

Baptist Progress

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117th Annual Session

of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas held in Tyler

By **JERRY FULTON**
Baptist Progress Editor

The 117th Annual Session of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas concluded Tuesday evening, Nov. 7, with 197 messengers and 115 visitors present. Attendance this year was a slight increase over last year where 175 messengers and 115 visitors were present.

President Wes Pratt called the meeting to order at New Harmony, Tyler Monday, Nov. 6. Following the call to order he introduced the theme of the meeting, "On Mission," 1 Peter 2:9-10. New Harmony, Tyler pastor Robbie Caldwell officially welcomed messengers and visitors.

Following an introduction of officers, two constitutional amendments were offered. On behalf of the Liberty Baptist Association, Leon Ross, pastor of Latch, Gilmer, offered an amendment concerning how membership in the BMA of Texas can be terminated. Charles Johnson, pastor of Rosewood, Gilmer, offered an constitutional amendment to change the number of trustees serving on the Texas Baptist Home for Children Trustee Board to 11 BMA trustees and four Southern Baptists of Texas Convention trustees. Both amendments were approved later in the meeting.

Two churches petitioned for membership in the BMA of Texas including, The Refuge, Terrell, where Darren Lemons is pastor, and The Church at Valley Ranch, New Caney, where Gary Southard is pastor.

After the new churches were welcomed into the BMA of Texas, Wes Pratt preached his final message as president using the theme of the meeting. He told messengers that being on mission requires reminding yourself who Christ is, remembering who you are in Christ, rejoicing in what Christ has done and resolving to proclaim the praises of Christ.

Throughout the day and evening Monday, BMA of Texas missionaries Gary Southard, Brandon Durham, Christian Martinez and John Harris addressed those in attendance by sharing the vision for their church plants and preaching from God's Word.

Tuesday's agenda began with the Annual Texas Women's Missionary Association Meeting and the Leadership Conference. Dr. David Dykes, pastor



▲ Jacksonville College Choir



▲ Vice President Robert Easterling welcomes petitioning churches



▲ Missionary Commissioning Service

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making progress

Happy Thanksgiving

By **JERRY FULTON**

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“WHAT SHOULD BE THE FOCUS OF CHRISTIANS ON THANKSGIVING?”

The original thanksgiving celebration was held by the Pilgrim settlers in Massachusetts during their second winter in America in December, 1621. The first winter had killed 44 of the original 102 colonists. At one point their daily food ration was down to five kernels of corn apiece, but then an unexpected trading vessel arrived, swapping them beaver pelts for grain, providing for their severe need. The next summer’s crop brought hope, and Governor William Bradford decreed that December 13, 1621, be set aside as a day of feasting and prayer to show the gratitude of the colonists that they were still alive.

These Pilgrims, seeking religious freedom and opportunity in America, gave thanks to God for His provision for them in helping them find 20 acres of cleared land, for the fact that there were no hostile Indians in that area, for their newfound religious freedom, and for God’s provision of an interpreter to the Indians in Squanto. Along with the feasting and games involving the colonists and more than 80 friendly Indians (who added to the feast by bringing wild turkeys and venison), prayers, sermons, and songs of praise were important in the celebration. Three days were spent in feasting and prayer.

From that time forward, Thanksgiving has been celebrated as a day to give thanks to God for His gracious and sufficient provision. President Abraham Lincoln officially set aside the last Thursday of November, in 1863, “as a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father.” In 1941, Congress ruled that after 1941, the fourth Thursday of November be observed as Thanksgiving Day and be a legal holiday.

Scripturally, we find things related to the issue of thanksgiving nearly from cover to cover. Individuals offered up sacrifices out of gratitude in the book of Genesis. The Israelites sang a song of thanksgiving as they were delivered from Pharaoh’s army after the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 15). Later, the Mosaic Law set aside three times each year when the Israelites were to gather together. All three of these times [Unleavened Bread (also called the Feast of the Passover) (Exodus 12:15-20), Harvest or Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15-21), and the Feast of Ingathering or Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:33-36)] involved remembering God’s provision and grace. Harvest and Tabernacles took place specifically in relation to God’s provision in the harvest of various fruit trees and crops. The book of Psalms is packed full of songs of thanksgiving, both for God’s grace to the Israelite people as a whole through His mighty deeds, as well as for His individual graces to each of us.

In the New Testament, there are repeated admonitions to give thanks to God. Thanksgiving is to always be a part of our prayers. Some of the most remembered passages on the giving of thanks are the following:

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6).

“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men” (1 Timothy 2:1).

Of all of God’s gifts, the greatest one He has

given is the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. On the cross of Calvary, Jesus paid our sin debt, so a holy and just Judge could forgive us our sins and give us eternal life as a free gift. This gift is available to those who will call on Christ to save them from their sin in simple but sincere faith (John 3:16; Romans 3:19-26; Romans 6:23; Romans 10:13; Ephesians 2:8-10).

For this gift of His Son, the gift which meets our greatest need, the Apostle Paul says, “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” (2 Corinthians 9:15).

We, like the Pilgrims, have a choice. In life there will always be those things that we can complain about (the Pilgrims had lost many loved ones), but there will also be much to be thankful for. As our society becomes increasingly secular, the actual “giving of thanks to God” during our annual Thanksgiving holiday is being overlooked, leaving only the feasting. May God grant that He may find us grateful every day for all of His gifts, spiritual and material. God is good, and every good gift comes from Him (James 1:17). For those who know Christ, God also works everything together for good, even events we would not necessarily consider good (Romans 8:28-30). May He find us to be His grateful children.



▲ Jerry Fulton

Inman promoted to major

On October 10, 2017, Doug Inman, a BMAA military chaplain, was promoted to major in the U.S. Army Chaplaincy. Doug, his wife Katja, and three children have been assigned to Fort Hood over last the couple of years. A few months ago, Doug underwent successful back surgery requiring an extensive rehabilitation program. With

his new promotion to major also came new orders. The Inman’s will move to Fort Sill, Oklahoma in early January 2018. He has already been notified by his gaining command of an impending deployment to Southeast Asia shortly after their arrival to Fort Sill. Please remember to keep the Inman’s and all our chaplains in your prayers.



▲ Chaplain (Major) Doug Inman, Wife Katja, and oldest of three children, Nathaniel

Judeo—Christian Heritage—Series #2

Capital punishment—Leviticus 24:17

By **DR. JOHN M. ADAMS**

Moral Action Executive Director

According to scripture, the Bible favors the death penalty. Capital punishment not only deters crime; it is the ultimate and greatest deterrent because the murdering criminal knows that from the imposition of the sentence there will be no probation, no parole. Society, according to God's law, has a right to defend itself, that is to take the life of those who commit murder with premeditation and planning.

IT IS TAUGHT IN THE SCRIPTURE.

Genesis 9:4-6 teaches that life is preciously made in God's divine image. Murder strikes at the God who created man. God requires in verse 5 the life of the murderer.

The laws and ordinances of Exodus again remind us, Exodus 21:12-15, of the sacredness of life. James 1:14-15 describes the corruptibility of sin bringing forth eventual death. It is the people's right to impose capital punishment for murder offenses.

Other scripture references declare with attention God's intentions toward life. They are Exodus 20:13, Exodus 21:23-25, Numbers 34:31-34, Romans 13:3-5, and Acts 25:10-12.

IT IS MISSING FROM OUR GOVERNMENTAL LAWS.

In the case of *Furman versus Georgia*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 5 to 4 that capital punishment was unconstitutional. This nullified the existing death penalty statues in 40 states and the sentences of the then 629 death-row inmates.

On July 2, 1976, the Supreme Court ruled 7 to 2 in the *Gregg versus Georgia* case that the death penalty, at least for the crime of murder, is not a cruel or unusual punishment. So presently, 32 state legislatures have passed death penalty statues, yet there is no federal death penalty legislation on the books. Because of this lethargic position of our governments and the long appeals in the courts, we now have 2,843 death row inmates.

After World War II, death penalty executions became less popular. *Newsweek* states, there were 82 in 1950, 49 in 1959, and two in 1967. Much of the decline in carrying out the death penalty resulted after legal battles were waged against it by the A.C.L.U. (American Civil Liberties Union). The nationally scheduled executions for 2017 will be 14.

IT IS FRIGHTENING OUR SOCIETY.

But according to a Gallup poll, 60 percent of Americans now favor capital punishment, up from 57 percent. Most people believe it is an effective public deterrent to murder and a permanent deterrent in preventing the murderer from committing additional murders inside or outside of prison.

At least one study by Dr. David Phillips, a sociologist at the University of California at San Diego, confirms that capital punishment acts as a deterrent to murder for at least two weeks after a highly publicized execution. "On the average, homicides decrease by 35.7 percent," Dr. Phillips explained.

But still death penalty executions are so slow in being

carried out that many are beginning to complain. "I feel the same way the majority of people in the United States feel about the death penalty," stated Texas Judge Michael McSpadden recently. "Enough is enough of these appeals. It's time to enforce the laws."

Former California Gov. George Deukmejian probably brought the delay issue more into focus than anyone in recent times when he complained that of the 150 men on the California Death Row, the state Supreme Court has reviewed the cases of only 23 and of that number, the death penalty convictions of only three have been upheld.

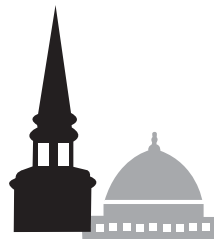
"The time is long overdue," said Deukmejian, "for us to implement the death penalty in California. In the last years, there has been just one state execution of a convicted killer, while more than 30,000 innocent Californians have been murdered..."

Former U. S. Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D. Ariz.), writing in the *American Legion* magazine, put the use of capital punishment into its correct perspective:

"If we in this country are to administer a successful criminal justice system, we must first consider what qualifies as justice. Obviously, the more simple and direct form of justice is restitution-compensative to one who has been wronged.

"But in reality, restitution often is not possible. When an innocent human life has been lost, restitution is not among the options from which blind justice can choose. Punishment becomes the alternative. It logically follows that the more severe the crime, the more severe the punishment applied."

"We have, in this nation, admirably adhered to the protection of individual rights; yet, we should not in that process, forsake our responsibility to protect the rights of society as a whole. And, in these cases (murder cases where the murderer was sane and represented a threat to society)... capital punishment emerges as the only vehicle for ensuring those rights." More information can be obtained via the internet – Death Penalty Information Center.



Mandatory evacuation--no exceptions. Hurricane Harvey was on its way and the forecast was grim. We watched it all on television as raging winds roared in and as water poured out of the heavens filling streets, cars and houses, covering anything in its' path. Large trees were yanked out of the ground, homes disappeared under water, and many of the streets suddenly took on the appearance of a lake.

Some folks on the Texas gulf coast were able to leave, but imagine the dread they felt as they wondered what would be left when they returned. Others had to stay behind--the sick, elderly, widows. Terrorizing fear must have gripped their hearts, taking away all hope.

I wasn't there and I'm sure my description from this distance is puny and weak, falling short of the loss and devastation these folks experienced. But what I saw and heard from those on the scene was enough to bring tears to my eyes and knock me to my knees. As we heard the news, watched graphic pictures roll across television screens, I was blessed by the response. And it came in many different forms. Prayers. Money. Some took their boats to ferry people to higher ground. Others drove cars, trucks, and flew private planes packed with necessary relief items for personal delivery and distribution. Folks showed up to remove water soaked furniture, soggy carpet and saturated sheetrock. Houses were emptied down to the studs, and for some, all the family owned lay in piles of rubbish in their front yard.

My nephew, Mike Patterson, is pastor of Cedar Lane Baptist Church (14 miles from Bay City), and many families in his congregation suffered great loss. After 13 days of evacuation, some of them returned to find the road to their homes looking like a small lake passable only by boat. They must have been devastated, but they were never alone. That loving body of believers opened their arms and their homes, doing whatever was needed. The ladies of the church went on high alert! They were compassionate--organized--committed. Day after day and week after week, they rolled out hot meals from the parsonage like it was a first class catering service. And they are still delivering food as the hard cleanup continues.

It's not always a natural disaster that wipes out hope, breaks hearts and destroys homes. And it often comes without warning, slamming like tidal waves flooding our hearts, diminishing truth and weakening our faith to levels of logic. Sometimes a person needs soup and socks. Others need to hear the salvation message. Someone else needs a caring person to simply hang out with while they hang on and climb down from their wall of discouragement. Someone you know may be living in the eye of a storm right now. Whatever the need, this special Thanksgiving season is a great time for us to become the hands and feet of Jesus--showing and sharing the real message of hope: Christ alone is the secure anchor--surrounding, loving, protecting and no matter what--He never lets go! As you share food and fun with family during this sweet holiday, rejoice because our hope today and our promise for tomorrow is in Him! (Isaiah 40:28-31 and Hebrews 6:19)

Pat Quesenbury has been active in ladies' ministry for years. She is a pastor's wife, mother and active member of the Women's Missionary Auxiliary. Contact her at pquesenbury@gmail.com.



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DiscipleGuide



DiscipleGuide

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Do you prefer the traditional format of Compass Sunday school literature? Beginning this spring, DiscipleGuide will offer Compass Classic: a traditional format of Compass curriculum. Now, every class in your local church will be able to choose the format they prefer while all studying the same lesson. For teachers, Compass Leader will be compatible with both formats.

Compass Classic will provide the printed text of the lesson in the King James Version without fill-in blanks or discussion questions. Samples of Compass Classic will be placed in every shipment of DiscipleGuide curriculum this winter so that every church can get a preview.

Compass Classic will be offered in the regular size that fits in most bibles, as well as a large print size. For more information or to request more samples, call 800.333.1442 or email info@discipleguide.org.



First, Palmer helps camp survive

When First Baptist Church of Palmer, Texas received word that Daniel Springs Baptist Camp might have to close its doors, they generously donated funds, and now the camp is able to continue. Because of their kindness and generosity, along with that of several other donors, Daniel Springs will carry on and continue to change lives for Christ!

“One of the biggest factors of letting us know about the camp’s need was Scott’s article about how the camp is worth saving,” said Paul Gauntt, pastor of FBC Palmer. “I wrote another article expanding on this, because we really need the camp. It’s probably the greatest evangelical tool we have – thousands of people are saved there. It’s definitely worth saving.”

FBC Palmer began to seriously consider donating to the camp when one deacon, who wishes to remain anonymous, was given a large burden for the camp, and then spurred on the giving efforts in his church.

Brother Gauntt has a vested interest in the camp because his father, Eugene Gauntt, was the first full-time director of the camp. The deacon who headed up the effort to give, though, had only attended the camp one time in high school. Yet when he and Gauntt visited the camp to talk to Jason Prewitt, the director of

Daniel Springs, he took notes and assessed the need for renovation projects. From this, he developed an interest in the camp.

“I didn’t prod this guy to launch out in to this,” said Pastor Gauntt. “He’s just very active and very resourceful. We have an

extra fund in our church for projects like this, and when projects come along that are in need and are worthy, the church really doesn’t think twice about giving.”

FBC Palmer is hoping that they can do other things in the future to help ministries in need as well.

DiscipleGuide would like to thank FBC Palmer for their generosity to Daniel Springs, and their passion for continuing the important evangelistic work of the camp.

If you or your church are considering supporting Daniel Springs to continue its ministry and make essential improvements on the facility, visit <https://danielspringscamp.com/give/>.



It's a wrap!

Just as Christmas season is getting started, Everlasting Smiles Christmas Shoeboxes is ending.

At least our part is.

Since July, our warehouse has been busy with Christmas. Wrapping boxes, filling boxes, loading, packing, and transporting boxes. We have had a multitude of volunteers come and serve with us, and we know that we could not provide this ministry without you. Our churches packed close to 12,000 shoeboxes this year, and we are so thankful for everyone who helped make this special for the children. You never know how a life will be changed because of your actions. How will this change a life, you ask? Some children that will get a box this year have never received a gift before. That will be special in itself, but the best part of this ministry is that every shoebox contains a Spanish Bible, so everyone has the opportunity of the greatest gift ever given: salvation and a relationship with Jesus.

One of the best things about these boxes is the amount of times they have been prayed over. Many of our volunteers started their morning praying over the shoeboxes. A middle school group of girls from Greenbrier Public Schools served one day, and before leaving one of the students asked to lead a prayer over the boxes and the children that would receive them. A youth group from a nearby church also served and prayed over the boxes. Chances are that the families, churches, and classes prayed over the boxes as well.

On Monday, Nov. 6, Missions finished loading two large shipping containers full of shoeboxes to send to our missionaries. Those shoeboxes are off to Bro. Denis Lopez in Honduras and Bro. David Marroquin in Guatemala. Please continue to pray for these missionaries as they plan for the best way to use the boxes. Pray for the children and families that receive them.

Thank you so much for your involvement with our ministry.

Our missionaries are so thankful for your generosity. These boxes are used to help build relationships for our missionaries and churches. You are a blessing to so many.

Begin now planning to be a part of Everlasting Smiles Shoebox Ministry in 2018. All boxes for next year will be sent to our missionary in Peru, Bro. John Michael Poulin, to distribute throughout the country of Peru. Children from the mountains, desert, jungle, and coast will be receiving these boxes.



BMA Of america



FBC Itasca's Legacy Lives Through Daniel Springs

It's heartbreaking to see a local church shut its doors. So many stories, memories, trials, and triumphs happen inside those walls. Yet the legacy can continue on.

First Baptist Church in Itasca, Texas voted to donate their property to the Ellis Hill Association in order to continue their kingdom-legacy through other ministries—including Daniel Springs Baptist Camp.

For years, children and teenagers in the Ellis Hill Association have attended Daniel Springs. Many even professed faith in Christ there.

"When FBC Itasca closed their doors, the church was given to the Ellis Hill Association," said Grady Cashion, pastor of FBC in Blooming Grove, Texas and moderator of the Ellis Hill Association. "We sold the church building to another church, and we weren't interested in sitting on a bunch of money—we aren't a bank. We wanted to help some people, so we looked around for who needed help."

According to Cashion, many churches in the Ellis Hill Association attend Daniel Springs, and many of their children have accepted Christ at the camp. When they received word that the camp was in financial trouble, the

association decided to donate \$20,000—a donation that greatly helped save the camp.

Jason Prewitt, director of Daniel Springs, said, "We are always saddened to see churches close their doors, but we know the legacy of FBC Itasca and the desire it had to see people surrender their lives to the Lord will continue to live on through the ongoing ministry at Daniel Springs. We count it a blessing to partner with Ellis Hill in the kingdom work."

Throughout the process, the Ellis Hill Association's intention for the funds was to help churches and help the legacy of FBC Itasca carry on. In addition to donating to Daniel Springs, the association also donated funds to Jacksonville College, Progress, Texas Baptist Home, and The Bridge Church (a BMA church plant pastored by Matt Prather).

"Even though FBC Itasca closed, they had been around for many years. Through us helping these other ministries, their ministry will continue to have a legacy through these churches and through the camp—that was our whole mindset," concluded Cashion.

Liberty Association holds 2017 annual meeting

By CHARLES JOHNSON

Pastor of Rosewood, Gilmer

Oak Hill, Gilmer was the site of the 138th Annual Session of Liberty Baptist Association on Sunday, Oct. 8. Twenty-seven churches were represented. Liberty Association was organized in 1880 at Liberty Baptist Church near Hawkins.

Bro. Thomas Ayres, pastor of Camille Acres, Longview, brought the annual sermon. Host pastor Bro. Dicky Mauk preached in the evening session. Bro. Michael Pool was elected to bring the annual sermon in 2018 with Bro. Riley Pate as the alternate.

Dr. Blanton Feaster reported on the work of Jacksonville College. Bro. Jason Curry, newly elected President of Texas Baptist Home for Children in Waxahachie and Bedford, gave an update on the ministries of the Home, Texas State Missions, *Baptist Progress*, and BMA of Texas Loan Association.

The following were elected as officers for the coming year: Bro. Wayne McKay, moderator; Bro. Dicky Mauk, vice-moderator; Bro. Larry Lansdale, treasurer; Bro. Leon Ross, assistant treasurer; Charlotte Johnson, clerk; and Jeanette McKay, assistant clerk.

Several mission projects were adopted for church year 2017-18 including the following: \$400 monthly support to Missionary Tracy Miller at BMAA church plant Stonepoint Mission in Cumming, Georgia; \$1,000 per semester scholarship to ministerial student Bro. Riley Pate at Jacksonville College for the next two semesters; \$250 monthly support to BMA of Texas Missions; \$500 monthly support to Editorial Bautista (Spanish publications); \$500 monthly support to Jacksonville College; and \$400 added from the general fund for each associational rally.

The messengers also approved a recommendation from the Aged Ministers' committee to provide \$150 each per month financial supplemental assistance to eight qualifying retired ministers and widows of ministers.

Rallies and meeting places for the new church year are as follows: December 14, Rally for International and North American Missions at Pritchett-Gilmer; January 18, Rally for Jacksonville College at Rosewood-Gilmer; March 15, Rally for Texas Baptist Home at Simmons Hill-Diana; May 17, Rally for Baptist Medical Missions International, Sovereign Life Fellowship-Longview; August 16, LifeWord Media Ministries Rally at Stone Ridge, Kilgore; and October 14, annual association at Fellowship-Pittsburg.

National Adoption Month

By JASON CURRY

November is National Adoption Month. Many children all over Texas will be getting adopted this month, including five families from Texas Baptist Home. They will all be completing their adoptions on National Adoption Day. We are so excited for these families and how your support has led them to this day. November is also Orphan Sunday month. Many churches will be celebrating National Adoption month by dedicating time in their services to recognize the foster and adoptive families and to pray for the kids in foster and adoptive homes.

One of the families that is completing their adoption this month is the Walter family. The Walters have been fostering for two years and have wanted to adopt. They have been a great foster family and this November, they are excited to be starting their forever family through adoption. They are adopting two kids and everyone is very excited and ready. They have gone through many highs and lows with the process. The kids have lived in a couple different foster homes before moving to the Walters. They have all done really well with their new normal

and as their agency, we have been able to stand beside them through all the changes they have all gone through the last couple of years.

Continue to be in prayer for the Walters as they start their journey as a forever family. Pray for the many other children at TBH that are still waiting for their forever family. We have a great staff and supportive foster and adoption parents that help these children day to day. TBH kids, foster families, adoption families, and staff are better today because of your prayerful support. To learn more about National Adoption Month or Orphan Sunday, visit www.tbhc.org.

Jason Curry is the president of the Texas Baptist Home for Children. Contact him 629 Farley St, Waxahachie, TX 75165, 972-937-1321 or jcurry@tbhc.org. For more information, visit www.tbhc.org.





church health

Dealing with conflict and criticism

By **LARRY BARKER**

How do you please people without being a people pleaser? Pastors have a desire to get along with their members and have a strong burden for unity. Sometimes that is quite a challenge with so many different opinions on how people think churches should be run and what they believe the pastor's responsibilities are. People can sometimes be difficult and when conflict comes we must be ready to have a plan in place for how we will handle it. Will we handle it biblically?

The greatest challenge is to make sure you respond to conflict rather than reacting to it. The biblical standard given multiple times throughout the Word is that we are to refuse to guard (hold on to) resentments. We must refuse to carry grudges or nurse hatred and anger. Oh, we will get angry and we will get hurt so we must be ready to zealously banish all resentment and anger from our life. We will have to choose over and over again whether we will get better or get bitter.

When you do get hurt or mad the first thing to do is take a really good deep breath. While taking that moment it is your opportunity to ask God for strength and wisdom. You might not be able to handle the stress and conflict but He always can. The key here is choosing to be under His control and direction instead of your own. It is hard but it is possible because we can do all things through Christ who gives us the strength we need when we need it.

I Peter 2:23 says, "When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He was suffering, He did not threaten but entrusted Himself to the One who judges justly!" Jesus did not retaliate! When conflict or criticism comes we will have to decide how we will respond to it. Will we choose to allow Him to be in control or will our flesh be in control? Jesus chose to not retaliate and to trust the Father to handle the judgment end of things. Do we trust God enough to allow Him to handle that end of it?

There are a lot of options but let's take a look at four. We must choose how we will handle difficult people and difficult situations daily. You should not judge a church by whether it has problems or not but by how they handle their problems. That same principle applies to leadership because the real litmus test is how we respond to and handle conflict. A pastor posted this sentiment on Twitter, "I refuse to be a Christian who is generous with damnation and stingy with grace."

First, you could choose to give in and pander to the criticism or conflict. The temptation is to just agree with them even when you do not agree with them. You do not



want to offend them, upset them, or rock the boat. Everyone has a desire to be liked but that desire should not override the truth and must confront the difficulty in love. Remember that Proverbs 15:1 says that, "A gentle answer turns away wrath." So often it is not what we say but how we say it.

Second, you could choose to isolate yourself from them or ignore them. The temptation here is to hope that if we ignore the problem it will just go away or solve itself. The truth is that almost never happens. It is sad when people in a church will avoid certain people and use a different entrance to make sure they do not have to speak to them. That could be called stealth avoidance but a more correct description would be escapism and an unbiblical approach to conflict resolution.

Third, you could get defensive and power up for the confrontation. This is where you try to overpower the difficult person using intimidation. You have the mindset of straightening them out, showing them once and for all, and telling them a thing or two. The focus becomes more about changing them rather than being the person Christ wants you to be. Powering up is where you want to blow them away with what you say and shut them up once and for all.

Fourth, you show courage and stay calmly connected to them. This is the most biblical approach where you speak the truth in love. You refuse to see them as the enemy and ostracize them. Your focus is on biblical resolution and restoration of the relationship. In Acts 20:17 Paul said, "For I did not shrink back from declaring to you the whole plan of God." Later in Galatians 4:16 he says, "Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?"

The biblical response to conflict and difficult people

is found throughout the scriptures in verses like Romans 12:17, "Do not repay evil for evil." And also in I Peter 3:9, "Not paying back evil for evil or insult for insult but, on the contrary, giving a blessing, since you were called for this." Once again, the key is not necessarily what you say but how you say it and the love you have for the one to whom you are saying it.

Nehemiah is an excellent example of handling conflict but not allowing it to distract him from the task God had assigned him. You must continue to labor and press forward even when you conflict and criticism comes. Nehemiah in chapter 5 says he was "extremely angry" when he heard their outcry and their complaints but in verse 16 he says he "devoted" himself to the work. When the detractors asked him to stop the work and come down and discuss it he refused.

Nehemiah made it clear that there was nothing to the rumors they were spreading and even told them in Nehemiah 6:8, "you are inventing them in your own mind." He knew that their attempts at intimidating him were focused on trying to discourage him and bring their work to a screeching halt. Then in Nehemiah 6:11 he says something we should all remember when faced with conflict and criticism, "Should a man like me run away?"

Larry Barker is the pastor of Cornerstone, Jacksonville. He also serves as the operations director for North American Missions. For more information or to contact him, visit www.bmamissions.org.





insights for pastors

Priorities for Pastors

By **DR. ALLEN TILLEY**

Pastors often resemble fire fighters, as they rush to put out fires in the church. Exhausted at the end of the day, pastors often feel as if they didn't accomplish anything, because most of their time was spent on reacting to crises. Brian Croft, senior pastor of Auburndale Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky, has generated a top ten list of priorities for pastors. Examine his list to see if you are making time for the real essentials of ministry.

Guard the truth. Jesus said, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32). Knowing and living, as well as helping others know and live by God's Word, is paramount for pastors.

Preach the Word. Pastors are dispensers of God's Word, not their own opinion or the opinions of others. As a result, pastors must give adequate time in sermon study and preparation.

Pray for the church. Just as Jesus reminded Peter that Satan wanted to sift him as wheat (Luke 22:31), Satan wants to do the same to your people. As the under-shepherd to the Great Shepherd, be passionate

about praying over the spiritual welfare of your church.

Set the example. If you want your people to live biblically, honestly, morally, and ethically, you must model it before them. Nothing will destroy a church any quicker than a hypocritical pastor.

Visit the sick. With the advent of impersonal social media, where people have lost physical contact with each other, personally caring for your members is vital. People will put up with poor preaching, if they know their pastor cares for them.

Comfort the grieving. During times of crisis, a pastor can earn more influence by attending to the needs of his congregation than all his sermons combined. More than your words, they long for your presence.

Care for widows. James said that pure and undefiled religion before God is to visit orphans and widows (James 1:27). The apostles and early church learned quickly that a lack of care for widows can be divisive (Acts 6).

Confront sin. While every pastor wants to be liked and loved by his congregation, a pastor worth his salt

will love them enough to point out their sin. The cross stands as a stark reminder as to what God thinks of sin.

Encourage weaker sheep. Not everyone at church is on the same spiritual level. Some are babes in Christ, while some are mature. While fellowshiping with the strong is much more enjoyable, the only way the weak can become strong is with your help.

Identify and train leaders. Ephesians 4:12 clearly teaches that the role of the pastor is to invest in others, so they can carry on the work of the ministry. A pastor who carries the workload without enabling others does a disservice to himself and the church.

Dr. Allen Tilley is pastor of First Baptist Church of Carthage, Texas. He has over 30 years of pastoral experience, and God has continually blessed his ministry with dynamic spiritual and numerical growth. Contact him at allen@firstbaptistcarthage.com.



Unlimited: Lifeword's New Media Vision—Part Two

By **HOLLY MERIWEATHER**

Lifeword

(The following is the second of three media releases regarding Lifeword's new vision. Part one is available at lifeword.org.)

As Executive Director Donny Parrish began formulating the idea for the Lifeword Cloud on the Lifeword Network, he considered the following: "Is this a big plan? It really is. It will certainly be the challenge of my life's calling in ministry to shepherd this from dream to reality. After introducing this plan to our staff and getting buy-in from our team, there have been nights that I have laid in bed and thought, 'What in the world are you doing? This is going to be very difficult to do! Why put yourself through this?'"

"I'm glad that I don't have to accomplish this. My God is big enough to make this happen all by himself. I'm depending on his power, guidance and leadership to make his dream become a reality. I'm confident that what he has birthed in my heart he will see to completion."

THE LIFEWORD NETWORK

Imagine for a moment the opportunity to provide programming in both audio and video for Lifeword Community Radio stations. This programming will allow churches and pastors to stream a constant source of uplifting gospel music and messaging from one source, the Lifeword Network, to people who would choose to listen to their "station." The churches who join our network team will be allowed to broadcast Lifeword programming but then speak to their audience directly by preempting the Lifeword Network broadcast. This will allow for quality, trusted gospel programming from Lifeword, with local control and messaging. The goal would be to provide programming in as many languages as Lifeword could produce. The internet will allow churches and missionaries to broadcast the Lifeword Network without the financial constraints that have burdened us in the past.

THE LIFEWORD CLOUD

How do you deliver programming that has been produced to Lifeword Network stations around the world? Through the Lifeword Cloud. Our dream is for lifeword.org to become the center of all we do as an organization. Languages, broadcasts and discipleship materials would all be uploaded to the Lifeword Cloud for dissemination to stations around the world. Our goal is for easy access to our Lifeword Community Radio partners around the world, freeing them from having to be intensive programmers. Lifeword will be the programmers. They will have the freedom to concentrate on one or two programs that will enhance their outreach to their audience.

THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

There are many challenges facing the Lifeword team as they move to this mode of ministry. Some of these challenges we understand and know. And there are many others that we will not know until we face them. Part three of this series of articles will discuss those challenges.



By HEITH MITCHELL

A WORD FROM YOUR MISSION OFFICE:

We just had an uplifting, encouraging, Christ exalting, and loving BMAT Meeting. New Harmony Baptist Church practiced true hospitality throughout the meeting! They made us feel at home and fed us well. The officers planned and carried out the meeting with humble excellence. Each message was right on. God showed himself in detail after detail and really brought revival to my heart. I heard the same from others. It's a good time to be BMA Baptists!



▲ Heith Mitchell

It was also great to see The Refuge Church in Terrell and Valley Ranch Church in New Caney join the BMA of Texas. We are glad to welcome these two young churches to the Association family.

A WORD FROM YOUR MISSIONARIES:

GARY SOUTHARD—

THE CHURCH AT VALLEY RANCH MISSION, NEW CANEY

Rhonda and I are so excited to share what recently took place with your BMA of Texas mission...

On Sunday, Oct. 22 the partners of the Church at Valley Ranch met at Beacon, Bryan. The purpose of the meeting was to organized The Church at Valley Ranch into a full fledged church.



▲ Gary Southard

Bro. Clinton Everett, pastor of Beacon, Bryan preached a charge to The Church at Valley Ranch. The church covenant and the doctrinal statement was adopted. Bro. Don Swindoll, pastor of Harmony Baptist Church, expressed words of excitement and encouragement to the mission project.

After hearing a request from the mission called The Church at Valley Ranch to be considered a church, a member from the mother church, Beacon, Bryan made a motion to accept this request. A second was given, and the members voted yes.

A list of some of the partners/members of Beacon, Bryan was read and requested to join the newly formed church called The Church at Valley Ranch as charter members. A motion was made and seconded. A vote was yes to have 41 members released to join The Church at Valley Ranch.

A motion was made and seconded to call Bro. Gary Southard as the pastor of The Church at Valley Ranch. Motion carried.

The right hand of Christian fellowship was given by the members of Beacon, Bryan to the new members of The Church at Valley Ranch.

Bro. Heith Mitchell, missions director for the BMA of

Texas, dismissed with a prayer to bless the newly organized church.

The first official Sunday of The Church at Valley Ranch was held on Sunday, Oct. 29 with 58 in attendance. There were two salvations and one new member joined by statement. The church currently has five awaiting baptism.



▲ Organizational pastor committee



▲ The Church at Valley Ranch members praying

JAIME GARCIA—

LA IGLESIA BAUTISTA NUEVA VIDA, SPLENDORA

When God speaks to his servants to work in his Work he gives us the promise that he Himself will be with us (Haggai 2:4-5). His promise is faithful and true, let us be encouraged, all people, says Jehovah, and work; because I am with you, says the Lord of the armies. Let us go ahead that there is much to be done in this world. God's lamp is still burning (1 Samuel 3: 3). It is our opportunity to make it shine abundantly.

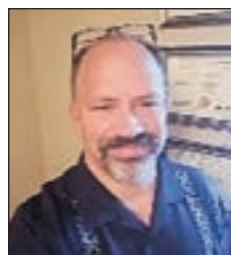


▲ Jaime Garcia

CLIFF ROBERTSON—

CARPENTER'S HOUSE MISSION— LAKE JACKSON/CLUTE

We have faced tragic flooding. Some of our members are still



▲ Cliff Robertson

recovering. We have faced a major house fire that destroyed a family's world. The enemy is working hard against us, as we should expect. Yet, we are growing! God is good!

BRANDON DURHAM— REDEEMER'S LOVE MISSION, HOUSTON

We are truly grateful to partner with the BMAT! The training, coaching, camaraderie and resources are a tremendous benefit. Thanks to you, our leadership feels equipped and confident to tackle the challenges inherent to church planting in an urban, secular, pluralistic context. It's not easy going, but God is at work, and it's exciting to roll up our sleeves and get our hands dirty in the labor of evangelism and disciple-making. Pray for us during this holiday season. We've set a goal to have 50 attend our Thanksgiving Feast as we seek to reach our unchurched friends. We're casting fresh vision during this season as we gear up to launch our JOURNEY discipleship initiative in January. Discipleship is a journey with Jesus, from lost to (Christ) likeness. We can't wait to invite everyone in Southwest Houston to come JOIN THE JOURNEY!



▲ Brandon Durham



MATTHEW PRATHER— THE BRIDGE MISSION, MIDLOTHIAN/WAXAHACHIE

October was a good month at The Bridge. We continue to reach out to our community in many different ways and build relationships. This month, we really spent time teaching and focusing on helping people find their purpose in life. What it is that God created them to be and do. It led to many good conversation and places of growth. During October our Community Groups



▲ Matthew Prather

BMA TEXAS MISSIONS continued on p.11

2017 United Thanksgiving Offering

SUNDAY
NOVEMBER 19, 2017

OVERALL GOAL: \$125,000

GOAL PER CHURCH: \$1,500

The offering benefits Baptist Missionary Loan Association, Baptist Progress, Jacksonville College, State Missions and Texas Baptist Home for Children.

Mail offerings to
BMA of Texas, P.O. Box 73, Waxahachie, Texas 75168

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 Oct. 1, 2017—Oct. 31, 2017.

ENDOWMENTS

E ANN PACE: Karl & Martha Pace

HONORARIUMS

MELINDA ARMITAGE: Freda Haak

CHARLES & CHARLOTTE JOHNSON: Leora Johnson

LADIES CLASS @ FBC, BLOOMING GROVE: Earlene Crenshaw

ANN MAXWELL: Marilyn Simpson

KAY PETERS SPRAGUE: David Medcalf

MARY E. WOLFINGTON: John Wolfington

MEMORIALS

ROBERT BAILEY: Rose Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Mineola

TIM BAKER: Lola Baker

JACK BARNES: Jimmy & Carla Shipp

JAKE E BARNES: Charles & Charlotte Johnson;

DELLA CROAN: Rose Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Mineola

BRENDA & JOHN DAVIDSON: Joe & Linda Dodson

EVERLYN HILL DETWEILER: Charles & Charlotte Johnson

KATE DIBBLE: Brenda Ray

LINDA & LINDELL DODSON: Joe & Linda Dodson

BRO. MARVIN GARDNER: Red Springs Missionary Baptist Church, Tyler

BEN GLAZE: Jed & Glenice Whitaker; Jimmy & Carla Shipp

HARMON GRAHAM: Travis & Audrey Shipp

JAMES RONNIE GRESHAM: Joe Boley Family

RICHARD HENSON: Charles & Charlotte Johnson; Rosewood Baptist Church, Gilmer

BARBARA HILL: Jed & Glenice Whitaker

CHARLES R. IVY: Jane Darcey Ivy

J.R. KENMORE: Joy Linton

BILLY RAY KNOX: Gay Mitchell

MIKE LEAGUE: Larry & Carol Brock

PAT LIGGETT: Sand Prairie Baptist Church, North Zulch

SUZY LUNA: Paul & Erni Luna

MRS. MICKEY PLACKER: Delores Adams

DEWAYNE RIVERS: Duane & Charlotte Turner

JOANN ROBERTSON: Jed & Glenice Whitaker

DOROTHY ROSE: Jed & Glenice Whitaker

PEGGY SANDIFER: Joe & Linda Dodson; Rose Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Mineola; J.C. & Anita Lassiter

ROSEMARY BARBER SEAHORN: Brenda Ray

ROMA SHAW: Charles & Charlotte Johnson; Mary Ann Wylie; Welta Burris

PATSY SMITH: Charles & Charlotte Johnson

CAROLYN SPENCE: Charles & Charlotte Johnson; Rosewood Baptist Church, Gilmer

JOYCE STRICKLAND: Diane Renfro

ROY THAMES: South Park Baptist Church

SUE ANN THAMES: Kenneth Smith

LAINY & MITCH WEST: Joe & Linda Dodson

CLAY DENE WILLIAMS: Charles & Charlotte Johnson

MONEY WISE

BAPTIST MISSIONARY
BMLA
LOAN ASSOCIATION

I'm Thankful

By **JERRY BURNAMAN**

On the rocky slopes of a steep hill overlooking the spacious plain of Drama in Macedonia, Philip of Macedon defeated the Thasian Colonists, the city of Crenides, and renamed it Philippi in about 356 B.C. When the Romans came to power, the Egnatian Way, a Roman thoroughfare joining the East and the West became a busy trade route through the valley.

The Roman settlers also discovered gold and silver in the hills and a rich mining business developed. Thus, in the first century A.D., Philippi was a bustling, wealthy city of industry and commerce. Here Paul and Silas met Lydia and other women by the riverside at a time of prayer. Along with the Philippian jailor who was converted and his family, they started a church in about 40 A.D.

Later, when Paul was falsely accused and in prison at Rome, facing execution in about 60 A.D. he received a personal message from Epaphroditus about the church. There was tension in the church, and on the horizon severe persecution loomed like a dark storm cloud.

Paul wrote them a heartwarming letter of encouragement. Think about it—he was facing execution, with every reason to be depressed, yet his strong faith enabled him to write a

letter to inspire a church that he loved.

Paul exhorts the church to “stand fast...be of the same mind...rejoice in the Lord always...but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known...and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:1, 2, 4, 6, 7).

I have to ask myself, Am I thankful during these uncertain times? Are you thankful? For all believers reading this article, is our faith strong and do we give thanks in everything when the world around us has gone crazy?

Here are some things I'm thankful for. I'm thankful the Lord saved me and put me in the ministry. I was on a downward path, pleasing my own desires, going away from God, but Jesus found me and the Holy Spirit convicted me, and I was saved. The same night He called me to preach. It has been a magnificent journey for 57 years.

I'm thankful for the BMA of Texas that had confidence in me, and elected me to serve as Mission Director for 18 years, and since 2016, Manage the BMA of Texas Loan Association.

I give thanks to more than 275 individuals, churches and auxiliaries who have invested funds in the BMLA of Texas.

Presently we have \$14.1 million in assets, providing funds for growing churches. We are assisting 24 projects with loans, and have sufficient funds for several other projects.

I'm thankful for my colleagues in the office, and especially my secretary, Cassie Fulton. We all work together to extend the ministries of the BMA churches of Texas. We have a passion to serve our churches, and with denominational leaders working with our churches, we can impact many people with the gospel. About 27 million people live in Texas and only 18 percent are connected with a church. This should break our hearts, drive us to our knees, and thank God for the opportunity to serve as His ambassadors.

These are a few things I'm thankful for as we approach Thanksgiving Day. Are you thankful?

Jerry Burnaman is the manager of the Baptist Missionary Loan Association. Contact him at 972-923-0758 or jerryburnaman@yahoo.com.



Obituaries

ROBERT (BOB) FRANK LANE, age 72, of North Richland Hills, walked into the arms of the Lord on Oct. 19, 2017 while enjoying one of his favorite pastimes—traveling the world with his beloved wife, Gloria. Known for building and strengthening churches, Bob's career in ministry spanned nearly six decades, both at home in Texas—including 12 years growing North Park, North Richland Hills into a vibrant community and serving as senior pastor for 10 years at Fox Avenue, Lewisville—as well as in communities across the country. Since 1999, he served as Executive Director of The Inquest Group, a national nonprofit devoted to equipping pastors, planters, leaders and missionaries across many denominations with time-tested skills and strategies for effective ministry. Bob was curious about and cared for everyone he met, striking up conversations with total strangers and recalling details about friends and acquaintances he hadn't seen in years. And the people he knew best loved him dearly; he was an adored husband, father, son, and sibling. He is survived by a large and loving family—mother Oleta Moffitt; his wife of 52 years, Gloria; children Greg (Aimee), Tracey (Clint) and Brad (Liv); siblings Karen Latino (Charles), Michael Moffitt (Cheryl), Stephen Lane (Leanna), Sam Moffitt (Donna), Sally Lane and Phil Lane; and nine grandchildren. He is preceded in death by father Frank Lane, stepfather Wilson Moffitt and stepsister Sue Gilley. A celebration of Lane's life was held at North Park, North Richland Hills Nov. 4. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be sent to the Bob Lane Memorial Fund at North Park Baptist Church (NorthParkNow.com).



Upcoming 
EVENTS
WINTER TERM 2017 AND SPRING TERM 2018
Registration ongoing

FALL CHOIR CONCERT
Thursday, November 16 at 7:00 p.m.
in Buckner Chapel

CHRISTMAS SHOW: CHRISTMAS CARDS
Thursday, November 30 at 7:00 p.m.
in Buckner Chapel

117th Annual Session of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas Cont.

of Green Acres, Tyler was the guest speaker during the conference. He spoke on dealing with discouragement in ministry.

Reports were given by department directors during the afternoon session beginning with Jason Curry, president of the Texas Baptist Home for Children. During the past year, the Home ministered to 280 children. There were 32 adoptions, and 21 professed Christ as their Savior.

Jacksonville College President Dr. Mike Smith and representatives of the department shared that the Fall 2017 enrollment at the college was 583. Nineteen countries are represented among the student at Jacksonville College. Over 100 decisions have been made for Christ. Also, several students have been involved in Hurricane Harvey relief efforts in the Houston area. Homecoming at the college will be Feb. 9-10, 2018.

Reporting for the *Baptist Progress*, this editor reported that it has become necessary to reduce the salary and required office time of the editor by one-third. Services currently offered by *Baptist Progress* will continue uninterrupted.

Heith Mitchell reporting for BMA of Texas Missions shared about the West Texas Multiplication Network that has a goal of establishing 100 churches in West Texas towns. Four are already underway. There are currently 16 mission projects across the state. Mitchell also reported that only 50 percent of BMA of Texas churches give to State Missions. He challenged others to give so that more churches can be planted in Texas.

The Baptist Missionary Loan Association (BMLA) report was given by Jerry Burnaman, manager of BMLA, who reported that the BMLA has over \$14 million in assets, an increase of approximately \$2 million over last year. He noted there are three ways to support the Loan Association: 1) A contribution from an individual or church, 2) An interest free loan, 3) Interest loans that compound quarterly. Currently BMLA is paying 2 percent on share accounts and 2.5 percent

on investment certificates. These rates may change during the year depending on the financial climate.

Elected from the floor to serve on the Administrative Committee of the BMA of Texas this year were Mark Bradberry, James Schoenrock and Matt Woods. Phillip Waddell was elected to serve on the Nominating Committee of the BMA of Texas.

Cindy Allen, newly elected president of the Women's Missionary Auxiliary (WMA) gave the WMA report. For details on the Annual Texas WMA Meeting see page 12 of this issue.

Wayne Wimberly reported on behalf of the Master's Builders stating that the group has just completed their twenty-sixth year of raising roofs for Christ. They have completed six projects since their last report with a total of 151 projects in the history of their ministry. The six projects included projects at Jacksonville College, Daniel Springs, and Oak Hill, Gilmer.

Jason Prewitt, director of Daniel Springs Camp, was elected to bring the annual message next year. Jason Collins, pastor of Crossroads, Rowlett, was elected as alternate.

Elected to serve as president for the 2017-2018 year was Robert Easterling, pastor of Mahl, Nacogdoches. Leon Ross, pastor of Latch, Gilmer, was elected to serve as first vice president. Ryan Burchett, pastor of Northside, Garland, was elected to serve as second vice president. Wayne McKay and Eddie Ballard were reelected to serve as recording clerks.

The Tuesday evening session of the meeting included worship with the Jacksonville College Choir and the annual message by Dr. Blanton Feaster, vice president of executive affairs at Jacksonville College. Following the annual message, a missionary commissioning service was held for those elected as state missionaries.

The 118th Annual Session of the BMA of Texas will be held at Calvary, Fairfield, Nov. 5-6, 2018.



BMA Texas Mission cont.

continued to grow. People are experiencing what community is all about and it also provides them a way to grow in their walk with Christ. Please continue to pray for The Bridge as we continue to reach out to the hurting and broken people in our community. Thank you for your continued support and prayers!

PRAYER REQUESTS FROM THE FIELD

- Jaime Garcia asks you to pray for, "My family, my finances, my health, and may God send me brothers willing to faithfully give the best of themselves. For trips to the city of Mesquite. For the Work of Splendor and that a word of encouragement be given to the needy."
- Cliff Robertson asks you to pray for strength and energy as they reach the lost for Christ.
- Christian Martinez asks you to pray for, "For clarity and good Spirit-driven planning for beginning the church planting work in Lubbock."
- John Harris asks you to pray for the spiritual warfare they are facing.

PRAISE REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

- 7 salvations were reported this month!
- God continues to answer your prayers on behalf of your mission effort!

Heith Mitchell is the director of BMA of Texas Missions. Contact him at P.O. Box 73, Waxahachie, TX 75168, 972-923-0757 or hmittell@bmatexas.org. For more information, visit www.bmatexasmissions.org.



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auxiliary

Shine for Jesus

By SHARON COLE

The Texas WMA theme this past year was: “Shine for Jesus.” Ladies, if we are to shine God’s love to everyone we meet, we must be growing in His grace; ever learning. We don’t get to old to learn. We learn from each other as we meet together and study God’s Word, pray and serve the Lord through the church. Our annual meeting was at New Harmony Baptist Church, Tyler with 101 in attendance. The ladies of New Harmony and Smith District did an outstanding job of meeting our needs and making us feel welcome.

We raised over \$16,000 for the project this year: Daniel Springs. Much has been done at the camp to make it more comfortable, safe, and updated, from the cabins to the tabernacle to the landscaping. But much more needs to be done. Project Promoter, Diana Morris, presented certificates to the churches and districts who donated money for the project. Union Hill, Brownsboro received the honor of giving the most.

The new project will be “BMA of Texas Missions” specifically for a 16 ft. box trailer with a drop down ramp door. It will be used to store and transport useful items for our Church Planting Missions around the state and it will be used as an outreach effort to different mission points. The goal is \$15,000.

New officers elected for 2017-2018 are: President-Cindy Allen; 1st Vice President-Johnnie Ross; 2nd Vice President-Glenda Chamberlain; 3rd Vice President-Kristi Key; Corresponding Secretary and Assistant-Jo Strong and Charlotte Johnson; Editor-Sharon Cole; Historian-Alicia Johnson; Project Promoter-Diana Morris; Recording Secretaries-Jane Meyers and Elizabeth Midkiff; GMA/YLA Promoter and Assistant-Kendra Verhelle and Cheryl Hughes; Sunbeam Promoter and Assistant-Vera Koonce and Shirley Hoffpauir; Song Director-Dera Moy; Project Selection Committee-Claudia Thompson, Lynda Hill and Stacey Hernandez. Nominating Committee-Jackie Ricks, Shawn Norris and Ann Pugh. Advisory Council-Bro. Leon Ross, Bro. Charles Johnson and Bro. Buddy Saddler.

Resolutions Committee member, Dian Pope, read the resolutions that we as a body resolve to do. Highlighting these resolutions was a show of loyalty and respect to our country by standing at attention to repeat the pledge of allegiance to our American flag for what it represents.

Glenda Chamberlain installed the officers as she introduced the new theme for the year: “In The Potter’s Hands.” She emphasized that we are like snowflakes; all alike in some respects, but all different in other areas so that God can use our unique talents to accomplish His plan for each of us. A beautiful replica of a snowflake was given to each officer.

The Jacksonville College Singers presented a medley of songs for us: “I Will Trust in You,” and “He’s A Chainbreaker.” Special speaker, Janice Caldwell, presented the program, “You Were Made to Shine for Him,” using Matthew 5:16. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” The main idea in this verse is the last phrase, “...glorify your Father...” Mrs. Caldwell stated from Isaiah

49:16, that “Behold, I have carved you in the palms of my hands...” She continued to say that if we are carved into God’s hands, then God is carved into our hands because His Spirit is in us and we are created in His image. She further stated that our hands are Working Hands, Praying Hands, Loving Hands, Stern Hands and Aging Hands. Using each finger of the hand for each topic, Mrs. Caldwell emphasized that we all should choose our work; plan and organize. We should pray, ‘not my will but thine be done.’ Loving hands are to hug, comfort and meet the needs of others. Stern hands should expect the best of others and don’t allow ourselves to hurt others and be disciplined. Finally, aging hands although weaker and finding things harder to do, is not a reason to quit. Don’t let age stop you from Shining for Jesus.

DISTRICT NEWS

The Cherokee District WMA met October 17, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. with Cornerstone, Jacksonville, with First, Maydelle serving a wonderful meal. At 7 p.m., Cindy Allen called the business meeting to order and led in opening exercises. Nancy Washburn introduced the new theme: “The Armor of God,” using Ephesians 6:11. Officers for the new year are: President-Cindy Allen; Vice President-Nancy Washburn; Secretary/Treasurer-Carol Shine; Assist. Secretary/Treasurer-Shirley McAnnally; Pianist-Eloise Thomas; Historian-Carleen Thompson. Glenda Haynes introduced the guest speaker: Dr. John and Shirley Ladd, who were missionaries to Mexico for 43 years. A special young lady began by modeling some clothes that were worn and helped with the program. A video was shown of how the BMMI went to different countries. There was also a display of different things from some of the countries. A motion was made and carried to give \$25 to have a picture on the ministers’ wall at the BMA Seminary in Jacksonville in honor to New Summerfield pastor, Dr. David Helwig, who is a teacher at the Seminary. Afton Grove received the attendance banner. The next meeting will be Jan. 9, 2018 at Enterprise Baptist Church.

The Mt. Olive District WMA met Oct. 24, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. for a fellowship meal and quarterly business meeting with Antioch Baptist Church, Carthage with 12 present. After the meal the meeting began with installation of officers for 2017-2018. President-Leona Wimberly; 1st Vice President-Nelda Salas; 2nd Vice President-Shawn Norris; Secretary/Treasurer-Sharon Cole; Project Promoter-Emilee Baker; Sunbeam Promoter-LaVerle Spurgeon; Advisory Council-Bro. Rodger Cole and Wayne Wimberly. Installation was conducted by Texas WMA President-Sherry Decker, using Matt. 22:37-39. Mrs. Decker used the colors of the rainbow to illustrate that we are all different, just like the colors of the rainbow are different. Each officer was given a WMA hotpad in appreciation for their service and urged to live a life to show the love of God. President-Leona Wimberly called the meeting to order. The opening business was carried out including a challenge by the Project Promoter, Emilee Baker to “Do Something.” Each church was encouraged to plan fundraisers for the district project: “Kid

Zone,” of Daniel Springs Encampment. We will participate in the festivals of Joaquin and Logansport, La to raise the money.

NATIONAL WMA

Begin now to pray and plan to attend the National WMA meeting April 17, 2018 in Jackson, Mississippi. The theme is “Fear Not” and the guest speaker will be Kim Crabill, founder and president of Roses and Rainbows Ministries, Inc., and Community COFFEE (Conversations of Friends of Faith to Encourage and Equip). She also is an author of several books including: Burdens to Blessings, a book about her personal journey through past failures to the person she is now. For more information contact: Charlotte Johnson, National WMA 2nd Vice President. 1044 S. Mimosa Rd. Gilmer, TX 75644. 903-790-1385. chjl054@etex.net.

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.



Ideas to raise funds for National WMA Project

The 2017-18 National WMA Project is the Baptist Missionary Association College in the Philippines. Our goal for this year is \$40,000. The due date for the project donations isn’t until early 2018, but thought some ideas of how to raise money would be helpful.

The majority of the money donated to the WMA usually comes from smaller churches giving what they can instead of a few larger churches giving a lot. So don’t think that your group is too small to contribute!

Here are some ideas and the Project Committee would welcome any ideas you have. An easy way to raise money would be to have a potluck lunch after church one Sunday (or several times throughout the year) and put out an offering plate. Lots of folks go out to eat on Sundays and this meal would be better because it is homemade and offers an opportunity to help a worthy cause at the same time.

Another idea is to provide small banks for each Sunday School class to fill with change and dollars, and one person suggested having the school children save their small milk cartons, then clean them up and spray paint them or decorate them.

Perhaps my favorite idea is to have a silent auction at your district WMA meeting. I’m planning to do this in January at our district meeting because many time we receive gifts at Christmas that could be “donated” to the Silent Auction.

Our church recently sold hamburgers at the Fall Festival in our town to raise money for the Project. Bake sales are usually successful too.

EVENTS

125TH ANNIVERSARY

DATE: November 19, 2017

PLACE: Glenfawn Baptist Church, Cushing, TX
The celebration begins at 11 a.m. with singing, church history, and a message brought by former pastor, David Willis. A traditional Thanksgiving lunch will follow worship service. After lunch, special music by Living Proof will be enjoyed. Plan to come help us celebrate our church's anniversary.

BAPTIST MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION 117TH ANNUAL SESSION

DATE: November 6-7, 2017

PLACE: New Harmony Baptist Church, Tyler, Texas

CHURCH LEADERS CRUISE

DATE: January 13-18, 2017

PLACE: 5-day Caribbean Cruise
DiscipleGuide.org

church news

LAWRENCE SPRINGS, GRAND SALINE has called Bro. Ronnie Daniell as their pastor. Bro. Ronnie accepted the call and has served for one month now. Attendance has doubled and the church has had two professions of faith. The church is very excited and is working very hard to grow the work in this rural area of Van Zandt County. Sunday, Oct. 22, the church witnessed the baptisms of Ryan and Emma Curry. The church sponsored a Harvest Festival Oct. 29. In the near future a new church sign will be installed which will serve as an outreach tool for the church. The sign will include a marquee enabling us to place announcements and messages notifying our community of activities and special services. Pastor Daniell said, "I am greatly encouraged at the excitement the wonderful folks of Lawrence Springs are exhibiting. I believe God has many great blessings in store for His church family here. My Dad and Mom were members here until they were called home to be with Jesus. Dad served as a deacon and both he and mom taught Sunday school for many years. Lawrence Springs is where they carried me when I was only two weeks old. So, I count it an honor to be the pastor of the home church for my parents, Earl and Opal Daniell.

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PERSONNEL & POSITIONS

AVAILABLE MINISTER

SCOTT SCHULLE is available to serve as a bivocational pastor within 50 miles of Rusk. He is a member of First, Maydelle. Contact him at 903-795-3886 (home) or 903-948-0058 (cell).

AVAILABLE POSITIONS

PIANIST—Shiloh Road, Mesquite is seeking a pianist. If interested, contact Craig Bass at Cbassdatura@gmail.com or 469-236-8883.

YOUTH & FAMILY OUTREACH DIRECTOR—Calvary, Vidalia, LA is seeking a bi-vocational Youth & Family Outreach Director. Send resume to office@calvaryvidalia.com or 2001 Murray Drive, Vidalia, LA 71373. 1/18

PASTOR—First of Providence, Livingston is seeking a bivocational pastor. Send resume to John Henderson, 307 Red Oak St., Livingston, Texas 77351-4327, henderson2@livingston.net, or call 936-327-9228. 12/17

PASTOR—Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resume to Pastor Search Committee, Pilgrim Rest #2 Baptist Church PO Box 99 Golden, TX 75444 or pr2bcsec@gmail.com. 2/18

PASTOR—Union Hill, Brownsboro is seeking a full-time pastor. Please send resume and recorded sermon to Steve Goodrich at uhbc@embarqmail.com or PO Box 316, Brownsboro, TX 75756. 1/18

MUSIC—Craft, Jacksonville is seeking bivocational music minister. Send resume to James Dorman, PO Box 1644, Jacksonville, Texas 75766, james@craftjacksonville, or call 903-752-6610. 12/17

PASTOR—Mount Pisgah, Mineola is seeking a pastor. Bivocational is an option. Send resume to dmvaughn@peoplescom.net or mail to Mount Pisgah Baptist Church, 4995 FM 49, Mineola, Texas 75773. 7/18

YOUTH PASTOR—Davis Street, Sulphur Springs is seeking a full-time youth pastor. Send resume to dennis@davisstreetbaptist.org. 7/18

OUTREACH DIRECTOR—Farley Street, Waxahachie is seeking a bivocational outreach director. Send resume to resume@farleystreet.com.

PASTOR—Hill Creek, Whitehouse is seeking a pastor. Send resume and recorded sermon to Hill Creek Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 1287, Whitehouse, Texas 75791.

FREE PEWS AVAILABLE

South Park, Fort Worth has 35 (15 ft.) pews available for pickup any time after Sunday, Nov. 19. They are in good condition and are free to haul away. Contact Jessica Isch at 817-293-2760.



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Churches in review

OCTOBER 23, 2017

CHURCH	SS	WORSHIP	ADDITIONS
First, Omen		60	1 by baptism
First, Palmer	53	74	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	12	23	
Jackson, Joaquin	66	105	
Merriman Hills, Sherman	8	20	
Olde Tyme, White Oak		82	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	34	35	
Pine Brook, Tyler	24	53	
Rosewood, Gilmer	96	183	
Sand Flat, Grand Saline	38	64	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	19	50	1 by baptism
Simmons Hill, Diana	11	15	

OCTOBER 29, 2017

CHURCH	SS	WORSHIP	ADDITIONS
First, Blooming Grove	204		2 by baptism
First, Palmer	59	80	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	14	35	
New Harmony, Tyler	282	369	4 by baptism
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	40	47	
Pine Brook, Tyler	25	46	
Rosewood, Gilmer	140	249	
Sand Flat, Grand Saline	44	79	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	20	42	
Simmons Hill, Diana	18	35	
Yellowpine Macedonia, Hemphill	21	28	

NOVEMBER 5, 2017

CHURCH	SS	WORSHIP	ADDITIONS
Anthony Drive, Ennis	55	105	2 by baptism
First, Blooming Grove	206		1 by letter
First, Omen	34	58	
First, Palmer	64	90	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	20	47	2 by letter
Jackson, Joaquin	76	133	
New Harmony, Tyler	322	364	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden		47	
Pine Brook, Tyler	36	45	
Rosewood, Gilmer	140	217	2 by baptism
Sand Flat, Grand Saline	43	66	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	21	42	

NOVEMBER 12, 2017

CHURCH	SS	WORSHIP	ADDITIONS
First, Blooming Grove	202		
First, Omen	23	51	
First, Palmer	68	90	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	18	50	
Jackson, Joaquin	87	145	
Little Flock, Lufkin	175	250	
Merriman Hills, Sherman	18	31	
New Hope, Mineola	47	135	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	37	46	
Pine Brook, Tyler	31	50	
Rosewood, Gilmer	148	231	
Sand Flat, Grand Saline	51	75	
Simmons Hill, Diana	14	33	
Yellowpine Macedonia, Hemphill	18	23	

Sunday School Lessons

Tomorrow's forecast: Bright and hopeful

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: December 3, 2017

TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

LESSON AIM: To establish the Biblical truth that while physical death is eminent to all, there is hope and assurance for those of us who die in the Lord.

VERSE 13

1. Paul assured the church of the blessed hope of the believer in Christ after death. The lost (all who refused to confess Jesus Christ as Lord; the unregenerate. only has hope in this life now.
2. Paul admonishes believers whose loved ones have died in the Lord, (Revelation 14:13) not to grieve for them. 2 Corinthians 5:8

VERSE 14

Not only is the resurrection of Christ from the grave a historical fact, but His victory over the grave assures us of likewise being victorious over the grave. 1 Corinthians 15:17--23

VERSE 15 -16

We have the order of the resurrection of the saints. The dead in Christ shall be resurrected first - then those of us who are still alive will be caught up afterward. Paul assures the church of Corinth of this truth (1 Corinthians 15:50-58.

- c. We shall not enter Heaven in fleshly form 1 Corinthians 15:50
- d. Not every child of God will experience physical death 15:51

e. The transition will be instantaneously - 15:52

f. We shall be changed from mortals to immortality. 15:53

g. For the believer, death is victory 15:54-58

VERSE 17

All who are alive on earth when Jesus returns, shall be caught up (raptured) with those resurrected from the grave, to forever be with the Lord.

VERSE 18

Let this be our comfort and encouragement concerning our reunion with other believers who have preceded us in death.

Not home yet!

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: December 10, 2017

TEXT: Hebrews 11:1-16

LESSON AIM: To understand that while our heavenly destination is sealed and secure in Christ, the Christian's life and purpose on this earth, is ordered of God.

Many years ago at Jacksonville, Gerald Orr placed a song in the repertoire of the ladies' trio, "It's Not an Easy Road." The song delivers comfort that even though the Christian's life on this earth is filled with thorns, trials, troubles, dangers, and rugged paths; but Jesus lightens the load, guards and keeps us.

In our text this week, commonly known as the "Hall of Faith" we find examples of great people of faith who endured

this bumpy road known as the Christian life on earth. Each one demonstrated monumental faith in their sovereign God. In this blessed chapter, we see some of the characteristics of faith.

1. People of great faith have the confirmation in their hearts concerning events of the future. Even though those things are not seen now, faith already has the "title deed" of things hoped for. verse 1
2. People of great faith are approved of by God the Father. verse 2 (no one can please God without it.)
3. People of great faith pass the test of trials—verse 17
4. People of great faith considers themselves sojourners in this life verse 13

5. People of great faith choose to suffer affliction for Christ rather than to revel in the luxuries of the world verse 25

6. People of great faith choose to believe in the impossibility of God's power. verses 29-30

7. People of great faith often do not live to see the fulfillment of that faith on earth. verse 39

CONCLUSION:

A life of difficulty and sorrow because of faithfulness to a Holy God is infinitely better than the emptiness and meaninglessness of a life of ease, luxury void of the blessing of God.

Death is only the beginning

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: December 17, 2017

TEXT: Romans 5:12-21

LESSON AIM: Death is never the end for the believer

The entrance of sin into the world - verses 12-14

Adam's and Eve's experience with the tree of knowledge of good and evil is known as the fall. Man separated himself from fellowship with God through this act of disobedience.

This curse was passed upon all humankind, and death is the only payment, which can satisfy a Holy God.

Adam is, to quote the Amplified Bible, "a type of Him (Christ) who was to come, but in reverse—Adam brought

destruction, Christ brought salvation.

The grace which overwhelms the fall of man. Verse 15-17

Adam's sin brought condemnation - Christ's sacrifice brought justification

Adam's sin brought death - Christ's death brought grace. (unmerited favor)

The contrast between the first Adam and the second Adam verses 18-21

Adam—disobedience, carelessness bringing separation from God

Jesus—obedience in His sacrifice, brings righteousness to man making him acceptable to a Holy God.

Adam—Sin—death

Christ—Grace—eternal life

CONCLUSION:

Receiving Christ into one's heart frees him from the penalty of death brought on by Adam. Physical death for the believer is to close his/her eyes and instantly open them into the presence of Christ in glory. 2 Corinthians 5:8. And it is all because of God's amazing grace! (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Sunday School Lessons

Immortal beings

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: December 24, 2017

TEXT: John 5:24-30

LESSON AIM: Christians are immortal beings who have life both presently and for eternity. We should live for God today and for eternity.

1. Eternal life begins upon Salvation. verse 24. Notice the tense in verse 24—eternal life is now. We often refer to eternal life as an event which will take place in the future, only in glory. But scripture says that those of who have received Christ, have it now. Eternal life is irreversible. One who confesses Jesus Christ as Lord in this life shall never again be lost.
2. Eternal life begins when Jesus calls us. Verse 25-26 God the Father is “self-existent” and depends on no other force or entity to keep Him alive. Man, on the other hand, is dead in trespasses and sin, and cannot bring himself to life and salvation. Romans 3:11 states, “There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after

God.” Therefore, it is essential that God, through Jesus Christ, call one to repentance. Only through the miracle-working voice of God can a man dead in trespasses and sin, be called to new life in Christ.

3. Eternal life can only be provided by One Who was “sinless humanity” which qualifies Him to judge, and to cleanse of sin. The shed blood of a mortal man, who was born in sin, is absolutely not sufficient.
4. Eternal life will come to fruition when believers in Christ, will hear His voice from the tomb, will be resurrected to inhabit a glorified body, fit for heaven. The lost, in the tomb, will be resurrected 1,007 years later to stand before the White Throne Judgement of God and will hear the words “depart from me, all who work iniquity for I never knew you.”
5. Eternal life is provided by the One who came to earth to do the will of His Father, and he verifies that His testimony is validated by the Father in Heaven.

Where are they now?

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: December 31, 2017

TEXT: 2 Corinthians 5:1-11

LESSON AIM: Believers often wonder what happens to loved ones entering eternity. The Bible gives us clear guidelines on our eternal state.

1. The earthly body is temporary. verse 1: The temporal body will lie down in death one day, but afterward, the saints will inhabit an eternal body—a glorified body in heaven.
2. The earthly body is rife with groaning of pain, weighted down, oppressed, and with a longing to be clothed in the glorified body. We are sealed with the guarantee—the downpayment of the Holy Spirit. verses 2-5
3. The earthly body will be instantaneously changed to the glorified state. verse 6
4. “absent from the body—present with the Lord.” In our earthly bodies, our spirits walk by faith and confidence in God’s promises. We should possess hope, courage and a constant obsession to please

Him.

5. All believers will be called into account at the Bema Seat (Judgement Seat) of Christ. Verse 10 -11. We shall have our works put to the test. Those works which were done to the praise and glory of God shall be shimmering as gold, silver and precious stones. Works which were done to glorify ourselves, or rendered in a bitter spirit, will be consumed as wood, hay and stubble. But we shall be saved “yet so as by fire.” The Bema Seat is the judgement of the saved—not to determine if one makes it to Heaven or not—that has already been established when believers received Christ. 1 Corinthians 3:15

Paul Gauntt is the pastor of First, Palmer. He served for a number of years as the BMA of Texas Department of Church Ministries director. He has served several churches as pastor, and is a correspondent and featured article writer for Baptist Progress. Contact him at pop.gauntt@gmail.com.



GOD'S GIFT

HEAVEN IS A FREE GIFT!

It is not earned or deserved. No amount of effort or good works can earn a place for you in heaven. Why? Because . . .

MAN IS A SINNER.

“For all have sinned . . .” (Rom. 3:23)

Because of this, man cannot save himself.

GOD.

On the one hand, God is merciful and does not want to punish us. Yet God is just and must punish sin. God solved this problem for us in the Person of . . .

JESUS CHRIST.

He died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins and rose from the grave to purchase a place for us in heaven—“the Lord has laid on Him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6).

THE GIFT IS RECEIVED BY FAITH.

Saving faith is trusting in Jesus Christ alone for eternal life. It means resting on Christ alone and what He has done, rather than what you or I have done to get us into heaven. “Believe on (or trust in) the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31).

SO MAY WE ASK . . .

Have you received God’s free gift of eternal life?

The Bible assures us in 1 John 5:13 that we can know we have eternal life.

Do you know for sure that you are going to heaven when you die?

The Bible says, “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” If you are willing to repent (turn away from your sin and to the Lord Jesus) you can receive the free gift of eternal life by simply praying: Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner and do not deserve eternal life. But I believe You died and rose from the grave to purchase a place in heaven for me. Jesus, come into my life, take control of my life, forgive my sins, and save me. I am now placing my trust in You alone for my salvation, and I accept your free gift of eternal life.





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**"I WILL GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD WITH MY WHOLE HEART;
I WILL RECOUNT ALL OF YOUR WONDERFUL DEEDS" (PSALM 9:1).**



The Texas Women's Missionary Auxiliary raised over \$25,000 and purchased a new Kubota tractor for Jacksonville College.



In the summer, The Master's Builders worked on several projects across campus, including enclosing structures and creating more rooms and bathrooms for student housing.



Trustees not only govern, but also give. Trustee Carol Lybrand purchased a new convection oven and fryer for the cafeteria. Paul Burkhardt has given generously and assisted in other fundraising events.



Landmark Baptist Church in Cushing donated a golf cart to facilitate coaching golf and to give campus tours to aid in recruitment.



Alumni have supported the College with their time and money. JC alumnus Danny Holifield partnered with Edward Jones in Colleyville to purchase a trailer to carry the equipment for the choir and golf teams.

Our students continue to learn and serve. A large number of students participated in Disaster Relief Training on campus to be able to serve as volunteers in the Houston area and to be prepared for future disasters.



Faith Baptist Church of Malakoff blessed us with a beautiful new bus.



Revival continues across campus. Many students have been saved, and many others have rededicated their lives to the Lord. Almost 100 have come forward during Chapel services this semester.

WE THANK GOD FOR ALL THE ASSOCIATIONS, CHURCHES, AND INDIVIDUALS FOR YOUR PRAYERS AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT.