

BAPTIST TRUMPET

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Roberto and Patty Marcelletti

Bryan and Kelley Clay

Missionary Committee Approves New Missionaries

By Jeff Herring, Executive Editor

On Thursday, Feb. 10, approximately 40 pastors and guests gathered in the fellowship hall of South City Church in Little Rock to hear the recommendation from the Missions

Advisory Committee concerning two new full-time missionaries. Chairman David Inzer, pastor of Landmark in England, opened the meeting at called on Derek Bremer, pastor of Denver Street in Greenwood, to pray. He then recognized Scott Smith, pastor of Zion in Fordyce, to share a devotional.

Following the devotional, Bro. Inzer called the meeting to order and recognized Executive Director Paul White to present the missionaries under consideration. Before introducing the missionaries, Bro. White shared that a vote to proceed with hiring the two new missionaries would be authorizing spending reserve funds. He also shared that the Revolving Loan Fund was low.

Bro. White recognized Hispanic Coordinator Michael Hight to introduce **Roberto and Patty Marcelletti** who were recommended to serve with Epic Church in Northwest Arkansas and Pastor Jake McCandless of Epic Church, their sending church. Bro. Roberto is originally from Venezuela and Patty is from Columbia. They shared their vision for planting churches and making disciples from Acts 14:21-23 and that they have "come to serve." (See Roberto's *Missionary Personality Profile* in the Feb. 2 issue.)

Allan Eakin, pastor of Celebration
See **MISSIONARIES**, Page 2



BMAA Ukrainian Crisis Relief Fund

As the war in Ukraine escalates, the need for relief support increases. To support fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, BMA Global Missions has set up the Ukrainian Crisis Relief Fund. Donations can be made online at bmamissions.org. From there choose "Give" and then "Designate My Offering." On the next screen, you will need to click "Show All" and select "Ukrainian Relief" from the list to designate your offering. You may also mail donations to BMA Missions Ukrainian Relief, P.O. Box 878, Conway, Ark. 72033.

Continue praying for churches and pastors as they minister in their communities during this horrific crisis. Pray for men who have joined the army, including Pastor Yuri (Church to All Nations in Lutsk), a former army captain who rejoined the army to fight for his country. Pray for his wife and four children.



Governor Hutchison Declares Days of Prayer for Ukraine

Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchison has issued an executive proclamation that March 1-3 be designated as "Special Days of Prayer for Ukraine in Arkansas." The official proclamation states:

See **PRAYER**, Page 6

MOVING
with Ministers
and Staff

To view previous listings
from this column, visit
our website at
www.baptisttrumpet.com.

Josh Firey is the new directional pastor at Grace Hills in Bentonville.

Dwayne Thomas has resigned as pastor of Friendship Baptist Church in Greenbrier effective Feb. 27.

The Power of Connecting

Help us continue to
be your ministry connection!

Special Emphasis 2022

March & April

Baptist Trumpet Day is April 24

Special Emphasis Begins

By Jeff Herring, Executive Editor

I am excited to share what is going on with the ministry of the *Baptist Trumpet* as we begin our time of Special Emphasis — "The Power of Connection." The packets of promotional flyers, along with a letter to the pastor and the church, should be arriving in your mailbox by the end of the week. I encourage you to join us in this time of Special Emphasis and use the included posters to help promote the ministry of the *Baptist Trumpet* in the following ways over the next two months:

- Post the flyers in places around your church to let people know that we want to continue to be the connection between your church members and the work of the BMA on every level.

- If you are not already subscribers, please set up a church plan subscription for your members. The best way to ensure that the ministry of the *Baptist Trumpet* continues to connect for years to come is to provide the opportunity to reach your members and keep them "informed and inspired," as our mission statement says.

- Set a goal and a time to collect a special love offering on or before *Baptist Trumpet* Day on Sunday, April 24. Please prayerfully consider how you can help us

See **Journey**, Page 4



New Websites Launched

By Jeff Herring, Executive Editor

- The *Baptist Trumpet* has launched a redesigned website — www.BaptistTrumpet.com — to better fulfill our mission of keeping you informed and inspired. The new website will feature all the content that appears in the paper each week, but it will be restricted to only subscribers. You will be able to access the content using your login if you already have that set up in your customer portal. If not, please contact us at the office and we will help get you going. Our goal with the new website is to be your go-to source for information and inspiration. Please check it out and let us know what you think.

- The BMA of Arkansas now has its own web presence. For years, the www.BMAofArkansas.com website has been the state missions home, but we are transitioning that site to be a landing page for all things related to the BMA of Arkansas. You will find quick links to each department, contact information for the Arkansas state officers and leaders, state meeting information and other resources. While the site is live and ready for your visit, it is still a work in progress, and we would welcome any suggestions for improvement.

- Arkansas State Missions now has a new home on the web along with a new
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Men's Basketball

• **Conway, Feb. 25** — Looking for their fifth consecutive trip to the American Midwest Conference (AMC) tournament semifinals, CBC hosted the Eagles of Williams Baptist University (WBU) at A.R. Reddin Fieldhouse. CBC (15-14) got off to a slow start and poured it on in the second half, recovering from a deficit with under eight minutes to play to beat WBU (16-11) 100-91 and advance to the AMC semifinals.

• **St. Louis, Mo., Feb. 26** — Playing in the AMC semifinals for the fifth straight season, CBC took on the Missouri Baptist Spartans at the Petty Student Resources Center. CBC (15-15) saw their season come to an end, trailing at halftime and falling to Missouri Baptist (25-5) 82-69.

Women's Basketball

• **St. Louis, Mo., Feb. 28** — After a terrific season by CBC, a pair of Lady Mustangs were selected by the AMC to the AMC All-Conference teams. **Aminata Seck** and **Alexis Augustus** both earned honors from the AMC. Seck was named Newcomer of the Year, First-Team All-AMC and earned a spot on the All-Defensive Team. Augustus earned All-AMC Third Team honors for the third time in her career.

Baseball

• **Little Rock, Feb. 28** — Playing for the first time this season at Gary Hogan Field on the campus of the University of Arkansas-Little Rock, CBC hosted a doubleheader against #20 Oklahoma City University. CBC (5-5) only scored five runs in the doubleheader and allowed 17 in a sweep by OCU (13-1) by scores of 10-1 and 7-4.

MISSIONARIES (Continued From Page 1)

Baptist Church in Haskell, then came to introduce **Bryan Clay**. Bryan is a member of his church and Celebration will serve as the sending church for him and his wife, Kelley. They plan to plant a church in the Benton-Hot Springs area. Bryan shared his testimony and why he felt this was God's direction for his ministry at this time. (See *Bryan's Missionary Personality Profile in the Feb. 9 issue.*)

Bro. White then recognized Joe Owens, chairman of the Advisory Committee, to present the recommendation. Advisory Committee Secretary Randy Shepherd then read the minutes and recommendations from their meeting. Bro. Inzer then called for and received a motion and second to approve the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, which was approved by a unanimous vote. These two men will begin serving on March 1.

Student Ministry Matters

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Small Groups in Student Ministry

In episode 103 of the Student Ministry Matters podcast (studentministrymatters.podbean.com), Chris Vines and I talk about the "ins and outs" of small groups in our student ministries. While many readers may think "All I have is a small group," it is important to consider the value of reducing the size of your group into smaller segments. It is in these smaller groups that some of the deeper work can be accomplished.

What exactly are we talking about when we say small groups? Vines defines a small group in his context as "a discipleship group that meets together on a regular basis to encourage one another toward Christ-likeness." I think this is a great definition for us to embrace. It tells us what small group ministry should be about. They aren't just fellowship groups. These groups are designed for a purpose. In his setting, they are meant to serve as a place of discipleship, and discipleship is what it is all about. God has called us to help our students pursue Christ-likeness. Small groups can be a great tool for that endeavor.

Small groups provide at least three things of great value:

• **They help students connect with one another on a deeper level.** There are a lot of positives that happen in the large group, but connecting on a deeper level is not one of them. Small groups allow students an opportunity to get to know one another in a smaller space.

• **Small groups give certain students opportunities to lead.** You may have a student who is ready to step forward and flex some ministry muscles. Small groups are a great place for that to happen. You can shadow that young person for a while and coach them until they are ready to take over the group all by themselves.

• **Small groups can stretch students out of their comfort zones.** It is always easy to fade into the background in a larger group. When there are only 2-4 students in your group, every student can be encouraged to participate, and that participation stretches.

In addition to the values of small group ministry, there is always the question of what your group should look like or what it should include. Replicate Ministries led by Robby Gallaty, encourages that every small group includes four things — Bible engagement, Scripture memory, accountability and prayer.

There are many forms of Bible engagement, but we recommend **SOAPing** (Scripture, Observation, Application and Prayer). Don't neglect the other aspects. It is easy to make it all about studying the Bible and then praying at the end, but Scripture memory and accountability can be powerful components as your students move toward Christ-likeness.

One of the greatest things about small group ministry is the opportunity to take your students deeper into the Word. If you have a smaller youth group, small group ministry allows you to take those that are ready to a new level as they seek to follow Jesus.

To close the meeting, Bro. White shared that Missionary Darrin Smith has resigned effective Jan. 31. The work in Fort Smith will be dissolved, but he praised the Lord for the 144 souls who made a profession of faith during Bro. Smith's six years of ministry there.

Bro. Inzer then ended the meeting by asking Paul Bullock, pastor of College View in Magnolia, to close in prayer.



Victory, Hampton, March 13-15; 5:30 p.m. Sun.; 7 p.m. Mon.-Tue.; Ruben Weaver, evangelist; Robbie Duncan, pastor.

First, McNeil, April 10-13; Ken Williams, pastor.



A Military Friendly College

Military men and women work hard for our country. They sacrifice time away from their families and, in a lot of cases, they risk their lives for people they don't know. However, through all this pressure, we know that a college education is very important to them so they can reach their military career goals and personal goals.

CBC believes our military service men and women should have a chance to earn a degree for all they do for our country. That is why we honor these brave men and women through higher education that fits their busy lifestyle, and we have earned the Military Friendly® School designation for 12 consecutive years.

In addition, we also commit to working with all forms of military funding and provide one of the most generous veteran tuition discounts available to show appreciation for their sacrifice.

We also understand military personnel's time is even more precious than money. That is why we make the enrollment process simple. Military Students can visit cbc.edu/military, choose a degree and format that fits their busy lifestyle and schedule a virtual visit with a Personal Enrollment Counselor to start the enrollment process. We are here to help through the entire enrollment process.

If you or someone you know is a service man or woman looking for a way to earn a college degree despite their busy lifestyle, visit cbc.edu/military today to schedule a virtual visit. Or contact us at pace@cbc.edu or (800) 441-5106.

Third Annual Scholarship Gala

There are only five weeks left before the CBC Scholarship Gala. Join us Saturday, April 2, at 6 p.m. at the Conway Expo Center. The night will be a celebration of Courageous Faith and will feature keynote speaker, Alex Kendrick. Entertainment will be provided by the CBC Fine Arts Department.

The proceeds from the event will benefit the Central Baptist College Scholarship Fund which supports institutionally funded scholarships.

Event sponsorships begin at \$2,000. Single tickets are on sale for \$100 each. For more information, to purchase tickets or to make a donation, visit cbc.edu/gala or contact Director of Development Amy Reed at areed@cbc.edu or (501) 205-8934.

WEBSITES

(Continued From Page 1)

website design. Executive Director Paul White, along with the website designer, Wes Hulvey, pastor of Springdale Baptist Church in Springdale, invite you to visit the new website at www.bmaARmissions.com. You can find information about our missionaries, including the weekly updates that are featured in the *Baptist Trumpet* each week. Bro. Paul and Wes are working with us to develop the future resource that will help churches search for a pastor or staff members and pastors connect. This resource will be featured on all our websites when it is ready.

I hope you will take some time to visit each of these new websites and give us some feedback about what you like, don't like or how we can do better. Thanks for your faithful support for the work of the BMA of Arkansas.

DISTRICT CALENDAR

Southwest District Brotherhood, April 4, 6 p.m.; Mount Vernon, Waldo.

Central Ark. District WMA, April 9, 10 a.m.; Landmark, England.



HEALTHY CHURCH SOLUTIONS

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healthychurchpodcast.com • healthychurchsolutions.org



Calvary Baptist Church in Morilton is seeking a full-time pastor. Resumes may be emailed to cbcmorilton@att.net.

Hillcrest Baptist Church in Texarkana is seeking a bi-vocational music director. For more information, contact Pastor Kelly Owens at hbctexarkana@gmail.com.

Meadowside Baptist Church in Pittsburg, Kan. is seeking a bi-vocational pastor. Contact Greg Hardister at (620) 704-6860.

Friendship Baptist Church in Mesquite, Texas is seeking a full-time pastor. Resume may be sent to office@friendshipmesquite.org. Please enter Search Committee in the subject line. Also include a recent video of a sermon, on a DVD or by a website link. You may also mail the requested information to Friendship Baptist Church, 820 Pioneer Road, Mesquite, Texas 75149. For more information visit friendshipmesquite.org.

for serving opportunities and how you can have the entire church discover their spiritual gifts and unique God-given design. You might also consider preaching a series of messages about ministry needs and the teams you have to carry out those responsibilities. Teach and empower your current team members to recruit new team members. They are your best advocates and people prefer being asked directly over signing up on a bulletin board or clipboard somewhere.

• As always, begin in prayer as instructed in Matt. 9:38. Your first prayer should be, "Lord, who should I invite to serve in this particular area?" Before you approach someone about serving, ask God to prepare their heart and purify your motives. Your invitation should be based on a desire to see people find a fulfilling role in your church. You are inviting them to fulfill God's agenda and purpose in their lives. It is better to want something you do not have than to have something you do not want. Prayerfully approach a plan to place the "right" people, in the "right" seats, for the "right" reasons.

• Identify a need, then pray. Ask God to lead you to the right person to invite them to help meet that need — the right person, serving in the right place, in the right way, at the right time. Always be looking for people who are not serving because those who are already serving are usually already overcommitted. Invite them to try out the team they feel would be the best fit for them but give them permission to "test drive" that ministry. You do not want anyone serving on a team that makes them miserable because, before long, everyone will be miserable on the team. You have work to do. Pray for the Lord to send laborers.



Morgan Grace Church worship service.

Instead of Shutting The Door, Open the Bible

By Gavin Roberts, BMAA Missionary

(via *mission:world News*) Utah is known for the "Greatest Snow on Earth."

The state is home to some of the greatest skiing in the world. The southern part of the state boasts the "Mighty Five" national parks that attract tourists from around the globe. Within an hour's drive from where my family and I live you can see snowy mountains or red rock desert. It is a beautiful place!

Depending on where your data comes from, Utah is also the least reached state in the U.S. with the gospel, including a number of areas with significant populations with little to no evangelical presence. That is why my family and I packed up and headed west!

We minister in Morgan, Utah, an incredibly picturesque mountain town. Snowcapped mountains sit above the town on all sides while the Weber River runs through the valley floor and keeps everything green. Morgan is a town of roughly 5,000 residents and the largest city in Morgan County, which has a total population of around 13,000. Geographically, it is the smallest county in the state. My brother, Chase Roberts and I pastor Morgan Grace Church, the only evangelical church in the city of Morgan and one of only two in the county.

While evangelical churches are few, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) thrives. Utah is the home of the Mormon Church. Many in our BMA family know Mormons from their missionary uniforms. You've likely had Mormon missionaries visit your home. Growing up in rural Arkansas, this was about the extent of my knowledge of the LDS church. So how does one minister to Mormons? How do we share the gospel with LDS friends?

It is not uncommon for folks in Utah to only know Christians from the South as the people who eat fried food, drink sweet tea and slam the door in their faces while they're on their two-year mission with the church. Instead of politely telling missionaries you are a Christian and do not wish to hear their spiel, I would ask that you prayerfully consider a different approach — invite them in. Offer them something to drink. Listen to them. Talk with them. Ask them questions. Love them. They are real people just like you.

Our Mormon friends are professional evangelists. We have found that they are generally open to religious conversations. However, debating is often not the best approach. Instead of attacking the LDS faith, ask questions that cause both parties in the conversation to think critically about their faith. When people have only known one faith from birth, they may never have looked at God in a different light.

So ask good questions like, "Who do you think the Bible tells us that Jesus is?" or "What is the authority for how we are to live our lives and receive forgiveness of our sins?" Questions like these allow them to share their beliefs and allow you to share your own. Encourage your Mormon friends to read the Bible. Let God do what God does. He speaks through His Word. He brings life through His Word. God saves sinful people in need of His grace! Just like those of you reading this article.

Ministering to Mormons is about listening and loving. It is something that happens via relationships that take time. We are all broken people, so instead of shutting them out, open the door and open your ears. Win a hearing. Love them. Jesus said in John 6:63 (ESV), "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." Listen intently. Show grace. God's Word brings life. Trust God to do what He has promised to do — build His church.

Pray for Utah! Pray for us. Listen to the next Mormon missionaries you meet. Love them. Maybe God will call some of you reading this to be a part of what He is doing in Utah.

Editor's Note: You can sign up to receive these mission:world News articles by visiting bmamissions.org/missionworldnews.

Team Building Strategy



Team Building Strategy

In *Good to Great*, Jim Collins explains how you need to make sure that not only the right people are on the bus but that they are seated in the right seats. This is a matter of ministry placement and is crucial to building a team that is effective, efficient and loves doing what they do. Jethro clearly told Moses in Exodus 18 that he was incapable of doing it alone and it would wear him out. Jethro then told him in verse 21 (HCSB), "Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people." In other words, make sure you get the right people on the bus.

Jethro continued to explain, "... and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, of tens." Once you get them on the bus, place them in the right seats on the bus. God has a perfect design for every individual and how they best fit on a team because a team, in Jethro's words, will make it easier for everyone, will bear the weight and responsibility together, will enable you to endure and will help everyone to "go to their place in peace." Maybe the most important part of the interaction between Jethro and Moses is that Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he said.

Pastor, you oversee many responsibilities where any one of them could be full-time — sermon preparation, pastoral care, counseling, administrating, directing staff and ministries, plus a plethora of others. Everyone has a maximum capacity except superman, and you are not him. The wise leader understands the importance of a team while focusing on getting the right people on the team, then placing them in the right positions that enable them to flourish and the church to be blessed by their presence. The happiest people are people who are serving in the roles they are passionate about — their sweet spots.

Strategic planning and thinking requires developing a ministry placement system where "people grow, and

the church grows the most quickly by inviting the right people into the right ministries at the right time for the right reasons" (New Church Dynamics DCPI). Hal Seed defines a ministry placement system this way: "A ministry placement system is both a culture of understanding and valuing the spiritual gifts and contributions of each attendee; and it includes processes that foster healthy ministry teams through inviting and equipping team members and raising up team leaders." It is helping people to discover their place on the team.

Hal continues, "The goal of your Ministry Placement System is to get the right people into the right places of service, for the right reasons. Once they are there, your ongoing goal is to keep them cared for and well-fed. At New Song, we say, 'We want to put more back into our volunteers than we take out of them.' The backbone of healthy churches is healthy, gifted, growing volunteers." Your greatest asset at your church is your people who love the Lord, love His church and love serving one another (I Peter 4:10-11; Rom. 12:4-8). Pastor, you are most effective working on a **team where you are the visionary leader.**

Here are some things to consider when building a team:

• You should first ask yourself what they need from you and how you can best equip them. Some tools to consider in team building are personality profiles to help them understand how they are hard-wired, a core values audit to make sure their values and the churches values add up, a spiritual gifts test, a spiritual growth evaluation, instruction on how to have a godly impact and a clear job description. There will also be a time for a ministry interview, but that will probably be more effective after **equipping them first and answering as many of their questions as possible.**

• **Develop a system** to enlist volunteers by listing ministry needs and sharing them with your church. Consider how you can best cast the vision



By Executive Editor
Jeff Herring

Journey (Continued From Page 1)

meet our goal of \$45,000 to continue to be your ministry connection.

• Please visit BaptistTrumpet.com/SE2022 to follow our progress and download digital resources to help promote this time of Special Emphasis.

The following is a modified version of the letter that is included with the Special Emphasis packets that were mailed out:

The past 14 months since I began serving as the executive editor of the *Baptist Trumpet* have been exciting. We have continued to produce the only weekly newspaper in the BMA and have been able to connect with many of our subscribers across the state of Arkansas and beyond. It is truly a remarkable thing to see how God uses this ministry to provide the connection between what is happening in the BMA — locally, in Arkansas, nationally and internationally — to the people in our churches. I truly believe that the “Power of Connection” is something we can’t do without if we are going to continue to do the work of the association to the best of our ability.

As we enter the time set aside by the BMA of Arkansas for us to raise the needed support for this ministry, I want to let you know where we stand. The much-needed rate increase, along with a 50% funded *Trumpet* Team, has helped to stabilize our finances. As we begin this time of Special Emphasis (March 1), we are exactly 50% through our fiscal year (September-August). This means that the 50% funded *Trumpet* Team has carried us this far to help cover our deficit, but we must **raise the other 50%** during this time to complete the fiscal year strong. We need to raise **just over \$20,000** to offset the planned deficit.

For the past two years, we have been transitioning to a new circulation management system that allows us to better connect with our subscribers and provides a way for them to connect with the content on our website. The program we use is working well, but it has one major drawback — the ongoing monthly cost. We are working to **develop our own software** that can do what we need without the monthly cost, but it requires an upfront investment. This investment can easily be recovered once we are able to stop the cost associated with our current program and will be a big help in keeping our finances stable going forward. The initial **estimated cost for the development of this software is \$20,000**, but we are hopeful it can be done for much less.

As you are reading this, we will have launched our new website. Please **go check it out at www.BaptistTrumpet.com**! While we are excited to present it to you, there are some other resources we are looking to provide in the future that will require more investment to develop. We are in the process of creating a resource for churches that are looking for pastors or staff members and also a place where those that are available can post their information. Our goal is to make this **a searchable and sharable resource** that will help our churches find God’s man to fulfill their ministry needs. We are **budgeting \$5,000** to help develop this resource and others for our churches.

As you consider each of these goals, I hope you see, as we do, that they will help us continue to provide the needed connection between the people in your church and the ministries of the BMA on all levels. Please prayerfully consider how you and your church can **help us meet our goal of \$45,000**.

I would love to come and share about how God is working through the *Baptist Trumpet* with your church. You can contact me by email at editor@baptisttrumpet.com or by calling the office at (501) 565-4601.

provision, the General Assembly gets to establish offices that oversee public education — such as a Department of Education, Secretary of Education and State Board of Education. The governor appoints people to fill those positions.

The Public Schools Amendment of 2022 would strike this provision from the constitution and replace it with new language that puts an unelected board in charge of public education in Arkansas. The amendment says that anyone who has served on the State Board of Education in the past 10 years would be ineligible to serve on this new board and that the governor and the Arkansas Legislature would not have the power to review or approve new rules or policies the board makes concerning public education in Arkansas. (familycouncil.org)

Interpreter Breaks Down While Translating Ukrainian President’s Speech

A veteran interpreter translating Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s speech Sunday broke down in tears as she relayed the leader’s remarks after the country survived yet another night of attacks by Russian troops. “Russia is on the path of evil,” Zelenskyy said. “The world must deprive Russia of the right to vote on the U.N. Security Council.”

The interpreter then choked up when translating this comment from Zelenskyy: “Ukrainians, we know exactly what we are defending. We will definitely win. Last night was brutal in Ukraine. Again, the shelling, again the bombing of residential areas and civilian infrastructure.”

The unnamed interpreter for the German news outlet WELT could not translate the remainder of the Ukrainian president’s comments. After breaking down once more, she reportedly apologized before going off the air.

For his part, Zelenskyy — who has refused to flee his country despite threats against his safety — said Ukraine will fight as long as necessary to ensure its citizens’ freedom and autonomy from Russia. “The night was hard,” he said Sunday. “The people rose to defend their state, and they showed their true faces. This is terror. They are going to bomb our Ukrainian cities even more. They are going to kill our children even more insidiously. This is an evil that has come to our land and must be destroyed.”

“If children are born in shelters, even when the shelling continues, then the enemy has no chance in this — undoubtedly — people’s war,” Zelenskyy continued. “To victory! Glory to Ukraine!”

Faithwire spoke with a U.S.-based pastor born in Ukraine who said he is shocked by the scene unfolding in his home country. He said he is “proud” of believers in Ukraine who have placed their trust in God amid such harrowing circumstances. “They are rallying,” Pastor Andrew Moroz of Lynchburg, Virginia, told Faithwire. “They’re gathering in groups, they’re

worshipping. There are videos going around of prayer services and worship experiences in subways and so I’m praying that Jesus is glorified. If He is peace — which we believe He is, He’s the Prince of Peace — then we want more of Him in these spaces where people are hurting.” He urged Christians to pray the Lord’s Prayer over the situation in Ukraine.

“I’ve been praying the Lord’s Prayer for the country of Ukraine,” he said. “We can pray that for each other, too, in just the same elements that Jesus lays out for us. This is what those people need. This is what I need right now: ‘Lord, I need Your Kingdom present in my life. I want Your Kingdom present in the Ukraine. I need Your provision and sustenance; they need provision.’” (faithwire.com)

U.S. Senate Defeats Bill To Legalize Abortions Up to Birth

Senate Republicans, with the help of Democrat Senator Joe Manchin, voted to defeat a bill that would overturn every pro-life law in America and legalize abortions up to birth. Lawmakers voted 48-46 against cloture — against ending debate and allowing a vote on the misnamed Women’s Health Protection Act. As a result, the filibuster against the radical pro-abortion legislation was sustained and the bill is defeated, as 60 votes were necessary to move ahead to a vote on the bill.

Bans on partial-birth abortions, sex-selection abortions and taxpayer-funded abortions would be gone if the bill had passed. Laws that protect women and girls would be eliminated, too, including parental consent for minors and informed consent laws that ensure mothers receive basic facts

about their unborn baby’s development before going through with an abortion. (lifeneews.com)

Ukrainian Store Runs Out of Bibles

The thirst for hope and the spread of uncertainty have been so rampant in Ukraine that at least one Christian store has totally run out of Bibles. Robert L. Briggs, president and CEO of American Bible Society, penned a commentary piece for *Christianity Today*, explaining how Christians in Ukraine are responding to the Russian crisis.

“As people grapple with unknown, many are experiencing the Bible’s message for the first time ever,” Briggs wrote. “According to Anatoliy Raychynets, deputy general secretary of the Ukrainian Bible Society, priests and pastors over the past weeks have been flocking to the Bible Society store in Kyiv to buy Bibles.” The situation has been so intense the store reportedly ran out of Bibles, with Raychynets telling Briggs their biggest challenge is getting enough copies of scripture to meet the demand. “We need more Bibles,” he said.

Raychynets also revealed another crucial restorative detail about his relationship with Christian leaders in Russia, revealing that they communicate and have been united in Christ. In a world of such toxic division — and amid tensions that do anything other than unite opposing sides — this is a powerful testament to the fruit of the gospel in people’s lives.

Please continue to seek God on behalf of the people of Ukraine. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has invited the world to join him in prayer this Sunday. (faithwire.com)

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By Executive Editor Jeff Herring

Amendment Would Remove Legislative Oversight Public Education

A proposed constitutional amendment would make it more difficult for the Arkansas Legislature and the governor to oversee public education or hold educators accountable. Arkansas For World Class Education is working to place the “Public Schools Amendment of 2022” on the ballot this November. Among other things, the proposed

amendment would remove the provision in the Arkansas Constitution that gives the state’s General Assembly the ability to make laws concerning the State Board of Education.

Currently, the Arkansas Constitution says, “The supervision of public schools, and the execution of the laws regulating the same, shall be vested in and confided to, such officers as may be provided for by the General Assembly.” Under this



Is the American Church Special?

I love our nation, and I'm so thankful to have been born in the United States. I'm thankful for all the blessings we have been able to enjoy and for the men and women who have defended and are defending our nation. God has used our nation mightily in sending missionaries and resourcing them. Our nation has been a haven and shelter for the Jewish people and is helping and partnering with the nation of Israel.

With all the frustrating things we could say about the state of Christianity and the church today in the United States — there are so many who continue to be faithful and valiantly love Jesus. So, does God view believers and the church in America as more special than any other group of believers in other nations or throughout history?

I know the question seems silly, but it's a real and needed question. Though you'd quickly say "no" to that outright question to America's specialness, you have likely made a statement before that, if it was analyzed, would appear that you believed believers in America were more important and cherished by God more than believers in other nations.

I addressed this yesterday in an online conversation. I'm working hard to grow a new Facebook page — "Stand Firm Jake" (feel free to look it up and click "Like") — and each day I release a new meme. This one was controversial; it said, "The American Church Ain't Ready for Real Persecution." True in many ways, but oversimplified.

I received a message from someone saying, "It doesn't matter if American Christians are ready for persecution because we won't be here." I believe many feel the same way as this gentleman. I responded with, "Why do you feel that way?"

He hasn't replied, so I thought I'd share my planned reply with you. At least someone gets to hear it.

Now I imagine his response will be that America won't be here during the end times because we will be raptured. I'd still like to hear why he feels that's the case because I believe it's extremely important that we know the Scriptural reason we hold particular views. This is the case even if I agree with what is said. Too often, end time views are treated like a pizza buffet, we pick a view that sounds the best or that is the special of the day, but our views need to come from Scripture. If someone doesn't want to put in the effort to find the Biblical foundation of a particular end time view, then I encourage them to hold their view loosely.

Though I'm certain his response will be about the rapture timing as would be most everyone who felt the same way, I really feel there is a subconscious reason running in the background of those who think America won't face persecution. I'm not sure anyone realizes it enough to articulate it, but it's that subconscious reasoning that concerns me. I believe that deeper level reason is that many feel American believers are more special than other believers around the world. Therefore, the future narrative becomes that we (American believers) will continue in our freedoms and blessings until Jesus raptures us away and we'll never face any trouble.

It sounds ridiculous saying it out loud, but I'd argue that most of us have that narrative in our minds — I know I have for most of my life. If that is the reality of what is going to happen with the American church, then:

- How come we are more special than the Iraqi Christians who were persecuted by ISIS?
- What makes us more important than the African believers persecuted by Boko Haram?
- What makes us more valuable than the Afghan believers facing



Broadway Ave., Bay added three by statement; Rick Jenson, pastor.

Cathedral, Jonesboro welcomed three additions since last report; Ken Beaver, pastor.

Connection Point; Brookland rejoices over one profession of faith; Chad White, pastor.

Landmark, England reports three by letter and one by baptism; David Inzer, pastor.

First, Damascus gained two by baptism; Daniel Williams, pastor.

Fourth St., West Helena reports one by baptism and five by letter; Lance Madden, pastor.

The Bridge Church, Mountain Home received two by letter; Hershel Conley, pastor.

Union, Bodcaw witnessed two by baptism; Joe Brown, pastor.

Victory, Hampton added four by letter; Robbie Duncan, pastor.

persecution from the Taliban?

- What makes us so much greater than our brothers and sisters being persecuted in North Korea?

- Are we so much more special than the first century Christians that we will be spared?

- Are we even more special than the Apostles?

- More than the Armenian Christians?

No! No, we're not any more special or any more deserving! Saying this out loud makes the thought sound silly, but I imagine if we were all transparent, we've likely had that thought. Since we have possibly had that thought, we often project the future narrative, that as American Christians, we are untouchable, but that's not the case. We could face persecution or challenges like any of our brothers and sisters in the world today and throughout history.

Even if the rapture happens at the beginning of the final seven years of this age, there's no promise that difficulty and persecution won't befall us before that time. I'd argue that it's likely necessary for difficulty to hit the United States long before the final seven years. So, regardless of the rapture timing argument, scripturally we can't take challenges to the American church off the table.

I believe America is a special place. It's special because it was established on principles that flowed out of Judeo-Christian values. It's special because of the sacrifices made defending the nation and sustaining it. It's special because it's home. The American church is special because it's us, but it's not any more special than believers around the world. Therefore, we too should expect difficulty. We don't have to experience it, but we should expect to do so.

Jake is available for revivals and preaching learn more at standfirmministries.com.



Missionaries Stan & Donna Scroggins enjoyed celebrating Valentine's Day on the roof of a local hotel.

Stan & Donna Scroggins • The Philippines

Is the Philippines open for travel? Can I travel to the Philippines right now? Effective Feb. 10, fully vaccinated Americans and tourists from non-visa-required countries will be allowed entry in the Philippines and will not need to quarantine. Qualified travelers must meet several requirements, including a valid passport, booked return travel, proof of vaccination and a negative COVID test.

- **From Stan** — After three weeks of strict compliance on the campus, things really loosened up, and we could have our fourth World Mission Day. Mid-terms are next week and graduation is just around the corner.

Like so many of you at home, we are deeply concerned for our friends in the Ukraine. Donna and I, and a group from First Baptist Church in Magnolia first traveled there in the 1990s to train the Baptist Union to write Sunday School curriculum. That followed a five-year cooperation with Ukrainian Baptist working with our Publication Department and Volunteer Student Missions trips.

- **From Donna** — It seems like everywhere we go nowadays we gravitate to children. It might just be showing how much we miss our grandchildren, but I find playing the "grandmother" role lots of fun. Many parents teach their children to "bless" — the child takes your hand and presses it to their forehead. It is the sweetest thing ever.

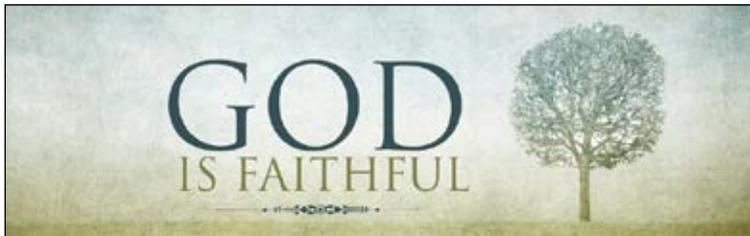
After almost four years, all our Philippine Missionaries are, at least for right now, actually in the Philippines. Cris and Alicia Samson, along with their two boys, are back in Bacolod. Fil Kakilala is in Iloilo but returned to the United States on March 2. Of course, Stan and I and Diane and Doug Lee serve here in Talisay and Danny and Rita Ballard are in Manila.



- **Darlene Carey Christian Academy** (pictured above) — There has been very good progress on the building this month. May I ask that you stop **right now** and say a prayer for the completion of the building?

— Donna: +63 908-894-6724/Stan: +63 908-894-6723. You can also contact us through email and Facebook Messenger: Donna, gojocrusaders@msn.com/Stan, stanmusical@icloud.com.

Editor's Note: There is much more information about the ministry of the Scroggins than we can print in this limited space. You can visit thescroggins.com to subscribe to their ministry updates.



Only God is Truly Faithful

By Vickie Arruda

God is always true to His promises. He can never draw back from His promises of blessing or of judgment. Since He cannot lie, He remains totally steadfast to what He has spoken:

- “Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations” (Deut. 7:9 ESV).

- “I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever; with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations. For I said, ‘Steadfast love will be built up forever; in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness.’ The heavens praise your wonders, O Lord...” (Psa. 89:1-5).

- “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ‘The Lord is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘therefore I will hope in him’” (Lam. 3:22-24).

- “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it” (I Cor. 10:13).

- “Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it” (I Thess. 5:23-24).

Faithfulness — I count on this attribute of God’s character. He is faithful. He cannot lie. I love that I can trust Him! I may not always like what His Word, the Bible, has to say or understand it, but I can trust that He will be faithful to His promises and all He has said.

Because of my counseling ministry, I am very aware that many individuals live their lives disappointed to the point of being bitter because they have been exposed to the unfaithfulness of another. That could come in the form of a spouse, child, church leader/member, boss, friends, etc. Yet God warned of the following in His Word:

- “It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man” (Psa. 118:8).

- “Stop regarding man in whose nostrils is breath, for of what account is he?” (Isa. 2:22).

My precious ones, He is faithful! There are only two possible choices when it comes to where we place our faith (trust). We will either have to choose God or man (ourselves or others). Our God is faithful! People, no matter how wonderful they are, will eventually let you down somewhere, somehow because we are only human and not divine like God.

Today, if you are harboring bitterness toward someone who has been unfaithful intentionally or unintentionally to you, please dethrone them. They are not God. Then trust God, the faithful one, to help you learn how to forgive and let go of the bitterness. Reconcile if possible, and where that is not possible let go and move on. God has a plan for your life and His kingdom!

He will never disappoint, and He calls all of us to accept that greatest gift of all — eternal life through His Son’s death on the cross and that free gift of grace!

— Vickie (vickie@purejoyinternational.org) is a Biblical Counselor, Founder and President of Pure Joy International (purejoyinternational.org).

PRAYER

(Continued From Page 1)

“WHEREAS: As Arkansans, we strengthen our faith through prayer and worship, and today, we come together united as a state seeking reassurance and guidance for our fellow brothers and sisters; and

“WHEREAS: On Feb. 24, 2022, the Russian Federation launched a large-scale invasion of Ukraine, after months of military buildup along Ukrainian borders. This unprovoked and brutal attack on Ukraine’s independence, sovereignty and freedom has resulted in the flight of thousands of refugees, damage to local infrastructure and multiple casualties, all of which continue to rise; and

“WHEREAS: Despite sanctions placed upon Russia by the international community, the fate of Ukraine’s democracy and future continues to be threatened as Russian encroaches the capitol city of Kiev from northern, eastern and southern borders; and

“WHEREAS: During this challenging time, families, communities and the preservation of democracy across Ukraine, Europe and the rest of the world are threatened by Russian aggression. We ask God to bless Ukrainians of all faiths and to give world leaders the strength, guidance and wisdom to overcome this deadly conflict; and

“WHEREAS: Recognizing the love and power of God, we unite with fellow citizens to pray for those who are affected by Russian aggression, whether it be Ukrainian citizens courageously taking up arms to defend their nation or refugees fleeing from the frontlines, and we gather in prayer for the protection they seek; and

“WHEREAS: In Deut. 31:8, we are reminded of God’s promise, “The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave or forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged” and

“WHEREAS: We specifically thank God for his love and mercy and ask for peace and healing throughout the nation of Ukraine and the rest of the world;

“NOW, THEREFORE, I, ASA HUTCHINSON, Governor of the State of Arkansas, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the laws of the state of Arkansas, do hereby proclaim March 1 to March 3, 2022 as Special Days of Prayer for Ukraine in Arkansas across the state, and I urge all citizens of all faiths and backgrounds to join in prayer for the citizens of Ukraine and the international community. These three days will include a special time of prayer dedicated to the citizens of Ukraine at the Arkansas Leadership Prayer Breakfast on Thursday, March 3, 2022.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed this 28th day of February, in the year of our Lord 2022.



Red Cross Issues Call for Volunteers

By John A. Brimley, Regional Communications Manager
American Red Cross of Missouri and Arkansas

Winter weather has increased the number of home fires. The American Red Cross of Missouri and Arkansas is recruiting new volunteers to help respond to these local emergencies by supporting people in their time of greatest need.

Nationally, the Red Cross has already responded to more than 1,900 home fires since 2022 began, providing assistance to more than 6,500 people. In the Missouri and Arkansas Region, trained Red Cross Disaster Action Team (DAT) volunteers have responded to more than 2,100 home fires so far this fiscal year (July 1, 2021 to Feb. 15, 2022), and have helped nearly 7,000 people impacted by a fire in their home.

Just since Jan. 1, in the Missouri and Arkansas Region, there have been more than 600 fires and more than 1,900 people assisted by Red Cross.

Local Disaster Response Volunteers Needed

When a home fire occurs, DAT volunteers are needed to respond to the fire to ensure the family members receive immediate assistance, including finances for a place to stay, food and clothing. Services provided are free and available to anyone impacted by a home fire.

DAT volunteers offer support during a very difficult time. As a DAT volunteer (redcross.org/volunteer/disaster-action-team), you will provide emotional support, access to financial assistance and information to help families begin to recover. DAT team members also offer compassion and care. Training is provided to volunteers and new volunteers are teamed up with experienced responders.

“Our Red Cross volunteers support their community and neighbors in need each and every day by responding to local emergencies,” said Lori Arnold, executive director for the American Red Cross Greater Arkansas Chapter. “We need more volunteer help so that no one faces this heartbreaking situation alone.”

“Volunteers who serve in these roles find the work extremely rewarding because they are able to be there in someone’s darkest hour and offer help and hope following devastating situations,” Arnold added.

Remote Volunteer Positions Also Available

Remote opportunities are available for those interested in volunteering as a DAT Duty Officer. These individuals are the first point of contact for fire departments and other emergency response agencies who request Red Cross assistance. Duty officers contact volunteers who are on call to respond to a home fire. They also provide guidance to the DAT volunteers who are responding to the fires. Duty officers work from the comfort of their homes.

Find out more about volunteering with American Red Cross at redcross.org/volunteertoday.

— About the American Red Cross: The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides comfort to victims of disasters; supplies about 40% of the nation’s blood; teaches skills that save lives; distributes international humanitarian aid; and supports veterans, military members and their families. The Red Cross is a nonprofit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to deliver its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org or cruzrojaamericana.org, or visit us on Twitter at @RedCross. (870) 206-4741/john.brimley@redcross.org

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PAUL WHITE
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
 arstamis@comcast.net

Heartbroken

Please remember all the innocent people in Ukraine who are suffering. I just can't imagine how the people must feel. May God put His hands of protection over them.

March Madness

What an exciting time for your State Missions Department. Beginning this week, we will officially have two new full-time men on the field. I just want to thank each of you for your support of this great ministry.

Bryan and Kelley Clay will be planting in southwest Saline County (between Benton and Hot Springs). They have chosen "Faith Journey" as the name for their mission. The Clays live in Benton and are being sent by their home church, Celebration Baptist Church in Haskell (a former mission project).

We are also happy to welcome **Roberto and Patty Marcelletti** as our newest Hispanic church planters. They will be working in the Springdale/Rogers area. Epic Church of Springdale will be the sending church, and they will be working closing with Pastor Jake McCandless in that location. Roberto is a former Texas state missionary and comes from Venezuela, where he and his wife Patty were dentists and church planters. They have yet to submit a name for their mission, but we will let you know as soon as possible.

FYI

Praise the Lord! The contract has been signed on our building in Fort Smith. To sell it in just a week and for a nice profit is a God thing. Pray as we will be closing in about 30 days.

Cave City

I had the privilege to present BMA Missions this past Sunday at Hillcrest Baptist Church. A special thanks to them for the invitation. After morning worship, we enjoyed a time of fellowship over a meal. I love sharing about missions and visiting our churches. I would love to come to share with your church. Feel free to contact me. God is good all the time.

From Our Missionaries

Misión Creciendo en Cristo (Growing in Christ), North Little Rock: Juan Carlos Posadas writes, "Some beneficiary families of the Community Service Program are responding to our invitation and are attending the Sunday service. We thank God and pray their hearts will be opened to receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

"Sunday, as part of the celebration of World Mission Day 2022, we had the privilege of hearing the word of God through his servant, Cristian Martinez, whom we have adopted as our missionary in Romania. Cristian shared with us from I Tim. 3:14-16. It was a great blessing to hear a message so well structured and applied to the church. We had the opportunity to pray and give an offering for World Missions and the Hispanic National Missions. We also renewed our faith promises to continue supporting Cristian and Vanesa in Romania.

"In our congregation, we have proposed to teach, practice and commit ourselves to the missions and, thank

God, the brothers are responding. We greatly appreciate your prayers for this mission in North Little Rock. God bless you all."

Ebenezer, West Little Rock: Ruben Isturiz writes, "I am grateful every time I hear from our brothers who send us the following words: 'We are praying for you.' That reminds me that our work is spiritual and that we are not alone. Thank you very much for your support.

"This week my heart has been praying for Ukraine and for all our brothers in Christ in that nation. The reports of missionaries there give us encouragement that, even in the midst of such a difficult situation, their faith grows.

"At Ebenezer, we continue with the Berean Groups (cells). We have had some setbacks in some groups to continue meeting, either due to the pandemic or bad weather. Pray for the families with conflicts. We have some cases, and we wish a powerful intervention in each Ebenezer family.

"Keep praying for my health. I have already had several medical tests, monitoring my heart for a month, the one for sleep apnea, now I need the one for heart stress. At the moment, the

cardiologist is reviewing the results. I am taking an aspirin daily and medicine for hypertension. Once again, a thousand thanks for your prayers. To God be the glory!"

Faith Chapel, Flippin: Johnny Shew writes, "We had a great week at Faith Chapel — the best number we have had in over a year since the second round of COVID hit. We pray that the Lord is bringing us through this.

"We had return visitors again Sunday morning, as well as one first-time visitor, and we had a great time of worship. We still have some who are out sick. I am praying we can all be healthy. Some that have not been coming say they will return next week since the pandemic numbers are improving. To us, this just means that if we will stay faithful to our calling, and let God work, He will take care of the rest, and that is what we are trying to do.

"We met new people this week. Some say they will come, some not. An interesting thing I have noticed when witnessing — so many times when I ask people if they are saved, their answer is 'yea, I'm good' but they don't live like it, they don't want to talk about it and they want to get away from you. That doesn't sound 'good' to me, but it's not up to me. So I just keep telling them the truth and trying to show forth the love of Jesus.

"Thank you for holding us up in your prayers. Please continue, God is hearing them and we thank Him for His answers."

The Table, Springdale: Clinton Morris writes, "We had a beautiful week. I was able to attend a great training at the Multiplication Workshop with Larry Barker. I also brought Drew along for the training. For all of you who do not know, we are training Drew to be the future pastor of The Table. I love the work ethic and overall heart for God that this guy has.

"Sunday was something else. We had 27 people at the service, and we were missing 7 of our regulars. We will be bringing a few more tables next week to accommodate our growing mission.

"I had a 90-minute conversation with an unsaved person after the service who has been wanting to understand our faith. I am so thankful that God allowed me another opportunity to share the gospel. This is still an ongoing prayer request.

"Pray for the community that we are reaching and the work that God is doing in our midst."

Leave it to Cleaver

By Dr. Tony Cleaver
 726 Walnut Dr. • Killeen, Tex. 76549
 jstmcleaver@embarqmail.com



Traditions That Trap

As good as our traditions might be, sometimes they become a trap. I need to examine some of my own traditions that might trap me. I have traditions because of family, past experiences or denominational attachment. Some of these place God in a box of being a God of "then but not now." Hezekiah (II Kings 18:5) showed great courage to put away a tradition that had been embedded in the soul of the nation for decades (Num. 21:4-9). I hope I have the courage to be like him in my walk with God.

There is great surprise and amazement in examining traditions. Some need to be kept. Some need to be abandoned. Let me share some traditions that I am wrestling with right now:

• **Time of worship service** — At one point in my life, I assumed God had commanded that we worship at 11 on Sunday morning. What a surprise when I went to a service at 8:15 a.m., then to Sunday School after that! Wow, I was awake.

• **Preacher attire** — As a young Christian, I assumed preachers were born in a black suit. They came straight from the factory dressed that way. I saw a preacher the other day without a tie. He probably did not get the memo. However, he preached a great sermon in the worship time. I also heard a superb sermon from a pastor in a pulpit robe. I saw a cowboy church preacher in boots and blue jeans, with a really big belt buckle. Mercy me — what a wide choice of preacher apparel!

• **Pews in the church house** — The first time I worshipped without pews was an uncomfortable experience for me. However, there is no requirement to sit in rows facing forward. Some congregations choose chairs for worship. They place them in a semi-circle. Making eye contact with other congregants is a good experience for me. This encourages me on to do the work of worship. I like both. I don't have to have it one way or the other as my tradition.

• **Other music instruments** — This is a fact of my life — the piano and the organ have always been on certain sides of the auditorium. What challenged me last month was the orchestra in the service. It not only had drums, but it also had strings, brass, reeds and cymbals. I tapped my foot — only one foot — during worship! Worship music is at times acapella. The point here is the worship of God, not the instrument.

• **Liturgy** — Our kind of Christianity prides itself that we are not liturgical. What happened to me in a recent service was this — they received the offering just before the benediction! What were they thinking? I heard responsive readings and prayers. It touched my heart as we said aloud together the Model Prayer. Don't tell anyone, but in my private devotions, I have begun to read aloud some of those readings in the back of the hymnbook.

• **Hymnbooks/screen hymns** — This is a tough call. I don't read music so I don't know what those little markings on the pages indicate. I know what I like to sing. I know my comfort zone in worship. There are others who are in worship with me who might enjoy some other music process. I think I might be open to some movement in this area. I know when I get to His presence I will sing, and sing with great gusto. Why shouldn't I practice that now?

As I consider my walk with God, I'm simply "thinking out loud here" regarding a few traditions that might trap me. We all have them. I am looking at mine. If I need to abandon some of my traditions, let me be like Hezekiah!

Lord Jesus, call to my mind those traditions that trap. If I need to, may I smash that tradition! Set me free! May I find fresh worship with You and You alone. May I find that bonded link with You while it is today!

(Originally published in the June 18, 2008 issue of the Baptist Trumpet.)



Continued Violence In Myanmar

By Holly Meriweather

(via Lifeword newsletter) February 1, 2022, marked the one-year anniversary of the military coup in Myanmar. Sparked by a general election that caused protests on both sides of the conflict, it has now turned into a civil war across the country.

Rama, Lifeword's global partner (and BMA missionary) explains, "The conflict is between the military junta and the People's Defense Forces (PDF) all over the country every day, and traveling is dangerous."

"Recently, an evangelist was preaching in a village and Buddhists who didn't like Christians reported them to the military. A few minutes later they came and arrested him. Several pastors have been shot dead by the military, and villagers are being paid to report

gatherings of more than five (people)."

Despite the fear and uncertainty of this endless coup, Rama has not stopped ministering to people in nearby villages. He still conducts small-group Bible studies in several communities, hosts three-day evangelistic camps, does house-to-house visitation and distributes the gospel tracts he makes.

But his most effective method of sharing the gospel is through Burmese-language Lifeword programming. Although most forms of communication are tapped and commandeered by the military, it is still possible to utilize a VPN (Virtual Private Network) connection to send and receive programming to a playout center in Singapore to beam the programming back into Myanmar.

Rama will continue to share the good news of the gospel despite pastors being arrested, homes being searched and church members being interrogated. He says the PDF, the small opposition army, has promised to begin more severe strikes against the military junta. The PDF have also begun making their own weapons and adding soldiers to their ranks. Still, he says, military forces have become more brutal and there is no sign of peace.

"The military is checking churches and pastors' houses where our house church is," Rama says. "They have not yet come to our house church. Our team and I will continue working in those mission fields and try to stay away from brutal military and police as much as we can. Last Sunday, we met without singing so we would not be noticed."

Please pray for Rama and his ministry leaders as they continue to share the gospel in Myanmar and other Burmese-speaking areas despite the danger.

Team Lifeword

We are excited to announce that Lifeword Sunday 2022 is Oct. 23! Stay tuned, as we will be announcing this year's theme soon!

If your church would like to schedule Donny or another team member to come and share what God is doing through Lifeword's ministry, contact Jennifer Herrel at jennifer@lifeword.org.

Please join us in praying for the salvation of non-Christians in Nepal who faithfully listen to and watch Lifeword Nepali content and for their understanding of the truth of the gospel being shared with them.

We praise God for our Lifeword team member traveling to Kathmandu to train the local network of churches. He reports exciting results — baptizing 10 people in the last month and beginning two discipleship groups in the coming weeks.

We also praise God that Lifeword will be adding languages #134 and #135 online by the end of month.

BMAA National Meeting
Springfield, Mo. • April 18-20
 For more information visit
baptisttrumpet.com/bmaa2022

UPCOMING EVENTS

Ark. Spring Galilean Meeting, March 5, 9:30 a.m.; Speaker Eliezar Semedo; CBC Community Room.

CBC Annual Scholarship Gala, April 2, 6 p.m.; Conway Expo Center.

Southwest District Brotherhood, April 4, 6 p.m.; Mount Vernon, Waldo.

Central Ark. District WMA, April 9, 10 a.m.; Landmark, England.

BMA of America, April 18-20; Springfield, Mo.

National WMA Meeting, April 19; 8:30 a.m. registration, 9:00 a.m. meeting; Grandview, Springfield Mo.

Baptist Trumpet Day, April 24.

Hot Dogs and Hot Rods, May 21; proceeds benefit Water for Christ; Lifesong, Greenbrier.

SOAR Student Conference, June 29–July 1; Hilton-Anatole, Dallas, Texas.

Lifeword Sunday, Oct. 23.

BMA of Arkansas, Nov. 3-4; Central Baptist College, Conway.

National Senior Adult Conference, Nov. 15-17; Chateau on the Lake, Branson, Mo.

The Power of Connecting

Help us continue to be your ministry connection!

Special Emphasis 2022 • March & April

Baptist Trumpet Day is April 24

Local District
 Information &
 Events



Goal: \$45,000

For deficit reduction, software improvements and website upgrades