

our hunt. Soon, we shot another deer. He managed to jump a fence so we went after him. We finally got him, so now we had two deer in our truck and the hunt continued. An hour or so later deer number three was in the truck. We decided that one apiece was enough and started back to town. Before we got back to Alpine, we put another deer in the truck. We had four deer to process, nowhere to do it, and nowhere to store the meat once we did. We woke up another college student who had a freezer and a bath tub. It was three in the morning when we got to his house. It was five in the morning when we finished skinning, quartering, wrapping, and freezing the deer. The guy who owned the truck dropped us off at our dorms and went to dispose of the hides, heads, and guts. He did that and we all thought we were home free. In fact, I was in my bed asleep when the pickup owner knocked on my door with the news that he had been caught. He had driven out a couple of miles and dumped all the deer remains into a ditch. On the way back to the campus he ran out of gas right in front of the sheriff's office. He left his truck to go get some gas. In the meantime, a deputy had noticed that this white truck in front of the office had a lot of blood on it. Upon looking into the bed of the truck he found two deer legs that had not been dumped. The Game Warden was called and by the time the truck's

owner returned to his truck, they were all waiting for him with charges of poaching being made. My friend then confessed and revealed myself and the other student as being involved as poachers. That day we had to appear before the Justice of the Peace, Haley Stilwell. As she went through the charges she informed us of them, and there were several charges. They were: hunting out of season, hunting with an illegal caliber of gun, hunting on a highway, no hunting li-

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cense, hunting with a spotlight, hunting at night, and trespassing. Then she totaled up the fines we would have to pay. The total was \$3,600.00 each. I did not have \$3,600.00 and no way of getting \$3,600.00. We asked for mercy and then she began to lecture us on how poaching was a big deal to land owners and the community, of the dangers to others, of the harm done to wild-life if we had just wounded some other deer, of the damage we may have done to fences, gates, and buildings, and how that, many times, deer hunting was the difference of ranches being able to make a profit. She then informed us that she was going to show mercy by reducing the sentence of \$3,600.00 down to \$100.00 cash each. The other two paid then and were released. I did

not have even \$100.00 and could not get \$100.00. She asked me what I could do. I replied that since Spring break was just a few days away that I could probably make enough in the oilfield to pay the fine when I returned from break. She gave me twenty days to pay the fine.

When I returned, I had managed to put together only \$40.00 because there was no work for me in the oilfield. I did not pay as soon as I got back so Mrs. Stilwell issued a warrant for me. Campus Security informed me and I went to pay what I had and to beg for more time. She was glad to get the \$40.00 but I was going to have to serve time for the rest.

She also told me I would only get credited \$2.00 per day. That meant 30 days in jail. I could not spend 30 days in jail so I determined to call my dad. However, until my dad actually paid my fine, I would still be in jail. Mrs. Stilwell began to fill out the papers to put me in jail when a group of my friends showed up with \$60.00 in hand to pay my fine.

The moral of the story is: A Christian man should never do anything against the law, God's or man's, because the consequences, even for a minor offense, like poaching, can, and often does, ruin your life.

## **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. (53 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 Trustees 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 Trustees 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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# **Poaching 101**

**by Martin Baker**

I have never been in jail. I have never had a criminal charge against me, except one: poaching.

The saga began innocently, as a conversation about deer hunting. The others told tales of deer hunts and deer being harvested, trophies mounted and meat consumed. My tale was of sitting in a deer stand, freezing, and never seeing a deer. A few days later, two of the guys found me and they were going to take me deer hunting. However, there were a few problems. We only had one gun, a .22, which is not legal for deer hunting. We did not have a lease to hunt on except the "long lease," the highway. It also was not deer season and we were going to hunt at night with a spotlight. I was really excited and I thought it would be okay because these two guys had done this kind of hunting before successfully – without being caught.

Nightfall arrived and our hunt began. We drove slowly down the "long lease" looking for deer. We saw groups of deer but the first ones were out of range or too close to town or too close to a house or another vehicle was approaching. Finally, we got our first shot and our first deer. We put him in the bed of the pickup and continued