

that support. I vow to seek God's leadership and do my best as the man in charge and to continue to minister to the spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental needs of the people that God brings to us for help.

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### **Martin's Biography**

*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. (Almost 49 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 Fredonia 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 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.*

*Bro. June Gentry was the founder and for over 45 years the president of God's Open Door To Eternal Life, Inc. d.b.a. GODTEL Ministries, 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 (food, clothing, and temporary shelter) while proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

*Bro. June was a lifetime member of the Creation Research Society and for 25 years the June Gentry Family Evangelistic Ministry was affiliated with the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists and the Conference of Texas Baptist Evangelists.*

*GODTEL also operates The Christian Help Center, which provides clothing assistance to Nacogdoches and Polk County residents.*

This article is to introduce Bro. June's successor, Martin Baker and to give an update on GODTEL's purpose and procedures. 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.

We are on the web at [www.godtel.org](http://www.godtel.org).

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# Meet Martin

— or —

## *New Year, New Leadership, Same Goals*

by **Martin Baker**

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### *Happy New Year from GODTEL*

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I am Martin Baker and with the passing of Brother June from COVID, I have been chosen by the Board of Directors to be President of the Board and to fill the role of Executive Director of God's Open Door To Eternal Life, Inc. (GODTEL Ministries). I was not particularly interested in starting a new career at seventy, however, I am glad to take the helm of GODTEL. I have been on the Board of Directors since Bro. June formed his Board back in the mid-'70's. I am the only remaining member of the original Board of Directors. My wife, Mary, and I helped start the original homeless shelter in the old Redland Hotel, also in the '70s. My family and I lived in far West Texas during the '80's, but in 1989 God brought us back to East Texas to be co-directors of the Lufkin mission.

Consequently, I feel I have the unique credentials to continue this ministry. Bro. June always talked about practical

Christianity, and for certain, nothing is more practical than knowing Jesus as Lord, serving the Lord by helping others, and helping others meet the one person in the Universe that really loves them. So I have been striving for the last three months to transition into my new role and to keep GODTEL moving forward as a ministry of Christ. So now I have three missions to shepherd instead of just one.

We began by inviting some godly people of my acquaintance, five men and one woman, to join our Board and we have been meeting once a month for the past three months. We plan to continue monthly meetings for another three months hoping, by then, to have all the wrinkles ironed out.

The Board currently consists of five old members: me, Nancy Gentry, Olivia Holley, Todd Alston, and Philip Childs. The new members are Chris Englert (one of the founders of GODTEL), Joshua Gentry, Clay Alverson, Lanny Williams, Pete Zapata, and Mrs. Bruce Robertson. The new members signed on for a minimum of six months to aid us in this transition. They are welcome to stay longer as their input and counsel have proved to be very helpful. Ultimately, we want God's will to be done.

In an effort to learn the routines and to help conduct some of the business that Bro. June took care of, I have been traveling to the Nacogdoches and Livingston missions each week. I spend Tuesday in Nacogdoches and Thursday in Livingston. So far, it has been very smooth with the employees and volunteers of the other two

missions helping and encouraging me—as I try to do the same for them. So far no serious problems have arisen except for the tree falling through the roof of the Livingston's women's dorm and both "mules" breaking down. I have had meetings at all three missions reassuring all staff members and volunteers that the changes I will make concerning the actual running of the missions will be few and minor.

The staff of the Nacogdoches mission consists of Stephanie Shumate Silva—Manager, Richard Silva—Maintenance, Stephen Shumate,

***Jesus is the answer for all their problems  
and accepting Him as Savior  
enables them to gain access  
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and has a good plan for their lives.***

Trinity Wahner, Fred Peachee, with volunteers Charles C., Mary C., James K., Charles H., Antonio M., and William C. The staff at the Lufkin mission consists of me and Mary my wife—Co-Directors/Managers, Warren Weis, Christi Hunter, Dolores Swonke, Crystal, Scott, and Joseph. The Livingston staff is made up of Benita Woodmansee—Manager, Greg Berg, Terry Van Meter, and volunteer Loretta. Nancy Gentry works at all three missions as I do.

I ask for prayers for each of us on the Board and all who work with us at GODTEL. Losing Bro. June has been very traumatic for each of us in different ways, so I ask again for your prayers for each of us.

For those of you who don't know, the name GODTEL is an acronym for "God's Open Door To

Eternal Life." The ministry of GODTEL is to show everyone we minister to the Open Door of Salvation—Jesus Christ.

A typical day at any one of our missions for a new resident would begin with the check-in process at 4:00 p.m. We discuss with them the reason they are in need of our services and assure them that no matter what their difficulty, Jesus is the answer for all their problems and accepting Him as Savior enables them to gain access to the One Who loves them and has a good plan for their lives. We then read them the rules which include twice-daily Bible study attendance and the 9:00 p.m. curfew requirement. Then, after the evening meal and Bible study, they receive their linens and bed assignment. We also meet any other physical needs we are able to, like clothing, personal hygiene items, etc.

The next day, after the morning Bible study and breakfast, they are expected to begin their job search and devise a plan to save money in order to secure permanent housing. We do not impose a time limit for the length of their stay, so they can have plenty of time to make preparation to move forward in their life's journey. To introduce people to Jesus and to help them have successful lives after they leave GODTEL has always been our goal and will continue to be our goal even though Bro. June is no longer here.

I thank each of you for any support you may have given GODTEL in the past and ask that you pray about continuing