

Biography of the Executive Director

Martin Allen Baker was born on December 16, 1951 in Denver City, TX where he lived to age 18. After graduating from Denver City High School in 1970 he attended Sul Ross State University from 1970 to 1972 when he transferred to Stephen F. Austin State University to major in Forestry. (There are not very many trees in far west Texas.) On March 10, 1973 he married Mary Skerkowski. (51 years and two wonderful children later, they are still married to each other. Their son, Paul, was born in 1976 and their daughter, Amanda, was born in 1980.) Martin graduated from SFA in 1975 with a B.S. in Forestry.

Martin had made a profession of faith in Jesus early in his childhood but did not fully surrender his life to Christ until he transferred to SFA and met Bro. June and Phil Metzinger and began attending Freedom Hill Baptist Church.

Martin joined GODTEL's Board of Directors in 1975 and after a few years became the Treasurer. When the Old Redland Hotel was purchased in January of 1977 to house GODTEL's first homeless shelter, Martin, Mary, and baby Paul were some of the first occupants.

In 1978 Martin established a welding business, "Martin's Welding," which he operated in East Texas and then in West Texas until 1989 when he and his family moved to Lufkin where he and Mary became co-directors of the Lufkin Mission.

In the 1990's Martin became the Vice President and Secretary of the Board, in which capacity he served until 2021 when he became President of the Board and Executive Director of GODTEL.

Martin Baker was one of the founders of GODTEL Ministries back in 1975 and has been affiliated with the ministry since that time. When Bro. June, our President/Executive Director for 45 years, went to be with the Lord in September of 2021, the Board of Directors unanimously voted for Martin to take his place.

God's Open Door To Eternal Life, Inc. d.b.a. GODTEL Ministries, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in East Texas. GODTEL operates three homeless shelters, or missions, (in Nacogdoches, Lufkin, and Livingston, Texas) which share "Practical Christianity" by meeting physical needs (temporary shelter, food, and clothing) while proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We do not seek nor accept funding from government sources.

GODTEL also operates two Christian Help Centers, which provide clothing and other assistance to Nacogdoches and Polk County residents.

This article is a personal testimony. To obtain additional copies, order by Title. For more information about other literature, preaching tapes by Bro. Gentry, or the ministry in general, write us at one of the addresses below, or give us a call.

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A \$35.00 Christian

by Martin Baker

I have been involved with GODTEL Ministries since 1975. I was on the Board of Trustees and we met from time to time to plan and execute previous plans. In 1977, we bought the old Redland Hotel in downtown Nacogdoches. My wife and I were the first staff couple to occupy the old hotel. We were preceded by two single college students, Roland Harvey and David Bryan. Brother June and Nancy Gentry moved in soon after we did.

Mary and I lived there as staff for two-and-a-half years. We moved out into our own home in 1979, then moved to west Texas in 1980, where we lived and worked for nine years. In May of 1989, we moved back to east Texas and became Directors of the Lufkin GODTEL.

While in west Texas we volunteered at the Operation Blessing ministry in Denver City. As you can see, Mary and I have been ministering to the poor in one way or another for almost 50 years, 37 of those years, as staff of GODTEL Ministries. Our experience has been extensive.

Ministry to the poor is hard and often thankless, but we have enjoyed God's wisdom, strength, peace, joy, and faithful provision throughout our career.

Of constant concern is having the necessary finances to fulfill our calling. In partnership with Bro. June and Nancy, we helped start this ministry by giving the money we would have used for rent, utilities, and groceries to GODTEL for the first two-and-a-half years of GODTEL's existence. Both Nancy and I worked outside jobs in order for our families to work as GODTEL staff for those same years without pay. (I tell you this, so you will know that we invested our time and treasure to minister to the poor.)

Having spent the eighties in west Texas, when we returned, we faced some of the same problems as at the very beginning of GODTEL: no money and massive amounts of work.

The finances at the Lufkin mission improved, not because of any fund-raising "genius" that we have but because we faithfully did our job of helping the poor. The Lord God improved the finances of all three of GODTEL's missions. Through the years, GODTEL has experienced many ups and downs in the finances. We have worried and prayed and tried different things that didn't work until God would remove the blockage and the money would come in.

Something occurred in my life several years ago that ended my worry. We all know what the Scriptures say about not worrying (Philippians 4:6-7, Matthew 6:34, First Peter 5:7...) and how Jesus taught His disciples to not worry. But, when the bills

are due and there's no money for paychecks, which of us does not worry?

We were having a severe shortfall of donations in Lufkin and bills were not getting paid. I was worried, Mary was worried, and I was trying to do something. I did everything I could think of to reduce the expenses and I thought of many things that might bring some money in. We gave extra to the mission from our personal resources, which were meager because we were not getting paid. I talked to people about our problem. I sought out advice about the problem. We prayed. But nothing we tried seemed to work. The money was still not coming in.

***Ephesians 3:20 tells us that
God is able to do exceeding abundantly
above all that we ask or think.***

One Sunday, Mary and I went to our Sunday School classes and we each shared with our separate teachers about the disaster we were looking at. That afternoon, I decided to try one last thing. I would collect all the scrap metal and aluminum cans I could find to sell on Monday. But, early Monday morning, my Sunday School teacher called and told me to hang on, something was about to happen.

Something happened all right, something amazing happened. Christians from all over Lufkin began to bring us money and checks. We were so busy with brothers and sisters in Christ coming to our office with donations and so busy making deposits and writing checks and paying bills that I did not get to sell my scrap until Thursday. By then things had quieted down and everything was caught up. So I strapped my

load of scrap down and went to the scrap yard. I was really rejoicing about what God had done so that I did not even think about what I would get for my trailer load of scrap metal.

I turned into the yard and got in line to be weighed. I had to wait for several minutes as other people were weighing ahead of me. My turn came and I got my weight ticket, unloaded my scrap, went back across the scales, parked, and went into the office to get paid. I was very disappointed with the amount I received (the price per pound was very low), but, it was **something** even though it was only \$35.00. I put the money in my pocket and started to leave. I was about half-way out the gate when the Lord spoke. I slammed on my brakes as God said in my heart, "You see, Martin, that's what **you** can do."

Every time I tell this story, it brings tears to my eyes. I realized that God called me to this ministry, not because He needed me. He called me to this ministry because I need Him. God does not need me, a \$35.00 Christian. I need Him because He can do way more than that. Ephesians 3:20 tells us that God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. He can take a handful of novices and build a ministry that helps thousands. A ministry that gives poor people a chance to meet the Savior. A ministry that operates in three counties in east Texas. A ministry that has touched people from coast to coast and across the seas. A ministry that He supports. A ministry that brings all glory and honor to our Savior, the **King of the Universe**.