeffrey, attended Harmony Schools K-12, graduating in 1997."

Johnson taught Pool as a student in Junior High, and he observed that, as a result of growing up on a farm, he developed a strong work ethic, and saw him carry these laboring principles into the ministry.

"Michael faithfully serves his church as a 'real' pastor—he is the real deal," Johnson said. "He strongly supports the associational work of the BMA at all levels, and is currently serving as the moderator of the Liberty Association. His strong support and involvement in our associated work is why I chose to nominate him as a vice president of the BMA of Texas."

Pool said his first year saw a great number of baptisms and additions to the church, and the growth continues. The church gained a new family this month.

Iglesia Bautista Nueva Vida Mission, led by BMA Texas Missionary Jaime Garcia, also meets at Antioch. Jaime, his wife, Gloria, and their eighth-grade son, Isaac, moved to Gilmer three years ago from the Houston area, coming from a Baptist church in Splendora. Jaime and Gloria speak very little English, but Isaac speaks fluent English, and is also a student at Harmony School. Isaac said there are around 25 youth, both Hispanic and Anglo, that meet on Wednesday nights in the recently completed youth activity building.

For further information about Pastor Michael Pool and the Antioch Missionary Baptist Church of Gilmer, contact him at pool-michael@hotmail.com.

## BMA Texas Missions cont.

**GAMALIER LUNA—  
NEW MISSION IN EL PASO  
GAMALUGA@HOTMAIL.COM**

Friends stay firm and do not lose heart.

**PRAYER NEEDS:**

Pray for the future of our churches and our families.



▲ Gamalier Luna

**MIKE WATT—  
CROSS-WORK MISSION, TAHOKA  
MIKE.WATT@CROSSWORKCHURCH.ORG**

Our Christmas Eve service was the best attended service of the year. We currently have some momentum in the community and are trying to capitalize on it. We are planning a marriage seminar in February. Pray that we are able to reach into our community and draw many families that need a biblical foundation for their marriage.



▲ Mike Watt



**CHRIS DRIVER—  
WEST TEXAS MULTIPLICATION NETWORK/  
TEXAS MISSIONARY CARE  
CJDRIVER316@GMAIL.COM**

Like the rest of the world, west Texas celebrated the end of 2020. It was the hardest and strangest year most people could remember. I have to admit, I have never been so happy to see a year end and welcome the promise the new year holds. But even in such a strange and terrible year, the goodness and



▲ Chris Driver

grace of God was ever present. We saw God bring salvation to souls, growth to his people and new opportunities for the gospel to towns that had been all but forgotten. And so we praise God for His goodness and faithfulness in some of the worst times in memory. And we look forward to seeing Him do even greater things in the new year. Please pray for persons of peace in these tiny towns of west Texas so the gospel can go forward and every man, woman and child will have a chance to hear and respond to the good news of Jesus Christ!

**PRAYER NEEDS:**

Please pray for the health of our missionaries.

**CHRIS MINDI/JESSE HALES—  
ANCHOR AUSTIN MISSION IN LEANDER  
CHRIS.MINDI@BMATS.EDU | HALESJESSE@GMAIL.COM**

Thank you for your persistent prayers for God to establish a strong healthy BMA church here in Williamson County. Our target for the birth of this new church is December 2021. Now that the new year is here, the excitement and anticipation seems to have heightened a bit more. God has been so good and faithful to us in 2020 and we praise Him for what He has already done and what He is going to do.



▲ Chris Mindi



▲ Jesse Hales

**PRAYER NEEDS:**

Our small groups continue to grow and we look forward to being able to multiply these groups in the coming months. For that to happen, we need to grow not only numerically but also spiritually with mature leadership. Please pray for God's continued help in deepening the faith and dedication of those we are discipling as well as allowing us to connect to many more people in an eternity changing way.

Heith Mitchell is the director of BMA of Texas Missions. Contact him at P.O. Box 73, Waxahachie, Texas 75168, 972-923-0757 or hmitchell@bmatexas.org. For more information, visit [www.bmatexasmissions.org](http://www.bmatexasmissions.org).



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Contact BMA Foundation Executive Director Charles Attebery for more information.  
charles@bmaamerica.org or call 501-472-2183





# EVENTS

## BAPTIST PROGRESS MINISTRY CONNECTION WORKSHOP: GOSPEL IMPACT THROUGH COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

**DATE:** March 23, 2021

**TIME:** 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

with lunch provided for \$10

**PLACE:** CrossRoads Church,  
7900 Chiesa Road, Rowlett

## BAPTIST PROGRESS MINISTRY CONNECTION WORKSHOP: CONFLICT—CAUSES AND CURES

**DATE:** June 10, 2021

**TIME:** 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

with lunch provided for \$10

**PLACE:** Jacksonville College,  
105 B.J. Albritton Drive, Jacksonville

## 2021 BMA OF AMERICA ANNUAL MEETING

**DATE:** Aug. 2-4, 2021

**PLACE:** Farley Street Baptist Church,  
Waxahachie, Texas

## BAPTIST PROGRESS MINISTRY CONNECTION WORKSHOP: REACHING PEOPLE THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITES

**DATE:** Sept. 16, 2021

**TIME:** 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

with lunch provided for \$10

**PLACE:** BMA of Texas Building,  
632 Farley Street, Waxahachie

## 2021 BMA OF TEXAS ANNUAL MEETING

**DATE:** Nov. 1-2, 2021

**PLACE:** New Harmony, Tyler

## 2021 NATIONAL SENIOR ADULT CONFERENCE

**DATE:** Nov. 15-17, 2021

**PLACE:** Chateau on the Lakes, Branson,  
Missouri

# PERSONNEL & POSITIONS

## AVAILABLE POSITIONS

**PASTOR**—New Bethlehem, Cut and Shoot is seeking a bivocational pastor. Send resume to 14630 Millmac Road, Conroe, Texas 77303 or [nbbc2112@consolidated.net](mailto:nbbc2112@consolidated.net). 6/21

**PASTOR**—Dr. Ray Thompson has retired as pastor of Enon Missionary, Gilmer. A pulpit committee was formed and is seeking ordained ministers as well as licensed ministers for pulpit supply, please contact [steven.Waller60@yahoo.com](mailto:steven.Waller60@yahoo.com). 3/21

**PASTOR**—Calvary First, Mesquite is seeking a lead pastor. Send resume to Mike Lampkin, 1001 Walford Drive, Forney, Texas 75126, [mike\\_lampkin@att.net](mailto:mike_lampkin@att.net) or call 214-862-4406. 5/21

**PASTOR**—Lakeridge, Lubbock is seeking a senior pastor. Send resume to Karen Isaacs, 4601 82nd Street, Lubbock, Texas 79424, [psc@mylrbcc.org](mailto:psc@mylrbcc.org) or call 806-771-0514. 5/21

**PASTOR**—Keltys First, Lufkin is seeking a full-time lead teaching pastor. Send resume, ministry philosophy, and any sermon links to [jobs@keltys.org](mailto:jobs@keltys.org) or to P.O. Box 3043, Lufkin, TX, 75903, Attn: Pastor Search. Visit [keltys.org/pastorsearch](http://keltys.org/pastorsearch) for more information and a job description. TFN

**PASTOR**—Antioch, Carthage is seeking a pastor. Send resume to Pulpit Committee, Scott Dyer, 442 County Road 1081, Carthage, Texas 75633, [sedyer57@gmail.com](mailto:sedyer57@gmail.com) or call 903-690-4819. TFN

**PASTOR**—Walnut Street, Winnsboro is seeking a senior pastor. Submit resumes to P.O. Box 587 Winnsboro, Texas 75494. Website: [walnutstreetbaptiststreet.org](http://walnutstreetbaptiststreet.org) Email: [wsbc75494@gmail.com](mailto:wsbc75494@gmail.com). TFN

**PASTOR**—First Missionary, Morton is seeking a pastor. Send resume to [jimmysealy@aol.com](mailto:jimmysealy@aol.com) or to FMBC Box 981, Morton, Texas 79346. TFN

**PASTOR**—First, Jacksonville is seeking a pastor. Send resume to Pastor Search Committee, 210 Philip Street, Jacksonville, Texas 75766 or email to [reception@firstjax.org](mailto:reception@firstjax.org). TFN

## AVAILABLE POSITIONS

**TOMMY JENKINS** is available for pulpit supply or revivals. Contact him in Rowlett at [tommyjenkins1105@gmail.com](mailto:tommyjenkins1105@gmail.com) or 469-223-8437. 1/21

*\*If you are aware of pastor and staff changes, please let us know at Baptist Progress by emailing us at [editor@baptistprogress.org](mailto:editor@baptistprogress.org).*

Stone Ridge, Kilgore voted to merge with Victory Baptist Church in the same city Jan. 10. The newly merged congregation will have a launch service with Evangelist David Ring at the Victory Road location (3800 E. Goforth Road) Feb. 14. All are invited to attend.



## ANDREW JONES

Andrew Jones, son of former Texas pastor Corbey Jones, passed away unexpectedly Jan. 9. Funeral arrangements were pending at press time.

## JACK BATEMAN

Jack Bateman, 92, of Arlington, who served as a Baptist Missionary Association missionary to Taiwan for several years, went home to be with the Lord Jan. 8. His ashes will be carried by his children and buried next to his wife in the family cemetery in Becton. A more public memorial will take place at a time to be announced at Calvary, Arlington. Memorials may be made to the Baptist Missionary Association of America in Conway, Arkansas or Jacksonville College.



## JIM COURTNEY

James D. (Jim) Courtney, 86, who served as a professor and chairman of the music department at Central Baptist College in Conway, Arkansas and as minister of music in numerous churches, including churches in Carthage, Houston and Lubbock, was called home to be with the Lord Jan. 7. A funeral service was held at Springhill, Greenbriar, Arkansas Jan. 13. Memorials may be made to the James D. and Loreta Ann Courtney Scholarship Fund at Central Baptist College in Conway, Arkansas.



## DAVID FORTNER

David Fortner, longtime BMA pastor, was called home to be with the Lord Jan. 9. Arrangements were to be made with Criswell Funeral Home in Ada, Oklahoma. At press time, we had not been provided with any other information.



## JOHNNIE HOLMES

Johnnie Ruth Holmes, 90, of Mexia, and mother of Dr. Charley Holmes, president of the Baptist Missionary Association Theological Seminary, went to her eternal home Jan. 3, 2021. Private funeral services were held at Sardis Baptist Church, near Jewett, Jan. 6. Memorials may be made to the Baptist Missionary Association Theological Seminary, P.O. Box 670, Jacksonville, TX 75766.



## DANNY PAT TRIMBLE

Funeral services for Danny Pat Trimble, 61, of Gilmer, were held Jan. 7, 2021 at The Church at West Mountain in Gilmer. He passed away Jan. 4, 2021. He was a pastor for 40 plus years and retired from New Hope Baptist Church in Upshur County.



## MICHAEL WAYNE MOORE

Michael Wayne Moore, 48, passed away peacefully from this earth and entered the gates of heaven, after a brave battle against coronavirus and other health complications Jan. 3, 2021. He was serving as pastor of New Bethlehem, Cut and Shoot at the time of his death and had served other churches previously. A graveside service was conducted at Guiceland Cemetery in Grapeland Jan. 9. Memorials may be made to The Gideons International Processing Center, P.O. Box 97251, Washington, DC 20090-7251.



## TERRY DON ADAIR

Terry Don Adair, 76, longtime Texas pastor, was called home to be with the Lord Jan. 9. Graveside services were held at Red Hill Cemetery in Henderson County Jan. 16. Memorials may be made to the Texas Baptist Home for Children in Waxahachie.



**Editor's note:** Due to the fact that we are including numerous death announcements in each issue of Baptist Progress, for the sake of space, we will no longer be publishing complete obituaries. We reserve the right to make exceptions in future issues.



# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

## Lasting treasures

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: Feb. 7, 2021

TEXT: Matthew 6:19-24

### THE HOOK

The following is a quote from C.S. Lewis. He said, “The Christian says ‘creatures are born with desires. A baby feels hunger—well there is food; a duckling feels the need to swim—well, there is water. If I find in myself, a desire, which no experience in this world can satisfy, then the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.’”

Often we humans pursue possessions, position and prestige, thinking it will satisfy. But eventually we discover all this is for naught. But to pursue God, and to lay up treasures in Heaven means that your satisfaction and fulfillment is realized in Him. And that satisfaction is not temporary—but for eternity.

### THE BOOK

**Earthly treasures are subject to the elements of nature (vv. 19-20).** No one will knowingly purchase a car that has been directly exposed to salty air of the coast, because it will rust and corrupt the metal. I recall a day when we went to bed in Gary Texas, and left the doors unlocked, and the keys in the car. But no more. All our earthly treasures must be under lock and key and protected from the elements. But such is not a problem in Heaven.

**Regard for treasures indicate the desires of the heart (v. 21).** It is not a sin to possess things on earth. Dr. and Mrs. W.A. Criswell owned a fortune in rare antiques acquired from all over the world. But they did not hesitate to auction all of them off to help raise funds for a building program for their church. That was very telling as to where their true treasure was. Corrie ten Boom famously replied in an interview, when asked about the subject of possessions, “I have learned to hold

onto things loosely.” One cannot find fulfillment in laying up treasures in Heaven if they clutch earthly possessions tightly.

**Regard for treasures indicates the spiritual stability of a person (vv. 22-24).** If the eye is single (meaning singularly focused—not double-minded) then the body is full of light. The person is “walking in the light” (1 John 1:7). James says, “. . . a double-minded is unstable in all his ways.” No one can serve two gods.

### THE LOOK

This lesson behooves us to examine our lives, to see if we are driven by a desire to satisfy the flesh and to acquire the things of the world—as opposed to seeking first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness. My favorite Christian rap song, performed by Toby Mac, is based on Mark 8:36, “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

## How to combat worry

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: February 14, 2021

TEXT: Matthew 6:25-34

### THE HOOK

Possibly the most ungodly act a Christian can commit is to worry. I hesitate to make this following statement, because it brings such conviction, but when we worry, we are, in effect saying, (1) “The weight of the world is on my shoulders.” (2) God is not able. If you believe the weight of the world is on your shoulders, you have an extremely elevated opinion of yourself; And if you say “God is not able,” you have an extremely diminished opinion of God.

### THE BOOK

Worry causes misguided priorities (v. 25). Worry causes us to focus more on things than life.

God illustrates the folly of worry through his lower creations (vv. 26, 28 and 30). He cites fowls of the air for food, lilies of the field for clothing, and the brevity of life in the grass of the field.

God explains that His children are not to be like the heathen (vv. 32-33). A godless heathen only knows to seek after clothing and sustenance in the energy of the flesh, but God has instilled into His children, the divine ability to seek His kingdom first.

God teaches us to not borrow trouble from tomorrow (v. 34). Someone once said 90 percent of things we worry about never come to pass; about 7 percent more things we worry about, it is not within our ability to take proactive measures;

only a tiny, minuscule amount of things that happen to us, can we prevent. The apostle Paul said in Philippians.

### THE LOOK

Paul said it well when he wrote, “Be careful for nothing, but

in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” In other words, don’t worry about anything, but pray about everything with a spirit of thanksgiving in your heart. Then, turn it over to God, Who is well capable of handling it.



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# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

## What nots and do whats

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: Feb. 21, 2021

TEXT: Matthew 7:1-12

### THE HOOK

This will probably be the shortest hook we have ever presented which is certainly not original; it has probably been overused, but yet appropriate. And it's this: "Point one finger at someone and three fingers are pointing back at you." This seems to be another way to word what Jesus told His disciples to do in Matthew 7.

### THE BOOK

**Some inequities when we judge others (vv. 1-2).** I want to refer to a couple of Matthew Henry's descriptions of one who judges others. He said, "We must judge our own acts but not make our word a law to everybody." He calls this text in Matthew 7, "...a reproof to those who quarrel with their brethren for small faults, while they allow themselves in greater ones." Judgement eventually comes to those of us who uses a different standard to judge others, and who forget—or refuse to acknowledge God the Father as the only Righteous Judge.

**The hypocrisy of judging others (vv. 3-5).** "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considers not the beam that is in thine own eye?"

Why do we have such a keen vision and insight into the faults of our brethren, while oblivious to our own. I suggest three possible motives:

- Judging others bolsters our self-image if we can highlight the sins of others.
- Judging others, we think, deflects judgement from others toward us.
- Judging others often indicates a secret sin in our own lives.

**he futility of judging the debauched (v. 6).** Godly counsel and reproof are valuable within the framework of the New Testament church when the object of the reproof is teachable and humble. Some are not only non-teachable, but also tend to become enraged at reproof, which indicates a hardened heart and prideful spirit. Dogs and hogs are used as the illustration here because they considered unclean creatures. Hogs return to the mire. Dogs return to their own vomit. Godly counsel is holy as the metaphor of the pearl indicates. But when

a person is hard hearted and debauched, it is an act of futility to give godly counsel—to cast pearls before swine.

**The merit in petitioning God's throne in prayer (vv. 7-9).** God loves a persistent prayer warrior. The indication in verse 7 is to "keep on seeking and knocking." Verse 9 gives us an indication as to God's response to our petitions, saying essentially that He will not give us something harmful, degrading or grotesque when we petition Him. He compares those answers to what our own children's petitions are to us. The Father delights in giving those good things to His children whose hearts are right (Psalm 37:4).

### THE LOOK

Jesus is not instructing us to refrain from counseling our brethren. Quite the opposite, He said in Matthew 18 that we are to go to brethren who have committed an offense against us. In verse 15, the phrase, "If he shall hear thee..." indicates that the recipient of the confrontation, which is delivered from a heart of love, has a receptive spirit, and will mend his ways.

## Choose wisely

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: Feb. 28, 2021

TEXT: Matthew 7:13-19

### THE HOOK

The subject of the "broad way" as opposed to the "narrow way" was illustrated graphically to us during Christmas when we drove to Ennis to see acres of Christmas lights, blinking in sync with Christmas music on FM radio. The show was wonderful, but the rural road was filled with potholes, and was too narrow to negotiate the heavy traffic. I wished for a giant, paved parking lot, overlooking the scene. That would have been much more convenient, than to fight traffic to get a parking place in a ditch.

### THE BOOK

**The narrow way is hard (vv. 13-14).** When one confesses Jesus as Lord, and believes in their hearts that God raised Him from the dead, they are placed on the way to Heaven. One does not work to obtain it (Ephesians 2:8-10). But the proof of that genuine faith results in one's negotiating that hard road to Heaven. If one chooses a life of debauchery, indifference and worldly, sensual pleasures, while refusing the hard road (like persecution, difficulty and sorrow) then it is indicative that genuine conversion did not happen. But one

who confesses Christ, receives the bumps and bruises of that hard road with grace, and a song in the heart.

**The lifestyle of the person on the narrow way is revealed (vv. 16-19).** Jesus uses the illustration of plant life. Figs do not come from thistles—grapes do not come from thornbushes. Neither does a genuine believer come from false teaching. The stability, peace and wisdom of a person living in the narrow way is quite a witness to a world headed for destruction.

**The detractors from the narrow way are revealed (vv. 20-23).** Through deceit and sleight of hand, false prophets feign miracles - claim to cast out demons and promise prosperity. They know enough biblical verbiage to deceive one into thinking they are godly when they are not. They lead one to death as Jim Jones led hundreds of people to death at the 1978 Jonestown massacre. False prophets deny the incarnation of Christ because they possess the spirit of antichrist. They do not wish abundant life for you, but somehow they seem to live "abundantly."

**The contrast between true believers and false religionists (vv. 24-28).** True believers act on the precepts of God's Word and live by them. Although still living in fleshly bodies and tempted to sin, true believers are quick to run to God when they sin—and quick to confess sin. True believers

have genuine wisdom -- the lost deny God, and are described as fools in Psalm 14:1. This is illustrated in the stability of the wise man (built house on the rock) as opposed to the fool (built house on an unsubstantial foundation).

### THE LOOK

1. The child of God has a resource within to guide him or her through the storms of life and from temptation.

The fool "washes out" in the midst of them. I implore you to choose wisdom—choose Christ.

2. The "narrow way" is not heavily populated ("few there be that find it.) But the "broad way" is jam-packed with people condemned to eternal torment in hell.

Paul Gauntt served for 16 years as the BMA of Texas Department of Church Ministries director. He has served several churches as pastor, and is a correspondent and featured article writer for Baptist Progress. Contact him at [pop.gauntt@gmail.com](mailto:pop.gauntt@gmail.com).





# JACKSONVILLE COLLEGE

## New Vice President of Executive Affairs at Jacksonville College

By **MIKE SMITH, Ph.D.**

Dr. Joe Lightner has a distinguished background of pastoring growing churches and serving as an executive leader in parachurch ministries. Dr. Lightner holds a Master of Divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, a Doctor of Ministry degree from Liberty University and will complete another doctorate degree in biblical ministries from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He also has a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration from the University of Arkansas as well as business experience that has strengthened the ministries he has served. Joe's training and experience as an administrator, communicator, preacher and evangelist will be of immeasurable value to Jacksonville College.




▲ Dr. Joe Lightner

He officially started with the college Jan. 4, 2021, but made visits in November and December to orient himself with the Jacksonville College family. Please be in prayer for Joe, his beautiful wife, Rebekah, and their two daughters, Hanna (15) and Julia (12) as they make this transition.

I'm excited and thankful that God has led us to Dr. Joe Lightner. He has the credentials, business experience, ministerial experience and godly leadership that we need.

Dr. Mike Smith is the president of Jacksonville College. Contact him at 105 B.J. Albritton Drive, Jacksonville, TX 75766, 903-586-2518 or [msmith@jacksonville-college.edu](mailto:msmith@jacksonville-college.edu).





### Upcoming Events

**SPRING WALK-IN REGISTRATION**  
January 8 & 11

**DORM MOVE-IN**  
January 8 & 11

**CLASSES BEGIN**  
January 12

**FIRST CHAPEL**  
January 15



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