

BAPTIST TRUMPET

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Directors' Prayers and Goals for 2021

Executive Editor's Note: As in previous years, each departmental director in the BMA of Arkansas and the BMA of America was given an opportunity to share their "2021 Prayers and Goals." Please join me in praying for each of these ministries this year. (Due to length, the articles will be continued in upcoming issues. They are being printed in the order they were received, except that the *Trumpet* always goes last.)

Student Ministry Matters Dan Carson, Director

While 2020 was a dumpster fire of a year, there were a number of positives that came out of it for our ministries. It pushed us to embrace digital giving and digital teaching options in ways that we would have never before considered. It taught us the value of relationship and showed us our need for one another. Some of us have been waiting for 2020 to conclude so that we could get church



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Baptist Publishing House Jordan Tew, Asst. to the Executive Director

The BPH prayer requests and goals for 2021:

Prayer Requests

- Pray that God will burden BMA pastors and churches to prioritize Bible teaching.
- Pray that God will put a desire in every BMA church member's heart to study God's Word faithfully.
- Pray for our brothers and sisters in Tanzania, who have recently begun printing and distributing Baptist Publishing House materials.

Goals

- For Bible knowledge and love for God to abound in our local churches.
- For every BMA church to use BMA Sunday School curriculum.
- For churches to strongly support this ministry through prayer and regular giving.



BMA Foundation Charles Attebery, Executive Director

Our ministry goals for 2021 are as follows:

- To make the mission of the BMA Foundation better known among BMA churches.
 - To encourage all BMA families to include the BMA Foundation in their estate plans.
 - To increase awareness among BMA families that charitable gift annuities with very favorable rates are available through the BMA Foundation.
 - To consider other ways the Foundation might be of service to BMA families, churches and departments.
- Please pray for God's blessings upon this ministry as we attempt to build a significant endowment fund from which earnings will provide supplemental funding to BMA departments until the Lord returns.



Ministers Resource Services Dr. Steve Crawley Executive Director

At Ministers Resource Services (MRS), it is our pleasure to provide retirement, benefits and risk insurance needs for pastors, missionaries, ministers and staff of all churches and entities affiliated with the Baptist Missionary Association (BMA) of America. This year, we will focus on the following objectives as we seek to accomplish our mission:

- Educate participants about **MRS Insurance Services**, a resource available to our churches to help them navigate



the often complex world of employee benefits. **MRS Insurance Services** provides expertise to help educate pastors and staff on benefit options available to them. Whether a church provides coverage for employees today, is exploring options or has questions about individual coverage, our goal is to help them make the most informed decision possible. Resources include group insurance offered by the church or individual products purchased separately by employees. Coverages may include Health (medical), Dental, Vision, Life and Disability. Voluntary or Supplemental products are also available including Accident, Critical Illness, Hospital Indemnity and more.

- Revamp our marketing/promotion strategy to allow for a grander scale of outreach to communicate better the retirement and insurance services offered to BMA churches.
- Enhance our website to better serve participants' needs.
- Increase the number of BMA churches providing the **Choice Plan** to their employees by 20%. The **Choice Plan** provides additional benefits to the pastor and staff beyond the **Basic**

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2021 BMAA National Meeting

August 2-4

Farley Street Baptist Church, Waxahachie, Texas



BMAA National Meeting Postponed Until August

By Jeff Swart, President

A Zoom call was held on Tuesday, Jan. 12 with the officers of the BMA of America, the executive directors of the departments of the BMAA, the directors or officers of the BMAA Auxiliaries, the BMAA Production Team and Richard Smith, host pastor of the 2021 national meeting. The purpose of the virtual meeting was to discuss the feasibility of holding the national meeting at the regularly announced time in April 2021.

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

After more than an hour of discussion, it was clear that our mutual desire was to host a physical meeting of the BMAA in 2021 if possible. Therefore, the 2021 national meeting of the churches of the BMA of America will be delayed until Monday, Aug. 2 through Wednesday Aug. 4, 2021 at the Farley Street Baptist Church in Waxahachie, Texas. The meeting will be conducted with the same format as the 2019 national meeting, with some minor changes to comply with local and state health regulations.

The elected officers of the BMA of America will decide by June 1 if holding

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Avoid COVID Burnout

By Dr. Rick Caracciolo, Chaplain • Randall Williams Correctional Facility

Burnout is a word used to describe a feeling of physical and emotional exhaustion which comes after we have had prolonged involvement with people and/or situations that demand our time, energy and strength. In the past, the term burnout was used in reference to an item not working any longer, such as a light bulb or small appliance; it was burned out, not usable anymore.

Today, the meaning also has to do with the mental and/or physical condition of an individual. Burnout has become a catchall phrase by many people for situations and conditions that are in no way related to the burnout syndrome.

It isn't easy in this COVID-19 environment for those in the people professions to continually interact and help those who are hurting while they are continually under COVID-19 precautions and under pressure. Some of the people with whom we live with and work demand a lot of our time, energy and concentration during this time and are unable to give very much

in return. In many instances we feel for them and we can reassure them God is there waiting for them to call out to Him. If they hurt, we hurt; if they are sad, we are sad; and if they are pondering a decision, so are we and rightly so in most instances. All of this can be a great strain for a person seeking to serve, help and support another.

We must be mindful of our limits and health. You are not doing yourself or anyone else, any good by continually burning the candle at both ends without ever getting any rest, relaxation or exercise. You are not helping yourself and those that you work and care for by getting sick, and being available due to being ill. Remember II Thess. 3:16 (NIV): "Now may the Lord of Peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all."

Burnout Indicators

One of the most intensive studies on burnout was done at the University

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Terry Kimbrow
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PROFILE

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Legacy Event

The Office of Admissions is hosting its first legacy event on Friday, Jan. 29. The event will be virtual, and the exact time will be released very soon.

The purpose of the event is to have CBC alumni attend with their children or grandchildren. The fun, history, mission and values of CBC will be showcased. Of course, this will look quite different this year. However, the people and the mission are what make this college so special and can be showcased virtually.

To register and for more information visit cbc.edu/stampede or contact the Admissions Office at admissions@cbc.edu or (501) 329-6873.

Spring Stampede Preview Day

On Feb. 10, CBC will host an in-person Stampede Preview Day, with all mandated COVID-related precautions in place. Registration will begin at 9:30 a.m., the event will start promptly at 10 a.m. and end at 2 p.m.

Preview Days are designed for prospective students, and their guests, to see what makes CBC unique. Information will be shared throughout the day about financial aid opportunities and expectations, weekly chapel services and spiritual life programming and academic departments. Upon request, Athletic and Music tryouts can also be arranged in advance with the specific coach or music director. Attendees will be able to meet CBC President Terry Kimbrow, as well as other administrators, and lunch will be provided.

Due to COVID-19 precautions space is limited and registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. A small group rotation will be utilized throughout the day to ensure proper social distancing. Masks are required for the event.

Visit cbc.edu/stampede for more details and to register. Contact Admissions at admissions@cbc.edu or (501) 329-6873 with any questions.

Upcoming Registration Deadlines

Working adults looking for a convenient and flexible college option have another opportunity to enroll in the second five-week course of the spring semester. Courses are offered in-class, online or in a hybrid option. The deadline for new student applications for the second enrollment period of the spring semester is Friday, Jan. 22 for classes beginning Feb. 15.

With eight enrollment periods per year and five-week courses, there is always an opportunity to get started. Take advantage of CBC's \$500 BMAA Grant that applies for all students who attend a BMAA church, the Ministry Tuition Grant or the Veterans Tuition Grant.

The enrollment process begins by applying for admission or scheduling a virtual meeting with a personal enrollment officer at cbc.edu/online. If you have questions, contact the Admissions Office at admissions@cbc.edu or (501) 329-6873.



Men's Basketball

• **St. Louis, Mo., Jan. 7** — CBC opened the American Midwest Conference (AMC) portion of the 2020-21 schedule against the University of Health Sciences and Pharmacy. CBC (5-2, 1-0 AMC) used a 22-0 run in the first half to take a 12-point lead and cruise to a 93-75 win over the Eutectics (1-8, 0-1 AMC).

• **Conway, Jan. 8** — CBC hosted the Bearcats of Rust College at Reddin Fieldhouse. CBC (5-3) never led, trailing by as many as 19 points early in the second half, falling to Rust (2-4) 79-74.

Wrestling

• **Conway, Jan. 8** — CBC was on the mat today in the Mustang Duals against Williams Baptist and Oklahoma Wesleyan. CBC lost to Williams Baptist 45-4 and were defeated by Oklahoma Wesleyan 37-12.

• **Conway, Jan. 9** — CBC was back on the mat for the 2021 Mustang Invitational at Reddin Fieldhouse. CBC would place eighth out of the eight teams that participated.

• **St. Louis, Mo., Jan. 11** — For the second time this season, 149-pound wrestler Alejandro Mas has been recognized by the AMC. Mas was selected as the AMC wrestler of the week after his performances this weekend at Friday's Mustang Duals and Saturday's CBC Invitational.

MEETING

(Continued From Page 1)

a physical meeting of our national association in August is still a viable option. If it is deemed necessary that we cancel our meeting together in August, plans for a Zoom meeting of the BMA of America will be implemented and announced through our state papers.

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

SMM

(Continued From Page 1)

life back to normal. Thought leaders in the ministry world believe that many of those things are now simply gone. We need to be preparing for the new normal. That is what we want to accomplish as your State Youth Department. Our desire continues to be to encourage and influence those that are seeking to impact the next generation for Jesus Christ. We want to take the lessons that we have learned from 2020 and let that shape how we go about fulfilling our mission in 2021.

• **We want to continue and seek to improve our podcast.** Each week, we release a conversation about student ministry and student ministry-related things through our podcast called The Student Ministry Matters Podcast. It can be found on in Apple Podcasts, at studentministrymatters.podbean.com and through other major podcasting apps. The conversations range from 30-50 minutes. I hope to pull in even more great voices as we seek to grow in downloads and followers. If you have a topic you would like us to cover, contact us at info@studentministrymatters.com.

• **We want to continue to connect with more student ministry workers.** This past year, we hosted a handful of Zoom youth leader hangouts. It was great to get to know some of our student ministry leaders. My bigger dream is to stretch this network across our work, not just Arkansas. We hope to see some of that happen with partnerships with the SOAR conference and through our social media outreach. We hope to schedule three to four Zoom youth leader hangouts again for 2021.

• **We want to serve as an aid to connect our college ministries across Arkansas and beyond.** College ministry is quite different than typical student ministry, but it is different than standard adult ministry. In those gaps stand college ministers who can find themselves lonely. Between our ABS



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Accomplishing More in 2021

Youth pastors and student ministry workers often take a bad rap. We are thought of as flighty and unable to stay on task to accomplish more for the kingdom. While that may be true some of the time, those that serve students have a wide range of responsibilities. There are the typical youth pastor duties — teaching, mission trips, relationship building, youth activities and a host of other things. With the pandemic, many that serve with students have also been called on to help establish and maintain the digital/virtual side of our ministries.

However, whether there is truth to these flighty accusations, it is important that we stay on task as we seek to serve. How can we best do that? Here are a few things that we can do to accomplish more in 2021:

• **Begin your day in the Word.** Jesus is our source of strength and hope. We should do our best to start each day reading and praying. There is nothing like the encouragement we find in God's Word.

• **Write things down.** When you find yourself being given an assignment or realize that you have a lot to accomplish, it is important to take a moment to write that thing down. You may use a notebook, journal, white erase board or even your phone, but whatever method you use, the act of recording the information will help you remember. We learn by seeing, hearing and writing. Take a moment to jot down the details.

• **Take a few minutes each day to plan it out.** There is nothing like a good old fashioned "to do list." It doesn't take long to make and can give you the reminder you need. At the beginning of the week, I will try to line out all the things that I need to do on my list. As I revisit my list each day, some of those things will pop up again until they are completed. Prepping for Wednesday nights or other reoccurring activities are on my list almost all the time because they are almost always there. In years past, Wednesday evening would still sneak up on me because I wasn't reminding myself that it was coming. The time you spend at the beginning of the day and week will pay dividends as you seek to accomplish more for the kingdom.

• **Find someone to hold you accountable.** If you are a paid staff member, your lead pastor is more than likely holding you accountable. However, since many of our readers are part-time or volunteer, it is possible that your "supervisor" doesn't hold you to as high a standard as someone who is paid. Ask for the accountability. Our students deserve our best, and sometimes it takes knowing that someone is going to ask to motivate us to the next step.

There are tons of books out there that talk about productivity and getting more accomplished. However, many of those are talking about serving self. Our motivation should be different. We should want to accomplish more for the students and Savior that we serve.

What do you hope to accomplish in your ministry during 2021? Visit our Facebook group (cutt.ly/SMMCommunity) to share your goals and the ways that you get more done.

chapters and churches with college ministers, I hope to see a growing network that will offer support and encouragement.

• **We want to see a return of the in-person Student Ministry Workers Retreat.** I missed meeting up with the men and women across Arkansas and beyond because of COVID-19. We were still able to have a great digital event with the help of Riley Carson leading our worship and Chris Swain providing our teaching sessions, but it was just different. If you missed the event, check out the teaching videos on our YouTube Channel (Student Ministry Matters). Chris has allowed us to leave his talks on discipleship available for all that might be interested. Unless something stands in our way, we are currently making plans to host our fourth annual event this fall.

• **We want to provide more re-**

sources for our student ministry workers. I hope to do some giveaways at SOAR and other points in the year, but to make that happen, we need your support. Giving away a book to each of the youth leaders at SOAR would cost us approximately \$1,500. I would love to do that, but it can only happen if we have a special offering or if we have more churches commit to giving financially to the BMA of Arkansas Youth Department monthly. We have approximately 10 churches that support our work during the course of a year, for an average total of \$700 each month. Financially, we are doing all we can, but I would love to see us do more. Your youth workers deserve it. Our students deserve. Help us make it happen.

While we are looking for a return to normal in 2021, I don't want that. I want to see us find exceptional in 2021, and leave normal behind.



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Design Determines Direction

God designed you and He determined your gender, nationality, skin color, personality, etc. He has a divine purpose for your life and self-awareness is crucial in knowing who God made you to be and what He designed you to accomplish.

We are given natural gifts at birth under God's common grace to all, but when we are born again, I believe, we receive spiritual gifts from Him. I Peter 4:10

(HCSB) says, "Based on the gift each one has received, use it to serve others, as good managers of the varied grace of God." God has equipped you for the purpose He has assigned you.

As you discover His divine design, you should consider your gifting, your passions and your temperament. Every believer has a unique, God-given ability for service through the natural and spiritual gifts He has provided. He gives us a passion for using those gifts in our everyday lives.

In *Being Leaders*, passion is described by Aubrey Malphurs as "a God-given capacity to attach yourself emotionally to a cause or a certain group of people." Passion gets you up in the morning, keeps you up at night and is what you think about during the day.

Passion is what directs the use of your gifts and sustains you. You can tell what you are passionate about because when you speak about it your voice raises, your body tenses up or your eyes fill with tears. Passion drives you daily in the direction of how you can maximize your effectiveness in bringing God glory as you make the most of your gifts. Your temperament and passion lead you to how God wants to work in your life because it recognizes your God-given, inborn style of behavior. An example would be how He created you to be more extroverted or introverted.

Your fit in life and ministry is definitely determined by His calling and opening of doors, but we sometimes forget that we should also embrace the personality, temperament and overall person He created us to be. God knew what He was doing when He made you, and the Scriptures are clear that He formed you. Psalm 139:13 says, "For it was you who created my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb." This is the unique "hard wiring" of an individual leader. It is your personality and what is true about you

from birth.

Your personality doesn't really change over time, but as we follow Christ, He enables us to be the best we can be as we grow and mature spiritually. It is actually counter-productive, not to mention frustrating, to try to change this dimension of ourselves. In reality, being the best you can be is another way of saying, "Be who you are!" or better yet, "Be who God cre-

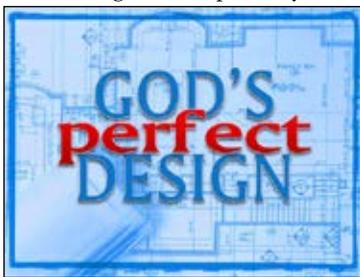
ated you to be!" You are far better off discerning how God designed you first, instead of waiting for some mystical, subjective call that is complete with lightning and an audible voice.

The truth that God has "wired" us a particular way speaks volumes about how our design determines our direction. Otherwise, why did He design us the way He did? Your divine design is a great way to see God's hand in your destiny and purpose that He orchestrated in how He created you. Yes, in our weaknesses God is glorified, but He has also given us strengths and gifts to glorify Him. Peter tells us to be good managers (stewards) of His gifts, emphasizing our need to know what our gifts are and then using them to mutually benefit our church.

Your unique giftedness cannot be replaced and no one can replace you. Take a look at the Word of God in how it describes the unique multi-faceted giftings that make every body of Christ come alive and cause each church to be stronger, deeper, and healthier. Two believers can have the same gift, such as teaching, but each believer will demonstrate it with their own passion and temperament. If you know your gift is teaching, then you must develop that gift. It is not enough to just own an axe, but you must also take the time to sharpen your axe for it to work optimally.

Discover your gift, develop your gift and deploy your gift by putting it to use for God's honor and glory. Gifts are not made to put on display and sit around like a showpiece. They were given to us to be used in the service of our King.

In the book of Nehemiah, we are told they had a mind to work, but it went beyond knowing they had a job to do, they did it by putting their hands to the work. Knowing your gifts, passion and temperament should go beyond the awareness level to the implementation of what you have learned for the



BURNOUT

(Continued From Page 1)

of California at Berkeley. Through their research they discovered that there are several signs which indicated that an individual was developing burnout. Some of the behavior indicators are:

- **Detaching self from other people** — staying at home, spending less time with others, aloof, cynical, less involved emotionally.

- **Beginning to run down physically** — frequent headaches, fatigue, loss of physical energy, high blood pressure, cramps, sleeplessness, arthritis, ulcers, and spasms. Psychological influences include low morale, forgetfulness, self-condemnation and a "what's the use" attitude.

Many times when an individual begins experiencing burnout, he or she doesn't have the slightest idea what is going on. The temptation is to try to overcome problems by working harder, but this only increases the frustration. In many instances, the individual will take it out on family, and they will be the ones to suffer the consequences. Some suffering from burnout will quit and change jobs and begin a repeat of the cycle again, and some will even get fired from their jobs. How do we break the cycle of burnout? How do we know if we are at risk for burnout?

Strategies to Overcome Burnout

We can help each other — loved ones, counselors, pastors and fellow workers — avoid burnout. There are successful coping strategies that work and we can overcome the situations and practice the strategies as needed. First, we should put our "trust in the Lord," as Prov. 3:5-6 states. Next, according to the University of California at Berkeley's study on burnout, some of the strategies that have proven successful are:

- **The need for time alone** — short rest breaks throughout the day or a few days vacation from the office, kids and in-laws.

- **Shared responsibilities** — training subordinates to do the jobs we don't really need to do, and remembering that we cannot do it all, no matter what the television commercial says.

- **Group support** — networking through video chat with others in the same profession and other professions so that we can get their share of support and ideas.

blessing it provides.

Aubrey Malphurs defines a spiritual gift as, "a unique, God-given ability for service." It is unique because not every one has the same gift. It is God-given because He decides which gift each believer receives and it is a service because we are told to use it to assist and aid others.

Since design determines direction you should consider using some of the self-awareness tools we can provide such as a spiritual gifts test and one of many personality profiles. If *Healthy Church Solutions* can help you in any of these areas, please feel free to contact us!



The Believer's Responsibility

I wrote in the previous issue about the need to pray regarding the association's churches, pastors, missionaries and leaders. That is essential. But now I want to reiterate the believer's responsibility regarding our nation's needs.

Hopefully, without being political, I want to emphasize that, once again, what we call the United States of America is anything but **united**. Therefore, because we are followers of the Lord Jesus, it is imperative that we diligently pray for the Spirit of the Living God to work in the hearts and minds of our country's citizens. This is not an issue about political preference; it is about bringing peace to a nation in chaos.

If a person has multiple health issues, many which may be life-threatening, we do not pray for the individual's sprained toe. No, we ask God to heal his many serious issues. Prayer — real prayer — is not merely clicking the "like" button on Facebook. Real prayer is taking a burdened conviction to the God in Heaven who can heal the maladies on Earth.

Let's not pray for one particular party to "win." Let's pray for the hand of the Almighty to be evident, blessing the country in times of pain, fear, frustration and confusion. We, this nation, needs complete healing!

I realize that, to many, this passage seems passe, but I personally believe it is as applicable and needed as never before.

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (II Chron. 7:14).

My friends, those are not merely "good words." Those words are truth! They are God's promises.

So let's covenant to pray for the nation in which we are blessed to live. Let's submit to the Spirit's leadership and diligently adhere to the scriptural admonition Paul gave Timothy: *"Urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone — for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior"* (I Tim. 2:1-3).

I truly believe that sums up the believer's responsibility at such a time as this. May God bless you, your churches, our association, and may God bless America!

- **Proper exercise and diet** — you can help in reduction of stress through toning up the body, relieving tension, getting energy and maintaining strength through proper diet and exercise.

- **Assertiveness** — knowing when we have too much to do. We can offer a polite "no" with a short statement that we are overbooked and could not give the project the proper attention that it needs at this time.

Burnout is a common experience among those in the people-helping professions and is now becoming more prevalent. With a wider audience of susceptible individuals because of COVID-19, the associated stressors are putting more individuals at risk of burnout. Why? Because they feel they should and are expected to constantly and completely give to those in need. If burnout hasn't affected you, it has probably affected someone you know. Burnout can be handled and conquered if we are aware of its influence and are willing to tackle it head on.

Remember to Keep Safe

Many times, we become lax in health precautions because we are so busy, and we begin to act and even subconsciously think that we immune from COVID-19 or burnout. We should emphasize the importance of personal health and safety to our

pastors, spouses and family members who are working on the front lines or providing care for others.

Are you (they) getting enough rest and relaxation so as not to frequently become angry, rough, ill-tempered, and slothful at work and home? As soon as we let these negative activities take hold, we are pushing the line toward creating additional health and relationship problems. Are you getting recreational and physical activity? Research has shown that individuals who remain active often have higher levels of personal satisfaction. If you are unable to currently do the same activities as pre-COVID, find an activity that you always wanted to try but never did in the past.

We do not know how long this season will last. Whether you believe in the COVID precautions or not, you are still at risk for burnout. Burnout is nothing new and can create enormous health and life problems for us if we are not mindful and proactive. This season of COVID-19 did not create burnout, but it is magnifying the illness and creating stressors in employers and employees who had not previously been at risk. Remember to pray for those individuals, whether you know them by name or not who are currently under pressure. This is a new season for everyone. Our focus, as always, should be on Jesus, and when it is, our worries will tend to melt away.



Who's Your One?

Several years ago, Dr. Charley Holmes preached a sermon titled, "Am I My Brother's Keeper?" at a church where I served on staff. As Dr. Holmes made application of the sermon, he challenged listeners to ask God to put one lost person on each of their hearts and commit to praying for them for a year. Of course, the ultimate goal was for the listener not only to pray for that person, but to share Christ with him or her during the next year.

Similarly, the North American Mission Board has developed an evangelist emphasis called, "Who's Your One?" The goal is to identify one person who is far from God and to be His instrument in seeing them come to relationship with Jesus.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus clearly stated that His mission was "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10 HCSB). He fulfilled that mission by speaking to crowds. But just as importantly, He fulfilled that mission through individual conversations.

Zacchaeus was an example of Jesus on mission. Zacchaeus was a man far from God (Luke 19:1-2). He was a tax collector. That implies he was corrupt, greedy and an outcast of society. Yet, Zacchaeus had a hunger for hope (Luke 19:3-4). He wanted to see Jesus and creatively positioned himself to do so. As Jesus passed that sycamore tree, He told Zacchaeus to come down. (I know you're singing that kid's song in your head right now.) Why? Jesus said, "today I must stay at your house" (Luke 19:5). Did you feel the urgency of that statement? Did you sense the opportunity for mission? Did you get the hint of a divine appointment? That day, Zacchaeus was the **one** with whom Jesus felt compelled to have a life-changing conversation.

Here's your challenge — adopt Jesus' mission as yours. Ask the Father to place **one** person on your heart, who is far from Him, for the purpose of you being His instrument in moving that person to relationship with Jesus. Just one person? Yes, start with **one**.

What if, during 2021, you prayed for your **one**, built a relationship with your **one**, served your **one** and shared your story of redemption with your **one**? Could that spiritual investment make a difference in the life of your **one**? Yes!

Just as Dr. Charley Holmes challenged me several years ago, won't you ask God to put **one** person (who is far from God) on your heart and commit to praying for them? It starts with identifying your **one**. Who's your **one**?



43rd Annual March for Life, Jan. 17, 2 p.m.; Staging for the march will begin at 1:30 p.m. between Battery and Wolfe Streets on West Capitol Avenue behind the Arkansas State Capitol; sponsored by Arkansas Right to Life; For more information contact Executive Director Rose Mimms at (501) 663-4237 or email artl@artl.org
CBC Homecoming, Jan. 29-30; Central Baptist College.
CBC Scholarship Gala, Feb. 20, 6:00 p.m.; Conway Expo Center. Contact Amy Reed for more info at areed@cbc.edu.
World Missions Day, Feb. 28; Jerry Kidd Offering for BMA World Missions.
Ministry Connections Workshops, Mar. 23, 10 a.m.; Cross-Roads Church, Rowlett, Tx.; Sponsored by Baptist Progress.
Fresh Grounded Faith Women's Event, Aug. 6-7, 7 p.m. Fri., 12:30 p.m. Sat.; Antioch, Conway.
Ark. Ladies Retreat, Sept. 25, 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.



Southwest District GMA, Jan. 23, First, Taylor.
Mt. Vernon District Brotherhood, Mar. 8, 6:30 p.m., Central, Hughes.



Beech Street, Crossett rejoices over one by baptism; Donnie Dubose, pastor; Ann Phillips, reporter.
Faith Baptist Mission, Flippin welcomed four by letter and three by baptism; Johnny Shew, church-planter.
Oak Park, Little Rock added one by letter; Dr. Gary O'Neal, pastor.
Old Hickory, Hattiesville reports one by baptism; Johnnie Hoffmann, pastor.
Unity, Hope gained two by baptism and two by letter; Nick Flowers, pastor; Penny Ehrhardt, Reporter.



Missouri is the First Abortion-Free State

Missouri appears to be the first state in America without an abortion facility. Recently, Operation Rescue confirmed that the Planned Parenthood in St. Louis, the only licensed abortion facility in Missouri, is not aborting unborn babies — and hasn't been for months. Instead, the group found that the St. Louis facility is referring women to a new Planned Parenthood a few miles across the border in Illinois for abortions.

The St. Louis facility still has a license to do abortions, but it apparently is choosing not to. Newman said he believes the reason is because Planned Parenthood does not want to comply with Missouri's pro-life laws.

According to Operation Rescue, there are 706 abortion facilities in the U.S., and five states — Mississippi, North Dakota, South Dakota, West Virginia and Wyoming — have only one abortion facility each. (lifeneews.com)



New Mississippi Flag Without Rebel Symbol Being Put Into Law

Mississippi is updating its laws to include a new state flag with a magnolia and the phrase "In God We Trust," six months after legislators ditched the last state flag in the U.S. that had the Confederate battle emblem. Voters approved the magnolia flag in November after a commission recommended the design.

Legislators must put a description of the new flag into law. Senators on Wednesday (Jan. 6), voted 38-7 to pass such a bill, a day after the House voted 119-1. Republican Gov. Tate Reeves is expected to sign the bill into law in the next several days. After that, officials will have a ceremony to raise the new flag at the Capitol.

The magnolia blossom on the new flag is encircled by white stars representing Mississippi as the 20th state, plus a single gold star representing Native Americans. The gold star is made of diamond shapes that are significant to the Choctaw culture. The flag also has gold stripes representing the artistic heritage of state that has produced blues great B.B. King, and Nobel Prize-winning novelist William Faulkner.

After emotional debates, legislators voted in late June to make the change, and Mississippi has been a state without a flag for several months. The bill that retired the old flag specified that a commission would design a new one that could not include Confederate imagery

and must have "In God We Trust," and that the single proposed design would go on the ballot for a yes-or-no vote. About 71% of people who voted in November approved the change. (baptistpress.com)

Unspecified Protestants Grow, Baptists Decline in Congress

Protestant Christians remain easily the largest religious group in Congress, but those who identify as "unspecified" have expanded their advantage over Baptists in that category. Protestants total 294 members, or 55%, of the 117th Congress, according to a study published Jan. 4 by the nonpartisan Pew Research Center. The analysis of data on members of the Senate and House of Representatives showed an increase of one Protestant from the previous Congress.

The report also continued to show the religious makeup of Congress differs considerably from that of the United States. While 88% of senators and representatives identify as Christian, only 65% of Americans do so. The Pew study groups Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox Christians and Mormons under the general category of Christian. And though only one member of Congress — Sen. Kyrsten Sinema (D/Ariz.) — counts herself as religiously unaffiliated, 26% of Americans identify themselves in that way.

The largest Protestant category remains "unspecified/other," which consists of 96 members who identify

themselves by such descriptions as Christian, evangelical Christian or Protestant without citing a denomination. That is an increase of 16 from the previous session that followed the 2018 election. This sub-category does not include 12 members who labeled themselves as "nondenominational." (baptistpress.com)

Groups Blast Big Tech For Censoring Conservatives

Media Research Center (MRC) President Brent Bozell and more than 30 conservative leaders issued the following statement Monday, calling for the breakup of Big Tech companies including Amazon, Google, Facebook and Apple after their sweeping acts of censorship against conservatives and President Donald Trump this past week:

"Big Tech is using the violent riot at the Capitol last week — even though it was immediately condemned by all conservatives — as an excuse to do what they have always wanted to do: banish conservatives from the internet. Over the last 72 hours, Big Tech proved they are too big and too powerful yet again, with Apple, Google, and Amazon collectively shutting down Parler. Free speech was controlled like this in East Germany and the Soviet Union. This should not be happening in America.

"Freedom has never been threatened like this before. We live our lives online, especially now, during the pandemic. The entire conservative movement will be canceled by the left and their thugs if we let them. They will turn the screws on conservatives if we don't defend our rights. It is time to stand up and demand the breakup of these big tech monopolies." (lifeneews.com)

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Former CBC Music Chairman Dies

James D. (Jim) Courtney, 86 of Greenbrier, passed away Jan. 7. He was the former chairman of the Music Department at Central Baptist College.

As a teenager, Jim found his voice as a tenor soloist who was adept at leading worship. To prepare for his ministry, he graduated from Jacksonville Baptist College in Jacksonville, Texas and completed his formal education at University of Central Arkansas with a Masters of Music Education.

He began serving on church staffs as congregational and choral director in Houston, Carthage and Lubbock, Texas. In 1962, he assumed the position of minister of music and education at First Baptist Church in Magnolia, Ark., where he directed choirs for all ages and created youth programs—The Galileans and The Lines & Spaces—which were replicated throughout the BMA.

In 1968, Central Baptist College recognized his innovative approaches and offered him the position of chairman of their Music Department. It is there that his influence on students' lives expanded, teaching music and training future leaders. Each year, he formed the Central Singers from the talent among the student body. The 10-member group, often accompanied by a full choir, visited churches to support fundraising and recruiting most weekends and school breaks. Each performance reflected Jim's meticulous preparation, coordination and pursuit of excellence in sound and presentation.

As "dorm dad" for a time, Jim insisted on cleanliness, safety and (after 10 p.m.) tranquility. He also served terms as dean of students, director of Life Skills Center, President's Administrative Council and on Faculty Committees including Activities, Curriculum and Disciplinary.

He was honored in 2019 at a 50-year Central Singers reunion that drew 150 former Singers, who expressed their appreciation for his service, friendship and wise council.

In 1997, he retired from teaching to care for his wife, Loretta, who passed away later that year. Until recently, he taught a Sunday School class at Springhill Baptist Church in Greenbrier and will be remembered by his students there as "always prepared and insightful."

In addition to his late wife, he was preceded in death by his brother,



Bateman, Veteran Missionary, Dies

Pioneer BMA Missionary Jack Bateman, 92 of Arlington, Texas, passed away Jan. 9. Funeral arrangements will be announced at a later date.

Bro. Bateman, who was born in Tianjin, China, and his wife, the late La'Trell Bateman were among the first group of missionaries sent out by the association after it was organized in 1950. He attended Jacksonville College in Jacksonville, Texas, and in November 1953, the Batemans left for Formosa (now called Taiwan) and went on to serve there for 37 years in and around Taipei. After returning to the States in 1990, Bro. Bateman served as Chinese Language Group Coordinator for Interstate Missions and as pastor of Plano Chinese Mission in Plano, Texas.

Dr. John W. Duggar wrote two short books about the Batemans. The first, *Two for God*, was written about the early years of their ministry in Taiwan. The second, *The Girl with the Missionary Heart*, was published in 1975 as La'Trell's testimony of her call to missions.

Bro. Bateman received several honors, including being named as Coming Home Royalty at the 2019 Jacksonville College homecoming.

BMA of America Interstate Missions Director Jack Courtney.

Survivors include his wife, Ellen Raines Hornaday Courtney; a daughter, Jamie Courtney; a son, Jonathan Brent Courtney; daughters Cynthia Hornaday (Stephen) McDermott; Carol Hornaday (Thad) Tennis; Laura Hornaday (Michael) Gray; and seven grandchildren. Extended family includes a nephew, BMA Pastor James Dean (JD) Courtney and a niece, Stacy Jordan, registrar at Central Baptist College.

Funeral Services will be held Jan. 13 at 2 p.m. at Springhill Baptist Church in Greenbrier, and live streaming will be available at springhillbaptist-church.info. Interment will follow at Crestlawn Memorial Park in Conway, under the direction of Roller-McNutt Funeral Homes of Greenbrier.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the James D. and Loretta Ann Courtney Scholarship Fund at Central Baptist College, 1501 College Ave., Conway, Ark. 72034.



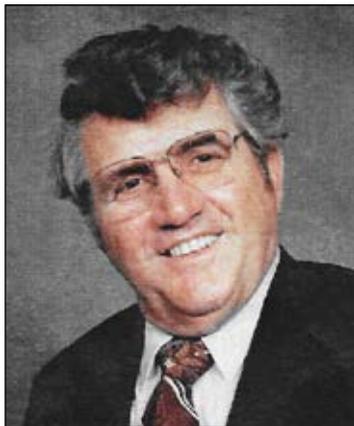
Moore, Former Ark. Pastor, Dies

Michael Wayne Moore, 48 of Palestine, Texas, passed away Jan. 3 due to coronavirus and other health complications.

He was a graduate of the University of Texas at Tyler and was a bivocational pastor and teacher. He was currently serving as pastor of New Bethlehem Baptist Church in Cut and Shoot, Texas and previously served as pastor of Beech Street Baptist Church in Crossett, one church in Mississippi and several churches in Texas.

Survivors include: his wife of 22 years, Cheri Moore; his parents, Travis and Ruth Moore of Keller, Texas; a son, Jonathan Moore; and two sisters, Angela (Raymond) Ray of Lewisville, Texas and Kelli (Brian) Saltzman of Keller, Texas.

Graveside services were held Jan. 9 at Guiceland Cemetery in Grapeland, Texas, with Lynn Stroud and Terry Gibson officiating and under the direction of Rhone Funeral Home of Palestine, Texas.



Jones, BMA Minister, Dies

Edward Leroy Jones, 89 of Hampton, passed away Jan. 6. He was ordained at the age of 25, and spent the next 64 years as a pastor of the Lord's churches, including: Mt. Pleasant, Hampton; Maul Road, Camden; Southside, Lake Village; Mt. Union, El Dorado; Corinth, Dermott; Park Hill, Harmony Grove; East Side, Monticello; Pilgrims Rest, Spearsville, La.; Landmark, Hermitage; Grace, El Dorado; Canaan, Harrell; and Locust Bayou, Locust Bayou. He also served as a BMA of Arkansas state missionary, planting and organizing Victory Baptist Church in Hampton.

He was a member of Woodberry



Mrs. Holmes, President's Mother, Dies

Johnnie Ruth (Lewis) Holmes, 90 of Mexia, Texas, passed away Jan. 3. She was the mother of BMA Theological Seminary President Dr. Charley Holmes.



Enid Jolly Dies

Enid Mary Yates Jolly, 98 of Little Rock and a native of New Zealand, passed away Dec. 14 due to complications from COVID-19. She retired from the BMA of America Missions Department several years ago with 30 years of service. Mrs. Enid was an active member of Oak Park Baptist Church in Little Rock and Gold Star Wives of America, Inc.

Survivors include: a brother, Wallace H. Brownlee and other relatives in New Zealand; a step-son, Don Jolly; and her special caregivers, Linda Cochran and Shirley Barnett.

A graveside service was held Dec. 19 at Lost Creek Cemetery in Sheridan, under the direction of Smith Little Rock Funeral Home, with Dr. Gary O'Neal and Shea Cochran officiating.

Baptist Church, where he taught the Adult Sunday School Class.

Survivors include: his wife of 44 years, Garlene Childers Jones; three sons, Steve Jones of Locust Bayou, Dean Jones of Frenchport and Joseph Jones of Hampton; two brothers, Clerry Jones of Camden and Mike Jones of Conway; five sisters, Helen Murphy of McNeil, Janie Bird of Camden, Pat Presley and Jeannie Telford of Little Rock and Della Willis of Camden; 10 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren.

His Celebration of Life Service was held at Mt. Union Baptist Church in El Dorado, on Jan. 8, and interment was at Smyrna Cemetery under the direction of Proctor Funeral Home.

Mrs. Holmes was described as a "devoted, diligent and doting mother." She was a woman of many talents, and in 1975, she obtained her insurance license and worked alongside her husband in his insurance agency.

She made certain that her whole family attended Calvary Baptist Church faithfully, where she taught Sunday School, Training Union, Vacation Bible School and served as the director of the Beginner Department for over 20 years.

Other survivors include: her husband, Charles N. Holmes; three daughters, Linda (Billy) Archibald and Molly (Marcus) Frost, both of Mexia, Texas, and Amy Holmes of Waco, Texas; 9 grandchildren and 15 great grandchildren.

Private funeral services were held at Sardis Baptist Church on Jan. 6, with Jerry Fulton officiating. Interment was at Sardis Cemetery under the direction of Blair Stubbs Funeral Home.

Memorials may be made to the BMA Theological Seminary, P.O. Box 670, Jacksonville, Texas 75766.



Gail Nixon, 83 of Ozark, passed away Jan. 6. He was a member of West Park Baptist Church.

David L. "Pops" Wood, 76 of El Dorado, passed away Jan. 6. He was a member of Mt. Union Baptist Church.

Enid Mary Yates Jolly, 98 of Little Rock, passed away Dec. 14. She was a member of Oak Park Baptist Church and served in the BMA Department of Missions office for 30 years.



A Relentless Foe

By Tommy Hall

Time is a relentless foe. It can neither be stopped nor slowed. It waits for no one and respects no one. It moves slowly but surely.

There are probably some times in your life that are special. Perhaps there are special years that were especially good and happy times. We might even like to roll back the pages of time and just freeze ourselves in that frame; but it can't happen, won't happen and doesn't need to happen.

We must live each day, and we should approach that day with a sense of excitement and expectation. Life goes on, with us or without us.

God has been gracious enough to give us the assurance that He is always with us — as children, as adults and as seasoned saints.

He gives grace for each day and for each period in life. Come to think about it, time might just be a good friend.

(reprinted from Feb. 7, 2007 Baptist Trumpet)



Those Who Weep

By Erich Bridges • Baptist Press

I recently spent time with two old friends. Both are grieving. One just lost his mother to cancer. The other lost his wife (also to cancer) three years ago, and his best friend died of a massive heart attack a few weeks ago. I knew that mother, that wife and that best friend, so I grieve their passing as well.

How do I comfort my friends? By keeping my mouth shut. When Jesus, for example, learned of the death of his friend, Lazarus and heard the wails of Lazarus' sisters, He didn't say much. He wept.

Words can wait. Tears come first, then silence, then listening — if the grieving one wants to talk. If they want to hear what words of comfort you have to offer, they'll ask.

Staying silent is hard to do. You want to say something, especially if you have experienced your own loss. You want to salve the wound with words. Don't! Follow Jesus' lead. He knew when to cry, when to speak and when to be quiet. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

Experiencing grief can prepare you to bear the griefs of others, but only if you allow it to do its good work in you first. Grief is the price you pay for love, the saying goes, but it can become too high a price. Some people let grief overwhelm them and never start on the road to recovery. Some spend the rest of their lives in despair, anger or bitterness.

"Sorrow removes a great deal of a person's shallowness, but it does not always make that person better," Oswald Chambers wrote in *My Utmost for His Highest*.

"Suffering either gives me to myself or it destroys me," Oswald noted. "You cannot find or receive yourself through success, because you lose your head over pride. And you cannot receive yourself through the monotony of your daily life, because you give in to complaining. The only way to find yourself is in the fires of sorrow. Why it should be this way is immaterial; the fact is that it is true, in the Scriptures and in human experience."

I have lost loved ones through the years, but I didn't know grief — really know it — until my wife died in 2017. I soon discovered how shallow I was. My heart had to expand to contain the tears or drown. It's an ongoing excavation project.

That doesn't qualify me to comfort someone else, however. Everyone mourns differently. To enter into someone else's grief, you don't necessarily need to understand it, but you need an invitation. When the invitation comes, be ready. Be available. Be generous.

"You can always recognize who has been through the fires of sorrow and received himself, and you know that you can go to him in your moment of trouble and find that he has plenty of time for you," Chambers promised. "If you will receive yourself in the fires of sorrow, God will make you nourishment for other people."

Blessed are those who mourn, Christ says, for they shall be comforted. He might even use you to do the comforting. (bpnews.net)

Dreading Death

By the Late Editor David Tidwell

"The last that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:26)

Someone has said that one is not ready to live until he is unafraid of death. Many are not ready to live!

Very few are anxious to die and many are practically scared to death at the thought of dying. Yet it is appointed unto man once to die, and countless cemeteries have marble monuments that testify to the accuracy of that truth. We all will die, and then meet God in the judgment; that is, unless Jesus returns in our lifetime. .

Some fear death because it is an unknown; some because they think it is painful. Some fear death because they don't want to leave loved ones or because they don't know who will take care of their family. Some fear death because they know eternity and the judgment follow.

For some, their fear is well-founded. I remember vividly hearing my childhood pastor tell of being called to the deathbed of a man who had always laughed at the thought of God. As he got out of his car in front of the home, he could hear the man screaming in his upstairs bedroom in the back of the house, "I'm not ready to die! I'm going to Hell! I'm not ready!"

Although it may be a long time before your death, the passage of time is relentlessly moving you to the final moment. It slows not because of your lack of preparation, dread or fear. Use the only moment in time you are guaranteed to make personal preparation to meet God — that moment is now! The preparation is made by repenting of your sins and placing your faith in Jesus Christ for forgiveness and salvation. Pray, asking God for salvation.

For the Christian, death is only a shadow. We "*walk through the valley of the shadow of death... and fear no evil: for thou art with me...*"

I believe death is not painful in itself. There may be pain associated with disease or an accident, but not with death. One would feel pain if hit by a car, but not if hit only by the shadow of a car. Jesus was hit by the car 2,000 years ago. He experienced the pain of death. We deal only with the shadow! A shadow requires a light, and Jesus is that light. He is the Light of the world and of eternity.

Don't fear death because it is an unknown, for we will not be alone — "*for Thou art with me.*" Don't fear death because you leave loved ones behind, for God does not forsake those left behind — He looks after His own. (Reprinted from the Aug. 2, 1989 Baptist Trumpet)

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A Picture of Godly Encouragement

By Matthew Hall • Baptist Press

If you've ever been in the wilderness, you know it can be a lonely place. And that's when we most need the encouragement of a friend.

I Samuel tells the dramatic story of David's rise to Israel's throne as the anointed king, but if you're familiar with the story, you know it's full of twists and turns. David is anointed by the prophet Samuel while still a very young man, and years go by before he is established as king. In the meantime, Saul is still on the throne, even though God had made clear his rejection of the Benjamite king.

By the time we get to chapter 23, Saul has massacred an entire Israelite town (Nob) and slaughtered all the priests with the exception of Abiathar, who manages to escape to David. Meanwhile, David is saving God's people at Keilah from the plundering raids of Philistine troops, only to then discover that if they have the chance they will deliver over their heroic redeemer to Saul.

So there he is, in the wilderness, reeling from an avalanche of difficulties.

What did his friend, Jonathan do? He "*rose and went to David at Horesh, and strengthened his hand in God*" (1 Sam 23:16). What does that mean? I like how the CSB translates the same verse: he "*encouraged him in his faith in God.*"

Personal

Meaningful encouragement is personal.

While Saul cannot seem to track down David, Jonathan has no such difficulty. However, it was no small thing for Jonathan to make the journey from Gibeath to Horesh. David had been labeled a traitor to the crown, an enemy of the state and someone to be killed upon sight. To put it mildly, he is not someone the crown prince is supposed to be hanging around. But Jonathan made the trip to Horesh.

Don't discount the impact of personal encouragement. We should all be grateful for the many ways in which we can offer and receive encouragement in our day. It can mean so much to receive a kind text message, a phone call or especially a hand-written note of encouragement from a friend when we most seem to need it. We should have no reluctance to make use of those opportunities.

But there is something extraordinarily powerful when encouragement

comes in person. When's the last time you went out of your way to seek someone out to offer them a word of encouragement in person? Jonathan could have sent a messenger to Horesh to relay a word to his friend, but he did not. He made sure to get there and to show up in person. That's what friends do. Whenever you can, be there in person.

Timely

Meaningful encouragement is timely.

It's hard to miss this in the story, but Jonathan's encouragement comes at a key moment. David has just discovered that the residents of Keilah will betray him if given the opportunity and has had to flee into the wilderness. He has sought to honor the Lord, to deliver his people and to obey his calling. Yet here he is with his troops, back in the wilderness, away from home, family and comfort. It seems that the promise of the kingdom is no closer than it was before. Can you imagine the discouragement of that experience?

As we read along, we know that the resident of Ziph would proactively seek to betray David, sending emissaries to Saul at Gibeath with a preemptive offer of full cooperation in arresting the future king. Sandwiched between these two episodes, David's friend arrives in Horesh at an urgent moment, when he's most in need of encouragement.

In our own lives, there can be a temptation to be passive, failing to offer encouragement. We might merely miss the opportunity (although late is better than never!), or perhaps we are tempted to think that someone else closer will surely be there to offer encouragement.

Don't underestimate the impact your encouragement might have in someone's life today. Rather than putting it off, who is God calling you to strengthen today?

Godly

Meaningful encouragement is godly.

Encouragement can come in person and at the right time, but still ring hollow. True encouragement that strengthens faith must be godly, or perhaps we might say, it must be Godward.

Jonathan did not come to Horesh

See ENCOURAGE, Page 8

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PAUL WHITE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters

This is one of many texts that I personally seek for comfort. When we feel void and are no longer able to express our feelings, may we turn to the Scriptures for reassurance. May we be reminded that God (not man) is good all the time. May God bless His people.

"I cried unto God with my voice, (even) unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah. Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak. I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search. Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?

"Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth (his) promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah. And I said, This (is) my infirmity: (but I will remember) the years of the right hand of the most High. I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings. Thy way, O God, (is) in the sanctuary: who (is so) great a God as (our) God? Thou (art) the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people. Thou hast with (thine) arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah. The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled. The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad. The voice of thy thunder (was) in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook. Thy way (is) in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron" (Psa. 77:1-20).

May you find comfort during these troublesome times from God's Word.

From Our Missionaries

Connection Point, Brookland: Chad White writes, "God has been faithful throughout this past week. This Sunday, we enjoyed a wonderful worship service. We had good numbers and some first-time guests in the service with us. We are so thankful for the opportunity to come together and worship."

"This past Wednesday, our groups began meeting again with a good turnout and some great Bible studies. These groups give us a great opportunity to not only disciple, but to encourage one another during the week."

"Sunday afternoon, we held a training for all of our Security Personnel. We are so thankful for these men who are willing to stand in harm's way to keep us safe."

"Join us in praying that we will continue to be effective ambassadors of Christ and reach people here in Brookland. Thank you for your support."

The Mustard Seed, Cain: Jim Tollison writes, "God is continuing to bless the mission. Our Wednesday night services are returning to pre-COVID-19 numbers. Sunday was exciting as well, as we enjoyed some return visitors. They are relatives of a young man we baptized a while back. They seemed to really enjoy the services and said they planned to come back."

Pray for them to make attendance a regular thing.

"Mission work has become more complex with this virus lurking in the background. Be praying for us as we navigate the changes we are having to make."

"Thanks for your continued support and your prayers."

Misión Creciendo en Cristo (Growing in Christ), North Little Rock: Juan Carlos Posadas writes, "We started the year with a week of emphasis on prayer, and in the discipleship meetings we dedicated ourselves to pray."

"Thursday, we had a continuous 24-hour prayer chain, starting at zero hours and ending at midnight, each member of the church had the opportunity to pray for at least one hour."

"At our Friday prayer meeting, we shared the beautiful experience of participating in the prayer chain. We did everything virtually since we started the year in quarantine. I thank God for the current means of communication that allow us, from the comfort of our homes, to meet, worship and learn from the Lord."

"We thank God for the year 2020 and we enter into 2021 hoping God will be a great blessing for our community, that we will be more effective in sharing the gospel and discipling

new converts. We ask God that more brothers and sisters will be willing to disciple in this new year."

Life Journey, Fort Smith: Darrin Smith writes, "When I was 21 years old, a man by the name of Mike Ward shared the gospel with me, and I trusted Jesus as my Savior. He was the pastor of Temple Baptist Church in Fordyce. That was almost 30 years ago. I had the privilege to have him come speak at our church a few weeks ago. It was exciting to catch up with all that has been going on in his life and to thank him, face-to-face, for sharing the gospel with me."

"After church, a lady named Leeza came into the church and, in just a few short minutes, she came to know Jesus as her Savior. I had met her just the week before. What a blessing to see her trust Jesus. Something else — the person who shared Christ with me was there... Mike shared Christ with me, I shared Christ with Leeza and now, prayerfully, it won't stop with her."

"What happened to the gospel since you trusted Jesus? Who have you shared it with? Don't let the gospel stop with you. Start sharing the gospel. God wants to multiply His life through you."

Grace, Green Forest: Carter Pearce writes, "Our congregation received a special Christmas present a few weeks ago. The WMA group at West Race Baptist Church in Searcy purchased *Heavenly Highway Hymnals* for us. We have put those hymnals to good use already as we now have enough hymnals for everyone who can read to have their own! It is a great blessing to know that our association is still focused on churches helping mission congregations."

"As with any new year, 2021 has many unknowns. What we know for certain is that we are in for changes this year. We will see a new president, new members in the U.S. legislature, changes in how we interact within our own communities and constant updates in regulations and guidelines."

"What will not change, however, is God's Word and His desire for us to worship Him in spirit and truth. At Grace, we are dedicated to doing that and helping those in Carroll County learn how to worship and serve God."

"Thank you all for your prayers and support as we continue to 'Reach the Lost, Train the Saved.'"

Ebenezer, West Little Rock: Ruben Isturiz writes, "What a wonderful week at Ebenezer! Last week, I asked



Who am I?

I am your constant companion.

I am your greatest helper or heaviest burden.

I will push you forward or drag you down to failure.

I am completely at your command. Half of the things you do you might just as well turn over to me and I will be able to do them quickly and correctly.

I am easily managed — you must merely be firm with me. Show me exactly how you want something done and, after a few lessons, I will do it automatically.

I am servant of all great people; and alas, of all failures, as well. Those who are great, I have made great. Those who are failures, I have made failures.

I am not a machine, though I work with all the precision of a machine plus the intelligence of a mortal. You may run me for a profit or run me for ruin — it makes no difference to me.

Take me, train me, be firm with me, and I will place the world at your feet.

Be easy with me and I will destroy you.

Who am I? I am habit! (*via Jan. 26, 2000 Baptist Trumpet*)

you to pray for protection as we visited families in our congregation, prayed for each head of the household and blessed each family. We were able to pray for eight men and their families, and this week we will pray for the rest of the families. Based on Num. 6:22-27, we ask for the blessing on each leader in the home and they get to pray for their family. Each visit we made was very much a blessing, as we were able to give thanks for the year 2020 and entrust ourselves to God's plans in 2021. The most appreciated thing for me was to see the love and friendship that we have and seeing the growth in the Word of God as this is our third year praying in homes.

"On Dec. 24, a pastor friend in Venezuela went into the presence of the Lord due to the consequences of COVID-19. Julio César Zamora visited us on several occasions in the beginning of Ebenezer, which was then in our home. He came and brought us the Word of God. We had known each other since I was 17 years old. Now he is enjoying the presence of the Lord. As the apostle Paul said, 'For me to live is Christ, to die is gain.' That is why I told you last week that I want to live my life without fear because I know God is with us. This pandemic overwhelms us, and we must be wise and take the careful measures, but we should not be paralyzed by fear. May God be glorified in the midst of His church!"

Faith Chapel, Flippin: Johnny Shew writes, "We had an amazing week at Faith Chapel! Many prayers were answered for our members and their families. One of our members was able to see and begin a relationship with a new grandchild that had been withheld from her up to now."

She had also been treated for Parkinson's for the last four years and now has been diagnosed correctly and has found out her tremors are treatable. Another underwent emergency gall bladder surgery on Saturday and was still able to attend Sunday worship with her family.

"O Lord, thank you for hearing our prayers, and thank you for your answers! Our prayers for the mission are being answered too. On Sunday, we had 7 join our mission — 4 by letter, and we will be baptizing 3 next Sunday! That brings us to 17, Praise God!"

"We thank all of you for your continued prayers and support for our mission, it means so much to us, and we thank God for each of you."

Not Alone, Springdale: Clinton Morris writes, "While we have not been able to start anything in the house (because we are still waiting on furniture), we are still utilizing the coffee shops and the boardgame stores. We talked with three new people this week and have also continued with all our previous relationships. We have four people who are committed to coming to our first Bible study."

"We are looking for a car for me to be able to drive without taking our only means of transportation. Pray that God will bring the right vehicle to us."

"As we have been praying over the direction of the ministry, God has revealed a family that is very interested in joining our team. Please join with us as we bathe this in prayer because this is a big leap for our ministry. It also requires some creative thinking because the family will require a bi-vocational ministry. It is very exciting to see God's hand continue to guide and direct, even in these 'cold' starting months. God bless."



Global Missions Conversation

Sunday night, Jan. 10 at 7:30, over 100 participants joined a Global Missions Conversation hosted by Dr. John David Smith, executive director of BMA of America Missions. During welcoming comments, Dr. Smith encouraged listeners to send questions to John Meriweather's email (john@bmaamissions.org). Although he was unable to address the questions during the hour-long meeting, Bro. Smith promised that the questions would be answered individually.

The entire recorded "conversation" is now available on the BMAA Missions Facebook page.

After leading in prayer, Bro. Smith shared a devotional from II Tim. 2:1-7 and emphasized four words — Go, Disciple, Plant, Repeat. He also said that another word could be added during this time of COVID-19 — Suffer — and encouraged church members and pastors to be faithful during this difficult time.

These missionaries then addressed the group:

• **Rama Bochung in Myanmar (Burma)** — He noted that they now have 4 mission churches in the southern part of the country and 10 in the northern part. This country also has problems with COVID-19, and churches are not able to hold public services. However, he has been able to share the gospel through Facebook, YouTube, MP3 players, some personal visits and small groups of five or less. Religious activity there is still limited, but a little more religious freedom is being allowed, which has been a blessing because people's fear of death and questions about God have allowed more gospel conversations. He asked for prayer for the salvation of the lost and for the safety of ministry leaders and the people of Myanmar.



• **Gavin Roberts**, who grew up in Greenbrier and serves as high school/college pastor at Antioch Baptist Church in Conway, shared that he feels led to start a church in Morgan, Utah, near Salt Lake City. This city has no church, and neither do two nearby cities — Coalville and Mountain Green — and they hope to start some in those areas. His twin brother, Chase, and his family are already there in Morgan, where he is a football coach and math teacher. Others are also planning to join them in this effort. Bro. Roberts noted that the average time for someone to come to the point of accepting Christ in that area is about 7 years, and it takes 10 years for them to become active church participants.



• **Eric Johnson** shared that missionaries will soon be going to Argentina, Romania and France. A couple from Peru will also be going to Brazil (a Portuguese-speaking country) in the next two months to establish a Spanish-speaking church there.

• **Larry Barker** — Although he had some connection problems at the beginning of the meeting due to unusual heavy snow in Texas, Larry Barker was finally able to join the group and share some of the work that is going on here in the United States.

• **Deodito Lisas — General Santos on the island of Mindanao, Philippines** — COVID-19 has also affected this country, and only half the church members can attend services. However, they have started a feeding ministry and hope to plant more churches this year. The work has been going on there since 1996 and eight churches and six missions have been established.



"Missions is both the source and the goal," Dr. Smith noted in his closing comments. He shared that the number of missionaries has doubled in the last five years and said, "We are praying to do the same in the next 10 years."

Finally, he reminded everyone of World Missions Day on Feb. 28 and the Jerry Kidd Missions Offering, then encouraged everyone to pray and give. (Contact BMA Missions at bmaamissions.org for the necessary materials.)

MRS

(Continued From Page 1)

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ENCOURAGE

(Continued From Page 6)

to give David a pep talk. He did not arrive with a commiserating indictment about Saul's wickedness. He did not boost David with a recital of all of his impressive accomplishments and clear qualifications to rule.

No, true encouragement points us to God and His promises. When the text says that he strengthened his hand in the Lord, it's clear that this is the case when we consider the summary of Jonathan's own message: "*Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Saul, my father also knows this.*"

These two friends then renewed their covenant of friendship before the Lord, and Jonathan returned home to Gibeath.

But Jonathan left David stronger because he reminded his friend of God's promises. Among the people of God, there is no better encouragement we can give than to remind one another of the promises our Heavenly Father has made to us in His Word.

But what do you do when it seems there's no one near and encouragement seems sparse? The apostle Paul knew that feeling. Writing of his own suffering and persecution, he explained it this way to Timothy:

"At my first defense, no one stood by me, but everyone deserted me. May it not be counted against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that I might fully preach the word and all the Gentiles might hear it" (II Tim. 4:16-17, CSB).

Godly friends who provide encouragement and strength are a gift from the Lord, but the good news is that even when friends fail or disappear, Jesus still stands with His own. What a friend we have in Jesus, indeed. By His Spirit and His Word, he will strengthen and empower for what He calls us to do. (bpnews.net)

Free E-Trumpet

Any active BMA military personnel is eligible to receive the Trumpet free. Please send their name, address or email address to P.O. Box 192208, Little Rock, Ark. 72219; or editor@baptisttrumpet.com.



By Jonathan Montgomery, Assistant Director of Missionary Care
BMAA Missions

When the pandemic began last spring, BMA Missions decided it would be helpful to form a team to assist the directors in maintaining contact with every missionary family. This missionary care team started reaching out to our foreign missionaries every week. The team asked for updates on how the missionary family was doing, the current conditions within their country and how life was for members of their churches or missions.

The most important question that our team asked missionaries was, "How can we pray for you, your family and your ministry?" These prayer needs were shared with everyone at the Global Missions Center so more individuals would be praying for our missionaries during such a trying time.

During this same period, another development was the start of Missionary Care Conversations featured each Tuesday on the BMAA Missions Facebook page. These simple conversations between our missionaries, directors and missionary care team members have allowed our Missions supporters to hear firsthand from missionaries and to know how they can pray for them. We are getting lots of great feedback from viewers saying how much they appreciate hearing how God has been caring for His people in the middle of the pandemic.

Another significant outcome of these weekly conversations is that our missionaries can listen to updates from other missionaries. They are often so busy with their own ministries that they have fewer opportunities to contact those serving in other parts of the world. Our missionaries have been encouraged to hear for themselves how they can pray and support what God is doing on other mission fields.

Some BMA mission fields have experienced more significant challenges than others during the pandemic. The Philippines, Central America and Lebanon have been hit particularly hard. In India and Myanmar, they have suffered through multiple lockdowns, unlike anything Americans have had to experience.

But with Lifeword's help in some areas of the world, technology such as Zoom and various social media apps have allowed the missionary care team to talk with our missionaries on video calls and text messaging to stay informed about the ministry, health and safety of our missionary families.

For me personally, one special blessing in talking so frequently with many of our missionaries is hearing how optimistic our missionaries are even though the situation in their countries may be difficult because of the pandemic. Our missionaries are always quick to share how they have seen God at work in providing for those who are serving on the mission field and in answering prayers.

("Jonathan has a heart for missionaries, especially in the area of missionary care, and has visited them on their fields and maintained relationships with them beyond his mission trips. He has been invaluable to the BMA Missions team as he continues to stay in contact with those serving abroad and has volunteered to assist missionary care director Jerry Kidd," said Lead Writer Holly Meriweather.)

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