

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. (50 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 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 brief overview of the previous year's events and future plans. 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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State of the Missions

by Martin Baker

*"The poor have the Gospel
preached to them."*

Matthew 11:5

October 2023 is the beginning of my third year as President/Executive Director of this amazing ministry. With all the turmoil of the first year and the settling in of a second year behind me, I am looking forward to continuing my service in the third year. I have more confidence as I follow Jesus in directing the operations of GODTEL and all three missions.

The Nacogdoches mission, with Stephanie as manager, is running very smoothly, especially since I fired one troublemaker and two others quit. It was really great to see Stephanie's stress level go way down with the departure of these three men. We replaced all three very quickly and the replacements have been more cooperative with Stephanie.

The Livingston mission with Benita as manager is also doing well, even though one employee had his probation revoked and will not be out of jail until December. We replaced him with Robert. He had been helping as a volunteer and resident, but he is now a paid employee. We have sold a large amount of scrap metal, a full semi-trailer of excess clothing, and held yard sales, which helps our bottom line.

The Lufkin mission with Warren as manager is doing well. Warren has really stepped up his game and has things operating very smoothly. He moved Dolores out of the kitchen and into the laundry room (she was delighted). He hired Chance and Brooke for kitchen and other duties.

I am pleased with how each mission is operating. Each of the managers and their staffs are doing an excellent job.

The big change for the Lufkin and Livingston missions is the air conditioning they now have. In Lufkin, the men's dorm/kitchen building now has central air. My house and the women's dorm have two large window units, and the staff apartments and offices have window units. In Livingston, the men's dorm and kitchen have two large units and several smaller units installed. We replaced a broken window unit in the C.H.C. The office and the women's dorm already had A/C. So, for the first time in 46 years, all

the missions now have air conditioning. (Praise God, it was just in time to keep us cool throughout our hottest recorded summer.)

The buildings in Livingston are old and in desperate shape. Clay Alverson (Trustee) and I have been looking at and evaluating our options, and we both believe that replacement is our best option. The only other option is to spend very substantial funds on repairs and remodeling, or to shut down completely. We both believe that a new building would cost anywhere from \$750,000 to \$1,000,000. Making needed repairs and remodeling may cost a little

"Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor and to thy needy, in thy land."

Deuteronomy 15:11

less than these figures. Shutting the Livingston mission down is really not an option, but, if the buildings begin to go, it may have to be done. If we begin remodeling and repairs, partial shut-downs would be unavoidable. We have started the process of possibly replacing the main building, women's dorm, and C.H.C. (Christian Help Center) with one multi-purpose 10,000 square foot building. An architect is working on a floor plan for this building. Once that is complete, we will consult with the City of Livingston for feasibility and requirements to obtain approval by the City. Then, we will begin the process of applying for grants to build this building.

So, we are asking for your prayers for wis-

dom and strength. Wisdom to be able to discern God's will, and strength to accomplish it. Once we are assured of His will in this matter, please pray that God will open the right doors.

The main consideration for any of these options is financing. We may be able to get a grant for new construction, but it is less likely that we would be able to get a grant for repairs and remodeling. So, we would have to use donations to do this. And that means God would have to increase our over-all support so we could

meet the expense of the repairs and remodeling, and still be able to operate all three missions. You see my dilemma. However, we also know that as God leads, He also provides. So that is where we all need to pray, that we, as a ministry, would be in the center of God's will, every step of the way.

I really want to thank all of the staff members and volunteers in the way they have responded to me. I also want to thank each of the Officers and Trustees on the Board for their support, advice, and prayers. And I thank each of you for continuing to support and pray for me and this ministry. It was really scary, because, sometimes, when the founder of a ministry passes, the support goes away also, but, praise God, all of you I mentioned above have stayed with me and GODTEL through the past two years of change and growth. May God bless you all.