

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 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.

Bro. June Gentry was the founder and for 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 (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.

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. He went to be with the Lord in 2021.

This article is a brief overview of events from September 2021 to the present. 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.

Email: godtel@minister.com

GODTEL Ministries

1902 Douglass Road
Nacogdoches, Texas 75964-3817
(936) 569-7914

323 Moody Street
Lufkin, TX 75901-0445
(936) 637-2520

1607 S. Washington Ave.
Livingston, TX 77351-4047
(936) 327-8863



A Year's Review

by Martin Baker

"The poor have the Gospel preached to them."

Matthew 11:5

One year as President/Executive Director of GODTEL Ministries. One year since Brother June died of COVID-19. As I began my "reign of terror", uhh, I mean, ministry, I was immediately aware of how big the job is. I went from being responsible for one of our missions, to three missions. I went from one mission staff to deal with, to three. I went from dealing with 15 to 25 residents at the Lufkin Mission, to 75 to 100 residents at all three missions. I went from taking the minutes at our Board of Trustees meetings to being in charge of the agenda and keeping the meeting moving in the right direction.

Along with the mundane, there have been special difficulties. The first crisis I had to deal with was a tree falling on the women's dorm in Livingston.

As usual, the crises have continued, with other trees falling, air conditioners not working, cooks quitting, Bible study teachers quitting, rebellion from volunteer staff, bed bugs, rodents, vehicles breaking, ... and the list goes on. But it is all good because God is good all the time.

After the Board elected me President, there was a lot of business that needed to be done with the changing of leadership. The first thing was to elect a Vice-President/Secretary to fill my old office. Nancy remained on as Treasurer/Accountant and Assistant Director of GODTEL. Joshua Gentry volunteered to become Vice President/Secretary. We also voted to meet once a month for a six-month transition time. At the first meeting of the Board of transition, I invited Lanny, Bruce, Chris, Clay and Pete to join the Board that consisted of me, Nancy, Joshua, Philip, Olivia, and Todd. The new members agreed to be on the Board for six months, with the option of staying on the Board after that. During that six months we amended our Articles of Incorporation, wrote a set of Bylaws, updated our Employee Handbook, revamped our house rules, passed several statements putting GODTEL in a legally protected position from the transgender, political-correctness society we live in. We also updated our Bible Study guidelines.

What we did not change are our principles, statement of faith, or our mission, which is to preach the Gospel and help

the poor. Two changes that did take place are that we added the possibility of partnering with another Christian ministry for disaster relief and we changed from Brother June's style to my style. We still teach "Practical Christianity" and focus on the love of God and the compassion of Christ.

I have always thought of GODTEL as a small East Texas Ministry, probably because I was focused on the Lufkin mission. As I took over and I had to focus on the broader ministry, I realized that we are not small. We may not be large as compared to, say, Samaritan's Purse, but we are not small. We have three missions with 40

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

Deuteronomy 15:11

plus acres of land, 13 buildings, 3 shops, 5 tractors, and 9 vehicles. All this constitutes assets of well over one million dollars. We have 15 paid staff and 10 paid volunteers. We have three C.H.C. rooms (Christian Help Centers where we freely distribute clothing and household items). Each year we serve thousands of meals, wash thousands of loads of laundry, provide thousands of beds with clean linens, and teach thousands of Gospel-oriented Bible studies. We are not small.

At the end of the six-month transition, all but one of the Board members decided to stay on the Board. Philip said he had completed what he was called to do and now it was time to leave. The Board then elected my wife Mary to

replace him.

It has been a hard year. It has been a busy year. It has been a good year. This was not part of my plan but, thank God, His plan is always the best plan.

Speaking of God's plan, it is just amazing how God opens doors, and closes doors. But we have to be alert that we do not force closed doors and do not overlook His open doors. At seventy years of age (before June's death), I was thinking that I would be moving away from full-time ministry. I had a good manager working under me at Lufkin and I thought it might work

out for me to have more time for my tree farm. Then, when the Lord took Brother June, that door slammed shut. The door that opened was to have the privilege to take the helm of this amazing ministry. I have seen that this is my time to step up to a challenge. This challenge has caused me to focus, pray, and to submit as never

before and it has shown me that it is God Who is giving me the wisdom and strength to do this job. He is also giving me the peace and joy that I might not be overwhelmed by this job. I am learning what it really means to be a slave for Jesus and what making Him LORD really means. I am looking forward to this next year.

The world and the U.S. are in big trouble but the God that provides has all we need to continue, no matter what happens in the world.

This is how we bring honor and glory to God — by clinging to Jesus as He carries us to the end.