

Baptist Progress

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Next stop: Atlanta An interview with Church Planter Todd Cox

By **JERRY FULTON**

Baptist Progress Editor

Todd Cox and Family are making plans to move to the Atlanta area within the next several months. Cox and fellow-church planter, Darren Lemons have experienced tremendous blessings from the Lord following their Terrell, Texas church planting effort. Now, the vision to plant more churches continues. Following is an interview I recently conducted with Todd.

FULTON: Give us a review about how The Refuge came to be in Terrell.

COX: Back in the fall of 2010, God began to call Darren Lemons and me to begin a work as church planters. I called Darren to talk with him about upcoming youth events we were working on together while he was the student pastor at Friendship, Mesquite and I was the student pastor at New Harmony, Tyler. As we discussed the youth events and prayed for each other as friends, we both spoke about how we felt God was leading us to start a church.

As we discussed these things, we realized that God was calling us to the exact same vision in the same area and to work with each other. As we continued to pray through the calling, we spoke to our wives and families, the pastors at our churches and the Missions Department, and we were continually confirmed in the process.

Darren and I, along with our families went through assessments by the BMAA and the BMAA Missions Advisory Committee. We were both approved and then elected as North American missionaries and church planters

in 2011. We are supported dually through BMAA and BMA of Texas Missions as church planters and co-pastors.

FULTON: What vision did the Lord give you for the Terrell church plant?

COX: The Vision we believe God has given us for Terrell and the surrounding areas is to reach the unchurched and those who have fallen away from the church due to a hurt, habit or hang-up or misconception about the church. We want to meet people where they are and show them the love of Christ and help break down the barriers they have up. We want to make disciples that make disciples. We wanted The Refuge Church to be a church that didn't become just about Sundays, but about living life together all week long and then come together on Sundays to celebrate what God has been doing in our lives and through us. We wanted The Refuge to not just be a church striving to be a mega-church but to be a church that is "born pregnant" with a mentality that we will be a church that raises up leaders to plant other churches all over the world; a church multiplication center.

FULTON: What has been accomplished since the Terrell plant was begun?

COX: The Refuge officially began to meet in the fall of 2011 as we held vision casting meetings with those interested in hearing more about the church and being involved. We then began by meeting weekly in a home for food, fellowship and Bible study; what we call "Life



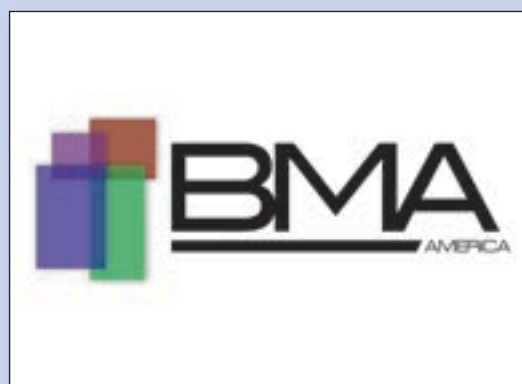
TODD COX continued on p. 2

▲ The Cox Family—Todd, Tina, Taylor & Tyler

Inside



Daniel Springs Camp
Page 7



BMAA Recommendations
Page 8



Jacksonville College
Page 12

Next stop: Atlanta

An interview with Church Planter Todd Cox cont.

Group.” We knew The Refuge was going to be special when we had a teenager give her life to Christ at our very first vision casting meeting.

As we grew, we multiplied Life Groups and held preview services once a month on Sunday. We had our first preview service in a hotel and even had baptism at the hotel pool after our first service. We then had our next preview service at Hometown Cinemas in the Tanger Outlet Mall in Terrell where we still meet for services today.

In our pre-launch phase, we met weekly for Life Groups and once a month for preview services. As we multiplied, Life Groups and grew. We had two preview services a month until we officially launched into weekly services in January of 2014.

Darren and I have seen God work in so many lives of those that started this journey with us and that we have met along the way. God is always at work and always miraculously blessing people and extending so much grace and mercy, if only we would pause long enough to recognize His handiwork and give credit where it is due.

Salvation is most assuredly the greatest accomplishment in anyone’s life because it is the most important decision anyone could ever make, so being a part of other’s coming to know Christ is The Refuge’s greatest accomplishment and reward. The other things that excite us are truly watching others that not only decide to give their lives to Christ because they don’t want to die and go to hell but those who want to live for Jesus every day and be completely committed followers of His. We love being a part of the discipleship and disciple-making process in other’s lives. To watch others come alive and truly grasp the Word and to change the way they were living because of how God has changed them and to see them hunger for a deeper walk with God.

I believe many times we haven’t properly made disciples of Christ as we were commanded to do in Matthew 28, otherwise known as “The Great Commission.” If we look at evangelism without discipleship, it would be like handing the keys of a Ferrari to a 12 year old and telling them, “Here you go. Here’s the keys to the vehicle that will get you where you want to go...figure it out”. I think so many people have been shown the vehicle to get where they want to go and even been given the keys to that vehicle, yet because they were never discipled, many people get in the vehicle and don’t know what to do or they go and cause accidents and others don’t want to be a part of that process at the church. We must do a better job of the disciple making process...it’s not an option...it’s a command by Jesus Himself!

FULTON: How did you decide to plant a new church in the Atlanta area?

COX: The easiest answer and the honest truth is because God truly called us to go and has made that very clear to our family and has confirmed that through a multitude of counselors and many confirming circumstances that He has shown us and had His hand in since He called us to go. We certainly weren’t even considering a move anywhere else other than moving closer to The Refuge in Terrell. So, I was taken by surprise when God began revealing His plans to me last Fall and confirming it with us in December. I am one that is completely committed and loyal to where

God has called me and especially when He has clearly confirmed that to me previously, so I wasn’t even thinking about the possibility that God would move us elsewhere anytime soon. So when God began getting my attention, it took me a little bit to realize what He was trying to say to us. It was only after much prayer and fasting that it was clear to me what He was calling us to do. After my wife and I understood what God was telling us, the clarity became apparent through many other factors too.

On a personal level, I am originally from the Atlanta area. I grew up just on the east side of Atlanta in Stone Mountain and lived in that area until I graduated from high school in 1989. After I graduated, I joined the Coast Guard and lived in North Carolina where I met my wife, and then was stationed in Savannah, Georgia. We moved to Texas around 2004 and have been far from our families for quite some time. Even though I haven’t lived in the Atlanta area since 1989, my mom, sister and other family and friends live there.

When my family and I were originally called to be church planters, before we went through the first assessment process, I had an initial thought that it would certainly be nice to be closer to family, but God had not given us any confirmation to pursue that and in fact had shown us that He wanted us to begin the work, with Darren, of planting The Refuge in Terrell. As we understood that God wanted us to be in the Atlanta area, we realized how excited we were getting as we realized we had been away from family for so long and had missed many things that we could have been a part of if we had lived closer. While we have lived in Texas, we have gone through many family tragedies and lost many loved ones and the distance has made things much more difficult to handle being away from that level of support.

FULTON: Where will the church be located in the Atlanta area?

COX: As we began to try and discern where in the area to plant, I began to look at areas where there is a need and where we might have the biggest impact and where we would have support and help. Statistics show that the Forsyth County area has gone through phenomenal growth steadily over the last 20 years and is ranked as the sixth fastest growing area in the country. As I dug deeper, I realized that although Georgia is considered the “Bible Belt” and there appear to be plenty of churches all around, 58 percent of the population just in Forsyth County are unchurched. Also, 60 percent of the population of the county weren’t born yet or didn’t live there before 1987.

Forsyth County is the county just north of Fulton County and Fulton county is the county where Atlanta is located. The area is growing rapidly, everywhere you look there are new subdivisions and homes, there is a major business and personal and recreational draw for people that is attracting them to this area and the need is high for people to see authentic Christians that will meet them where they are and show them the love of Christ and will disciple them and help them disciple others...there is a need for The Refuge in North Georgia and in Forsyth County.

My mom lives in Alpharetta and my sister lives in Cumming and they are both in Forsyth County and are looking at helping with the church plant. Also, other friends

of ours have contacted us and asked us where we are planting and live in the area and want to be a part.

FULTON: How will The Refuge in Terrell and The Refuge in Georgia be connected and/or work together?

COX: The Refuge in Terrell has always wanted to be a place that multiplies disciples and multiplies churches. We are very excited to be working together in this process and here are some ways we will partner together.

- Name and logo – The Refuge North Georgia is carrying on the name of The Refuge. We are all name carriers and as Christians, we are supposed to be carrying the name and mission of Christ everywhere we go. We believe in The Refuge and have a common interest and as The Refuge continues in Terrell we believe by sharing the name, we also show we have a common vision and purpose.
- Website – We will be keeping the same website domain (www.gototherefuge.com) and then branching from there. As people go to The Refuge website, they will eventually come to an initial Landing Page where they will then choose whether to enter The Refuge Terrell or The Refuge North Georgia. After choosing which site to go to, those websites will then be independent.
- Financial and missional – The Refuge Terrell, even though it is still a mission church, wants to financially help in some part as they send out our family to plant another Refuge Church in North Georgia. The BMA has said many times that we all need healthy churches that will reproduce healthy churches and that we all need to be willing to send those out who are called to continue God’s work to plant new churches. Also, this has given The Refuge Terrell much excitement to show their people how they can help be a part of missions in a very tangible way. The Refuge Terrell is already planning their first mission trip to help out The Refuge North Georgia in the summer of 2016!!

FULTON: When will you move to Georgia and what will you be doing to prepare for the move?

COX: As we speak, our family is visiting the Forsyth County area in Georgia and talking to people while we are out for spring break. We plan to move to the area this summer and begin to build relationships and start the groundwork for the birth of The Refuge North Georgia.

Before the summer, we are contacting churches to share the vision of The Refuge North Georgia with and looking for those that will partner with us.

FULTON: How do you plan to meet and engage the community once you arrive?

COX: In the simplest of terms it would be to “meet people where they are.” We plan on moving to the community and enrolling our son into high school and getting involved in many community and business events that will allow us to meet people and engage in friendships with them. We also will be connecting through my mom and sister and their connections as well as old high school friends of mine and those who we know who have moved to the area in the past several years.

We will be doing many of the same things that we did while at The Refuge Terrell that helped us to meet and

TODD COX continued on p. 4



An open letter from Moral Action

Dear BMA Churches,

As the proposed amendments to our doctrinal statement are presented via our BMA papers and hopefully adopted at the national meeting in Springfield, Missouri, we urge every church to adopt these changes by a motion, second and recorded vote in the church's minutes. This is to be done and recorded by the church to validate the churches and pastors' stand on Holy marriage.

Legal advice shares that our marriage stand should be simply stated and biblically backed. This same advice declares a need for a positive position and not to camp on the negative. We Christians know of our positions on divorce, homosexuality and the LGBT

(Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender).

We all know of the Boy Scouts of America's resolution to remove the gay restriction in denying membership and the litigation against its Christian Boy Scout leaders who refuse to accept the homosexuals.

We also read of the 70-year-old Barronelle Stutzman who was sued for refusing to provide flowers for a same-sex wedding. There have been numerous lawsuits, according to One News Now, being filed for declining to compromise their conscience by not filling orders for gay/lesbian wedding cakes.

Can churches be forced to perform gay marriages? Eric Johnston, president of the Southeast Law Institute, said that churches may be in

for legal challenges over gay marriages. Johnston advises churches that haven't done so to clarify their stance, and to make it biblical.

So, as the Moral Action's director, I urge all BMA churches to adopt in writing these proposed Amendments of Creation and Marriage presented by our BMA Seminary faculty. God will see us through!

Respectfully,
Dr. John Adams
"He Has Chosen..."
Joshua 24:15

God Created Man and God Created Marriage: A White Paper by the Baptist Missionary Association Theological Seminary Faculty April 2015

By DR. PHILIP ATTEBERY

BMA Theological Seminary Dean

During the August 2014 meeting of the Baptist Missionary Association of America's (BMA) Coordinating Council, Dr. John Adams presented a report on behalf of the Moral Action Agency. The report included a sobering description of current trends that contradict biblical teaching on marriage. The council discussed the issue and requested that faculty of the BMA Seminary compose wording for a proposed amendment to the BMA Doctrinal Statement that articulated both scriptural teaching and the persistent belief of BMA churches regarding the institution of marriage. Following consultation with Moral Action's executive director, the seminary faculty adjusted a prior statement, Article IIIC, and prepared a new statement, Article IIID, for the council's consideration. Chairman Ed Stephenson presented the statements to Springhill Baptist Church, Greenbrier, Arkansas, for approval. Subsequently, Springhill Baptist Church chose to recommend that the BMA adopt the statements during its annual 2015 meeting as an amendment to the association's Doctrinal Statement.

In addition to preparing recommended statements, the seminary faculty has prepared a formal exposition of Article IIIC and Article IIID for the purpose of clarifying the intent of each statement for BMA leaders and laypersons. Article III of the BMA Doctrinal Statement rightly recognizes God as Creator of the world, angels, and man. The proposed changes to Section C attempt to update the article's language and affirm biblical teaching related to the origin of human life. The new statement, Section D, attempts to affirm biblical teaching that clearly establishes God's original and permanent intention for marriage to occur within the exclusive bounds of a monogamous heterosexual relationship. When taken as a whole, the BMA Doctrinal Statement reflects the inherent dignity of all individuals while addressing the realities and consequences of human depravity and the blessings of God's mercy and grace. Such a view undergirds the heart of the paper. The authors hope that readers will recognize marriage as a blessing from God, bound by His principles and purposes, to both the joy of individuals and honor to Him.

Although the revision to Article III retains the current language of "man" and introduces the term "humankind" to Section C, the major revision deals with the addition of the phrase "every person from conception." In brief, BMA Seminary faculty concluded and affirmed the long-held belief of BMA churches that "the Bible teaches clearly that a person's life begins in the womb." Biblical

passages such as Genesis 25:22, Exodus 21:22, Job 10:8-12, 31:13-15, Jeremiah 1:5, Hosea 12:2-3, Matthew 1:18-2, Luke 1:39-44, Romans 9:11, and Galatians 1:15 include both direct and implied references to the unborn as children filled with emotional capacity and called by God for specific purposes in life. Although the term "conception" does not appear in Psalm 139, the scripture's teaching about fetus and embryo from the beginning stages is consistent with the idea of life beginning at conception and speaks unequivocally of life in the womb. Psalm 51:5 may also support this by acknowledging the inherent sinfulness of David at conception although the passage's primary purpose is not a theological statement. Such passages clearly demonstrate the presence of life and personhood in the womb from the earliest of stages.

Being made in God's image necessitates *inherent dignity and worth and merits the respect of all other persons*. The key biblical passage speaking to the uniqueness of human beings is found in Genesis 1:26-27, which locates their inherent dignity and worth in their design pattern. Genuine respect for others should always demonstrate God's mercy and obedience to Christ's teachings of how to treat those with whom one disagrees (Luke 6:27-38).

Proposed Article IIID also affirms the long-held belief of BMA churches that God created marriage and intended it "to be the inseparable and exclusive union between a male and female (i.e., a natural man and a natural woman)." Psalm 24:1-2 teaches that everything and everyone belongs to God because He created them. Creating all things automatically establishes God as owner of what He created and affirms the reality that all of creation, including human beings, must submit to His authority. The Lord responded to a question from the Pharisees related to marriage that clearly demonstrated His belief in creation, in a Creator, and in the Genesis account of creation found in the Bible, "Have ye not read, that he which **made them** at the **beginning** made them male and female. And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?" (Matthew 19:4-5). In this passage, Jesus referred to Genesis 2:23 and quoted from Genesis 2:24. Because God created both humans and marriage, humans must recognize themselves as accountable to His intent for marriage.

Genesis 2:24-25 identifies the special and exclusive relationship of the adult human male and female, joined together as husband and wife (Gen 2:24, 25), as the most fundamental and basic human

relationship. This relationship is said to have been designed directly by God and serves as the sole basis for a distinct family unit in perpetuity (Gen 2:24, 25; Gen 4:1, 17) and is even intended to be interminable except under specific, extreme circumstances (Matt 19:8). These passages declare that God's reason for creating male and female finds its ultimate purpose in the ability of male and female to become one flesh. The concept of one flesh includes physical (i.e., sexual), spiritual, mental, and emotional components. While some may argue for the possibility of such oneness outside the bounds of the monogamous heterosexual union, such arguments simply lack legitimate support from the Bible.

A marriage is to be comprised of a biological (i.e., "natural") man and woman. Because of the brokenness of creation as a whole, and the human race in particular, humans made in God's image sometimes face difficult disorders of sexuality which call for great compassion and sensitivity among God's people. First, there are some who perceive themselves to be the opposite *gender* in spite of their physical *sexual* characteristics (i.e., a biological male identifies psychologically as a woman, or vice versa). As noted in Article IIIC., God has designed the human race to be male and female, and he has prohibited same-sex sexual behavior. Accordingly, Scripture does not make possible the separation of sex and gender as the transgender movement has done. One who is biologically male must strive, by God's redeeming and sanctifying grace, to live as a man, and likewise one who is biologically female must strive to live as a woman—hence the language "a natural man and a natural woman" in the doctrinal statement proposal.

It is important to note that cases of sexual or marital union outside the bounds of a monogamous and heterosexual marriage, even if found in the Bible, simply deviate from God's intention for marriage and should not be considered as examples for living or doctrinal truths. A great deal of thought, study, and debate has gone into the particular wording of these revisions in hopes of presenting well-articulated statements that both reflect biblical teaching and address important issues related to personhood, marriage, and sexuality.

The need for such clarification of biblical teaching, as described in the proposed amendments, comes amidst increasing political and social pressures to accept and promote ideas and actions that violate biblical truths. BMA Seminary faculty has made the entire paper available at <http://bmats.edu/marriage>.



www.bmatexas.org

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From the Editor

Life goes on

By **JERRY FULTON**

As a child, I remember praying, "Father, if it be Thy will, please allow my father, mother and I to be taken to Heaven in the Rapture." Obviously, the Lord had other plans, as a few days ago, He called my sweet mother into His glorious presence. There, she will remain with Him, and there, I will one day see her again in perfection. Blessed be the name of the Lord!

My father, Cassie and I are extremely thankful for the outpouring of love we received on the night of visitation at the funeral home, as well as on the day of her funeral at the church. We have received numerous cards, calls and emails for which we will be grateful always. Thanks also to the many of you who have given gifts in memory of Mom to *Baptist Progress*, Anthony Drive Baptist Church and other charities, churches and BMA departments.

I count it an high honor to serve the Lord by serving the churches of the BMA of Texas as editor of *Baptist Progress*. Thanks again for your love, prayers and concern.

At Mom's earnest request, we are getting up and getting on with life

to the glory of God the Father. We miss her terribly, but we trust the Lord. All is well!

More news coming your way

In the coming weeks, *Baptist Progress* will make a greater effort to publish more news in each issue. I hope you enjoy the articles included in this issue about Todd Cox's church planting adventures, Davis Street Baptist Church's plans for the future as well as recommendations from each BMA of America department and agency.

What is happening at the church you attend? Let us know! Email news of past events and notice of future events to editor@baptistprogress.org.



▲ Jerry Fulton

Next stop: Atlanta

An interview with Church Planter Todd Cox cont.

engage with people there. In Terrell, we sponsor an elementary school and partner with them to help kids that need food and clothing and show our appreciation to the teachers and staff by bringing them goodies once a month. We are highly involved in the Terrell Chamber of Commerce and that has allowed us to meet many people and see needs and better serve the community. We have served through setting up baby changing and nursing mother stations at parks and community events, through cleaning up areas of Terrell and working on housing projects, through parades and floats and committees, through painting a field house at the community park used for sporting events, and so much more.

FULTON: What do you hope to accomplish once the church is established in Georgia? How and where do you envision expanding The Refuge's church planting movement?

COX: We hope to reach the North Georgia area with the gospel of Christ and spread His love and truth and grace so those that hear will be changed and choose to follow Jesus and become a disciple that makes disciples. We pray that we will be an integral part of helping other BMA churches start all around Georgia and also help establish the BMA of Georgia.

FULTON: How can the churches of the BMA of Texas and the BMA of America partner with you?

COX: We need your prayers and financial support. Church planting is hard work and takes much time, effort and money to establish, support, multiply and continue the work.

Pray. Please pray for us as we prepare and pray how God would use you personally and your church to partner with us. Pray that God will lead us to people and lead them to us. Pray that we carry His name well and would have His favor as we carry on His mission. Pray for us to raise

the financial support we need for salaries and rental facilities and ministry work. One of the most difficult things church planters face is to raise the financial support they need to do what they were called to do. Even in an established church, many people don't like to talk about money and the financial needs of the church. In a church plant, that is reaching out to those who have been away from the church for a while due to a hurt, habit or hang-up or misconception, or those that have never been to church, it is a challenging process to show them how to properly give and tithe as God has called them to do in scripture. It takes constant and consistent work to raise support from the outside that will support the work inside a mission until that work can sustain itself from the funds that are raised internally in its own congregation.

Partner with us financially through monthly support and one time offerings

Be part of the mission team through short term projects and visiting to help, through interning with us as church planters and learning what we do, through moving to the area of North Georgia and being a part of the long term mission on the ground.

Allow us to speak at your church to share the Vision of The Refuge North Atlanta. I realize that many churches are considering how they too can be a part of a church planting and sending movement and even looking at raising up foreign or national missionaries right from their own home church that they can send out and support and we think that is a great thing. We also realize that not every church is ready to do that or might not have a person or team they can send out as a mission or church planters, but they can partner with us and together we can work together to do what God has called us all to do as part of The Great Commission.

EVENTS

MARCH 22--25, 2015

Spring Revival
@ Jackson, Joaquin
Bro. Eric Johnson,
BMAA Missionary to Mexico, speaker
On Sunday, March 22nd,
Jackson Baptist Church will celebrate 94
years of sharing the Gospel in East Texas!
The morning service will begin at 10:50
a.m. followed by a "pot luck" dinner in our
fellowship hall.
Sunday-Wednesday,
services will begin at 6:30 p.m.

APRIL 6-10, 2015

Revival
@ Woodland, Gilmer
Monday: The Hamptons
Tuesday: Trent Preuninger
Wednesday: Wade Maberry
Thursday: Rily Pate
Friday: Jim Crump
7 p.m.

APRIL 20-22, 2015

66th Annual Session of the BMA of America
@ University Plaza Hotel
and Convention Center
Springfield, Missouri
Headquarters Hotel: University Plaza Hotel

MAY 14, 2015

Liberty Association BMMI Rally
@ Concord, Gilmer

JUNE 2, 2015

Administrative Committee Meeting
@ Rosewood, Gilmer
10 a.m.

AUGUST 13, 2015

Liberty Association Lifeword Rally
@ Cross Roads, Pittsburg

OCTOBER 11, 2015

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

NOVEMBER 10-11, 2015

115th Annual Session of the BMA of Texas
@ Champion Forest Baptist Church
15555 Stuebner Airline Road, Houston

APRIL 25-27, 2016

67th Annual Session of the BMA of America
@ Gatlinburg Convention Center
Gatlinburg, Tennessee
Headquarters Hotel: Glenstone Hotel

PERSONNEL & POSITIONS

AVAILABLE MINISTERS

ELDON BUSENITZ is available for pulpit supply or to serve as interim pastor. He has 46 years of experience as a pastor, with a passion for clear, practical Bible teaching. He is a member of Heritage, Waxahachie. Contact him at 214-399-9522.

AVAILABLE POSITIONS

PASTOR—Pine Acres, Gilmer is seeking a bivocational pastor. Email merrillgl@aol.com for more information.

PASTOR—Grace Temple, San Angelo is currently seeking a full-time pastor. Pastor will also oversee associate pastors and child development center. Send resumes to James Johnson 105 Guthrie St., San Angelo, Texas 76901, email jamesjohnson@allwcts.com or call 325-277-9325. TFN

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

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

PASTOR & STAFF CHANGES

MICHAEL POOL is the new pastor of Antioch, Gilmer.

JOE WHITE is the new pastor of Little Mound, Big Sandy.

TIM SMITH is the new pastor of First, Judson.

WAYNE MCKAY has resigned as pastor of Oak Hill, Gilmer.

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CHURCHES IN REVIEW

MARCH 1, 2015

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Anthony Drive, Ennis	63	99	
Cedar Creek, Teague	6	18	
Farley Street, Waxahachie	454	512	1 By Profession
First, Blooming Grove	223		
First, Palmer	36	54	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	23	47	
Harvest, Lufkin	20	25	
Jackson, Joaquin	76	133	
Little Mound, Big Sandy	42	50	3 By Letter
New Harmony, Tyler	334	397	
New Haven, Dallas	15	28	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	30	40	
Pine Brook, Tyler	26	59	
Rosewood, Gilmer	115	211	1 By Baptism, 3 By Letter
Security Calvary, Cleveland	21	42	
Shawnee Prairie, Huntington	10	20	
Temple, Mexia	30	45	
Woodland, Splendora	37	61	

MARCH 8, 2015

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Anthony Drive, Ennis	63	97	
Cedar Creek, Teague	15	20	
Farley Street, Waxahachie	430	542	1 By Statement
First, Omen	34	60	
First, Palmer	43	83	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	19	37	
Jackson, Joaquin	45	91	2 By Letter
Little Mound, Big Sandy	44	47	
Merriman Hills, Sherman	16	18	
New Haven, Dallas	16	28	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	45	58	
Pine Acres, Gilmer	26	71	
Rosewood, Gilmer	102	147	1 By Profession, 4 By Letter
Security Calvary, Cleveland	12	23	
Woodland, Splendora	32	67	

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

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An Expression of Everlasting Love

Many of our friends choose to honor or remember a family member, a friend or an associate with a gift for the children of the Baptist Home. Texas Baptist Home, in turn, notifies the appropriate person. Listed in capital letters are those honored or remembered from Feb. 1, 2015 – Feb. 28, 2015.

ENDOWMENTS

RICKI M JOHNSTON: Bro. & Mrs. Duane Turner

E ANN PACE: Mr. & Mrs. Karl Pace

MYRA STOKES: Mr. Bill Stokes

HONORARIUMS

ALL OUR SERVICE MEN & WOMEN: Earlene Crenshaw

MR. C. D. COE: Michael L. Woods

MT SELMAN BAPTIST CHURCH: N. W. Myers

MORGAN & CANDICE SHIPP'S WEDDING: Bro. & Mrs. Charles M. Johnson

MEMORIALS

ROY ABNEY: Pecan Baptist Church

MARQUITA ADAMSON: Benny Splawn

GWEN ANDERSON: Pecan Baptist Church

AMELIA AKIN: Jerry Hudson

J S BASS: Charlotte Morgan

WALTER BECKER: Dennis Myrice

JUANITA COLBURN: Bethel Baptist Church

JAMES DAVIS: Bro. & Mrs. Charles M. Johnson

VERL FLETCHER: Doris Lasiter, Mrs. Calvin Lasiter

GEORGE E GREENER: Jacob Roosa, T G Goodgame

JEAN HALLIBURTON: Temple Baptist Church

JANELE HENSON'S BROTHER: Tracy Moore

HAROLD HORN: Don Vaughn

GARY HOUSE: Bro. & Mrs. Charles M. Johnson, Virginia Hopkins

MORRIS HUGGINS: James C Moore

JOE MAX JOHNSON: Leora Johnson

BETTY JOINER: Mr. & Mrs. Milton Christian

WARREN KEITH: Jr. Theodore Kreder

ANITA LOUISE KENDRIX: Travis Floyd

JOE LOFTIS: Randy Parks

JIMMY DENNIS MCKIBBEN: Harmony Missionary Baptist Church

ELIZABETH MULLINAX: Mrs. Margie Beets, Mr. & Mrs. Andy McCuiston

DERRELL GENE NORWOOD: Allye Fuller

MARY DONNA OSBORNE: Don Vaughn

VERNIE PERMENTER: Fendley Tucker

GORDON PHILLIPS: Margie Wolfe

ROBERT'S YOUNGER SISTER: Mr. & Mrs. Milton Christian

MRS. NINA ROBINSON: Jerry Hudson

BRUCE SUTTON: Mr. & Mrs. James Murphy

EDNA THOMPSON: Mrs. Margie Beets

WANDA VIRDELL: Mr. & Mrs. Andy McCuiston

JAMES SOCKWELL: Ann Williams

JASON WILLIAMS: Gayle Ferguson

LOUISE WRIGHT: Fair Park Baptist Church

PATTY LARUE YAGER: J.C. Lassiter

Saluting Our Soldiers With the Gospel



By **SCOTT ATTEBERY**

I have never served in the military. However, I have the utmost respect and gratitude for those who put their lives on the line for our nation's freedom. We owe a great debt to our veterans and active-duty servicemen

Brandon, my best friend growing up, is one example. After the attacks on September 11, 2001, he chose to serve in our armed forces. As a college graduate, Brandon could have chosen another path, yet he volunteered to serve our country. Today, he still chooses to serve. I cannot thank him enough.

Recently, Brandon and I had the opportunity to eat lunch together. In the course of our conversation, he shared an idea for ministering to our veterans and active-duty personnel. Unfortunately, he explained, these men and women often have difficulty transitioning back into life at home. For months or years, he explained, they have lived in a military culture with a different language, routine, structure, and practice. Those who have experienced live combat have been exposed to horrors that the rest of us will never encounter. Many live the rest of their lives with unresolved questions and uncomfortable situations. Many feel as though they will never completely fit in when they return home. Worse, they feel isolated and alone in the struggle.

As a former pastor, I was thankful that he brought up the subject. I shared with Brandon an experience I had Sunday after Sunday when a veteran in our church would approach me with tears and say, "One day I need to come up and visit with you about some things." I knew he was referring to his military experiences in war. And to be honest, the thought of that conversation scared me to death. Why? Because I didn't have any common experiences to reference.

Sadly, many pastors feel the same way and this has led to a "wall of silence" between veterans and pastors when it comes to the difficulties they endure on our behalf. The unfortunate irony is the fact that as ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the message we proclaim holds the only power over the difficulties that plague the souls of our veterans and active personnel.

Sadly, the veteran in our church passed away before we ever had a conversation. At his funeral, I couldn't stop thinking about how many decades he had wrestled with issues that only Christ could resolve. While their willingness to put their lives on the line for our freedom reflects the gospel to us, we often do a poor job reflecting the gospel to them.

As ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we can do better. Our churches are full of these silent soldiers. Recognizing them during services on holiday weekends, although a good idea, simply isn't enough. Something more needs to be done –and it is long overdue. Our veterans are worth the investment.

Brandon's idea prompted several other conversations with friends who serve as chaplains, counselors, and VA social workers. Each of them has expressed similar concerns and a desire to change the culture of our churches.

Recently, I gathered some of these folks together and we began to discuss ways that we can help churches become "Military Friendly Congregations." After all, military families may be the most overlooked group of hurting people in the church today.

I am seeking your feedback. Whether you are a pastor, veteran, active-duty service man or woman, or a family member of someone who has served our country, would you please send me feedback to help us gather ideas? Perhaps you can share more of the struggles veterans and military personnel face. Maybe you can share examples of how other churches and ministries are helping. Or, perhaps you could just let me know if you agree that this is a legitimate need in our churches.

Dr. Scott Attebery is the executive director of DiscipleGuide Church Resources. Contact him by email at scott@discipleguide.org, on Facebook: Scott Attebery or Twitter @scottattebery. Visit www.DiscipleGuide.org.



Daniel Springs Camp - Exciting things are happening in East Texas.

By **JASON PREWITT**

Camp Ministries Director

Daniel Springs is an exciting place to be. We were blessed to host the 2015 Frontline Pre-Teen Winter Camp for 4th thru 6th graders over the weekend of February 20-22. Counting staff members and attendees, we had about 130 on the campus. It was a boot-camp-themed program with a focus on Micah 6:8. We are proud of the eight pre-teens who accepted Christ as their personal Savior.

Can you believe that this summer, Daniel Springs will celebrate fifty years of partnering with churches in ministry? We are currently finalizing details for the busy and amazing summer season. All the planning (determining camp themes, working on Bible study materials and interviewing and hiring summer staff) makes for a busy winter and spring.

We are still taking applications for summer staff, so if you know a college student who wants to be used in ministry this summer by helping lead worship, Bible studies or recreation, send them our way.

Summer will be here before we know it, so look on the website to pick your week to come to camp. You don't want to miss it! Check out the summer staff application and summer schedule at www.danielspringscamp.com.



▲ Jason Prewitt

Davis Street, Sulphur Springs planning for future growth

By **JERRY FULTON**

Baptist Progress Editor

Davis Street Baptist Church in Sulphur Springs decided they needed to do something in February 2014. The church's facilities were very dated, and the congregation was utilizing every possible space. Their children's ministry has quadrupled over the last four years. There were 15 babies born in the last year, and several more have been born this year.

Pastor Andy Comer said, "We have seen lots of new young families, and the phrase we hear most often in church is, 'There are so many new people.'"

The pastor said, "Our vision for our church is simply to be a place for people to worship God, connect with others, and serve the world. We have realized that if our ministry is to expand any further, then our facilities have to expand."

A new design concept to build on the current

church campus was revealed last month. The new building will include a 475 seat worship center, a 1,500 square foot welcome center and five nursery classrooms. When the new building plans were revealed, 290 were in attendance and over \$65,000 was raised.

Comer said, "But the biggest number of all is the five people we baptized to start the day. God has truly blessed us and we want to continue to make a difference in our community."



OBITUARY

RUFUS CRAWFORD

Funeral services for Bro. Rufus Burks Crawford, 88, of Conway, Arkansas, were at Central Baptist Church in Conway March 11, 2015. Born May 2, 1926 in Beckville, he passed from this life March 8, 2015. He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Mildred Garrett Crawford. Crawford graduated from Jacksonville College, Stephen F. Austin, and attended BMA Theological Seminary. He will be remembered for serving his Lord through the Baptist Missionary Association of America for 67 years as an evangelist, teacher, radio speaker and pastor in Texas and Arkansas and as a missionary to Brazil and Portugal. He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Mildred Garrett Crawford; five children and their spouses: Stanley and Cheryl Crawford, Houston; Mike and Diann Crawford Jones, Conway, Arkansas; Wendel and Deana Kay Crawford McCorkle, Hope, Arkansas; Mark and Dixie Crawford Thackston, Dardanelle, Arkansas; Mike and Telma Crawford Cross of Jacksonville, Arkansas; several grandchildren, great grandchildren and great-great grandchildren. To continue their legacy and further the kingdom of God, memorials can be made to the Rufus and Mildred Crawford Endowment Fund at Central Baptist College, 1501 College Avenue, Conway Arkansas 72034.



MICAH PHILLIP BERRY

Funeral services for Micah Phillip Berry, 21, were at South Park Baptist Church in Fort Worth March 2, 2015. Born June 2, 1993 in Dallas, he passed from this life Feb. 25, 2015. Micah grew up in South Park Baptist Church in Fort Worth where his father Phil has been the minister of music for almost 25 years and was also the minister of youth for over 20 years. At South Park Baptist he was active in AWANA, youth group, orchestra, and worship band among other activities. He professed his faith in Jesus and was baptized there at age 7. At Crowley High School, Micah was a member of the band and was involved in Junior ROTC. He graduated salutatorian in 2011 and accepted a full ROTC scholarship to Sam Houston State University. During the summers between school years, he returned home to Fort Worth to work and be with his family, worked as a staff member with Clear Christian Camps in Chicago, Illinois in 2013, and participated in a seven week military training program in Louisville, Kentucky in 2014. He committed to the Army Reserves in 2014 and had already begun his service during his senior year at Sam Houston State. He is survived by his parents Phillip Edward and Deborah Ann Berry; sisters Olivia Gail Tucker and Anna Katherine Berry; grandparents Billy Ray and Barbara Gail Beasley and many other relatives and friends.



ELINOR ELIZABETH SEAGO

Funeral services for Elinor Elizabeth Seago, 85, of Buda, were at First, Buda Feb. 28, 2015, with Bro. Buddy Johnson officiating. She was born December 16, 1929 to John W. and Bertha Speegle Elliott. She and her husband, Howard E. Seago, served in several BMA churches in Texas. She is survived by her son and daughter-in-law, Larry and Robin Pollock of Austin and her sister, Jo Ann Sikes of Buda. She was preceded in death by her brother, John W. Elliott, a missionary in Brazil for 40 years, and her husband Howard Seago, a minister for over 30 years.

Representative



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Recommendations to be made to Baptist Missionary Association of America

By **JERRY FULTON**

Baptist Progress Editor

The Annual Meeting of the BMA of America will be at the University Plaza Hotel and Convention Center in Springfield, Missouri April 20-22, 2015. Below are recommendations to be presented to messengers for approval.

Baptist Missionary Association of America Committee on Arrangements

The Committee on Arrangements recommends that our 2018 Baptist Missionary Association of America meet in Jackson, Mississippi. The meeting will be held in the Jackson Convention Complex. The primary hotels will be The Hilton Garden Inn, The Marriott, and the Sleep Inn & Suites.

Baptist Missionary Association of America Coordinating Council

The following proposed amendments to the BMAA Doctrinal Statement presented by Springhill Baptist Church, Greenbrier, Arkansas; Ed Stephenson, pastor

Article III—CREATION

C. Man—As the crowning work of His creation, God created humankind (male and female) in His own image (Psa. 8; Gen. 1:27, 2:7). Consequently, every person from conception is of inherent dignity and worth and merits the respect of all other persons (Psa. 51:5; Psa. 139:13-16; Gen. 9:6; Matt. 10:28-31; James 3:9)

D. Marriage—God created marriage (Gen. 1:27-28; 2:23-24). Jesus Christ declared the Creator's intention for marriage to be the inseparable and exclusive union between a man and a woman (natural man and natural woman) (Matt. 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9). Marriage testifies of the union between Christ and the church (Eph. 5:31-32; Rom. 1:25-27).

Baptist Missionary Association of America Missions (Advisory Committee)

1. We recommend Anders Lee as a North American church planter to South Haven, Mississippi receive a \$2,000 a month stipend.
2. We recommend a field change for Boris Lebedev to Atlanta, Georgia.
3. We recommend a field change for Todd Cox to Atlanta, Georgia.
4. We recommend the election of Daisuke Okada as a national missionary to Japan.
5. We recommend the changes to the benefits package for the 65/35 missionaries.
6. We recommend the approval of the 2015 budget as printed including the Missions department's part of the

LLC and Capital Spending Budget.

7. We recommend the housing allowance for all directors be set at \$24,000.00 for the year 2015.
8. We recommend that Dr. John David Smith stand as a nominee for the position of executive director of BMAA Missions.

Baptist Missionary Association Theological Seminary

1. Affirmation of the proposed budget \$1,534,227.00 be approved.
2. Reaffirm the appointment of Dr. Charley Holmes as president.
3. Each church observe Sunday, May 17, 2015 as Scholarship Sunday with:
 - a. special prayer for our graduates
 - b. a special scholarship offering to support the training of future BMA pastors and missionaries on that Sunday

BMA Foundation

1. That the name be changed from BMAA Foundation to BMA Foundation
2. That the proposed 2015 operating budget be approved
3. That the Executive Director's 2015 housing allowance be set at \$7,000 for income tax purposes
4. That members of BMA churches be encouraged to include the BMA Foundation in their estate plans
5. That Charles Attebery stand as a nominee as executive director

DiscipleGuide Church Resources

1. We recommend the adoption of the 2015 DCR budget.
2. We recommend that Scott Attebery stand as a nominee for the position of executive director of DiscipleGuide Church Resources.
3. We recommend that the Executive Director's salary for 2015 remain at \$59,000, which includes a housing allowance of \$24,000.
4. We recommend that church participate in DiscipleGuide's special emphasis Sunday.

Lifeword Media Ministries Recommendations

1. That we adopt the proposed 2015 operating budget of \$1,216,235.
2. That Sunday, October 25, 2015 be set aside as Lifeword Sunday.
3. That the housing allowance be set at \$2,000 per month for the executive director, chief broadcast officer, program director, and production team leader.

4. That the executive director be paid a base salary of \$65,845, plus one-half of Social Security/Medicare, health and dental insurance, retirement at 6 percent of salary and a car provided.
5. That we offer special thanks to God for His blessings on the ministry of Lifeword over the past 50 years.
6. That Steve Crawley stand as a nominee for executive director.

Ministers Resource Services

1. That Ron Chesser stand as nominee for executive director of Ministers Resource Services.
2. That \$18,000.00 of the executive director's salary be designated as housing allowance.
3. That the budget of \$270,459.78 be approved.
4. We urge each church to enroll her pastor and church staff in the BMA Retirement Plan at Ministers Resource Services.
5. We urge our pastors and their wives to enroll in the Ministers Benevolent Society and Auxiliary.
6. We urge each church to include Ministers Resource Services in her monthly budgeted offerings to the various departments and agencies of the BMA.

Moral Action

1. That our local associations, our local and state WMA and Brotherhoods, and our local churches be encouraged to give a financial gift or budgeted monthly gifts to Moral Action. These funds will strengthen this ministry.
2. That our churches and pastors embrace and support our nation by participating and promoting the National Day of Prayer (NDOP), Thursday, May 7, 2015. Joining other Americans in prayer for our nation. Meetings can be conducted at town halls, city halls, county courthouses, flagpoles, state houses and churches.
3. That all our BMA churches schedule June 28 or July 5, 2015, as the Moral Action "Freedom Offering" Sunday. This is an opportunity to honor or give memorials to our soldiers, both past and present also.
4. That Dr. John M. Adams, Executive Director, represent the BMA of America in Washington, DC at the Watchment on the Wall conference, and by encouraging and contacting our United States Senators, Congressmen and Congresswomen, and other Christian organizations such as the American Family Association (AFA), Focus on the Family, Family Research Council (FRC), and Alliance Defending Freedom.

Islamic jihad, in many forms, 'gaining ground'

By **DAVID ROACH**

Baptist Press Chief National Correspondent

NASHVILLE (BP)—Many in western democracies are blind to radical Islam's threat to their security and cultural values, speakers said at a day-long discussion of Islam during the National Religious Broadcasters International Christian Media Convention.

"The majority of Muslims are peaceful and good citizens," Robert Edmiston, a member of Britain's House of Lords from the Conservative Party, said at the Feb. 24 event in Nashville. "But there are some that are extremists, and they are gaining ground."

The threat Islam poses stems not merely from a radical fringe but from central doctrines of the Muslim faith, some of the speakers said.

"Moderate Islam is to Islam what nominal Christianity, cultural Christianity is to Christianity," said William Lane Craig, a professor of philosophy at Houston Baptist University who has studied Islam for 30 years. "It is a mere cultural set of mores that one has adopted, but it isn't representative in either case of the fundamental teaching of the original book of that religion, whether the Quran or the Bible."

Jihadists are using "the freedoms of democracy to achieve political change to try to destroy that democracy and the freedoms which it enshrines."

-- Caroline Cox

Caroline Cox, another member of the House of Lords, said "verses of peace" are in the Quran, but the Islamic principle of "abrogation" teaches that "verses of the sword" trump those advocating peace.

"Way back in the early days of Islamic theology, the authorities found it very hard for Allah to be inconsistent. So they had to reconcile the inconsistency between the verses of peace and verses of the sword. They did so by the principle of abrogation, whereby the earlier revelations of the prophet [Muhammad] are abrogated by the later revelations," said Cox, a former member of the Conservative Party who currently is not affiliated with either of the two major British parties.

"And unfortunately for all of us, the earlier verses, the earlier teachings or revelations, are the verses of peace. The later ones are the verses of the sword. And so those who do use those verses of the sword to justify their terrorist activities, which we see on our television screens, are operating in many ways from the correct theological interpretation according to traditional Islamic teaching," Cox said.

Cox added, "You cannot say that [jihadi terrorism] has nothing to do with Islam."

Topics at the NRB Islam discussion, at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center, ranged from national security to culture to the church.

Islam and security

If estimates by the Gallup polling organization are correct, 7-10 percent of Muslims worldwide believe in violent jihad, author and Middle East expert Joel Rosenberg said. That translates to approximately 150 million supporters of jihad -- a number equivalent to half of the U.S. population.

The Iranian government and the terrorist group ISIS advocate "apocalyptic jihad" and pose perhaps "the most grave danger right now," Rosenberg said. Those two

groups believe they can hasten the end times and the coming of an Islamic messiah by committing genocide, he said.

Iran's leaders think a way to hasten the messiah's appearance is "to annihilate two nations, two civilizations: Israel, which they believe is the little Satan, and the United States, which they believe is the great Satan," Rosenberg said. "But the Iranians' strategy thus far has been, wait until you can acquire [or] build the nuclear weaponry to accomplish that end."

In light of Iran's genocidal theology, it would be foolish for the U.S. to strike a nuclear deal with Iran that allows the Middle Eastern nation to maintain nuclear weapons, Rosenberg said.

Frank Gaffney, a former adviser to President Reagan, warned that "global jihad" -- not just the isolated activities of ISIS -- is the present generation's "existential threat."

There is "a global jihad brought to us by these Islamic supremacists for the purpose of imposing what they call sharia on the entire world and creating a caliphate or a similar kind of governing arrangement to rule according to it," Gaffney said.

Rosenberg and Gaffney made their comments during a panel discussion moderated by Richard Land, former president of Southern Baptists' Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

Islam and culture

Violent jihad, Cox noted, is just one of many strategies used by Muslims who seek Islamic dominance of western nations. Among the other types of jihad she cited:

-- "Political jihad" seeks the passage of legislation imposing judicial penalties for criticizing or making jokes about Islam. The British parliament narrowly defeated legislation during the Blair administration that would have imposed up to six years in prison for criticizing Islam, Cox said.

-- "Cultural jihad" utilizes investment in western universities to create centers for Islamic studies and install professors with biases toward Muslim causes and ideas.

-- "Demographic jihad" has led to government-permitted polygamy for Muslims in the United Kingdom, with some men having as many as 20 children. As a result, the Muslim population is vastly increasing.

-- "Legal jihad" has led to the establishment of at least 80 sharia courts in the United Kingdom that impose a strict Islamic code on individuals who choose to settle legal matters there. Sharia courts "pose a threat to the fundamental principle of democracy of one law for all," Cox said.

-- "Humanitarian jihad" demands conversion to Islam as a condition of receiving humanitarian aid, even amid dire circumstances. Saudi Arabia and other Islamic nations have given \$27 million toward humanitarian jihad in South Sudan, Cox said.

"In western liberal democracies, [jihadists] are using ... the freedoms of democracy to achieve political change to try to destroy that democracy and the freedoms which it enshrines," Cox said.

Erwin Lutzer, pastor of The Moody Church in Chicago, told of seeing a Muslim holding a sign on television during a demonstration in Dearborn, Mich., that said, "We

will use the freedoms of the Constitution to destroy the Constitution."

Such a strategy captures "exactly where Islam is at," Lutzer, author of "The Cross in the Shadow of the Crescent," said.

In 2004, an FBI investigation revealed that the Islamist group the Muslim Brotherhood planned to infiltrate America by establishing Islamic influence through education, mosque construction, the banking industry and other cultural avenues -- not violent jihad, Lutzer said.

Faced with such cultural attacks by Islamic extremists, America must discontinue its present strategy of submitting to Muslim demands and seeking to avoid offending Muslims at all costs, Lutzer said.

Lutzer compared America's posture toward Muslims and Islamic nations with "dhimmitude," the custom of minorities paying a tax within an Islamic state in exchange for protection from persecution. "What we have decided to do is to play the role. We haven't signed a pact, but the pact is there," he said.

Islam and the church

Michael Youssef, pastor of The Church of the Apostles in Atlanta, said he is less afraid of jihadists than he is of Christians departing from biblical theology because Islam has expanded during periods of doctrinal weakness in the church.

In the sixth century, Muslims conquered North Africa as a heresy called Montanism caused many Christians to believe God would provide continuing revelation beyond the Bible, Youssef said. Centuries later Islam expanded all the way to Austria "on the back of a weak church."

"I look around today and I see the church is plagued by universalism, heterodoxy, hyper-grace, emergent church, the insider movement, Chrislam," Youssef said, "I grieve more and become more concerned about this than I am about Islamists."

Despite the church's weakness, Youssef said thousands of Muslims are coming to faith in Islamic lands and providing hope for a better future.

One such former Muslim, Isik Abla, told of praying as a little girl in Turkey that Allah would let her kill and die for Islam. As a teenager, she married a radical Muslim and began supporting "educational jihad" -- sending Muslim students to study at western universities and then gain power in western nations.

By age 28, Abla had been abused and twice divorced, and she plotted to kill herself. But on the day of her planned suicide, she received Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior.

Since 2009, she has been hosting Christian programming on satellite television to reach Muslims in the Mideast. Abla reported terrorists being saved through her broadcasts and cited the Gospel as the ultimate solution to Islamic radicalism.

"The name of Jesus Christ was an offense to me as a Muslim," Abla said during the NRB sessions. "... Truth offends but it saves. And I am so glad that I was offended by the name of Jesus Christ."

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Auxiliaries

Blessed are ye...

By SHARON COLE

In a world of chaos and turmoil it is difficult for some people to think about how blessed they are. Every day on the news we hear of someone being killed for their faith in God. It is dangerous to travel out of our country, especially to the Middle East. Sadly, we don't even have to leave the United States to find someone who disagrees with our belief in God. Standing on the street corner in some of our own cities and handing out gospel tracts or Bibles can get you arrested if someone complains loud enough. So with all this and more going on, how can we say we are blessed? Because Jesus said we are!

Matthew 5:3-12 tells us how we are blessed. Verses 11 and 12 tell us when we are reviled and persecuted and lied about because we follow Christ, to be happy about it and rejoice! Why? Because there is a great reward waiting for us in heaven.

It is tough to stay happy when you are rejected over and over for what you believe. Just remember how many times in the Bible that Jesus was rejected, and his disciples also, for speaking the truth.

- If you woke up this morning, you are blessed. Someone somewhere didn't wake up.
- If you have more health than illness, you are more blessed than the million who won't survive the week.
- If you have never experienced the danger of war, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture or the pangs of starvation, you are ahead of 20 million people around the world.
- If you attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture or death, you are more blessed than almost 3 million people in the world.
- If you have food in your refrigerator, clothes in your closet, a roof over your head and a place to sleep, you are richer than 75 percent of this world.
- If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace, you are among the top 8 percent of the world's wealthiest.
- If your parents are still married and alive, you are very rare, especially in the United States.
- If you hold up your head with a smile on your face and are truly thankful, you are blessed because the majority can, but most do not.
- If you can hold someone's hand, hug them or even touch them on the shoulder, you are blessed because you can offer

God's healing touch.

- If you can read this message, you are more blessed than over 2 million people in the world that cannot read anything at all. You are blessed in ways you may never even know.

Today before you say an unkind word—think of someone who can't speak. Before you complain about the taste of your food—think about people who have nothing to eat. Before you complain about your husband or wife—think of someone who is crying out to God for a companion.

Today before you complain about how tough life is—remember someone whose life ended too early. Before whining about the distance you drive—think of someone who has to walk that same distance.

When you get tired and complain about your job—think of the many homeless, the disabled, and those who are standing in the unemployment line.

The Bible is full of examples where women used their home to be a blessing. The Shunamite woman was sensitive to the needs of Elisha. She shared the warmth and security of her home with him when he came her way. She and her husband built and furnished a room on their house for him to stay and rest on his journeys. Tabitha, or Dorcas, as she was known, used her skill in sewing to reach people for the Lord and was a blessing to many.

When she died, it was reported to Peter. Peter came and through God's power raised her back to life. God teaches us in Matthew 7:12 that if we want a blessing, we must be a blessing, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them..."

A blessing cannot be kept. There is an old saying: what goes around, comes around. In other words, if you want someone to be nice to you, you must be nice to others. Above all, don't forget to be a blessing to your own family. But how can we if we are not together?

We are getting more and more disconnected and impersonal and actually lonely because of technology. Sending texts is easier than speaking or hearing someone's voice. Someday you may be crying because you long to hear a certain person's voice that has been silenced forever. You have one child in a room with a computer, another child in another room with a DS game or video, mom in the kitchen playing Candy Crush on her phone and dad in the living room watching a ballgame on television. Is this what a family is

supposed to be? A family should be together, not separated like many are today.

Be a blessing to your pastor. Ask him how you can help him in the church. Put a note in your husband's or wife's pocket, purse or briefcase before they leave for work telling them that you are praying for them today. Offer to keep a friend's children so they can run some errands. Be especially nice to the grocery clerk and the one who bags and carries your groceries. Be faithful to your family and loyal to your work.

Stop and say thank you to your child when they obey. Laugh at yourself; laugh a little more; laugh a lot! "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine. Proverbs 17:22.

Smile at a stranger. Say, "Have a Blessed Day" to the store clerk. Watch them smile. Be a listening ear to someone who is going through some difficulty. Take the local newspaper to someone in the nursing home and read it to them if they are unable. Play checkers with them or go for a stroll down the hall or outside. Strive to be the source of blessings, not just the recipient.

DISTRICT WMA NEWS

The Houston-Anderson WMA met Feb. 14, 2015 at Ephesus, Latexo. President Sherry Lasiter presided and read her favorite scripture, Philippians 4:13. Nancy Skalicky shared a beautiful poem that she had written. Our district voted to send an offering to Jacksonville College for paper items needed in the cafeteria. The guest speaker was Masoud Edrisameri, a student at the BMAA Seminary. He told of his salvation in Iran, and having to leave with his wife and young child because of his belief in Jesus. A care-package of non-perishable items was given to the family. The host church served a delicious meal of baked potatoes with toppings to compliment the brisket prepared by Bro. Bill Platt. The April 11 meeting will be at Antioch, Palestine with guest speaker, John Shackelford, director of the Association of Baptist Students at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches.

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.



2015 WMA Meeting and Minister Wives and Widows Lunch

By JANET WIDGER

BMAA WMA President

All ladies (WMA or not) are encouraged to attend the National Women's Missionary Auxiliary meeting on April 21, 2015. The meeting will be in the Illinois Room of the University Plaza Hotel and Convention Center in Springfield, Missouri.

Registration will begin at 8:00 a.m.

Meeting will begin at 8:30 a.m.

- We will take care of business in a timely manner.

- We will be blessed and encouraged to hear from a few aspects of our auxiliary work.
- We will be blessed to hear special music from Grace Etabag, Doug and Diane Lee from the Philippines.
- We will be blessed to hear former WMA President Pat Quesenbury speak to us.
- We will dismiss on time.

Pastor's wives and widows are invited to a special lunch in your honor at 12:15 p.m. in the Colorado B Room.

The Tablerock Room will be used as a cry-room for small children the morning of April 21.

Thanks to the BMAA Committee on Arrangements as well as the staff from the University Plaza Hotel and Convention Center for accommodating our requests.

Sunday School Lessons

The suffering Savior in prophecy

By **PAUL GAUNTT**

DATE: March 22, 2015

TEXT: Galatians 3:13; Psalm 22:7-16

God's Word is amazing! While we read in Psalm 22 of David lamenting the plight of his own turbulent, tragic life, God the Holy Spirit was speaking the prophecy through David's lips of the horrendous death on the cross of the One from his own lineage - Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Last week, we examined the Brazen Serpent in Numbers 21, but there are many more types of the crucifixion.

Psalm 22:1-18 is written as though David, himself, was on hand to witness the crucifixion of Jesus Christ on the Cross, which occurred approximately 1,000 years later.

But Christ's death on the cross of Calvary is foretold throughout the Old Testament. Let's note several more Old Testament accounts picturing the death of Christ on the cross.

1. The ram caught in the thicket:

A most familiar Old Testament story is the heart-rending account of Abraham taking his precious son, Isaac, up Mt. Moriah, at the command of God the Father, to offer him as a burnt offering. On the third day, Abraham "took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son": Genesis 22:6.

(And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: John 19:17)

When Abraham drew his knife to slay his son, the angel stopped him. "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." Genesis 22:12.

Verse 13 notes that the "substitute" the ram caught in the thicket was to be offered as a burnt offering in the place of Isaac. Jesus Christ is our Substitute. He took our place on the cross.

Incidentally, many scholars believe Mt. Moriah and Golgotha are the same place.

2. The story of Joseph

I believe the entire story of Joseph (Genesis 37-50) is a foreshadowing of the saving life of Christ. They were both despised by their kindred; both were falsely accused, they both excelled as servants; they were both sold for silver - Joseph, for 20 pieces of silver - the price of a slave, and Judas sold Jesus

to the Romans for 30 pieces of silver. Joseph's coat was sprinkled with the blood of a goat and presented to his father; Jesus is our Scapegoat and His blood was presented to the

Father as a sin offering. (Leviticus 16:8-10)

3. Day of Atonement Leviticus 16:16

Once each year the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies, and offer a blood sacrifice for the remission of the sin of the people -- and himself

Leviticus 16:16 "So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness."

4. The Smitten Rock Exodus 17:6

"Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel." Exodus 17:6

This command of God had much more meaning than just to provide a thirsty people with water -- this was a foreshadowing of the "bruised heel" of Christ. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities. . ." Isaiah 53:5

God was delivering a picture of the crucified Christ through the smitten rock. As he hung on the cross, His side was pierced and water came forth. He told the woman at Jacob's well, ". . . If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." John 4:10 Jesus is our Rock, and He gives us Living Water.

This first striking of the rock was a type of Jesus' first advent, when He died on the cross. God told Moses a second time in Numbers 20:8 to "speak" to the rock. But because of Moses' anger, he struck the rock a second time, invoking the wrath of God. Moses' death was for much more than simply disobeying God's command the second time. Moses' anger caused him to destroy another foreshadowing -- speaking to the rock was to be a picture of Jesus' second advent -- setting up His millennial Kingdom and reigning over a sin-free world.

Even the most cynical person would have to take note of the pinpoint accuracy of the fulfilled prophecies in the Inspired, inerrant, perfect Word of God.

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.



66th Annual
BMA of America National Meeting
April 20-22, 2015
University Plaza Hotel & Convention Center
Springfield, MO

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

MONDAY EVENING,

7:00 Worship Service -Iowa, Georgia, Arizona
President's Message
{Dr Jason Aultman}

TUESDAY MORNING

8:00 WMA Meeting -Illinois
Brotherhood Meeting -Oklahoma
9:30 Committee Meetings
Colorado A (set for 75 theater)
Arkansas (set for 75 theater)
Kansas A (set for 75 theater)
Kansas B (set conference for 25)
Kansas C (set conference for 25)
Boardroom (set conference for 14)
Taneycomo (set conference for 25)
Lake of the Ozarks (set conference for 25)
John Q (set for 75 theater) previously held for open committee

LifeWord
DiscipleGuide
Baptist Theological Seminary
Moral Action Agency
Committee On Arrangements
Ministers Resource Services
Nominating Committee

11:00 Elective Session

John Q (set for 75 theater) previously held for open committee
Colorado A (set for 75 theater)
Iowa, Georgia, Arizona (general session room)
Arkansas (set for 75 theater)

Lunch

TUESDAY AFTERNOON,

12:15 Minister Wives & Widows Lunch
{Hosted by WMA} - Colorado B
2:00 Elective Session
John Q (set for 75 theater)
Colorado A (set for 75 theater)
Iowa, Georgia, Arizona (general session room)
Arkansas (set for 75 theater)
3:00 General Session -Iowa, Georgia, Arizona
4:30 Dinner

TUESDAY EVENING

7:00 Worship Service
Annual Message
{Dr. Mark Livingston}

WEDNESDAY MORNING

8:30 General Session
11:00 Elective Session
John Q (set for 75 theater) previously held for open committee
Kansas C (set for 75 theater)
2 groups in Iowa, Georgia, Arizona (general session room)

Lunch

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON,

2:00 General Session
3:30 Guest Speaker {tentative}
5:00 Dinner

WEDNESDAY EVENING,

7:00 General Session {Mission's Report} Commissioning Service

Answering God's Call

Isaiah 6:8 says, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, here am I; send me."

I believe in a "call" of God upon a person's life. There is that general call of salvation and the specific call for service such as the call to pastor or to be a missionary. I pray God will continue to call out the "called" for special service. I also believe a call carries a responsibility to prepare for service and that part of that preparation should include enrolling in Jacksonville College and earning an Associate Degree.

For example, Ricky Berry had a family, a good job, and great future. When God called him into the ministry, he packed up his family, left his job, and moved to Jacksonville to enroll in Jacksonville College as a full-time student. He serves as youth minister at Afton Grove Baptist Church and works at another job to provide for his family and pay for his education.

Possibly, God is calling you or someone you know. Come to Jacksonville College. No other two year college in Texas can prepare you for that calling the way Jacksonville College can. JC offers fully accredited basic courses, taught with a Christian, biblical worldview, that will transfer to any four year college.

When you see the call of God upon someone's life, tell that person about Jacksonville College, where we are dedicated to challenging minds and transforming lives.



◀ As of December 2014, the Joe Wright Elementary School campus officially belongs to Jacksonville College because of Hobby Lobby's generous donation of the property. The campus is located directly across from the JC main campus. We are relying on God to bless us through the donations of His people so we can use the new facility for multiple purposes.



The Voices of Mobile, a vocal ensemble from the University of Mobile, Alabama (Baptist) blessed Chapel attendees on March 4 with an inspiring performance of wide variety of Christian songs. The ensemble was directed by Dr. Roger Breland, founder of the award winning Gospel group, Truth. ▶



▲ Jacksonville College hosted this year's NJCAA Region XIV Championship Tournament for men's and women's basketball March 3-7. The tournament was held in the Jacksonville Independent School District Gymnasium on the previous Lon Morris Campus, and was sponsored by the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce and the City of Jacksonville.

DARBY/BEAL LECTURES 2015

MARCH 24-25, 2015
JACKSONVILLE, TEXAS

A Discussion of A Statement of the Traditional Southern Baptist Understanding of God's Plan of Salvation in light of The Baptist Faith and Message (2000)

Tuesday, March 24: Dorman Memorial Chapel at BMA Seminary

10:00 a.m. Speaker: Dr. Tom Ascol

Introduction: *A Statement of the Traditional Southern Baptist Understanding of God's Plan of Salvation*
Article Two: The Sinfulness of Man

3:00 p.m. Speaker: Dr. Tom Ascol

Article Three: The Atonement of Christ

Wednesday, March 25: Buckner Chapel at Jacksonville College

11:00 a.m. Panel discussion featuring: Dr. Tom Ascol, Dr. Malcolm Yarnell III, Dr. Mike Smith, and Dr. Charley Holmes



Dr. Tom Ascol is senior pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Cape Coral, Florida. He is a graduate of Texas A&M University (BS) and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (MDiv, PhD). He is executive director of Founders Ministries, an organization committed to reformation and revival in local churches, and editor of the *Founders Journal*.



Dr. Malcolm Yarnell III is director of the Center for Theological Research and professor of Systematic Theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He has received degrees from Louisiana State University (BS-Finance), Southwestern Seminary (MDivBL), Duke University (ThM), and the University of Oxford (DPhil).



Dr. Charley Holmes is president of the Baptist Missionary Association Theological Seminary in Jacksonville, Texas. He has received degrees from BMA Theological Seminary (BA, MDiv) and Reformed Theological Seminary (DMin).



Dr. Mike Smith serves as president for Jacksonville College. He holds degrees from Baylor University (BA), Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth (MA-Religious Education, MDiv), Luther Rice Seminary (DMin), and Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky (ThM, PhD).



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