

Baptist Progress

Baptist Progress, P.O. Box 2085, Waxahatchee, Texas 75168
Postmaster: send change of address to:
500125

Official Publication of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas | October 7, 2015 | Vol. 102 | No. 19

State Missions trustees choose nominee for director position

By **JERRY FULTON**

Baptist Progress Editor

Following the recent retirement announcement by Jerry Burnaman as State Missions director, trustees of the department sought resumes for three months. After narrowing the search to four candidates and conducting interviews, trustees chose Heith Mitchell as their nominee.

Mitchell has served as pastor of Myrtle Springs, Quitman, his current ministry position since 2011. In his nineteenth year of fulltime ministry, he has also served as worship leader at Walnut Street, Winnsboro; was employed by Daniel Springs Baptist Camp in Gary; and served as youth and music minister at O'Quinn, Pollok and Friendship, Mequite.

The nominee said, "The best preparation for ministry I have had over the years has been the opportunity to serve under godly men. These men have been both biblically sound and excellent pastors and leaders. My family has been blessed to serve in loving



▲ Heith Mitchell

churches with a heart for God and others."

Mitchell is a founding board member and volunteer with the East Texas food ministry, Mercy Mall, in Quitman. Also, he has volunteered in the Revival in Texas movement sponsored by State Missions. Mitchell is co-founder of Enough is Enough, an organization dedicated to the eradication of drugs through local pressure and the Gospel of Christ in the area of Texas in which he lives. He was also a board member of Morgan's Mercy Mansion, a Christ-centered live in drug rehab center sponsored by Winnsboro church.

During the Hurricane Rita catastrophe, Mitchell led in the formation of a long term relief shelter for victims of the storm. With the help of 200 volunteers, an old nursing home was converted into mini apartments and completely furnished. Eighty people were housed over a four month period. Several professions of faith were witnessed during the four month stay, and the facility was recognized by the State of Texas.

He continued, "I have a burden for the work of the Great Commission. I love to see people saved and to make disciples. I have a burden and a love for churches and a passion for helping them. I have friends and acquaintances all across our work both in Texas and across our national work.

The nominee said, "I feel very inadequate for the job that lies ahead for the new director, but I firmly believe that God equips us to accomplish His will. He has taken me on quite a journey so far that I believe uniquely equips me. I also know that success requires working together. For the BMA of Texas to have a successful church planting movement and church revitalization movement, it will take us all working together."

Mitchell said, "I look forward to serving our planters by physically chipping in on work days, outreach days and whenever needed. I look forward to worshiping with them and getting to know them better. I also look forward to serving the churches of our association. I look forward to partnering with and learning from our national missions work. They are really paving the way toward an exciting new day for planting churches in the BMA.

Mitchell has been married for 19 years to his wife, Christi. They have three children, Allison, 16, Logan, 12, and Emily 11.

The trustees of the State Missions department will officially nominate Heith Mitchell to serve as State Missions director when the BMA of Texas meets for annual business in November.

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Baptist Progress

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P.O. Box 2085, Waxahachie 75168
972-923-0756 • www.baptistprogress.org

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Baptist Progress

USPS: 043120 • ISSN: 005-5751

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

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

www.baptistprogress.org

Periodical postage paid at Waxahachie, Texas 75168 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

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

Let's get 'er done, church!

By JOE MCKEEVER

(If we wait until we can do everything perfectly, we will still be sitting here when the Lord returns. Let us be up and doing.)

"Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men" (Colossians 3:23).

"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

A minister who was interviewing for a position on the staff of my church said, "If I come as your (whatever the position was), I would not make any changes for the first year, but spend that time building relationships."

That was it for me. We have work to do, I thought. Relationships are good, but they may be built and must be maintained in the midst of doing the work the Lord has given us.

Stephen Dill Lee, well-known Confederate general who later became the founding president of Mississippi State University and served as a deacon at nearby Columbus's First Baptist Church, once resigned from the church's deacon board. He said, "When I was in the service, my approach was always to charge, charge, charge. Go forward. But these deacons don't want to do anything."

The minutes of the deacons from those years, the early 1900s, indicate that some prevailed upon General Lee and he agreed to stay on. Then, he chaired the church's building committee that tore down the 1838 sanctuary and built the 1908 edifice which still stands. He was a get 'er done leader.

"If it's worth doing, it's worth doing poorly." That has always been my philosophy.

Some of us have a running dispute over that little adage. My wife Margaret's version goes, "If it's worth doing, it's worth doing well." Our friend Annie insists that her approach is, "If it's worth doing, it's worth overdoing."

I imagine that at one time or other, each of those has its application.

Margaret points out that my philosophy—if it's worth doing, it's worth doing poorly—seems to endorse shoddy work. To the contrary, it's saying "Even if we cannot do it perfectly, it's still worth doing." I've drawn many thousands of cartoons for various publications over a half century, but not a one was perfect. Likewise, I suppose I preached five thousand sermons, all of them flawed in one way or the other. But they were worth doing.

Had I delayed until the cartoon was perfect or the sermon was without some weakness, we'd still be looking for the first one.

Recently, during my reading of several Civil War books, I've been struck by a life lesson demonstrated by the generals on both sides of the conflict.

Some generals were accused of inaction, not because they were afraid, but because they were perfectionists. They had to have everything "just right" before engaging the enemy.

General George McClellan seems to have been such a leader. Put in charge of the Federal forces early in the War, he is said to have done a masterful job of planning and preparing his troops, organizing his forces, and inspiring his men. What he did not do well was actually engage the enemy with his armies and win battles.

Despairing of his inaction, President Lincoln pulled together some of the generals to formulate a plan. He commented, "If General McClellan does not want to use the army, I would like to borrow it for a time."

He was removed and replaced by a succession of leaders until Lincoln found the one he was looking for: General U. S. Grant.

Grant was a "gung ho" fighter. His style contrasted with most of his predecessors (as well as with the Confederate generals) who liked to wage a battle, then pull back and lick their wounds for a time, regroup, reorganize, make new plans, etc. That method of warfare guaranteed that the conflict would go on and on, turning it into a marathon.

Grant's plan was to keep pressuring the enemy. Once he pulled back to reorganize, you kept coming at him, giving him no respite, no relief, no time to get his people together to formulate new plans. By hounding him relentlessly, you made your enemy deplete his resources and run out of troops, all of which forced the war to an end more quickly.

Eventually, that's how Grant led his forces to victory over the great Robert E. Lee.

In "Grant Takes Command," a wonderfully readable volume by eminent historian Bruce Catton, Grant is seen as frequently frustrated by his own generals who would not move until every detail was in place. He would send a courier with a message: "Move out against the enemy tomorrow at sunrise." The courier would return with the reply: "Unable to comply. The cavalry finds the going slow crossing the swamp. Will not be in place until sunset."

In World War II, the U.S. Marines gave to the world the expression "gung ho!" Wikipedia identifies this as a corruption of a name for a Chinese organization which originally meant something like "work together" or "work in harmony." However, the Marines turned it into a battle cry, a spirited call to action. Even today, we speak of certain people as "gung ho" types.

Are there church leaders waiting until all the factors are right before beginning a ministry? They should learn about faith.

By faith Abraham went out not knowing where he was going. By faith

LET'S GET'ER DONE continued on p. 8

Two copies of a USPS Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation form for Baptist Progress, dated October 1, 2005. The forms include publication details, circulation data for September 2005, and ownership information.

BMA of America News

An incredible summer at Daniel Springs Camp, plans for 2016 underway

By JASON PREWITT

Daniel Springs Camp Director

What an incredible summer we had at camp! I must admit that I had no idea how this summer would go with the changes that were implemented. For as long as anyone can remember the summer camp staff consisted of five to six girls and three to four guys, but this year we had twenty students working in the various areas including teaching and recreation. I am very thankful that “the staff” made this transition go very smoothly.

Camp is always a time for churches and friends to reconnect as well as to meet new people, but the greatest part is being able to see

God work. This summer during the eight camps, over 2,100 individuals from 154 churches visited Daniel Springs. Of these, 102 made professions of faith, 18 rededicated their lives for Christ and eight surrendered to ministry. We serve a great and mighty God!

Planning for the 2016 camp season is under way and I cannot wait for you to come and experience what God is doing at Daniel Springs. The 2016 camp schedule will soon be available at www.danielspringscamp.com. If you are interested in being part of our camp staff, please e-mail me at jason@danielspringscamp.com.

A friend and former missionary in need: Bro. Marvin W. Clack

By C.D. WALKER

Senior Pastor of Bethel of White Rock, Dallas

I have known Bro. Marvin for many years. When I served as State Missions Director for Texas, Bro. Marvin served as a State Missionary at Gun Barrel and St. Elmo. He has been a faithful servant of the Lord and since retirement has continued to work part-time as a contract laborer. In August of this year, Bro. Marvin began to notice problems with his legs and this month has been paralyzed from the waist down. Doctors have not been able to find the cause even after two major exploratory surgeries. Janet (Bro. Marvin’s wife) will become the primary

care-giver and will not be able to continue her part-time job. Needless to say, this family needs your prayers and Lord willing—your financial support. If you wish to make a loving offering donation to Marvin and Janet Clack, please make your check out to Bethel Baptist Church and indicate on the check “Love Offering for Marvin Clack”. Mail to Bethel Baptist Church of White Rock, 9314 Ferguson Road, Dallas, Texas 75228-4636. You will receive a confirmation letter of your donation and the funds will be forwarded to the Clack Family.

Silence No More!

By DR. JOHN ADAMS

Moral Action Executive Director



In a world that becomes more diverse and more global each day, Christian believers must face the toughest of questions from the existence of hell, to the evil of evolution, to the common objection of Christianity, and especially the moral lifestyle of born again believers. God’s people cannot remain silent of Bible truths. “Silence no more” is the Moral Action outcry.

Jude 3 sounded out the alarm: “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” The words “earnestly contend” mean to give a determined, intense struggle to defeat the foe. God wants us to valiantly strive for the faith. Born again Christians are to defend Bible-living styles. Our morals have to be upheld and lived by joyfully.

Simon Peter in I Peter 3:15 gave a command also, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” A ready answer is needed to share why we morally live as we do! A good verbal defense refuting the claims of the destructive critic is needed.

Silence no more, as we seek to defeat humanism. Humanism has drastically affected the basic morality of the United States and the world. It is a subtle philosophy and it is often undetected by those not aware of it. Humanism is that old struggle of man’s will against God’s will. It is not new. A true humanist believes in himself rather than God.

Silence no more, as we combat disrespect for authority. Humanism affects children in many ways and in this children are taught that whatever you choose will be right for you because you choose it. Romans 1:30-31 declares that they are “Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents.” We must teach respect for those in authority.

Silence no more, as Christians seek to change the decline in discipline. Since children are taught that they are their own authority, they want to do their own thing. They will ignore the leadership of

parents, teachers, law enforcement and others in authority over them. The verse of Romans 1:30 uses the words “despiteful and disobedient”.

Silence no more, as Christians desire to stop the decline in school/college academics. We call it the dumbing down of American children. When discipline deteriorates, learning also deteriorates. Teachers are not able to teach if they do not have the attention of the children. Romans 1:31 declares they will be “without understanding”.

Silence no more, as God’s churches refute total sexual freedom. Humanists want to “liberate” our children from sexual inhibitions. Often their sex education programs are nothing more than academic pornography. To combat this humanistic philosophy, children need to be trained from the Bible in church, in school, and in the home.

We have Bible reasons why we must defend our morality. Dr. Charles Swindoll gives Christians a reason to stand against the wiles of the devil:

Number one: know where you stand. You cannot afford the luxury of being ignorant or ill-informed when it comes to biblical truth and faith. So educate yourself in the common areas that come under attack: the Bible, the Trinity, the person and work of Christ, and the means of salvation.

Number two: know where the enemy stands. Learn the tactics of those who oppose the truth. Satan is wily and is as “crooked as a dog’s hind leg.”

Number three: know the Scriptures consistently. The Bible is the only tangible, offensive weapon the Lord has given us in our battle against falsehood; the apostle Paul called the Word of God “the sword of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:17). Learn to wield it with skill and wisdom.

Number four: stand alone if necessary. We need more men and women like Esther, who risked her life to save a nation... like Daniel, who refused to compromise his principles... like Paul, who, though condemned to death, stared in a madman’s eyes and preached the gospel.

Silence no more! God’s Son will give us the courage we need.



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.

Church Health

Living in the F.O.G.

By LARRY BARKER

We know that Noah found the favor of God. Noah worshiped faithfully as did Abel in Gen. 4. He walked with God intimately just like his great-grandfather, Enoch, did in Gen. 5. Then Noah worked purposefully for God in Gen. 6. Living in the F.O.G. is living in the favor of God. What does it mean to have the favor of God?

Favor can be defined as demonstrated delight. The favor of God equals tangible evidence that you have the approval of God. Perhaps more than any other individual in history, Noah's life was obedience personified. Noah is the poster child for obeying God without debate or hesitation. Gen. 6:22 says, "And Noah did this. He did everything that God had commanded him."

What does this tangible evidence look like? We need wisdom as ancient as the foundations of the world. That is the word of God that is settled in heaven forever. We also need insights as fresh as each new morning. That is the Holy Spirit guiding us, directing us, and leading us. God looks down with favor on those who look up to Him with an eye of faith and then obey Him!

Isa. 66:2 is a good litmus test for tangible evidence of living in the favor of God. "My hand made all these things, and so they all came into being. This is the Lord's declaration. I will look favorable on this kind of person: one who is humble, submissive in spirit, and trembles at My word." God's favor rests on those who worship Him, walk with Him, and work for Him.

Here are three ways to live in the F.O.G. (Favor of God):

First, do not rely on what others tell you about God. Get to know Him firsthand. Noah walked with God. He had had a close, personal, and intimate relationship with Him. This requires an investment of your time for which there is no substitute. The best and only way to learn who God really is requires intentionally seeking Him daily in His word.

All of us have accepted ideas and notions about God because of what someone has told us about Him that simply are not true. We must find out for ourselves through searching the scriptures because Jesus said they are what testify of Him. That is where you find out who He is, what He likes, and what He dislikes. For example; He likes humility and He dislikes pride and arrogance.

Second, don't let somebody else tell you who you are. All too often we base our identity on how others have described us and who we know. We think our value depends on our athletic abilities, our popularity, our academic advancement, or our possessions. Living in the favor of God means that we let Him tell us who we are. Our true value is based on our position in Christ.



Our value is assigned to us, it is not earned. Regi Campbell says it like this, "At the moment we accept God's offer to become His adopted son, our value is maxed out. We go from the outhouse to the penthouse. From sinner to saint. From 'guilt' for our sins to 'innocence' through Christ's payment on our behalf."

Third, take the "one-word" exercise challenge. In a recent blog, Regi Campbell challenges mentors to have those they are mentoring to divide a sheet of paper in half. On one side you are to write down terms that may have been said to you while you were growing up. You may have forgotten them but they can cause you to doubt who you are in Christ. You might write down words like; selfish, stupid, worthless, incompetent, fat, lazy, wasteful, useless, and others.

On the other side of the sheet begin to write down what your Heavenly Father says about those who are in Christ; smart, worthy, competent, capable, valuable, son, friend, heir, and favored. His words are loving, accepting, and

encouraging. God's description of us can be totally different than who people say we are and even who we believe in our hearts we are!

The question is who are you going to believe? Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord which is the unmerited favor of God. When God looks at His child He has a sparkle in His eye and a smile on His face. You are favored! John 1:12, "But to all who did receive Him, He gave the right to be the children of God, to those who believe in His name."

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





Ministry Tip

70 came before 50

By **TONY CLEAVER**

I know normal counting goes something like 1, 2, 3...and 70 does not come before 50. It did however for me in birthdays and celebration of marriage. I am several lunar cycles beyond 70 years. The 50 years of marriage represents many lunar cycles of being married to a lady who is way above my station.

As all this rattles around, what does it all mean? Well, to be upfront, the Lord God has been gracious to me and continues to be so. I don't know about you, but as I look back I ask, "How did I get here?" Simply it is the prevenient grace of a beneficent Lord who guides my life in context of living. Some label themselves as "Five Point Calvinist." If there is such a thing as a "Six Pointer" I guess I would claim humbly to say it is of Him, through Him, and for Him I am where I am today. It is not what I brought to this 70 plus years, it is what has honored Him that brings me to today.

Being married 50 years-all in a row and to the same person-is an expected thing in my family. Both my parents and my "first wife's" "parents" were married more than 60 years. So I had a good example before me. Yet again it is the kindness of Him who loves me and gave Himself for me that my first wife and I are at this point in life. It is not what we brought to the altar but what He gave us as we made vows to each other, to family, to friends, and to the Lord Himself.

What can I say as I look at 70 coming before 50? So far as marriage, have a short memory when you are right or wrong with your spouse. Saying "I might be wrong and you might be right, or I'm sorry, please forgive me" are important phrases to repeat often. Laughter at self, even settings of seeming shattering situations can be of great value to come

to the other side. Life will go on. The morning will come. Your life will continue.

Thanks be to God for this time in my life where 70 did come before 50 in a wonderful, marvelously exciting-and continues to be-way.

Tony Cleaver is the director of distance learning and a professor of Biblical studies at Baptist Missionary Association Theological Seminary in Jacksonville, Tex. He is an author and writer of the popular newspaper column, Leave It to Cleaver. He may be contacted at tony.cleaver@bmats.edu.



Satan's strategies

By **MICHAEL WAITS**

Pastor of First, Crandall

Have you noticed.....

...the cleverness of Satan's strategies? Take the sin issue. If it weren't so tragic, bringing about the destruction of so many people, it would be downright impressive in its reach. There is nothing new about people being fooled by Satan and those who follow him. But notice the evolution of how we have the modern sorrow of a large swath of our population doesn't so much as feign a love for the Lord and His ways, His church, His people. They rarely darken the doorway of a Bible-believing church, subscribing to two deadly false beliefs: they are not that bad and they've got time to get right with God. But these are people that have not been blessed with being exposed to the truth of the living Son of God.

The greater tragedy is all the people professing Christianity, yet many so friendly with sin they are virtually indistinguishable from the world's lost. There is a stunningly and excruciatingly large percentage of Christians who spend more time focused on their laughter and comforts than on seeking God's will and serving Him. The phrase 'God wants me to be happy', or some derivative thereof, has surfaced more and more in the past decade. Very surprising, given the fact that the Bible does not describe a God that declares all His followers are living the easy life.

On the contrary; following Christ will have its share of

hardships and tests of faith. But I doubt these folks would have fallen for a frontal assault and declaration by Satan that they should not worship God with deep gratitude for salvation. They'd have rejected and resisted Satan's straight-talk commands to deny God the grateful praise due Him.

It began earlier, the strategy that is, to make sin less of a problem; less noteworthy. Half a century back, we all saw the growing trend to minimize sin. People began throwing around the 'don't judge me' phrase, misusing God's warnings on judgment, to begin a rapid de-emphasis of the damage of sin. It was a half century ago or so when this whole concept of sins, or your sin, not being a big deal. Adultery was a no-no some 60 years ago. Not anymore. There are whole web sites dedicated to helping people break their wedding vows without getting caught. Living in sin? Sex before marriage? Skipping church? Yes, it was all considered inappropriate by the culture at large. Yet sin; any kind of sin, became much less of a big deal.

And when you get a people group to make a smaller and smaller issue out of sin, then the forgiveness and salvation that may be found in Christ and Christ alone can become less and less of the miraculous joy it truly is. Are you more grateful for the person that lets you in from the onramp when the traffic is bad; or are you more grateful to the cardiac surgeon that just repaired the arteries in your child's malfunctioning heart?

Of course the latter. Why? Because the magnitude of the gift you were given. Small gift = small gratitude. Big gift = big gratitude. God's forgiveness addresses the horror of sin that separates us for eternity from our Creator. The devastation of sin is so huge, it took Jesus being born of a virgin and living a sinless life. Then He suffered the life of a mortal man and finally, false accusations leading to his own painful death on the cross of Calvary.

Sin; our sins; are a very big deal to God. The pains and effort Christ went to in atoning for our sins should be a big deal to us as well. So now you see the strategy. The ingratitude and easy-believism of the modern era directly linked to the downgrading of the problem of sin starting decades ago. Did you fall for it and decide sin, your sin is not really that big of a deal? If you are saved, have you praised God for saving you? Do so today...you'll be glad you did.

Michael Waits is the pastor of First Baptist Church in Crandall, Texas.





JC hires director of Alumni Relations

By **DR. MIKE SMITH**

With the addition of Randy Decker to the administrative team, Jacksonville College is expanding its alumni outreach efforts. Randy will take the newly created position of Director of Alumni Relations. While the job description is wide ranging in scope, Randy's primary focus will be to reconnect with alumni on a personal level and enable them to connect with each other as well as with Jacksonville College.

Randy is a retired educator with twenty-nine years of service in Texas schools in Jacksonville, Dallas, Mt. Pleasant, Gilmer, and Tyler. The majority of those years were spent as a choral director with two years as a junior high math teacher. He is a 1974 graduate of Canton High.

He holds two Associate degrees from Jacksonville College, a Bachelor of Science in Music Education from Dallas Baptist University, and a Master of Science in Education from Stephen F. Austin. He holds educational certifications in Texas in All-Level Music Education (K-12) and Mathematics (4-8) as well as a Principal's Certification.

Randy has been married for 35 short years to Gay Lynn. Gay is a registered nurse who worked in home health for 17 years and in outreach and education in the medical field for 15 years. She has been an avid volunteer for the American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association. She currently works at East Texas Medical Center in Athens in the education department. Randy and Gay have two children, Ryan and Melissa. Ryan is a design engineer for Bell Helicopter. He and his lovely wife, Katie, have two amazing daughters, Chloe (3) and Ellie (2). Melissa works in marketing for American National Bank of Texas and has an equally amazing son, Jeremiah (3).

Randy has maintained close ties to Jacksonville College in the forty years since graduating in 1976. He returned to the school to work as Admissions Counselor from 1979-1982. For the last six years, he has served as President of the Bearden-Bonner-Gaylor Chapter of the Alumni Association and as a member of the Executive Board of the Alumni Association.

When asked about his relationship with Christ and the role Jacksonville College has played in his Christian walk, Randy was eager to share his experience.

"Christ came into my heart a little over 51 years ago. He's been working to rescue me from myself ever since. My life verse is Psalm 46:10, 'Be still and know that I am God.' He's been putting the brakes on me for decades. How amazing that in all these years He continues to bring just the right person with just the right words and just the right opportunities. More amazing still that when exposed to His Word, I am changed from the inside out.

"I am very happy to be closely connected to Jacksonville College again. I sat next to the jaguar on top of the coach's office and watched Chief Johnson rain down jumpers on frustrated opponents when my dad, George Decker, was a ministerial student here in 1961-1962. I was a student here in 1974-1976 and was introduced to my personal life ministry when I finally had opportunity to be in one of Gerald Orr's great JC choirs. I returned and worked in the Admissions Office in 1979-1982 in hopes of bringing others to find what I found here. Here I am again with the mission of reconnecting our family so that we can reclaim and rekindle our part in the mission and



▲ Randy Decker

ministry of our College. I am excited to return and represent Jacksonville College where I was mentored and where I developed lifelong friendships. I'm a Jag for life."

Randy can be reached at his JC office at (903) 589-7143, on his cell phone at (903) 790-1700, or by email at rdecker@jacksonville-college.edu.

New Alumni Liaison

Jean Galyean is the new Alumni Liaison at Jacksonville College, filling the position of Neatha Cagle upon her retirement. Jean's roots with Jacksonville College go back to the 1960's when her father, Leon Gaylor, was a Bible teacher and chair of the religion department at the College for 28 years. In 1970-1972, Jean was a student at Jacksonville College, graduating with an Associate of Arts Degree. After receiving a Bachelor's Degree from Stephen F. Austin State University, Jean began a 36 year career in teaching in Jacksonville. She is married to Paul Galyean, JC alumnus and current Director of Financial Aid at the College. The Galyeans have two children, Leigh Parker and Chad Galyean, and are active members of Craft Baptist Church.



▲ Jean Galyean

Jean is looking forward to working with Jacksonville College and the Alumni Association. She can be contacted at her JC office at (903) 589-7143, on her cell phone at (903) 721-5027, or by email at jgalyean@jacksonville-college.edu.



▲ On Sept. 4, at 11 a.m., county law enforcement officers met with JC employees and students at the Jacksonville College flagpole as part of the statewide "Stand with Law Enforcement" event. JC President Dr. Mike Smith expressed appreciation and respect for our law enforcement officers, and led in prayer for their safety. More than two dozen officers attended the event.

DiscipleGuide offers tools to assist churches in maximizing great commission potential

By **DR. SCOTT ATTEBERY**

DiscipleGuide Executive Director

Everyone would agree that the Great Commission is the church's calling. However, many congregations struggle to answer that call.

DiscipleGuide has several tools to assist churches in maximizing their Great Commission potential. Camps, Conferences, Church Solutions and Curriculum are the tools we use to accomplish this. Each tool may have a different function, but they all exist to help churches fulfill the Great Commission.

In the months of October and January, there will be opportunities for helping the church maximize its Great Commission potential through Conferences. These conferences are Pastors Oasis, National Senior Adult and The Great Escape. Information on each Conference, as well as our other tools, is found at discipleguide.org.

Upcoming Opportunities:

Pastors Oasis will be Monday, Oct. 3 through Wednesday, Oct. 5 at the Hilton Convention Center in Branson, Missouri. Todd West, lead pastor at Oasis Church in Maumelle, Arkansas, and Bill Elliff, senior teaching pastor of Summit Church in North Little Rock, Arkansas, will be the keynote speakers. Travis Sellers, worship arts pastor at Antioch Baptist Church in Conway, Arkansas, will be the worship leader. To register, go to discipleguide.org/pastorsoasis



National Senior Adult will be Wednesday, Oct. 28 through Friday, Oct. 30 at the Hilton Convention Center in Branson, Missouri. Bro. Richard Smith, pastor of Farley Street in Waxahachie, Texas, will be the keynote speaker. Bro. Shelby Race, music minister at Calvary Baptist in Fairfield, Texas, will be leading worship.

The Great Escape, student and children's minister cruise, will depart from Galveston, Texas, on Saturday, Jan. 16 and return to Galveston on Thursday, Jan. 21. Mark Dance, pastor advocate for Lifeway, will be the keynote speaker. Terry Kimbrow, president of Central Baptist College, will be this year's host. There will be ports of call in Progresso, Yucatan and Cozumel, Mexico. To register, go to discipleguide.org/thegreatescape

DiscipleGuide: helping churches maximize their Great Commission potential.

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



A Word to Young Pastors

By **JORDAN M. TEW**

Dear fellow young pastors,

My heart is heavy with concern over our generation of pastors and ministers. We are at a critical point in the history of both Christianity and our denomination. What we do over the next few years and decades will have a profound impact on the future, should the Lord tarry that long.

Let me begin by stating I am 26 years old (Although I am 76 at heart). I understand what my fellow young pastors or ministers are going through and the feelings they have in regards to ministry and reaching people with the Gospel. I understand there can be frustration, at times, with church traditions, practices that seem antiquated and ineffective, going to meeting upon meeting with very few people under the age of 65 present, and serving in a culture which values historic, Baptist doctrinal positions. I know there seems to be a dividing line between the "old school" BMA and the "new school" BMA people. Brothers, this should not be.

As a young pastor, please let me state that we desperately need to learn from older pastors and ministers. Friends, we do not know all that well we need to know. There is much value in learning from men who have been pastoring longer than you have been alive. There is much to be said about the men who planted your churches—about how they thrived and were sustained to this very day. There is much safety in clinging to the old doctrines, as they have stood the test of time and existed before the latest author got his book deal or recorded his video-based teaching series.

Please understand me. I am not saying that all new things or technology is bad. I am not saying we should not try to reach a younger generation with the Gospel, nor am I saying that you should not help your churches move forward. However, I am saying there is infinite value in respecting and learning from our elders, as they have set a godly example before us in their teaching and love for the Lord. I am saying we must be humble and be willing to learn from them. I am saying that it is important to know that doctrine still matters, and it may be a good idea to study and make your people aware of the BMA Doctrinal Statement once and again.

We live in a time when young pastors are flooded with a plethora of church trends, buzzwords, methods, systems and programs. However, I often step back and make note of how Christ had no need for such things. I am reminded how He modeled preaching and discipleship and missions to us. We must recapture an appreciation for the old ways, a respect for the old people, and a love of the old doctrines. Fellow young pastors, we should not seek to be a 21st Century church. In case you have not noticed, the 21st Century church is not fairing so well. We must always seek to be a 1st Century church. This cannot happen if we refuse to learn from or respect our elders. We have so much to learn. May God bless us with willing, humble, teachable hearts.

Jordan Tew is pastor of Eighth Street Baptist Church in Grand Prairie, Texas.



UPCOMING EVENTS



Distinguished Manley Lecture Series

Wednesday, October 7 at 11:00 a.m. in Buckner Chapel

Speaker: Gillian Sheridan, news anchor for KYTX CBS 19

Topic: Behind the Scenes of the News Desk



15th Annual Jaguar Basketball Spaghetti Luncheon (dine in or carry out)

Sunday, October 18 from 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the College cafeteria

Tickets: \$5.00, for purchase in advance or at the door

Fall Theater Production

The Women of Lockerbie

October 22-24 at 7:30 p.m. in the Theater on the Joe Wright campus

Tickets: \$7.00 for adults, \$5.00 for students

Christmas Show by JC Theater and Music Programs

Scrooge (a reader's theater production)

November 20-21 at 7:30 p.m. in the Theater on the Joe Wright campus

Tickets: \$5.00 for adults, \$4.00 for students

Mission Life

Are you awake?

By **JERRY BURNAMAN**

State Missions Executive Director

It's easy to sleep through life. With work, taking kids to school and after school activities, jumping from one activity to another adds up to a very busy life. We don't take time to reflect on our lives and we're carried along like a leaf in the river, just going with the flow.

Here are some familiar situations:

- 1. Sleeping through career choices.** I read recently that 50 percent of working people are unhappy with their jobs or vocation. Discover what you like to do, write out a plan of action, then get with it!
- 2. Sleeping through finances.** We buy today thinking we'll have the money at the end of the month, then funds are short and we just pay the minimum and debt increases. The U.S average household debt is \$7,630 on credit cards, plus \$8,163 on cars. There are some people who have much more debt than this.
- 3. Sleeping through friendships.** We know of young men who were hanging around with the "wrong crowd," then woke up in prison and sadly reflected how life had carried them along.
- 4. Sleeping through our marriages.** We take our spouses for granted and fail to show our love and appreciation to one another. Then we wonder why the divorce rate in America is fifty percent.

How to Wake Up

T.S. Eliot wrote, "We had the experience, but missed the meaning." Missing the meaning is being asleep. Living life with

reflective intentionality is to be awake. Here are 7 ways to wake up and stay awake.

- 1. Wake up to who you are.** In our process of assisting church planters and churches, we talk a great deal about discovering your calling, giftedness, values and personality. You'll never be awake if you don't know who you, how you're wired and where you want to go in life.
- 2. Wake up your mind.** The more you are aware of your thoughts, values, and perspectives, the more you will be awake to interact with life around you. Psychologists, such as Margaret Meade, say we only use about 5 percent of our brain. If we could double that or triple it, it would be amazing what we could do.
- 3. Wake up your possibilities.** Those who are asleep listen to their own inner critic. "I could never..." "I'm not... enough." "If only I were... I could." If you think you can't, you probably won't. Develop a positive mental attitude and say, "I have the ability to...and I do my best, which gets better all the time" and wake up to your possibilities.
- 4. Wake up to your dreams.** People who are asleep limit their dreams to what's easily attainable. Wake up your dreams and go beyond the visible to what is not yet, to what is unseen. Critics will mock. They are asleep, so ignore them.
- 5. Wake up your decisions.** People who are asleep allow others to make decisions for them. Those who are awake make their own decisions, even if that decision is their

attitude about a decision someone else made.

- 6. Wake up your energy.** Being awake takes a lot of energy. That's why so many sleep, it's easier. Those who are awake put energy into thinking, make decisions and act again and again. They increase their personal disciplines to have more energy to live life awake. Here is a simple formula: Study—Think—Plan—Act.
- 7. Wake up your focus.** Some who are asleep look awake, busily working on things, but they have no focus. The person most awake applies the previous six things on this list, and then focus on their one thing.

Happiness, fulfillment, success, and making a significant contribution in the world are all the results of living live with reflective intentionality. Wake up to change from being the leaf carried helplessly down the river by the current, to the salmon intentionally swimming upstream to fulfill its destiny.

Adapted from
Dr. Keith Webb
Professional Certified Coach

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.



Let's get 'er done, church cont.

Noah built a boat far from the ocean. By faith Moses walked away from Pharaoh's house without any assurance the Israelites would welcome him in. By faith John the Baptist stood in the desert and began preaching.

James B. Sullivan, leader of Southern Baptists' Lifeway ministry when it was still called The Sunday School Board, once told of a church in Mississippi whose old minutes he had been reading. Sometime around 1900 they decided to construct a new building. However, they needed more money and chose to wait until they'd raised enough. Then the First World War came along and that was followed by inflation of the 1920s and the Depression of the 1930s, and then the Second World War. The 1950s were unsettled with people moving about the country and the 60s saw racial riots and a loss of confidence in the government and the Viet Nam war. Dr. Sullivan said, "At last report, that church still had not built their building."

Waiting until all the conditions are just right.

The call to "get 'er done" in the Lord's work is based on a number of factors...

- the urgency of the hour.
- the reality of spiritual warfare.
- the need of our loved ones and those in darkness.
- the brevity of life.
- the will of God.

A young man I once knew was trying to establish a ministry in his apartment complex. Interviewed by a reporter, he was quoted as saying he had no intention of telling anyone the gospel of Jesus until he had been there a solid year, that he was trying to build up their confidence in him.

I wrote him a letter.

"My friend, I have been doing such a ministry in my apartment complex in Jackson, Mississippi, and have found that the turnover rate for residents in these establishments is very high. In fact, around 30 percent move in or out every year. I suggest that there is no time

for you to enjoy the luxury of 'earning their trust.' You need to get on with the business of telling them about Jesus."

I never heard back from him.

So, what are we waiting for? A better economy? Good weather? All the bad guys to go away? A warm feeling?

The Bible says, "He who watches the wind will not sow and he who looks at the clouds will not reap" (Ecclesiastes 11:4).

Let's get on with it. Get 'er done.

Dr. Joe McKeever is an itinerant preacher who served five years as director of missions for the 100 Southern Baptist churches of metro New Orleans, and several years as a pastor. Visit www.joemckeever.com.





Auxiliaries

Pastor and deacon appreciation

By SHARON COLE

At the annual WMA meeting, Nov. 8, 1983, the officers recommended that we sponsor Pastor Appreciation Week beginning March 4-10, 1984. At that time, Mrs. W.A. (Ruby) Corley of Joaquin, first vice president, was in charge of promotion. We believed that recognizing and honoring our pastors would be a wonderful opportunity for us to show our love for him for his service in the Lord's work.

Several years later, Pastor Appreciation was changed to October to be in conjunction with the National Clergy Appreciation Month. Actually, you can show your pastor appreciation anytime because he deserves it year round. If your church has not participated in honoring your pastor, begin this year. The point is to let him and his family know how much you appreciate him. We can never do too much because they give so much of themselves to the church and community.

Most people have no idea what the pastor does all day long throughout the year. Many pastors must have a secular job on top of his pastoral responsibilities. Most pastors volunteer to do things that are not in God's job description of what he is to do. I Timothy 3:1-7 tells how a pastor ought to behave. Pastoring a church isn't an easy task. A 30 to 45 minute sermon is equal to an eight hour day of work. He is exhausted and drained after feeding the souls of the congregation.

They may put in several hours a day studying, praying and preparing to preach God's Word, visiting the sick or unchurched in the community, but they are actually on call 24/7 and must be available at a moment's notice. Their time is rarely their own. Many times his family must put their plans on hold, even on holidays, so he can be with a family at the hospital whose loved one is having surgery. He gives comfort to people whose family member has died

and provides a listening ear to someone who just needs some encouragement.

Most men punch a time clock and forget about it until the next day, but a pastor finds himself doing things at night that are still related to his job. Why does he do all these things not in God's job description? It's because of love for God and souls.

So, what can you do to honor your pastor? Pray for him and his family daily. Let him know it. Pray for God's direction in his ministry as he follows the Holy Spirit's leading. Share your heart with him about your desire to begin a ministry in the church. Make an effort to be at Wednesday night Bible study. He needs your faithful attendance in every worship service. He needs your faithful service in community outreach.

The pastor's family sometimes has very few visitors socially. Be his friend. Ask him to go play golf, go fishing or go to a concert, a ballgame, or out to eat, and remember to not bring up church issues.

Create a coupon booklet of special things that can be redeemed, such as a pecan pie, a fish dinner, a free car wash, mow his yard, clip the hedges, cut fire wood for the winter, etc. The ideas are endless and varied considering his needs.

Give him a gift certificate to a Christian book store or the dry cleaners. Buy him a tank of gas. Money is always the right color. Remember his birthday and anniversary with cards and phone calls.

Plan a church celebration of his years of service and include a love offering and/or pounding. Offer to babysit his children so he and his wife can have an old fashioned date. Be kind to his children, understanding that they are just like your children. They need the same patience and love.

As a church, pay your pastor as well as possible. When the cost of living goes up, so should his salary.

Maintain maintenance on the parsonage. Do you wait until the pastor leaves before doing repairs and painting so you can make a good impression on the new one? That's not good stewardship of what belongs to and is dedicated to God. The parsonage is part of church property and should be taken care of the same as the church building.

Always speak well of your pastor. Tell him his sermons have inspired you to a closer walk with God. Take your grievances to the Lord in prayer, not your neighbor.

Deacons, as well as pastors, need to be honored and remembered for their service to the Lord. Deacons are the pastor's helpers. Qualifications, duties and behavior are given in Acts 6:3; and I Timothy 3:8-13. They are to care for the physical needs of the church, visit the sick and widows, as well as other things so that the pastor can devote his time to prayer, Bible study and preaching the Word. Many of the same ideas for pastors can be applied to deacons.

Have a testimonial service from members about how the deacons have blessed them personally. The pastor might preach the sermon on the duties of the deacon. Make personal phone calls and send cards expressing appreciation. Have a church dinner after services in their honor. Other ideas include visiting their home to pray with them and for them. Take them out to eat at their favorite restaurant and eat with them. They need fellowship too. Have a fun night and call it "Deacon Roast" with all good things to say about each one.

Deliver, or have delivered, special gifts such as balloon bouquets, food, books, gift certificates, a floral arrangement for the home, Christian videos or pen and pencil sets engraved with their name. Recognize them in a special service; include their wives and children. Present them with a boutonniere. Place pictures of them and their family on the bulletin board along with their names and addresses, birthdays and anniversaries, hobbies, etc. so people can send cards throughout the year. Have church members write coupons for acts of service they can provide to each deacon. Each coupon could say redeem anytime or a specific date, such as: mow and weed-eat the yard; invite them to your house just to fellowship or a home-cooked meal, etc. To many pastors, the deacon is his right hand man, his helper, and his confidant. Let your deacons know they are loved, needed and appreciated.



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.

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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.



EVENTS

OCTOBER 10, 2015

Women's Conference
@ Northside, Garland
9 a.m.-3 p.m.

OCTOBER 11, 2015

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

OCTOBER 23-24, 2015

Southern Gospel Round Up
@ Northside, Garland
6 p.m.

OCTOBER 28-30, 2015

National Senior Adult Conference
@ Hilton Convention Center,
Branson, Missouri

NOVEMBER 1-3, 2015

Revival
@ Greenpond, Como
Sunday, 6 p.m.
Monday-Tuesday, 7 p.m.
Todd West, evangelist
Lloyd Cashion, pastor

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 POSITIONS

MUSIC/YOUTH—New Hope, Mineola is seeking a music/youth minister. Send resume to 3855 FM 1801 Mineola, Texas 75773.

PASTOR—Eighth Avenue, Teague is seeking a fulltime pastor. Send resume to 201 S. 8th Avenue, Teague, Texas 75860 or eabccw@sbcglobal.net.

PASTOR—Meadowside, Pittsburg, Kansas is seeking a pastor. Send resume to 1406 S. Rouse, Pittsburg, Kansas 66762.

PASTOR—Anthony Drive, Ennis is seeking a fulltime pastor. Send resume to the church at P.O. Box 9, Ennis, Texas 75120 or adbc@sbcglobal.net.

PASTOR—New Beginnings Bible, Ferris is seeking a fulltime pastor. Send resume to the church at P.O. Box 558, Ferris, Texas 75125. ^{10/21}

PASTOR—Lake Highlands, Sulphur Springs is seeking a fulltime pastor. Send resume to the church at P.O. Box 441, Sulphur Springs, Texas 75483-0441. ^{TFN}

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

MUSIC—First, Crandall is seeking a bivocational music leader. Salary negotiable. Mix of contemporary and traditional. Call Bro. Mike Waits for more details: 214-697-7998 or mbwaitssr@att.net. Visit church website at firstbaptistcrandall.org. ^{TFN}

YOUTH—Soda, Livingston is seeking a fulltime youth pastor. Send resume to Pastor Wayne Bickley, 8105 Us Hwy 190 East, Livingston, Texas 77351 or youthguywayne@yahoo.com, or for more information, call 936-433-9526. ^{11/4}

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. ^{TFN}

AVAILABLE MINISTERS

GENE LEE is available for pulpit supply to serve as pastor, associate pastor or interim pastor. He is a member of Heritage, Jefferson. Contact him at 903-665-9971, 903-720-7572 or dkaylee60@gmail.com.

MIKE MCEUEN is available to serve as a pastor. He is a member of Bethel, Bentonville, Arkansas. Contact him at karen.mceuen@cox.net or 479-295-1054. ^{10/7}

STEVEN MARSH is available to serve as a bivocational pastor. He is a member of Farley Street, Waxahachie. Contact him at 972-935-0009, sportsfan8019@yahoo.com or 315 Choctaw Trail, Waxahachie, Texas 75165. ^{9/16}

DR. BOBBY ADAMS is available for pulpit supply or to serve as interim pastor. Contact him at 972-342-3085.

SPEAKER FOR SPECIAL EVENTS

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 Stacie@claypotworks.com or 903-603-8597. Also, visit www.claypotworks.com or connect with Stacie on Facebook at https://facebook.com/claypotworks. ^{12/15}

PASTOR'S LIBRARY FOR SALE

APPROXIMATELY 600 VOLUMES FOR SALE—Dr. Bobby Adams has an approximate 600 volume pastor's library for sale. If interested, contact him at 972-342-3085.

CHURCHES IN REVIEW

SEPTEMBER 13, 2015

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Cedar Creek, Teague	14	20	
Farley Street, Waxahachie	485	480	2 By Letter, 1 By Profession
First, Blooming Grove	230		
First, Omen	52	75	
First, Palmer	35	81	2 By Letter
Glade Creek, Gilmer	19	42	
Jackson, Joaquin	90	152	
Little Flock, Lufkin	10	15	
Little Mound, Big Sandy	35	42	
Merriman Hills, Sherman	14	18	
New Harmony, Tyler	319	372	3 By Baptism
New Hope, Mineola	67	125	
Pine Brook, Tyler	40	70	
Pine Forest, Huntington	35	45	
Rosewood, Gilmer	146	246	2 By Baptism, 1 By Statement
Round Prairie, Fairfield	85	147	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	22	37	1 By Baptism
Temple, Mexia	36	48	
Tundra, Canton	66	85	

SEPTEMBER 20, 2015

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Antioch, Gilmer	48	86	
Cedar Creek, Teague	12	15	
Farley Street, Waxahachie	503	513	1 By Profession, 3 By Letter
First, Palmer	41	78	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	14	30	
Jackson, Joaquin	90	152	
Little Flock, Lufkin	15	20	
Little Mound, Big Sandy	35	50	
Merriman Hills, Sherman	17	16	
New Harmony, Tyler	319	378	2 By Letter
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	56	61	
Pine Brook, Tyler	42	76	
Pine Forest, Huntington	45	55	
Rosewood, Gilmer	120	179	
Round Prairie, Fairfield	91	149	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	22	45	
Temple, Mexia	33	55	
Yellowpine Macedonia, Hemphill	12	18	

SEPTEMBER 27, 2015

Church	SS	Worship	Additions
Anthony Drive, Ennis		89	
Antioch, Gilmer	46	105	1 By Baptism
Cedar Creek, Teague	17	21	
Farley Street, Waxahachie	493	605	4 By Profession
First, Blooming Grove	218		
First, Crandall	65	91	3 By Letter, 1 By Baptism
First, Owen	45	97	
First, Palmer	37	86	
Glade Creek, Gilmer	18	38	
Jackson, Joaquin	86	120	
Little Flock, Lufkin	16	22	
Merriman Hills, Sherman	15	19	
New Harmony, Tyler	283	324	
New Hope, Mineola	75	131	
Pilgrim Rest #2, Golden	45	58	
Pine Forest, Huntington	35	50	
Rosewood, Gilmer	127	218	
Security Calvary, Cleveland	20	38	
Temple, Mexia	34	45	
Woodland, Splendora	41	36	

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

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Sunday School Lessons

Joshua: Victory

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: October 11, 2015

TEXT: Joshua 1:1, 8; 2:11; 3:7-8; 6:1, 2; 14:8; 24:14, 15

THOUGHT PRIMER

Changes in life means the old passes away. You trade the familiar comforts you've known for the unknown. Whether you are finishing high school and are bidding your parents farewell as you go off to college, or to a job, or military—you find out rather quickly that life is no longer as it was—nor shall it ever be again. It can be frightful—unless you are assured God is ordering and directing your path.

This was Joshua's situation. He had been the understudy of Moses for a long while sheltered under his watch care. during the Israelites' wanderings in the wilderness—now Moses is dead—Joshua is at the helm, and the formidable task of leading the people over Jordan, to the rich land God promised in His covenant with Abraham, is at hand.

STUDY

1. Joshua's victory was contingent on several things; 1:1 a. being strong (verse 6) b. Affixing his eye on the goal, not being distracted (verse 7) c. meditating on, and obeying God's book of the the law.

2. God provides help and encourage along the way. Joshua 2: Rahab, a harlot -- and ironically, of the lineage of Christ, provided a place for the two Israelite spies to hide. She informed them that all of Jericho was living in fear of the Lord, knowing full well how He had provided for Israelites.

3. God further affirms Joshua's authority and leadership among the Israelites with a promise that He (the Lord God) would perform great

wonders among them. 3:7-8

4. God affirms His promise to Joshua concerning the Israelites inhabiting the land promised to them, through the fear of the inhabitants of Jericho. Where God leads, He makes a way. 6:1,2

5. Caleb recalls the faithlessness of the 12 spies sent, (Numbers 13) one from each of the 12 tribes, to scout out the land. They returned the dismal report that the cities were filled with giants, and they, as grasshoppers in their sight. Caleb declared his faith in God to provide.

6. The great declaration of faith by Joshua. (24:14-15) Joshua set the standard, saying he would not only serve the Lord, he would lead his household to do the same.

APPLICATION

Pursuing the direction and leadership of the Lord requires a leader with resolve, a people willing to forsake all human safety and step out on faith. While the people were not to rest on the laurels of the past (i.e. the shelter and provisions of Egypt) it is still good to review God's past victories and be reassured that where He leads, He will make a way. Proverbs 20:24.

CHALLENGE

In your quest to follow God the Father all the days of your life, be strong (Ephesians 3:16) meditate upon His word; Men, make a public declaration that you will lead your families to follow the leadership of the Lord. (Joshua 24:14-15).

Paul Gauntt is the pastor of First, Rice. He served for a number of years as 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 pop.gauntt@gmail.com.



Judges—Defeat

By PAUL GAUNTT

DATE: October 18, 2015

TEXT: Judges 1:1; 2:10, 16; 3:9-12; 21:24-25

THOUGHT PRIMER

In 1776, Alexander Fraser Tytler, a European historian, published what he deemed, was a common pattern of the rise, decline and fall of any empire; From bondage to spiritual faith—then progressing to great courage, liberty, abundance, selfishness, complacency, apathy, dependency—and back again to bondage. Israel was no different as we see in our Sunday school lesson this week—Judges—Defeat. God's people in America stand dangerously close to bondage today.

STUDY

The book of judges begins with the death of Joshua, and the raising up of judges by God the Father, to care for His people, Judges 2:16. The Israelites experienced being recipients of God's divine intervention and protection, but they turned from God and became involved in paganism. It seemed to be a never-ending pattern.

Othniel (3:9-11) was the first judge, and because of his military prowess, coupled with God's divine direction, the people enjoyed peace for 40 years.

When Othniel died, (3:12-30) the people turned from God, they were oppressed by Eglon, God raised up left-handed **Ehud** who killed Eglon, and led the people to defeat the men of Moab.

Shamgar (3:31) killed 600 Philistines and once again Israel was delivered.

Deborah (chapters 4 and 5) for 40 years, was the only woman judge.

She sent for Barak and directed him to take 10,000 men to fight Sisera. Barak killed all of Sisera's people.

Gideon (chapter 6-8) was a judge for 40 years.

Tola, 10:1-2, was the next judge who judged Israel for 23 years.

Jair, was a judge for 22 years.

Then came **Jephthah** (chapter 11-12) **Ibzan** (chapter 11:8-10) **Elon** (chapter 11) **Abdon** (chapter 11) **Samson** (chapters 13-16) probably the most talked about judge, who had brute strength, and a weakness for a woman.

Eli, a high priest, judged Israel for 40 years, but judgement was brought upon his own house because of his neglect to rear his sons, Hophni and Phinehas in the fear of the Lord.

APPLICATION:

In time periods between the death of Joshua and Samuel, the last judge, whom most scholars believe wrote the book of Judges, Israelites strayed from God and chased after idols. When God raised up a judge, the people enjoyed a measure of victory. Today, while we are never void of access to leadership by our Judge, Jesus Christ, often, we stray, and follow after strange gods and experience spiritual bondage similar to what the Israelites experienced by the oppression of Eglon (chapter 3)

CHALLENGE

Judges 21:25 "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Such is the sad commentary on a people who stray from the safety of God's protection and leadership, and chase after other gods.

Sunday School Lessons

Ruth—Hope

DATE: October 25, 2015

TEXT: Ruth 1:1, 5, 16, 17, 22: 2:1; 4:1, 11, 17

THOUGHT PRIMER

The little book of Ruth is a great account of unconditional love, loyalty, and God’s ability to sustain, even in the face of tragedy, loss and His response to the cry of His people. It is a compelling story of God’s divine providence upon lives which appeared to be hopeless. Ruth’s great declaration to Naomi in 1:16 has been the hallmark scripture of wedding vows. “. . .Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.” What marriage would fail when genuinely based on such devotion?

STUDY

Tragedy in Moab

A man by the name of Elimelech, along with his wife, Naomi, fled the famine of

Israel to the gentile land of Moab. Then sorrow struck—Elimelech died, and later, her two sons, Mahlon and Kilion, died—but not before they married Moabite girls, Orpah and Ruth. The girls were good wives to their husbands, and devoted to their mother-in-law.

Naomi returns to Israel

Naomi decided to return to her homeland after hearing that the Lord had smiled on Israel by blessing them with a good harvest. Ruth and Orpah elected to return to Bethlehem with Naomi, but after Naomi’s convincing pleas for the girls to return to their families, Orpah followed her advice. But because of Ruth’s devotion to Naomi, she remained with her and made the return trip, just in time for springtime harvest.

Ruth meets the kinsman redeemer

Boaz, a close relative of Elimelech, took a special interest in Ruth and invited her to work gathering grain. Most everything about

Ruth’s encounter with Boaz illustrates our relationship with our Kinsman Redeemer, Jesus Christ. She was from a foreign land (2:10) She fell down at his feet, a foreshadowing of the believer meeting Jesus face to face in glory one day. (2:10) He provided her a refuge (2:11) She was drawn to him in heartfelt devotion (2:13) She fell in love with him -- but he first loved her.

The threshing floor: (chapter 3)

Even Boaz’s work at the threshing floor is a foreshadowing of Christ. We find that Ruth’s overwhelming feeling of unworthiness of Boaz’s kindness, was similar to the words of John the Baptist, first cousin of his Kinsman Redeemer. (Matthew 3:14) He declared in Matthew 3:12, “Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” The threshing floor of Boaz is a type which illustrates how one day

Christ will separate the wheat from the chaff—the sheep from the goats.

Boaz marries Ruth 4:13

One day our Kinsman Redeemer will come for us, Jesus’ bride and we will live with Him in glory forever.

A very noteworthy epilogue—the Lord blessed the marriage of Boaz and Ruth with a son, Obed, the father of Jesse, and the grandfather of David—in the lineage of our Kinsman Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

APPLICATION

Read, in-depth, all the components of Ruth’s and Boaz’s relationship—His absolute care for her, and her absolute devotion to him.

CHALLENGE

Renew your devotion to your Kinsman Redeemer, using, as example, Ruth’s devotion to Boaz.

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 The National Brotherhood project is 50% Philippines Printing Ministry, 40% National Galileans and 10% General Fund.
 Offerings may be sent to
 Robert Bynum, 43 Bear Pen Creek Rd.
 Laurel, Miss. 39440.