

Baptist Progress

Baptist Progress, P.O. Box 2085, Waxahatchee, Texas 75168
Postmaster: send change of address to:
5010125

Official Publication of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas | May 20, 2015 | Vol. 102 | No. 10

GLORIOUS

SOAR set for July 1-3 25th edition of conference themed *Glorious*

By **PHILLIP RICE**
BMA of America

SOAR, the BMA's annual National Student Conference, turns 25 this July! Thousands of students and hundreds of youth have made SOAR a yearly rite of passage. Featuring world-class artists and some of the best student communicators found anywhere in America, SOAR has set the standard in conferences inside and outside the ranks of the BMA, and 2015 looks to be no exception.

Glorious, the theme for SOAR 2015, will focus on Jesus! Donny Parrish, Conference Director for DiscipleGuide and one of the producers of SOAR for the past 25 years, said that the choice for the 2015 theme was obvious. "For any conference to last 25 years is really incredible. SOAR has celebrated Jesus every year since its inception. To look closely at our glorious Savior was a natural for our twenty-fifth anniversary."

Featured musical artist for SOAR 2015 is Dove and Grammy award-winning Christian artist For King and Country. The group is making SOAR history by being the first musical artist to make back-to-back appearances.

"The power of music can impact our mood, emotions, our day. But when you merge the strength of music with the heart, hope and passion of the Gospel, it has the ultimate power not only to change someone's day, but to impact them for eternity. This is why we write music and sing songs - we hope that people will be moved, encouraged and stirred to live a life for Someone greater than themselves"—For King and Country

Another highlight for SOAR 2015 will be the speakers at the event. God birthed the vision for SOAR in the heart of Bobby Tucker almost three decades ago when

he served the BMA of America as director of church ministries. Bobby will return as one of the speakers for the event. Steven Carroll was a staple as speaker and then Conference Director. He will also preach. Dustin Wisely, a SOAR favorite, and Steven Castleberry, making his first SOAR appearance, will round out the featured speakers.

SOAR Village, a place for food, fun and fellowship, will also be making a return to SOAR for its twenty-fifth anniversary.

SOAR 2015 will be held at the world-class Dallas Omni Hotel in downtown Dallas. For information on attending SOAR, registration and hotel reservations, visit the official SOAR website at www.gosoar.com.

Inside



Jacksonville College
Page 6



EIM's Shepherd Bags
Page 7



Daniel Springs Camp
Page 12



www.bmatexas.org

Baptist Progress

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

**BMA of Texas Missions/
Loan Association**

Jerry Burnaman, Director
PO Box 73, Waxahachie 75168
972-923-0757
www.changedintexas.com

Jacksonville College

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

Texas Baptist Home

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

Baptist Progress

USPS: 043120 • ISSN: 005-5751

Published every first and third week of the month by the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas

Jerry Fulton, Editor/Business Manager
editor@baptistprogress.org

P.O. Box 2085 • Waxahachie, Texas 75168
972-923-0756 (office) • 972-923-3534 (fax)

www.baptistprogress.org

Periodical postage paid at Waxahachie, Texas 75165 and at additional mailing offices

SUBSCRIPTION RATE:

- Mail Church Plan:** \$1.50 per month
 - E-Mail Church Plan:** \$1.00 per month
 - Mail Subscription:** \$21.00 per year
 - E-mail Subscription:** \$15.00 per year
 - Mail & E-mail:** \$25.00 per year
- (Advertising Rates Available on Request)

Postmaster: Send address changes to Baptist Progress, P.O. Box 2085, Waxahachie, Texas 75168

From the Editor

We are turning 103—June is anniversary offering month

The first issue of *Baptist Progress* rolled off the press in 1912. As the official publication of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas, it is our mission to promote interest in missions, evangelism, benevolence and Christian education among the churches of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas. Since 2004, it has been my privilege to serve as editor of *Baptist Progress*, and I am thankful for those who served before me throughout these 103 years of ministry.

To celebrate the 103rd anniversary of *Baptist Progress*, and to help us meet our budget for the associational year, we ask that each church and any willing class, group or individual please mail an offering to *Baptist Progress* in the amount of \$103 for 103 years of ministry. If 200 churches, classes, groups or individuals gave just \$103, we would raise \$20,600 for this ministry. It is so doable!

Will you celebrate with us and help us to continue this vital ministry ?

Mail your offerings to:

Baptist Progress
P.O. Box 2085
Waxahachie, TX 75168



▲ Jerry Fulton

High School Graduates' Names Requested

A list of high school graduates will be published in the June 3 issue of *Baptist Progress*. Please send the names of those in your church's membership who are 2015 high school graduates to editor@baptistprogress.org or *Baptist Progress*, P.O. Box 2085, Waxahachie, Texas 75168.

High school graduates' names must be submitted to *Baptist Progress* by 5 p.m. on May 25, 2015.



EVERY SUNDAY BULLETIN SERVICE IS NOW BEING OFFERED THROUGH BAPTIST PROGRESS!

Simply set up your account with Baptist Progress for the number of bulletins you regularly need on Sunday, and they will be shipped right to your door. We have a wide selection offering six bulletin styles in various sizes to fit the worship style of nearly any church. Extra bulletins are available to add to your regular order for special days such as Easter, Christmas, Mother's Day, etc. To order or for more information, visit www.baptistprogress.org, click MORE at the top, then click Every Sunday Bulletin Service or give us a call at 972-923-0756 or send an e-mail to editor@baptistprogress.org.

If your church currently purchases bulletins directly from Warner Press, please allow us to add your church to our customer list. Baptist Progress will receive a commission if you are added to our customer list. The price for your church will be the same. Just give us a call to make the change, 972-923-0756 or email editor@baptistprogress.org.



Family Matters

The influence of godly parents

By DR. TRAVIS PLUMLEE

I find myself some days doing things that my mother did. I find myself saying things that I used to hear her say to me. Sometimes I realize just how much she influenced my life. Recently, it was Mother's Day. My mom is rejoicing with Jesus in heaven these days. And if you are close to your parents, then life is never the same after they go home to heaven.

You laugh. You live. You have the great blessing of having grandchildren to fill you with joy, but life will never again be the same. It can't be. They are not here. Part of your heart is in Heaven. It's called life.

You miss them, but thank God because of Jesus you will rejoin them some glad day! Sometimes, like during the holidays, just for a brief moment, I will find myself thinking of how much my mom would enjoy my grandkids. She would just think they are truly great and laugh with them. Holidays today are wonderful, but they will never again be the same as when Momma was here.

So I reflected on Mother's Day just how much I find myself doing and saying things that she did. And of course, I thank God I had such a godly, Christ-centered mom. We all have memories of what our parents give us in life. It stays with us for life. God knew this when He commanded parents to raise their children to honor and obey them, as well as teach children about Him from His Word.

There are memories of course of holidays, vacations or special ways our parents and grandparents raised us. But I am not writing about these. I am writing about meaningful things that become a legacy. These are the precious memories that shape who we are as adults.

I implore parents and grandparents in my family conferences to leave a legacy of holiness to the younger generation in their home. I can tell all of my readers here even, to start today if you never have worked at this. It doesn't matter how many times you failed in the past. It doesn't matter if you weren't saved, lived a life of wickedness or just flat

didn't think about such things and now your kids are grown and moved off. It is never too late to leave a legacy.

Even if there are hurt feelings in the family; the first precious memory they may have of you is when you come and ask them to forgive you for all the mistakes you made while raising them, and asking for a chance to begin again. God is the God of a second chance, third chance and so on.

Praying with them, reading the Bible together in your home and going to church together make precious memories. Family traditions that center around Christ in the home during holidays are things that cannot be erased from memory.

What about those who still have their parents with them? Write them a letter thanking them for all they have done. Yes, it can be mushy gushy. We don't tell people enough in this society how much we appreciate them.

If you can, share a story of

how you are now doing something they taught you when you were little. Remind them of some saying they always told you that you now use. It will make them smile.

Text, email, twitter or try an old fashioned letter in the mail (it is still delivered to those boxes out on the road – ha). Tell them what they mean to you before you celebrate a Mother's Day or Father's Day without them. Also, include your grandparents in this process.

Above all, find things for which to thank your parents. It is an honoring act to do. Regardless of our age, we are always supposed to honor our mother and father. It will go well for you if you do this. God promised this in the Old and New Testament in Exodus 20 and Ephesians 6.

Today, I find myself doing so many things that my dad did. He always helped others. He made himself sick once helping feed rancher's cattle in a blizzard. He helped people stuck in cars on the freeways. He was always serving others. He is the one who most impacted me about Jesus.

I saw this army soldier (my dad) burst into tears one night at church. He stood and told the whole church he wanted to give a testimony about Jesus. He spoke for 15 minutes about how wonderful Jesus was to save him. My father was a quiet shy man who never publicly spoke. I was so taken aback by all of this as a small child in the pew. It caused me to want to know this Jesus personally like my daddy did.

My mom was a prayer warrior. She had my church schedule of every where I would be preaching, and every day she would pray for those people at those churches. The one thing I miss most about my mom is calling her every day and us praying together. She was a real prayer warrior. She was also a soul winner. She brought 180 people to revival when she was just 14 years old. The pastor signed all of this in the Bible the church gave her for bringing so many.

Even in later years, she would write all of her relatives, including all of us kids who are saved and just reminded us that we needed to be saved by the blood of Jesus if we were not. These are the precious memories. This is the legacy. Some day in the future, your kids and grandkids will be thinking about you on Mother's Day or Father's Day and you will be in heaven. What will they remember about you? Now go make some memories!

Bibles, Books, Music & Gifts

To order Bibles, books, music and gifts from *Baptist Progress*, visit www.bmatexas.org and click the flashing box at the top of the right hand column.

When you order through our website, Christian Book Distributors shares their sales profit with us. Get to shopping!



Dr. Travis Plumlee is a full-time professional speaker and leads Family Ark Ministries. He is national board certified as a therapist/specialist in various areas of human behavior. For more information or to contact him, visit www.travisplumlee.com.





Central Baptist College seeking two full-time faculty in Department of Business

DESCRIPTION: Central Baptist College is seeking applications for a full-time accounting faculty member in the Department of Business. Rank is open depending on teaching experience and qualifications. This is a 9 month position and employment begins August 1, 2015.

Job #1 RESPONSIBILITIES: Teaching introductory and advanced undergraduate accounting and business classes. Academically advising incoming and current students. Participation and service in various college activities and committees.

QUALIFICATIONS: MBA or MAcc required, PhD or DBA preferred. CPA or CMA certification.

Job #2 RESPONSIBILITIES: Teaching introductory and advanced undergraduate marketing and management classes. Academically advising incoming and current students. Participation and service in various college activities and committees.

QUALIFICATIONS: MBA required, PhD or DBA preferred. Institutional Requirements Successful college teaching experience preferred. Commitment to the integration of faith and learning in the classroom. Candidates must support the Christian identity of the College and demonstrate mature faith, Christian lifestyle, and a strong belief in Baptist doctrine.

THE COLLEGE: Central Baptist College is located in Conway, Arkansas, a city of approximately 70,000 just 30 minutes north of Little Rock, Arkansas. CBC is a small but consistently growing liberal arts college with approximately 850 students associated with the Baptist Missionary Association of Arkansas.

APPLICATION: Send (1) a letter of application, (2) current vita/resume, (3) unofficial copies of all undergraduate and graduate transcripts, (4) a statement of your view of the integration of faith and business, and (5) three letters of reference to: Beth Cantrell Chair of Business Department Central Baptist College 1501 College Avenue Conway, AR 72034 Applicants may also email materials to bcantrell@cbc.edu. Review of applications begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled.



Redeeming the time – Part 2

By LARRY BARKER

How do we redeem our time? How do we prioritize our time and make sure we are focused on the right things? There are plenty of ways to waste our time and to invest our time in things that will never produce the results we desire. In *Growing New Churches* (training materials by Dynamic Church Planting International) Hal Seed shares tips on dealing with time demands. He gives “Ten Biblical Guidelines for Managing Your Time.” In the last article we covered the first five:

1. **Our time is precious!**
2. **We will give an account of how we spend our time!**
3. **We must seek God regularly to guide our use of time.**
4. **We spend the most important time each day with God.**
5. **Rest is important for our long term health and therefore our time management.**

In *Building a Discipling Culture* (How to release a missional movement by discipling people like Jesus did) Mike Breen describes two New Testament words that are translated as time. The one we are probably the most familiar with is *Chronos* which refers to things in a sequential order. This is why we have 24 hour days and a 7 day week. The clicking of the clock is what often drives us to set our goals, timelines, and planning the future. The calendar rules!

Another word for time in the scriptures is *Kairos*. Breen defines it as, “an event, an opportunity – a moment in time when perhaps everything changes because it is the right time. A *kairos* moment is when the eternal God breaks into your circumstances with an event that gathers some loose ends of your life and knots them together in his hands. In *kairos* moments, the rules of *chronos* time seem to be suspended.”

Our goal in redeeming the time is to make sure that God is directing our day. We want our schedule to be under His guidance. Hopefully, we desire to be the best stewards of our time that we possibly can be in taking advantage of every opportunity that we have to advance His kingdom. Here are the next 5 biblical guidelines in managing your time:

6. **Saying ‘no’ to good uses of time to say ‘yes’ to the best uses.** Martha and Mary’s response to Jesus’ visit in Luke 10:39-42 is a great example. Mary said no to housework and hospitality while saying yes to sitting at His feet. Just because you

can do something does not mean you should do it. It is easy to allow busy work to distract us from important work. Most have a ‘to-do’ list but we would be wise to also have a ‘don’t-do’ list. What should you stop doing so you can focus on something of greater importance?

7. **The best use of our time is to prepare believers to do ministry.** There is no better use of our time than discipling and mentoring others. Joby Martin has said, “The measure of your success is more about who you raise than what you’ve accomplished.” Dave Ferguson puts it this way, “The core competency of any movement is apprenticeship, a fundamental principle of reproduction.” Do you have an easily reproducible plan for leadership development?
8. **Avoiding or procrastinating important tasks is often a result of ungodly presumption and laziness.** Mark Twain suggested that if there was something you knew you needed to do that day but did not want to you should go ahead and “swallow the frog.” Get it over with and behind you. Delayed obedience is disobedience.
9. **Busyness does not equal godliness or productivity.** Every job requires our taking care of tasks that are unpleasant and we do not enjoy. Do not avoid the unpleasant but important tasks. Resist the temptation to only spend your time on the things that are ‘sexy’ or ‘fun’ to you. Are you only busy doing ministry or are you busy multiplying ministry through others?
10. **We must plan the wise use of our time.** *Psalms 90:12* says, “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”

Listen to the wisdom of Bill Bright, “For many years, one of the first things I do every morning is to evaluate all the day’s competing demands against one single criterion: How will each opportunity enable me to maximize my contribution to helping fulfill the Great Commission? I prioritize accordingly. Some of the demands go to the top of my list, some down the list, and some get eliminated.”

Larry Barker is the operations director for North American Missions. For more information or to contact him, visit www.bmamissions.org.





What is your confidence Level?

By **JERRY BURNAMAN**

State Missions Executive Director

Self-confidence is extremely important in almost every aspect of life, yet so many people struggle to find it. For many of us who have a leadership role in ministry, our confidence level is often like a roller coaster ride—up and down! We expect people to follow our leadership; however, if we are nervous, fumbling and apologetic, people are reluctant to back a proposed project.

How Confident do You Appear to Others?

Here are some marks of confident behavior:

Doing what you believe to be right, even if others criticize you for it.

Being willing to take risks and go the extra mile to achieve better things.

Admitting your mistakes, and learning from them.

Accepting compliments graciously. “Thanks, I’m pleased you recognize the efforts to accomplish the project.”

Here is behavior associated with low self-confidence:

Governing your behavior based solely on what other people think.

Staying in your comfort zone, fearing failure, and so avoid taking risks.

Working hard to cover up mistakes and hoping that you can fix the problem before anyone notices.

Dismissing compliments offhandedly. “Oh that was nothing really, anyone could have done it.”

Building Confidence is a Journey

The bad news is there is no quick fix, or five-minute solution. The good news is that becoming more confident is achievable, just as long as you have the focus and determination to follow through with your goals and projects.

Where do you see yourself? How can you build self-confidence and transfer it to other leaders in your church? Remember this is a journey and takes a life time to complete it. As believers we turn to the Bible for guidance. I checked *Young’s Analytical Concordance* and there are at least 46 verses in the Bible referring to confidence. And there are many, many more references to assurance, courage and dependence on God.

One verse that we know very well is from Paul’s pen while he was in Roman Prison: “*Being confident of this very thing, that he who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ*” (Philippians 1:6). Thus, our journey is not complete until the Lord returns or he calls us home.

As we make our spiritual journey through this world, our confidence is in the resources of God who will give abundant grace so that we will have “*all sufficiency for every good work*” (2 Corinthians 9:8).

Think About Your Achievements

It is good to keep an “Achievement Log” in a journal. This

could include a training process for leaders of various ministries in the church. It may also include evangelistic efforts, mentoring individuals and benevolent activities. The idea is to remember that you have made progress and then build on your achievements.

Consider Your Strengths

If you have difficulty focusing on your strengths, or if you do not know your strengths, it would be advantageous to take a personality and spiritual gifts tests. There are several available for a nominal fee. After you receive the results you may want to secure the services of a good coach or mentor to help you develop skills in the area of your strengths.

Manage Your Mind

Learn to identify and defeat the negative self-talk with can destroy your confidence. Create strong mental images of what you feel and experience as you achieve your major goals. Remember Romans 12:1-2: “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*”

Commit Yourself for the Long Journey

The Christian life is more than a forty yard dash; it is a marathon. As we manage our minds and focus on God’s plan for us, we will keep our eyes on the goal. Sure there will be ups and downs, and some disappointments. But these words encourage us: “*Therefore, we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us*” (Hebrews 12:1).

Are you thinking about your confidence level? Can you identify some attitude or skill that you need to work on? Then begin right now to work on a plan to build your confidence and then execute the plan. If you need help, call a fellow pastor or some leader to give advice, or perhaps help you develop a process for building your confidence.

Jerry Burnaman is the executive director of State Missions and the Baptist Missionary Loan Association. Contact him at jerryburnaman@yahoo.com or 972-923-0757.



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 April 1 to April 30, 2015.

ENDOWMENTS

E ANN PACE: Mr. & Mrs. Karl Pace

MYRA STOKES: Mr. Bill Stokes

HONORARIUMS

REX ARMOUR: Delmarie Middleton

OLGA JUAREZ: Julin & Sandra Juarez

JUNE LAGRONE: Julin & Sandra Juarez

JAY & BABS MARTIN: Earlene Crenshaw

MEMORIALS

HARVEY ALFORD: David & Marjorie Gilmer

DAN ANTHONY: M Wolfe

JOHNNY ARNOLD: Brent & Tammy Swanner

J S BASS: Charlotte Morgan

WALTER BECKER: Dennis & Ilona Myrice

DAVID BROWNING: Wilson & Mary Hodge

JERREL GLEN BULLARD: Calvary Baptist Church

NEVA BURCHETT: Terri Hudson

MARY JO BROWN: Travis & Brenda Floyd

DAUGHTER CINDY: Tommie Wothy

WAYNE CLAXTON: Clyde & Debra Wilson, Kerry & Johnathan Wilson

FRANCES CLIPPARD: Agnes Jones; Scott & Dawn Raye

F MICHAEL COKE: L B & Freedia Coke

ELLOWEEN CROSS: Jed & Glenice Whitaker;

Timothy & Rhonda Thompson; Bro. & Mrs. Charles

M. Johnson; Brent & Tammy Swanner

JANIE DUNAVANT: James & Margaret Wolf

MARTHA JEAN DRENNAN: Don & Susan Ross;

Bro. & Mrs. Charles M. Johnson

OWEN DRY: Dorrell Freeman

JUDY ENOCKS: Richard & Kay Jones

BONNIE FIKES: Wood County Baptist Association

JACKIE FORD: Barbara Ford

ANN FULTON: Karl & Martha Pace; James & Margaret Wolf

GERALD FULTON: Bro. & Mrs. Charles M. Johnson;

Karl & Martha Pace; James & Margaret Wolf

BOBBY GAGE: Brent & Tammy Swanner

GREAT GRANDSON: Tommie Worthy

BILLIE GRIMES: John Grimes

MARY LEE HATHAWAY: Doris Lasiter

REGGIE HAYES: David & Marjorie Gilmer

DONNIE HEFLIN: Clyde & Debra Wilson, Kerry & Johnathan Wilson

MARY SUE HENRY: Travis & Brenda Floyd

KATHY HOLLINGSWORTH: Red Springs Missionary Baptist Church

ROBERT JACKSON: Wood County Baptist Association

VELMA LUSK: Billy Lusk

KEITH MCKINLEY: Bro. & Mrs. Charles M. Johnson

GEORGE SCOTT: Billy & D’Andra Smith; Roy & Jo Ann Martin

LEE SHORT: Florence Short

W. C. ‘SONNY’: James & Margaret Wolf

NORMAN SMITH: Bro. & Mrs. Charles M. Johnson

WILBURN TEFTELLER: Jed & Glenice Whitaker

BILL THOMPSON: Temple Baptist Church

BRAD TODD: Calvary Baptist Church

IDA WADDELL: Andy & Nell McCuiston; M Wolfe; Beatrice Conn; Billy & D’Andra Smith; Roy & Jo Ann Martin; Roland & Sandra Plaster; James & Margaret Wolf

IRA WADDELL: Beatrice Conn

DR. RUSSELL WARDEN MD: Bro. & Mrs. Charles M. Johnson; Tommy Gibson

ANNETTE WINTTERS: James & Deborah Perryman; Jerry Null; Red Springs Missionary Baptist Church



COMMENCEMENT 2015

Jacksonville College proudly presents the largest graduating class, with the highest GPA in JC history.



Summa cum laude graduates



Commencement speaker Rev. David Butler with President Mike Smith



Graduating members of the prestigious Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society



Sandy Jones, the oldest graduate in JC history



Record attendance



Overcomers

Expertise



With Church Mutual, you get more than just insurance. You get your questions answered by industry experts — quickly and easily.

That's because insurance specialists, like Brad Barton, are ready to help. Brad takes about 6,000 calls from churches every year. Chances are, he's heard your question before — and can answer it right away. In fact, on average, calls to our National Customer Service Center have a 13.57 second response time, twice as fast as the industry average.* By focusing on the needs of churches day in and day out, we have the unique expertise to put your mind at ease. Isn't that the kind of experience you'd like on your side?

Church Mutual has received consistently high ratings from industry analyst A.M. Best every year since 1952.

To learn more, call us at
(800) 554-2642
or visit
www.churchmutual.com.

* 13.57 seconds average response time for calls to our National Customer Service Center in 2014.



Listening, Learning, Leading. is a registered trademark of Church Mutual Insurance Company. © 2015 Church Mutual Insurance Company

Prather Family's loved one killed in flooding

Brandon Charles Henegar, son-in-law of Roy Prather, pastor of Fifth Street, Levelland and brother-in-law of Matthew Prather, pastor of The Bridge, Celina, has been killed during flash flooding in North Texas. Henegar's body was found in his car around 10 a.m. Friday, May 8.

Authorities say that it appears Henegar's car was swept away in flash flooding south of Gainesville.

Funeral Services for Brandon Charles Henegar, 36, of Gainesville, were May 13, 2015 at First, Gainesville with the Bro. Roy Prather officiating.

Brandon was born August 18, 1978 in Plainview. He was employed with BNSF and formerly with Gainesville High School. He was a member of First, Gainesville. He will be remembered as an amazing husband and Dad and a loving son and brother.

Survivors include his wife Karla Henegar of Gainesville, children Kyler Blaine Henegar and Charlee Grace Henegar; grandfather Charles and Nora

Chandler, parents, Mike and Debbie Henegar of Tulia, and Linda and Greg Tibbets of Scurry; sister Tavie and husband John of Forney; brother Ryan Tibbets of Arkadelphia, Arkansas; step-brothers: Jason and Christy Swift of Lubbock, Cody and Misti Swift of Amarillo, Corey and Karinton Tibbets of Montgomery; sister-in-law Kayla and Brad Andrews of Plainview; brother-in-law Matthew and Amy Prather of Celina; and many nieces and nephews.

A memorial fund for the Henegar family is set up at First State Bank in Gainesville.



▲ Brandon Henegar

Need A Project For VBS?

How about allowing your students to take an active role in world evangelism?

With EIM's Shepherd Bags™, children can reach other children with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Bags are placed in the hands of children in need around the globe.



For more information on how your church can get involved, contact Fonda Norris at (870) 226-3626 or fnorris@eimworldwide.org.

Also visit our website at www.eimworldwide.org

BMA of America News

BMA retirement averages 7.62 percent each year for 12 years

By **RON CHESSE**

Ministers Resource Executive Director

I want to thank the Lord for His blessings upon Ministers Resource Services during this past year. Each pastor, church staff, missionary or employee of the BMA who had their retirement funds in the BMA Long Term Growth portfolio had a growth of 3.10 percent posted to their account during the year 2014, which gives us an average growth of 7.62 percent each year for the past twelve years. In the past twelve years we have posted a total of 91.47 percent to each LT Growth account.

The 2014 yearly total we received for deposit into retirement accounts for pastors, church staff, missionaries and employees of the BMA was \$1,428,567.01, a daily average of \$3,913.88. As of December 31, 2014 there was a grand total of \$15,808,186.67 on deposit in retirement funds at Ministers Resource Services, reflecting a growth in assets of \$11,926,119.80 over the past twelve years. These numbers represent pastors, church staff, missionaries and employees of the BMA who are diligently preparing for retirement at Ministers Resource Services.

The BMA Ministers Retirement Plan is

approved by the Internal Revenue Service for tax-deferred income from the churches, departments and agencies of the BMA. As a participant in the BMA Ministers Retirement, a pastor, church staff, missionary or employee of the BMA may tax-defer up to 100 percent of their annual salary and compensation not to exceed \$53,000 dollars each year. Manning and Napier Advisory Advantage Corporation of Rochester, New York professionally manage the BMA Retirement portfolio through our broker, Fawcett and Company Investment Strategies.

You may contact Ministers Resource Services, the retirement agency of the BMA of America, at P.O. Box 2866, Texarkana, Arkansas 75504, by phone at 870-774-2654 or email the Executive Director, Ron Chesser, at RChesser6365@aol.com to request a retirement packet or to open an account.

If your church is supporting this ministry, we express our sincere appreciation. If your church is not supporting Ministers Resource Services, we ask you to please give prayerful consideration. May God bless you for your prayers and support of MRS.

Tuesday Talks line-up announced

By **PHILLIP RICE**

BMA of America

Tuesday Talks, the monthly webcast designed to minister to pastors, staff and churches of the BMA, has announced its line-up. Tune your web browser to www.bmalife.com/tv every second Tuesday of each month at 10 a.m. to watch!

All previous editions of Tuesday Talks can be found at www.discipleguide.org/tuesdaytalks.



May 12- "Going to camp? Here are some things you need to know!"

Jason Prewitt, Director, Daniel Springs Baptist Camp

June 9- "I found out some things about my church"

Todd West, Pastor, Oasis, Maumelle, AR
Director, DiscipleGuide Church Solutions

July 14- "Three vital trends every church must prepare for"

Dr. John Adams, Pastor, FBC Mantachie, MS
Director, BMA Moral Action Committee

August 11- "Make your Sunday school class more than a lecture"

Dr. Mark Livingston, Pastor, FBC Keltys, TX
Managing Editor, DiscipleGuide's Compass

September 8- "Is your church in the recliner?"

Larry Barker, Director of North American Church Planting

October 13- "Putting your church in a position to grow"

Dr. Scott Attebery, Director, DiscipleGuide Church Resources

Daniel Springs improving camp registration process

By **JASON PREWITT**

DiscipleGuide Camp Ministry Director

Great things are happening at Daniel Springs in anticipation of the 2015 summer camp season, and we think churches will be pleased.

First, this year's registration is user-friendly and completely online. Simply go to www.danielspringscamp.com, select a camp week to register your group and pay by credit or debit card.

Also, to make things more straightforward, the regular registration fee is \$125 per attendee regardless of the preferred housing (cabin or dorm). This will allow Daniel Springs to adequately prepare for the correct number of campers (i.e.

ordering food, supplies, t-shirts, Bible study materials, etc.).

Registrations made within 14 days of the camp's start date will be considered late registrations and will incur an additional \$15 fee per attendee. Late registrants will not be guaranteed a t-shirt.

Registrations are transferable but not refundable and the balance is due at the time of registration.

Finally, we take seriously the safety of the students entrusted to our care, so to be in compliance with Texas state regulations, all adult sponsors are required to complete a background check and watch a safety video that is

linked to Daniel Springs Baptist Camp. Churches are responsible for completing this process with each adult volunteer prior to arrival. Specific details for each sponsor are necessary for this process to be completed.

The Daniel Springs medical release form must be downloaded and filled out for each attendee. Please bring two copies of each release to camp, one for your group leader and one for the camp medical staff.

We are thrilled about this camp season and what God has in store for each attendee. We look forward to partnering with each church and to the relationships that will be formed during the summer!



Auxiliaries

Dust on the Bible

By SHARON COLE

In this world of chaos you wonder how long God is going to delay His coming. When you ask people if they are Christian, they will comment that they go to church, or they pray, or they read their Bible. They can't give you a straight answer. You can't judge a person's soul, but you can inspect the spiritual fruit in their life by what they say and do.

By observing a person's attitude and behavior, you can know how close they are to God. I'm reminded of the children's book, *Petunia*, about a goose who wanted the other animals to think she was smart so she found a book and placed it under her wing. Strutting around the barnyard, she thought she knew everything about everyone because she had a book. She passed unfair judgment on others and soon became very unpopular with the other animals.

You see people carrying Bibles, but do they open it to find the wisdom that is necessary for them to show Christ's love to others? It takes more than just carrying a Bible to find out how we are supposed to live. We have to read and study it. It is one of the most important things that a Christian must do. The apostle Paul admonished Timothy to "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)

Personal daily Bible study is important for our spiritual growth. Also, corporate group Bible study is important where we learn to share each other's needs, weaknesses and strengths and encourage one another to depend on God for direction. God's Word can shine through us only if we know it in our hearts and live it out in our daily lives.

His Word teaches us that patience comes through tribulation. Submission and obedience is learned through suffering and sacrifice. We learn unselfishness by God giving us opportunities to sacrifice ourselves by doing things for others.

We pray for someone to love and God sends unlovely people in our lives in the form of a dirty little boy who just wants a hug. I'm sure if I asked, everyone would say that they have a Bible, maybe even more than one. Perhaps it is grandmother's Bible put away because you were told that it was precious to her. But the Bible is more than a precious keepsake; it must be opened. It's the most fascinating book in all history.

Sadly, many others have purchased it to just be a coffee table ornament laid aside and seldom touched. People have given their lives to protect it; some have devoted their lives to studying it. More importantly, many have put their confidence in its promises and have used it as the guide for life. So, if you want your life to be enriched beyond measure, you must trust the promises of God's Word.

People in every generation since the Bible has been available have demonstrated a high regard for it. They have viewed it as the inspired Word from God and have built their lives upon it. It is important to commit scripture to memory, for we may not have a Bible close by when we are tempted, or we need instruction or comfort. That's what Bible study does and it gives us continuous strength as a group and as individuals. As we read and study, God is molding us into vessels that He can use to bring honor to Him. The more we have inside, the more we will have to shine out to give to

the world of people who do not know Him. There should never be dust on your Bible.

DISTRICT NEWS

Liberty WMA met at Simmons Hill, Diana on April 11, 2015. The meeting was called to order by President Glenda Chamberlain. At the last meeting, the door prize packages were sent home with each church group with the challenge to create a special way in which to raise money for the Jason Walters' Camp Christa project. Results of those efforts were reported by those churches in attendance. Of the five responses at the meeting a total of \$1,830 was raised by some very creative ideas, which along with the day's project offering have raised \$3,342.51, nearly doubling the goal of \$1,800.

After singing and a short business meeting, Ms. Cindy Clark sang a beautiful solo medley of "Written in Red" and "Nothing But the Blood." The guest speaker was Ms. Nancy Essary from Diana ISD. She presented an inspirational topic of helping others. She cited ways in which she was coordinating a backpack assembly of healthy snacks for children to take home over the week-end. She encouraged all to explore ways to promote such projects, citing Luke 6:38 and keeping with our theme: "Let's Do Something." The meeting ended with a box lunch served by the Simmons Hill WMA. The next meeting will be with Coffeerville, Ore City on July 11, 2015.

Mt. Olive WMA met Antioch, Carthage on April 28, 2015. After a delicious meal, President, Nelda Salas, brought the meeting to order then led in reciting the motto. Shawn Norris led the WMA Song, then the theme song: "Just A Closer Walk With Thee." After a short business meeting, Renee' Nolen and Sharon Cole sang, "Breathe On Me." Shawn introduced the program with a Bible quiz. The program title was "In Sync With the Holy Spirit." We are to walk, talk and act in sync or together with the Holy Spirit. Our yearly project is Bro. Tommy Rose ministry in Mexico. The next meeting will again be with Antioch, July 28 at 6:30 p.m.

CORRECTION

The date of the Annual Ladies Retreat given in the last issue of Baptist Progress was incorrect. The correct date and information is below:

TEXAS LADIES RETREAT
FARLEY STREET BAPTIST CHURCH
WAXAHACHIE TEXAS
AUGUST 29, 2015

Detailed information will be given at a later time.

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.



Great opportunity for grandparents

By SHERRY LAMINACK

National Sunbeams Promoter

Are your grandchildren as cute and precious as mine? Would you like to do something to honor them and the Lord and help lead people to the Lord?

The National Sunbeam project is collecting money for Shepherd Bags. A donation of \$10 will supply funds for one Shepherd Bag. One in three bags leads to the salvation of a soul.

I am giving grandparents the opportunity to honor your grandchildren by giving to this project. All grandparent's names and each grandchild's name will be published in your state BMA paper. No money amounts will be published. Any amount will be appreciated. You might want to give \$10 to purchase supplies for one bag or you might want to purchase a bag in honor of each grandchild.

Please send your donations along with your name and the names of your grandchildren to:

Sherry Laminack
1047 Maple Ridge Drive
Greenwood, AR 72936

Make checks payable to: National Sunbeam Project

Your grandchildren will be happy when they see their name published and know that you have honored them. But, most of all, you will have had a part in spreading the gospel and contributing to the salvation of lost souls.

Please, Grandma and Grandpa! James and Sherry Laminack will be at the top of the list! Please send money by May 31, 2015.

SUNBEAM WORKSHOP

Sunbeam workshops will be held at Daniel Springs Baptist Camp in Gary, Texas during GMA camp. The following workshops will be conducted:

Wednesday, June 17, 2015 @ 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
Sunbeam Material Presentation & Updates
Sherry Laminack
National Sunbeam Promoter

Wednesday, June 17, 2015 @ 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Scripture Memorization
Sandra Kizer
Assistant National Sunbeam Promoter

Thursday, June 18, 2015 @ 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Mission Information
Linda Dertinger
Mississippi State Sunbeam Promoter

EVENTS

JUNE 7, 2015

103rd Anniversary
 @ Little Flock, Lufkin
 Guest Speaker:
 Gene Hazell, former pastor
 Concert by:
 Southern Plainsmen Quartet
 Dinner on the grounds
 and afternoon singing
 10:30 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 Speake—
 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

RALPH BEASLEY is available for pulpit supply. He is a member of Anchor Bible, Pharr. Contact him at beasley.ralph@gmail.com or 409-291-2512. ^{5/20}

JIM CRUMP is available for pulpit supply or to serve as pastor. He is a member of Little Mound, Big Sandy, and has 35 years of ministry experience. Contact him at 903-918-3260. ^{6/3}

MICHAEL PHILLIPS is available as bi-vocational pastor, pulpit supply, revivals, or as the Lord leads. He has 7 1/2 years of experience as a pastor. He is a member of Enon, Gilmer. Contact him at 903-238-7856 or 903-725-5267. ^{5/20}

AVAILABLE SPEAKER

STACIE BOSTIC is available to speak at women's luncheons, youth retreats, adult conferences, seminars, Bible studies and other events. She has a powerful testimony that focuses on the art of surrender, walking by faith and rising above circumstances. Her message resonates with a wide range of listeners. She has the ability to tailor her message to fit a group's unique event theme. Stacie is a member of Liberty, Gun Barrel City. Contact her at claypotworks@outlook.com or 903-603-8597. Also, visit www.claypotworks.com or connect with Stacie on Facebook at <https://facebook.com/claypotworks>.

AVAILABLE POSITIONS

PASTOR—Mt. Pleasant Missionary, Plumerville, Arkansas is prayerfully seeking a full-time pastor and accepting BMA applicants at this time. Send resume to 896 Hwy 92 Plumerville, Arkansas 72127 or email to mtpleasantpastorsearch@gmail.com. ^{5/20}

YOUTH—Antioch, Gilmer is seeking a bivocational youth/student minister. Send resume to the church at P.O. Box 688 Gilmer, Texas 75644; Contact person—Michael Pool, pool-michael@hotmail.com. 903-315-6822.

PASTOR—Pine Acres, Gilmer is seeking a bivocational pastor. Email merrillgl@aol.com for more information. ^{7/1}

PASTOR—Grace Temple, San Angelo is seeking a full-time senior pastor. He will also oversee associate pastors and child development center. Send resume to Pat Jackson 7809 CR 339, Christoval, Texas 76935, email pwjack@aol.com or call 325-651-7875. ^{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}



What Happens To Your Gift to the BMA Foundation?

All gifts to the Foundation, except those designated for operating expenses, are placed in an endowment fund and invested for one or more of the BMA departments or agencies as specified by the donor. Income from the investments provides supplemental funding for those ministries until the Lord returns. Gifts of cash should be mailed to P.O. Box 1188, Conway, Arkansas 72033. Call the Foundation office at 501-329-6891 for more information on other ways to give.

CHURCHES IN REVIEW

MAY 3, 2015

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Anthony Drive, Ennis	64	92	
Cedar Creek, Teague	15	21	
Farley Street, Waxahachie	493	578	5 By Statement, 2 By Letter, 1 By Profession
First, Omen	30	40	
First, Palmer	41	63	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	16	38	
Harvest, Lufkin	15	25	
Lighthouse, Rowlett	31	49	
Little Flock, Lufkin	8	15	
Little Mound, Big Sandy	56	56	
Merriman Hills, Sherman	19	20	
Rosewood, Gilmer	106	172	1 By Baptism, 1 By Profession, 2 By Letter, 2 By Statement

MAY 10, 2015

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Anthony Drive, Ennis	60	144	
Cedar Creek, Teague	15	16	
First, Omen	30	62	2 By Salvation
First, Palmer	28	64	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	13	40	
Harvest, Lufkin	20	30	
Jackson, Joaquin	64	122	
Little Flock, Lufkin	12	18	
Little Mound, Big Sandy	37	59	
Merriman Hills, Sherman	11	13	
New Harmony, Tyler	288	402	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	58	87	
Pine Brook, Tyler	31	64	
Rosewood, Gilmer	141	225	1 By Baptism, 2 By Profession, 6 By Letter
Temple, Mexia	37	57	
Woodland, Splendora	37	94	

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

HALL FURNITURE LTD.

Fine Church Furniture since 1939
 P.O. Box 157
 (1321 Industrial Dr.)
 Henderson, TX 75653
 903-657-4501



Sunday School Lessons

Father, into thy hands

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: May 24, 2015

TEXT: I Peter 4:19; Luke 23:46-49; Psalm 31:1-5

THOUGHT PRIMER

Aren't homecomings great? I love to attend high school and college reunions. When I was a child, it was always a joyful time being reunited with all my cousins at our grandparents' home in Teague. There's great joy being reunited with friends we haven't seen in years.

Seven days after Carolyn and I married, I had to bid her farewell at the Shreveport airport to fly back to my duty station in Florida. A few days later, my ship set sail for an 11 month, round-the-world cruise with duty in the far east. Words cannot describe the loneliness of being away, nor can I express the joy in returning home to my new bride after that long deployment. I was home again. It was a joy to once again, find myself among familiar faces and surroundings.

Now, multiply the joy of that reunion, times infinity, and you might fathom the joy in Heaven when Christ, once again, inhabited that place at the right hand of His Father after a 33 1/2 year "deployment" to earth. I'm sure much of that joy was in being reunited in fellowship with the Father after having been separated from Him spiritually because of the sin of mankind being placed upon His shoulders on Calvary. And Christ had to feel absolutely fulfilled from having provided salvation for all mankind who would believe -- and glad from having totally submitted to His Father in obedience. I'm sure He was glad to have the task completed of descending into the heart of the earth and going to that place where imprisoned fallen demons were incarcerated and delivering a message to them of Satan's foiled plan.

I imagine there was a grand "welcome home" party in glory when Jesus once again, took His place at the Father's right hand.

STUDY

It is amazing to note how Jesus, even in His deepest anguish and suffering, continued to multi-task; saving a malefactor, dying for all the sin of all mankind, caring for His mother, and now, in His final breath, He does something else for us.

1. He exercised the faith in His Father to receive

Him: By uttering His final words, Jesus demonstrates to us that we can trust God the Father to receive us across that great divide between physical life, and life in glory. We are to have no fear in crossing that divide.

David said in Psalm 23:4, "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

The Amplified Bible refers to that experience as "deep", and "sunless." But David doesn't call it death -- he calls it the "valley of the shadow of death." We never sleep or become unconscious; There is only a shadow -- and for there to be a shadow, there has to be light. That light is the glory of God in His Heaven.

I Peter 4:19 corroborates David's description of the death experience. "Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator."

Dr. Raphael Cruz, who spoke in our church during the National Day of Prayer on May 6, stated that out of the hundreds of Christians adults and children that were told by Islamist terrorists to deny Christ or be executed, there is no record of anyone denying Christ -- not one!

Tradition tells us that Polycarp, who was pastor of the Smyrna Church in the first century, as he was about to be burned at the stake, was given one last opportunity to deny Christ and live. The pastor told the soldier, "Eighty and seven years has Christ Jesus been faithful to me; I shall not deny Him now." God the Father gives extra dying grace to all who are martyred for Him, and will receive a special crown.

2. He ascended triumphantly:

The darkest moment in the history of mankind was followed by the blessed Son of God rising from the grave, victorious over sin, death and the devil's agenda. Although His disciples couldn't realize this

truth at the time, the devil was, to quote an unknown source, "de-fanged at Calvary -- since then all he been able to do is try to 'gum us to death.'" In Matthew 27:50-53, we find that at the moment Jesus "yielded up the ghost," several things happened; (1) the veil which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, was torn in half - from top to bottom. That way, no one could say that it was an act of man. (2) The earth shook violently and the rocks were split apart; (3) Old Testament saints were resurrected from their graves and transferred from Paradise into The Holy City.

The Apostle Paul verifies this in Ephesians 4:8. "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." Paul was using the analogy of the Israelites experiences of warfare. After a battle was won, they took the spoils of victory and made the long ascent into Jerusalem. This is what Jesus did when he led captivity (translated Old Testament saints into Heaven) and simultaneously gifted the church as He "ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." This was what Jesus preached to imprisoned spirits (fallen angels) in that compartment in the heart of the earth. But His sermon was not "good news," but rather a proclamation. I believe it was a proclamation to these spirits that Satan's plan was foiled at Calvary. Jesus was victorious over the devil at the cross, and He has taken the spoils of victory with him as he ascended into the New Jerusalem.

3. He ascended, comforting His followers. In Luke 24:13-35 Jesus met up with two disciples on the Emmaus road. They were distraught over the crucifixion and felt their hopes had been dashed. Yet, even being knowledgeable of the event at the sepulcher, they were still questioning as to whether or not He was the Redeemer (24:21) Jesus said to them, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" Then He explained himself to them, beginning with Moses and the prophets. After He shared a meal with them, their eyes were opened, and they knew who He was. Their statement was, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" (24:32)

In John 20, Jesus reassured the disciple, Thomas concerning His resurrection.

During those 40 days after His death on the cross, Jesus appeared to several -- to Mary Magdalene at the sepulcher, to the women as they left the tomb, to Peter, to eleven apostles without Thomas, and then later, to the apostles, including Thomas. Probably the most familiar of all was His appearance by the Sea of Galilee, when He delivered His Great Commission to the New Testament Church.

THE APPLICATION

There are several applications we may glean from this lesson. First of all, when you study the scripture, you find that God, the Father is totally and completely trustworthy. He will see you through all trials and tribulations in your life, and He will guide you safely across "the valley" when you experience physical death. It's natural and normal for man -- even regenerated man -- to feel some apprehension about death at some point. One person said, "It's not death I'm concerned about -- it's the fear of that long, painful process I may go through before death finally comes." Remember the perfect, calm assurance of our Savior when He cried out to the Father, "Into Thy hands I commend my Spirit."

Secondly, just examine all the scripture that deals with comfort. Jesus spent a lot of time comforting people -- the Christian life, even in the midst of turmoil, is a life of inner peace and comfort.

THE CHALLENGE:

If you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, I want to challenge you to spend some time meditating and dwelling on that glorious reunion we're going to have with Him one day. Think of His promises -- He assures us He is building an elaborate, beautiful place for us in the New Jerusalem. (John 14) He assures us we shall serve Him and be in His presence throughout all eternity. (Revelation 7:15) There will be no more darkness of night (Revelation 22:5) No more goodbyes (Revelation 21:4) and no more sorrow (Revelation 21:4)

The preaching of the cross

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: May 31, 2015

TEXT: I Corinthians 1:18-25

THOUGHT PRIMER

I suspect there is no symbol which has had more songs written about it, or that has been more mimicked than the cross. Many college fraternities, motorcycle clubs, and firefighters utilize a variation of the Maltese cross to signify their organizations. Even Hitler's Nazi Germany displayed a form of a cross known as the swastika, which is one of the most notorious symbols of evil known to modern man.

But there is one cross, which is hated, disregarded and even feared by multitudes of the ungodly. Atheists are spending millions of dollars in lawsuits to have crosses removed from government buildings, hilltops in the western mountains, neighborhoods and courthouse lawns. But the cross of Jesus Christ does, has, and shall continue to represent the most world-changing event since time began -- the death, burial and resurrection of our blessed Savior, Jesus Christ.

STUDY

WHAT DOES THE CROSS SIGNIFY?

1. To the unregenerate, it is foolishness. (I Corinthians 1:18.) But many unregenerate people are steeped in worldly, secular philosophy, with a wall full of degrees. This is seen in many foolish professors in liberal colleges and universities, spewing their anti-God, immoral dogma to young minds. There was an ilk of people who lived in Alexandria, whose main purpose in life was to loudly proclaim their "world-wise" dogmas. When they attended the Isthmian games in whatever Grecian city they were held, the Greeks, especially the educated crowd from Alexandria, would sit in the stadium, and loudly shout their philosophies rather than to focus on the games.

The Apostle Paul, in his preaching, often used examples of the competition games to illustrate his points. He dwelled briefly on the crown of laurel leaves which was the coveted trophy for winning the competition, saying "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." (1 Corinthians 9:25)

The crowns which will be given out at the Judgement Seat of Christ are those incorruptible crowns Paul refers to. To the Greeks, the cross of Christ was some sort of mystical, abstract, symbol which made no sense to them, and if they heard a message on the cross on the street corners of Corinth or Alexandria, it was nothing more than laughable and amusing. But Paul refers to them as a people who are "perishing," (I Corinthians 1:18)

2. To the Jews, it was a stumbling block. (I Corinthians 1:22) For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom." If the Greeks were ever searching for some semblance of a god, they were seeking through intellectualism and the world's wisdom. The Jews were different -- they were, in truth, looking for the Messiah. They knew the Mosaic Law to the letter, and at one time were on the right track. But when Jesus didn't appear as they had expected He would, to establish His Kingdom on earth at that time, but instead, died on the cross, this, to them, was a stumbling block to their search for the Messiah. Today, devout Jews are still looking and longing for Him to come to earth and set up His Kingdom. That will occur just after Christ returns to earth with His throng of followers, and slays the anti-christ. Then

He will set up His Kingdom, and will reign for 1,000 years.

3. To the Christ follower, it is the the power of God (I Corinthians 1:18). Paul says in I Corinthians 1:16 that the spiritual man can discern spiritual things because the spiritual man has the mind of Christ. A natural man - or a lost man, cannot discern the thing of the Spirit of God. That's why, when a person receives Christ into their hearts, their spiritual eyes are opened -- the Holy Spirit then begins to embark on His ministry in their hearts, which is: (1) guiding them into all truth; John 16:13 (2) convicting of sin; (3) being their Comforter; (4) accompany them throughout their lives (the Paraclete) (5) Intercedes in their behalf to the throne of God; (Romans 8:26) (6) He indwells them: I Corinthians 3:16: (7) He gives power: Acts 1:8;

We are also commanded to be filled with the spirit: (Ephesians 5:18) or literally, be being kept filled with the Spirit. This creates joy in our hearts, making us able to "sing to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with our hearts. Believers are also capable of grieving the Spirit of God as well. (Ephesians 4:30)

4. To the carnal Christian, it means failure to grow in grace. A carnal Christian is one who is saved, but spiritual growth is stunted. They have not graduated from the "milk of the Word" to the "meat." They still struggle with inability to understand the deep truths of the Word (I Corinthians 3:2) and they still struggle with personal issues in their lives (envying, strife, divisions) something they shall overcome as they mature in Christ. Verse 5 affirms that a carnal believer is still a believer, and also Paul declares that the spirit of God dwells in them. (I Corinthians 3:16)

APPLICATION

What does the cross mean to you? By the "Way of the cross," we are saved from sin and it's eternal consequences, through the payment Jesus made on that cross with the shedding of His blood. By the cross, we have a blessed Resource inside our hearts -- namely the ministry of the Holy Spirit. By the cross, we have the privilege of declaring to the world that Jesus lives in us. One way is to publicly proclaim it through water baptism, by the authority of the New Testament Church. By the cross, we have been enabled to walk "in newness of life" -- in joy and gladness -- and with the God-given ability to discern the deep things of God, and an overwhelming desire to proclaim Christ with our lips, and through our lives.

CHALLENGE

Examine your heart. If there a very little joy and gladness in your life, ask God to restore the joy of salvation to you. (Psalm 51) If there a lack of discernment of the Word of God, ask your pastor or someone whom you deem to be spiritual, to help you with study guides, or personal Bible study. If you are walking around with a guilty conscience because something is amiss in your life, make sure you are saved. If you are, perhaps you have not made it public, and followed the Lord in baptism. Baptism has no saving power, but it is the "answer of a good conscience toward God." 1 Peter 3:21.

Paul Gauntt is the former BMA of Texas Department of Church Ministries director. He has served several churches as pastor, and is a correspondent and featured article writer for Baptist Progress. Contact him at paul.gauntt@att.net.



**IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO
MAKE A SPLASH WITH
YOUR KIDS THIS SUMMER.**



**REGISTER YOUR GROUP TODAY AT
DANIELSPRINGSCAMP.COM**

