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# THE *upbeat* REPORTER

Letter from the publisher

## Keep Going!



Mary Kay Kuhrts

"Keep going!" I heard those words, loud and clear as I knelt and prayed about three months ago. The price of printing paper had gone up significantly, and I had doubts as to whether I would be able to keep The Upbeat Reporter going. I am by nature an upbeat person, but on that day, life became just hard. I had to remind myself that this is for God's glory and a ministry of "Bringing Good News, Hope and Direction to the Texas Panhandle."

First changes to occur...new office, new direction. Even though I still cannot see all the plans God has in store for The Upbeat Reporter, I am holding those words, "Keep Going," close to my heart. The magazine will remain in print, and we are embarking on a new era with the relaunch of Upbeat & Beyond. We are excited to announce that within the next few months, you will have an opportunity to watch the stories come alive as we take The Upbeat Reporter to a whole new digital level! (Details to come!)

With the addition of new Upbeat Team member, Cathleen Tyson-Day, graphic and website designer, and social media specialist, you will be seeing a whole new side of The Upbeat Reporter! Please find us and like or follow The Upbeat Reporter on Facebook and stay informed of all the new happenings of Upbeat & Beyond!

A special thanks goes out to all the advertising supporters who make it possible to continue offering this inspiring magazine FREE to anyone wanting good news! I also appreciate Pastoral Advisor, Dr. Sheldon DeVries, for his counsel and wisdom, along with the dedicated writers, friends, and family who have helped by encouraging me to "Keep Going!"

I would also like to thank Denise R. for her email I received when I needed it the most!

*Mary Kay, I enjoy reading your magazine. But the summer issue is better than great. In a word WOW. I started reading and could not put it down. Every article, especially your cover story inspired me. I learned some things reading today; information I will surely pass along, with a copy of your magazine. Keep it coming and thank you.*  
- Denise R

I am hoping you will enjoy reading the variety of stories in this Fall 2022 issue of The Upbeat Reporter. Please let me know if you have a story idea for future issues, or are interested in writing, or becoming a supporter by advertising. I look forward to hearing from you!



**ON OUR COVER**  
Photo courtesy: Angel Miranda Photography, Sharpened Iron Studios

theupbeatreporter



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# MISSION M25

by Mike Haynes



**Gary Burd** constantly looks in all directions. He's been a pastor or ministry leader for close to half a century, but these days, the church isn't where his gaze usually falls. Sometimes it's Israel, sometimes a Navajo reservation, sometimes under a bridge in Amarillo. He takes to heart Jesus' guidance in Matthew 25 when Christ explains why some people will be blessed by the Father:

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

Burd, his church and Mission M25, named for that Bible chapter, accomplish all those charitable activities and more on a regular basis – sometimes on motorcycles. And the 71-year-old's founding of Mission M25 is a result of a dramatic change in how Burd viewed the church.

"I live with my head on a swivel, asking God to show me what I need to do, if I'm broken," Burd said. "The real key to me is that I don't do anything because it's tradition. I do it because I have a broken heart or because I'm being obedient to the Bible." He said he believes helping people is the duty of every Christian, not just when they perceive a special calling. "The Bible clearly states that it's all our job," he said.

The Amarillo native followed his father, Lloyd Burd, as pastor of Christian Heritage Church at 900 S. Nelson St. The son was a pastor there for 40 years, 29 of them as lead pastor. In 1999, he had "an earth-shaking experience that changed my direction."

One cold, snowy Sunday morning, instead of praying and studying his sermon notes in his office, Burd rode his motorcycle under a bridge where homeless people could be found. He encountered a man named Moses who was dirty from head to foot, including his long beard. He gave Moses a cup of coffee, then took off his gloves and offered them to him.

"You can't give me your gloves; it's cold out here," the man replied.

Burd recalled, "Out of my mouth rolled these words: 'You can have them, but it's not for free. I want you to pray for me.' In a reversal of roles, Moses put his hand on Burd's shoulder and did pray for him. It led to Burd baptizing him and Burd and other church members getting him off the streets and eventually back to the family from which he had been estranged.

"I started reading the Bible without my church lens on," Burd said. "I read the four gospels and realized I called myself a Christian, but I was in no way like Christ; I was everything like a traditional church. And the Lord began to break me."

Since then, Burd's focus has been on helping those who come into his path through Mission M25 and his church. Craig Lawlis is the senior pastor now, but the two ministries go hand in hand, and the sign outside the church now reads "Feed the Need: A City of Refuge."

Much of Burd's outreach has been done on two wheels. A few years ago, he rode in the Hoka Hey Motorcycle Challenge, a trip based on Lakota Sioux principles of respect, honor, integrity and compassion. The trek covered 10,000 miles from Key West, Florida, to Homer, Alaska. Along the way, Burd visited the Wounded Knee memorial in South Dakota where 150 Native Americans were massacred in 1890.

*"In that journey, the Lord broke my heart for the Native Americans," Burd said.*

Later, he connected with a Montana church that was serving Native Americans, eventually leading Burd and Mission M25 to start delivering food, water, firewood and other necessities to a Navajo reservation in western New Mexico. "There are a large number of Native Americans there who have no running water and no electricity," he said. "That should not happen in America."

The ministry and the church also have built 25 chicken coops and given 800 egg-laying hens to the Navajo as well as houses to keep their dogs out of the weather. With the help of Affiliated Foods, three semi-truckloads of food have been hauled to the reservation.

Mission M25 has done motorcycle rides to support military veterans, the nation of Israel and pro-life causes. Burd and others from Amarillo have ridden in Rolling Thunder and Run for the Wall, both of which honor military veterans, POWs and MIAs, and Mission M25 has provided support for riders.

In 2017, Burd arranged for 30 motorcycles to be shipped to Israel, and he took 74 people to honor the Israeli Defense Forces. In 2018, a Jewish man in Canada asked Burd to ride with him in "Never Again" rallies to remember the Holocaust. "We stand with Israel," Burd said.

For the movement against abortion, Christian Heritage Church in the 1980s ran a program called Breath of Life Defenders (BOLD) to support women who wanted to keep their babies. In 2015, Mission M25 started the 50CC Diaper Ride, a 50-hour motorcycle challenge to raise funds for diapers for Royal Home Ministries in North Carolina.

Burd and others rode in a pro-life rally from California to Mexicali, Mexico. He said he asked a Mexican pastor this year if such a rally was necessary in his country. "He said, 'It is now, because we followed the United States.'"

As the ministry reacts to faraway needs, it doesn't overlook its back yard. Until the pandemic, "we fed homeless people seven days a week, two meals a day, for over 20 years," Burd said. "And the church has given more than \$44 million of food out of the parking lot since COVID hit," supplied by Affiliated Foods.

The church offers Free Camp each summer for local children. "We stand against racial, economical and social barriers," Burd said. "It's not a church camp for church kids. It's a camp where we mix church kids with street kids.

"I've slept on the floor of our gymnasium with a kid from an \$870,000 house on one side of me and on the other side a kid that lived in a house with cardboard windows. When you cross those kind of barriers, that's huge."

Burd's wife of 52 years, Carolyn, also has taken Free Camp to Africa and the Philippines, and Mission M25 planned a similar camp for Navajo children in New Mexico this summer.

"I'm deeply convinced that we'll never solve problems from inside the church. We need to hang with those people on the outside," he said.

To that end, Christian Heritage Church and Mission M25 stay on the north side of Amarillo where the need is greatest. And they embrace Jesus' words in Matthew 25:40:

**"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"**

## Mike Haynes



Mike Haynes taught journalism and mass media at Amarillo College for 25 years and was an adviser of student media at Texas Tech University for seven years. He is co-publisher of Panhandle-Plains Basketball Magazine and writes a Faith column in the Amarillo Globe-News. He and his wife Kathy attend Hillside Christian Church.



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# A KOOK 4 Christ

by Carol Simpson

## Lord of the Commandments

Beware when you ask a child an open-ended question! A substitute Sunday School teacher had worked so hard for a month to help her 3rd graders learn the 10 Commandments, during the absence of their usual teacher. The kiddos were all prepped to show their teachers how hard they worked to learn. The scene was set, the returning teacher was in the seat of honor, the kids were around the table eager looks on each face, and then the time was upon them. The sub teacher led the kiddos through 1-4 but then came the 5th.

*Honor your mother and father so that you may live a long life.*

After the class quickly rattled it off, the teacher asked what they thought this one meant. Johnny, the usual teacher's middle son, quickly raised his hand and even before being called on said in a booming voice, hands raised like holding a sword, "Obey or parents slay!" And slashed his invisible sword down in a swift swoosh.

Gandalf would be so proud!



Carol Simpson

I was born at an incredibly young age in Ft. Worth, TX when Dallas was playing at home and they won!!! I gave my life to Jesus in 1973 in Canyon, TX and it has been the best roller coaster ride of my life. I have been in around Christians all my life and have noticed something...we need to laugh more! I genuinely believe

that if we cannot look like God has saved us from something, this ol' world is not going to be interested in what we have to say. I performed my first Christian Comedy in 1996 at Cal Farley's Boys Ranch and knew if I could get those kids laughing that God had a place for me in this ministry of humor.

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# First Gospel Ministry

by Amy Crowley

It was a hot Sunday afternoon as I sat inside Brookdale Senior Living home listening to the smooth, strong voice of Michael Matthews worshipping the Lord. His wife, Judi, sat by his side as the beautiful musical notes rolled off his lips. In humility, Michael gives praise to the Lord for his voice realizing it is truly "miraculous" to be able to speak at all. Years of drug abuse and a few medical issues would silence many, but not Michael. He knows his voice is a gift - one he uses well.

Michael found himself a successful businessman as a restaurant owner and professional musician. In fact, he opened for singers such as Ray Charles, The Temptations, and the Chi'lites. By all accounts, he had it made. However, because he simultaneously "yielded to drugs and alcohol," it all collapsed. He lost his restaurant, two marriages, his fancy cars, and his home. As a now homeless man doing life and drugs "my way," Michael spent much time inside drug houses looking for his next fix. Eventually, that would all change.

Meanwhile, Judi, a self-described "go getter" who had owned several successful businesses, including Critter Camp, was living life as a professional poker player in Las Vegas, Nevada. She found herself a player in the World Series



of Poker, winning quite a lot of money at the card tables over the years. In 2013, she returned to Amarillo temporarily to help out at Critter Camp, but had plans to return to Las Vegas and purchase a home to stay there permanently.

Throughout it all, Judi considered herself a good person. She didn't drink, didn't smoke, didn't do drugs and went to church most Sundays. However, when she left the church doors it was with a good-bye wave to God and an "I'll see you next Sunday." She was what she referred to as a "Sunday Christian and Monday through Saturday Atheist."

Back in Lubbock, Texas, Michael found himself at a crossroads; he knew he needed to get clean. Eventually, after "kicking and screaming all the way to Amarillo" he entered a program at Faith City Mission on July 27, 2011. Exactly one year later, Michael graduated this program and immediately went to work for the same organization that helped him get clean. It was time, he says, to "clean up and finally come out of the storm to get under the umbrella of God's grace."

It was March 2014, and Judi found herself at Faith City Mission with her grandson; he had become a meth user but wanted to turn his life around. Having raised him, Judi was very supportive, staying with her grandson throughout this difficult time. It was then she met Michael. He was the director and minister of in-kind donations and preaching to the homeless during mealtimes at Faith City Mission.

“  
... clean up and  
finally come out of  
the storm to get under  
the umbrella of  
God's grace.”

For Michael, it may have been love at first sight, but not for Judi. Michael asked her out but in the same breath told her he had been a drug user, homeless, in jail, a conman, a partier, and a womanizer. Judi was somewhat taken aback by this and decided she in no way wanted to be involved with such a man.

## But God had a plan...

Michael was persistent and Judi finally realized that she had to trust God when it came to Michael. After four months of visiting her grandson and participating with him in group activities at Faith City Mission, Judi realized Michael was a Godly, Christian man who did indeed love the Lord. She found him to be very honest and full of integrity. Less than a year later, they were married.

As I sat and listened to Michael speak to the small crowd of residents at Brookdale, their heads nodding at his words, I realized he and Judi truly are living what he speaks. He tells the residents "Faith is an action word. You demonstrate what's in your heart and mind towards God." It's obvious what is in their hearts and minds as they take me through their mission called First Gospel Ministry. Rarely is there any down time in their schedule; four to six times a week they can be found in nursing homes, homeless shelters or churches ministering through praise, worship and the Word to those who have need.

For seven years Michael and Judi have also led a Bible study group - Souls on Fire - in their home. This includes things like praise and worship, Bible study, blessing families during the holidays with gifts and meals, and taking care of others in the midst of difficult times.

Additionally, for the last six years, they can be found at Panhandle Adult Rebuilding Center (PARC) every week bringing sack lunches, which they have prepared, to the homeless who benefit from the services there. PARC is a place to allow those homeless indi-



viduals who come an opportunity to find their value, gain confidence, and take steps to move forward.

Then there is the program - Tapestry.

Judi's face beams as she relays the details of this ministry. The first Saturday of each month visits are made to Kirkland Court Nursing Home, where 43 of 45 residents have no visitors. Time is spent with the residents playing games, singing, devotional reading, or just loving on those sweet individuals who otherwise have no connection to the outside world. Their church, Journey Church, is actively involved with this ministry as well, with over ten volunteers helping at any given time.

When I asked this obviously dedicated couple to give me just one take-away they summed it up so well. "Nothing is too big, bad or impossible for God." While they had some years spent away from God and living life as they saw fit, the fervor with which they serve the Lord now is contagious. "My tongue is to praise the Lord," says Michael, and "I wouldn't take nothing for my journey. I love my walk with the Lord." It's clear First Gospel Ministry exists to share the love of Christ with anyone who will listen.

For more information or to find out how you might help, contact Michael or Judi Matthews at: [firstgospelministry@yahoo.com](mailto:firstgospelministry@yahoo.com)



**Amy Crowley**

Amy resides in Amarillo with her husband, Johnny, and is mom to five girls. She is a freelance writer and is the author of the Facebook page Live BOLDLY. She can be reached by email at: [amylcrowley@hotmail.com](mailto:amylcrowley@hotmail.com).

# What Legacy are you leaving?

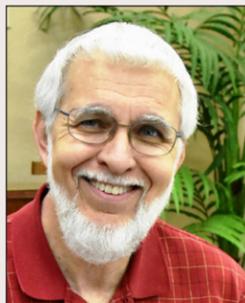
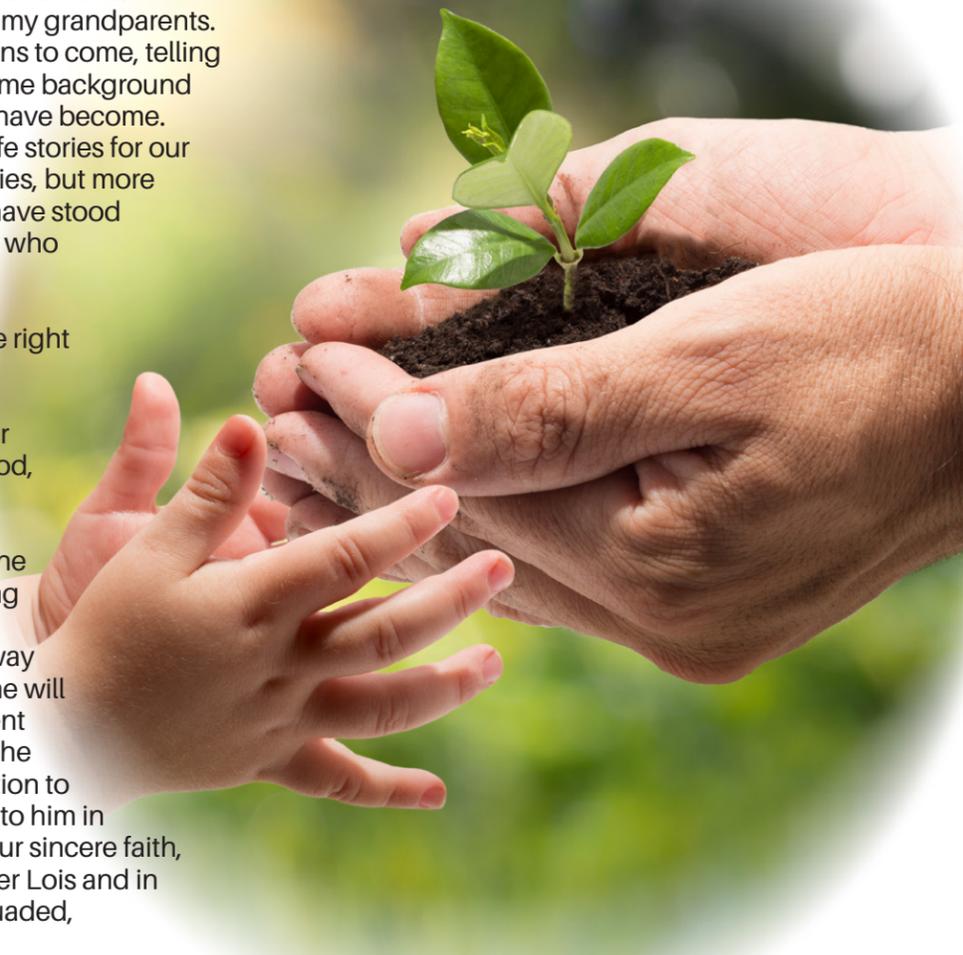
by Danny Mize

Lately, I am focusing on legacy projects to benefit our children, two grandchildren, and others who may follow. I have digitized cassette tapes of precious family times. I have scanned postcards with messages sent between a World War I soldier and his sweetheart - who later married and were my grandparents. I recorded a video for the generations to come, telling them a little about who I am and some background events which contributed to who I have become. Previously, I wrote more than 100 life stories for our two sons - capturing family memories, but more importantly, emphasizing values I have stood for and want to pass along to those who follow me.

I believe that my legacy projects are right in line with the emphasis of the Old Testament verses in Deuteronomy 11:18-21. We should be helping our descendants to personally know God, so they can influence those who follow them in the same way. The maxim in Proverbs 22:6 describes the value of proper foundational training which will positively affect future generations - "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not turn from it." The New Testament minister Timothy was a product of the legacy of faith passed from generation to generation. Paul, his mentor, wrote to him in 2 Timothy 1:5: "I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also."

Youth ministers, teachers, and coaches have tremendous opportunities to help shape future generations by leading, teaching, guiding, and infusing young people today with life skills and values for tomorrow. But, let's not leave it all up to them.

Parents and grandparents - let's focus on the legacy we can leave for our family!



**Danny Mize**

.....  
Drawing on his background in hospital and hospice chaplaincy, church ministry and grief support, Danny Mize serves the Street Auto Group (Street Toyota and Street Volkswagen) as a corporate chaplain - a role the company calls Staff Support. Since his retirement from full-time hospice work, Danny has made himself available to support the employees of the two dealerships through in-person visits, calls, texts and e-mails.



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# The Holy God

by Tammi Scoggin

Have you heard the phrase *holy cow* exclaimed when something extraordinary occurs? The word *holy* means *something set apart for a special use or purpose*. The phrase *holy cow* may have derived from the sacrificial system in which a cow was set apart for the purpose of offering it on the altar. God Himself exists apart from all of His creation. He stands unmatched in glory, power, and purity. Holiness, therefore, is intrinsic to His nature. The Psalmist declares...

“Your way, O God, is holy.  
What god is great like our God?  
Psalm 77:13”

**The clear answer - no one!**

Yet, we find a startling statement in Hebrews 12:14. *“Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.”* If God demands holiness in order to see Him, how can anyone obtain it? The Apostle Paul gives us the answer in Ephesians 1:3-4 - *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.”* If you are in Christ, you are being made holy by God. In other words, holiness cannot be achieved

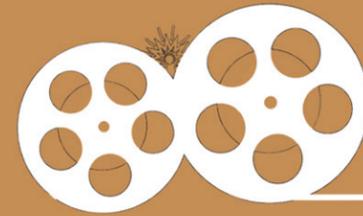
by trying harder to become a good person or making external changes to look holier. Rather, you must be in Christ because He alone lived a perfect, sinless life. This is the heart of the Gospel. When God shows you that you are a condemned sinner who cannot obtain holiness in your own power, and you respond with repentance and trust in the perfection of Jesus for your salvation, God actually sends His **Holy** Spirit to reside in you. He graciously begins to sanctify you (make you holy) by His power. *“In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.”* Ephesians 1:13

While believers in Jesus obtain holiness through faith in Him, the Bible makes it clear that God alone deserves worship for His holiness. The prophet Isaiah received a magnificent vision of Heaven. *“In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!’”* Isaiah 6:1-3 When we begin to get a glimpse of the incredible holiness of God Almighty, we will join with these heavenly beings in humbly proclaiming that the Lord is “Holy, holy, holy!”

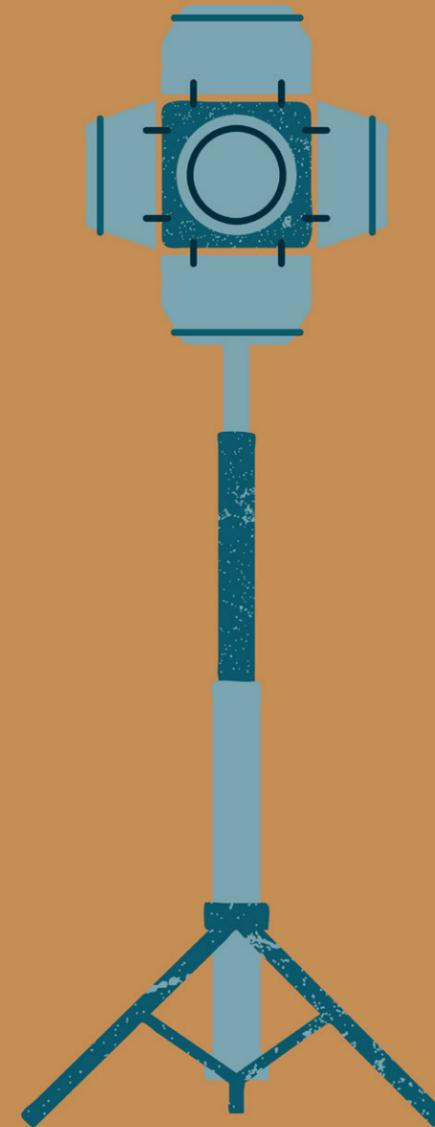
**Tammi Scoggin**



Tammi Scoggin, an Amarillo resident for over thirty-two years, enjoys all forms of writing - novels, short stories, poetry, children's books, ladies Bible studies, anecdotes, articles, and even a discipleship manual. She aims to share the gospel of Jesus Christ through all of her communication and encourage others to pursue a personal relationship with Jesus, especially through Bible literacy.



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Public education is at the forefront of our society and many times it is shown in a negative light. The complexity of education and the overwhelming job of educating students from different races, ethnicities and religious backgrounds can be a daunting task for educators. Christians are familiar with and apply Jeremiah 29: 11 to their personal situations: "For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." But have you ever stopped to consider God has a future and a hope for public education and it is not one of disaster? Have you ever contemplated that God uses His people to bring about astonishing wonders in public education?

Jay Barrett, Principal at AmTech Career Academy absolutely believes God has a vision for public education, and he embodies the hope and desire to see that vision come to light as students are guided to discover their individual paths to success. "It is truly an amazing work that God has blessed me to be a part of and share with others His vision for what is happening at AmTech Career Academy. I pray every day for wisdom, guidance, discernment, and strength to do what God has commissioned me to do. He has raised up a group of dedicated people to come alongside His vision for the Academy to create this amazing learning space for young professionals at Amarillo Independent School District," said Jay. "For 2 years the leadership at AISD met every Thursday to bring AmTech Career Academy to fruition, and we knew we were doing something special for the young people in AISD."

From an early age, Jay has always tried to follow the path that God has set before him. Mentored in college by his future father-in-law Gene Parker, Jay was led to consider a path he may not have chosen for himself, one that eventually opened the doors to public school administration. As the principal at AmTech Career Academy, Jay recognizes he is not perfect, but fully aware he is being perfected by the Spirit of God, and he approaches each day with enthusiasm, passion and humility for his staff and students. All through his life Jay has allowed God to direct his steps as he continues to walk with

an excitement and gratefulness to be a part of His vision for public education. Being a Christian is not something he puts on as outerwear; it is his identity, wrapped up in who Christ has made him to be, and it is evident in how he lives his life.

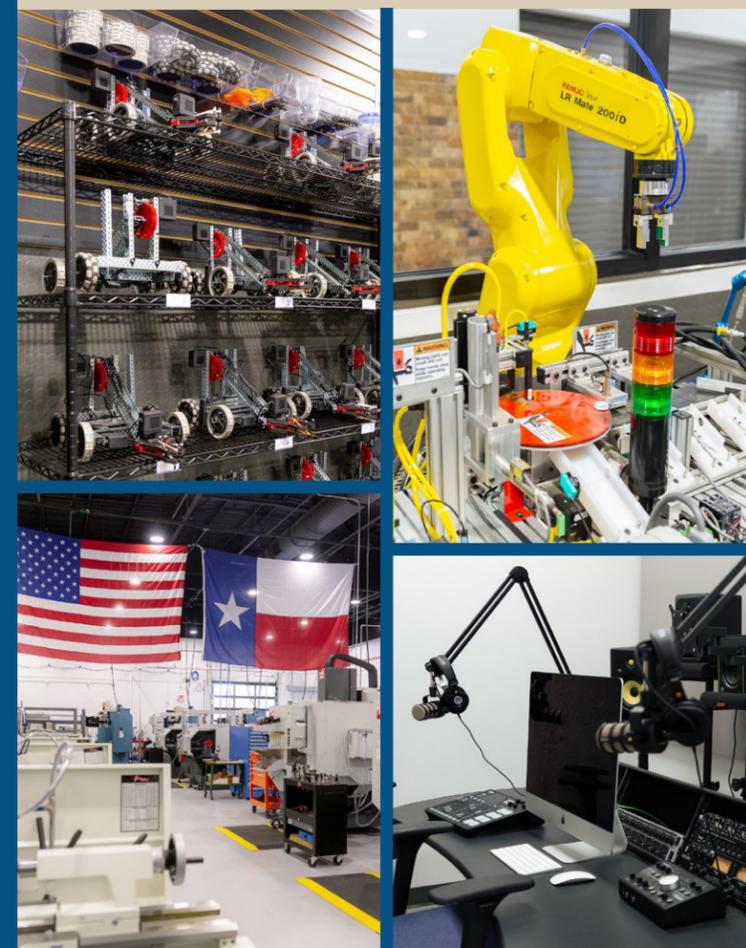
Describing the unique Academy and all its attributes with humility and passion, Jay spoke of the team that made the Academy a reality. "The visionary leadership of Superintendent Doug Loomis, the AISD Board of Directors, and many others made the Academy happen," he remarked.

**AmTech Career Academy is home to nine different schools under 235,000 square feet of contiguous stimulating creative learning space. 1,850 students attended in the inaugural school year 2021-2022, and over 2,600 are registered for the 2022-2023 school year. There are over 35 unique pathways for students to choose from within the School of Animal Science; School of Architecture, Manufacturing and Construction; School of Business, Marketing and Finance; School of Culinary Arts; School of Law and Public Service; School of Media Arts; School of Medical Arts; School of Stem and Information Technology; and School of Transportation.**



# God's Vision for Public Education Includes God's People

by Sharon Miner



The leadership at the Academy does not believe there is only one pathway for students to journey. They do not see education as a box that all students fit neatly in, and with no preconception of what education is, AmTech moves forward, unconfined to the norms and opening a world of possibilities for its y. "We give our students a chance to see something else in themselves that nobody else sees. What we want for our young professionals is what they want for themselves, and we help them shape that path," commented Jay.

Students who attend the Academy appreciate that they are treated as young professionals by the staff, and they reciprocate the respect. The atmosphere is not guided by the sound of a bell every 50 minutes reminding students it is time to relocate. They are moved by an inner maturity that is transferred to the students by the leadership team, because of the trust and faith they have in every student's ability to do what they know to do. Accountability and responsibility are just a part of the culture at AmTech Career Academy.

The word retirement tried to take up residence in Jay's mind before he was given the opportunity to head up the team to guide AmTech Career Academy to the nation's premier high school career academy. Knowing in his heart God was calling him to continue on, Jay asked the Lord for a verse to stand on, and God evicted the thoughts of retirement and moved in Psalms 127: 1 "Unless the Lord builds the house, the worker labor in vain; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain." Every day Jay lays his role as principal of AmTech Career Academy at the feet of Jesus, and he and his team have not labored in vain.

Continued on pg 18



Watch our video interview with Jay Barrett



Continued story from pg 17

The book "Chase the Lion" by Mark Batterson, is a favorite of Jay's and it begins with The Lion Chaser's Manifesto:

“Quit living as if the purpose of life is to arrive safely at death. Run to the roar. Set God-sized goals. Pursue God-given passions. Go after a dream that is destined to fail without divine intervention. Stop pointing out problems. Become part of the solution. Stop repeating the past. Start creating the future. Face your fears. Fight for your dreams. Grab opportunity by the mane and don't let go! Live like today is the first day and last day of your life. Burn sinful bridges. Blaze new trails. Live for the applause of nail-scarred hands. Don't let what's wrong with you keep you from worshipping what's right with God. Dare to fail. Dare to be different. Quit holding out. Quit holding back. Quit running away. -- Chase the lion.”

Thank you, Jay, and the team, at AmTech Career Academy for believing and trusting in God's vision for public education and for not being afraid to chase the lion.



Sharon Miner

Sharon is the director of development and public relations for Martha's Home. She has worked with homeless women and women in recovery for over 20 years. Her professional career includes politics, business and non-profit organizations.

Cindy Rowley has been a licensed pastor for almost 24 years and has served at Cox-Rowley Funeral Home for almost 12 years. Cindy loves visiting with and getting to know individuals and families so that she can ensure their wishes are in place. It is important to her that she be there pastorally for families when they experience the loss of a loved one. Cindy pledges that she and the capable staff at Cox-Rowley Funeral Home will care for those they are blessed to serve, will maintain the highest in moral and ethical standards, and that every funeral service will be a true "celebration of life."



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# Positive Thinking is your power

by Diana Fielder

One of the greatest things that separate us from other animals is the potential we have to control and manipulate our own thinking. Why is this so important? It's because to control how and what we think, controls how we feel and how we behave. Positive thinking may seem impossible at times, but we always have a choice.

Though it seems impossible, Saint Paul was in prison waiting for execution and wrote to his fellow Christians to "be joyful in all things." It doesn't take exceptional insight to see the severity of happenings around us. While we cannot ignore them completely, it is very easy to fall into obsessing about all the negativity in our world. And, guess what? If this is true - obsessing - then our thoughts bring fear, anger, and a tendency to give up. This is not to say we should be ignorant and put our heads in the sand, or to change our basic beliefs and accept everything just for emotional comfort. But, we need to know that we are not at the mercy of our thoughts.

Purposefully reframing a thought brings different feelings. What is taking away your joy these days? Is it buying into new world views like being cancelled, or being labeled an oppressor or the oppressed because of the color of your skin? There are so many new cultural ideas; some of which seems upside-down. We don't have to sacrifice our world view to live positively in today's negative world. Can you really be cancelled? If we listen to grim prospects about the economy, politics, and growing immorality in the world, the expected thinking response would be to lose hope and to be afraid of the future. We, however, have the ability to retrain our thinking to include hope—that things will be better in the future, that there are many good and smart human beings, that history has proved over and over to be dynamic, not static.

## Here is a short list of things that may help you have a positive attitude:

- 1** Here is a short list of things that may help you have a positive attitude:
- 2** Don't watch or listen to news all day (even your favorite channel).
- 3** Examine your thoughts when you feel negative. Literally talk with yourself, and reframe your thoughts. It will change the script that the world wants you to follow.
- 4** Celebrate the truths you hear, i.e. thousands of baby lives will be saved, or, rather than be angry about past methods, be glad there is a new and more accurate way to count Covid incidents.
- 5** Invest in relationships that will be positive and uplifting.
- 6** Trust your faithful, Holy Father to keep His word and make good come from corruption. God is moving amongst us.

I am not saying our lives will be perfect if we reframe negative thoughts, but our power to do so can develop a world view that is positive, possible, and personally empowering.



**Diana Fielder, MEd., LPC**

Diana is a Licensed Professional Counselor, currently retired after 25 years in practice. She attends Saint Paul United Methodist Church and enjoys time with her children and her 19 grand and great grandchildren.



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# Love Wrecked

by Joy Conner

It wasn't the accident itself but rather the aftermath of it that wrecked me. Six months after being rear-ended on the highway, a specialist discovered my hip was out of place. It took a six-inch hook needle injecting fluid into my socket, to push it open enough to jolt my hip back into place. My vertebrae were out of alignment, my collarbone was off track, and I had a few slipped discs that pressed against my nerves and spine. The doctor offered weekly pain shots that would put me on bed rest for two to three days at a time and assured me that this would be my new life. His words only offered anguish. Over the next two years I spent my life in a daze, on pain meds that made me feel exhausted, yet the pain was always present. The insurance company would only reimburse me for my medical bills when I finalized the claim, and those bills kept racking up. I got a second job to pay for it all, then a third, and before I knew it I was working four jobs.

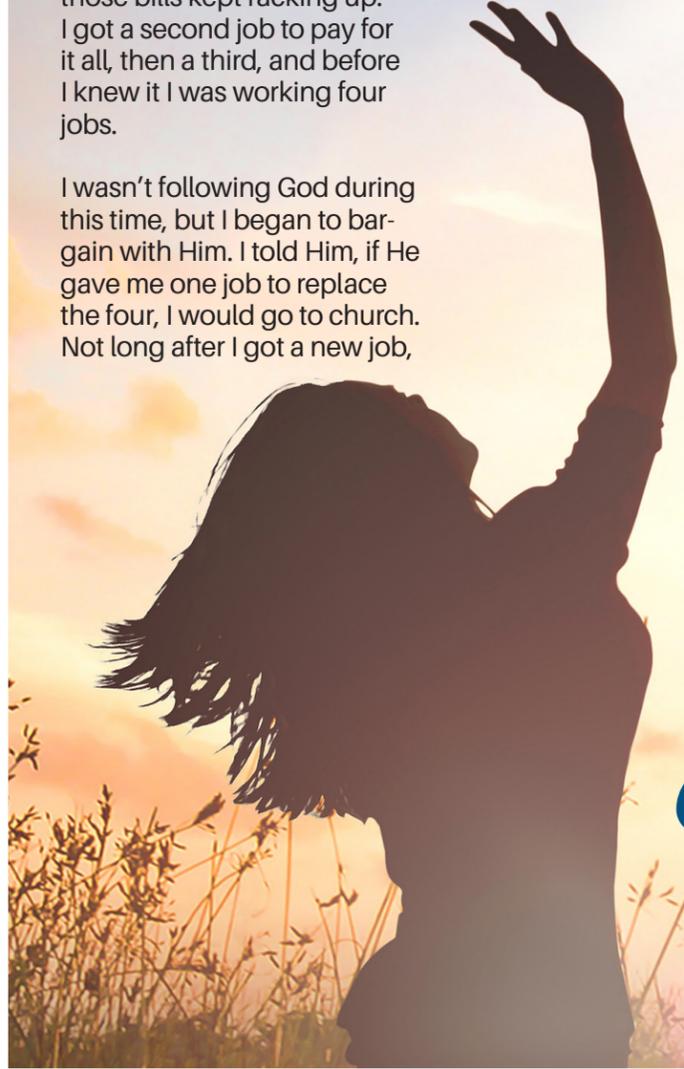
I wasn't following God during this time, but I began to bargain with Him. I told Him, if He gave me one job to replace the four, I would go to church. Not long after I got a new job,

(several paygrades above my qualifications) then was invited to church by a new co-worker. I went reluctantly, then I kept going back. I couldn't put into words why I chose to return but there was something in the music that was emotionally healing. I escaped the religious captivity of my childhood only to walk into a religious gathering, willfully? I was confused by my own actions, so I drank every time I left church to regain a sense of normalcy. I questioned every word that came from the pulpit and trusted no one. Every time I visited the church I was cyphering truth from lies in the muddy pool of my heart, and every time God was right there with me, offering me peace, and beauty, and life in a world that felt so void of it all.

Then, out of nowhere it happened! A speaker at church started praying for people to be physically healed. I wasn't sure if I believed it. I wanted to but I struggled with the thought that some people could be faking it for attention. Then, the speaker asked those with back pain to come forward. I was intrigued. I thought, I have back pain, could they be talking to me? I watched as a crowd filled the front row and decided, everyone has some kind of back pain. They prayed, then the speaker got more specific. This pain isn't something that has come with time it came all at once... from an accident. In that moment my spirit was awakened. Several more people walked to the front, but this time I believed it so much that I prayed for them too.

It still wasn't on my radar that I could be healed, not like this, not without surgery. Mere words don't put bones back into alignment after tendons have been growing over them the wrong way for years and there certainly isn't a way to push slipped disks away from my nerves and spine through prayer. I settled back into the pain and away from possibility that I could ever be healed. The speaker then lifted the mic and with a sense of frustration said, "okay, it's a woman in her early 20's and this was from a car accident. If

*"I paced back and forth in the foyer afterward asking God what just happened!"*



you want your healing, get up here now!" Without a second thought I was out of my seat and bolting my way to the front. When I approached the now empty front row, I didn't care who was watching. I knew the Lord called me out and I knew his eyes were on me. I don't remember the words that were prayed over me, but I remember knowing God was talking directly to me and that He was doing something to my heart. In a moment, my fractured mind felt whole. The dark cloud that followed me disappeared and I felt peace surrounding me.

I paced back and forth in the foyer afterward asking God what just happened!

I wanted answers because I didn't feel any pain! I looked for it, like I was waiting to come down from a high that I was certain would only last a few moments, but the pain was nowhere to be found. I began to weep at the reality that I was healed! I was whole and every fragment of my body was at peace. "Why?" I asked. I was happy, but mostly perplexed. Then clear as day I heard, "Because, I love you!" My weeping turned into an uncontrollable sob as the love of God shattered every wall that I built to keep love out! I was

healed, because He loves me! It wasn't anything I did or anything I could do. He loved me and that was reason enough to heal me.

From that moment on, I have pursued this love, and every day He continues to tear down my walls and trade His truth for the lies that have been so deeply imbedded in me. He breaks the strongholds that I have allowed to bind me to anything that could hinder me from seeing him rightly. He is constantly pursuing me and will always be for me. His patient persistence, truth and unfathomable love are like a novel that I will read for the rest of my life, knowing that my heart will be unraveled by Him for eternity. His love wrecked me.



Joy Conner

Over the last 15 years Joy Conner has dedicated her life to helping the hopeless and the hurting, both locally and abroad. Joy serves as the Director of Development with Acts Community, to make a positive impact in the Amarillo area, and is committed to serving those in need.



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# Happy Autumn

by Frances Frost

It might be hard to imagine when temperatures are still above 90 degrees, but that crisp fall weather is right around the corner. You might be ready to cozy up with a blanket in front of a fire, but is your home ready? Here are 5 tips to prepare your home for the upcoming season.



1. Have your fireplace inspected and cleaned. Make any repairs to mortar and replace your chimney cap if it's missing.
2. Get your heat unit serviced and replace the filter. As utility costs escalate, having a well running heater will save you money!
3. Make sure your windows close and seal properly. Caulk any cracks that might allow cold air in and heat to escape.
4. Secure your attic from birds and critters trying to find a warm place to stay. Check fascia for holes, secure gable vents and put screen on the inside for extra precaution.
5. Test all of your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and replace the batteries.

Now, grab your favorite fuzzy blanket and slippers, stock up on firewood, and get your pumpkin spice ready, because fall will be upon us before we know it! **Happy Autumn!!**



**Frances Frost**

Frances is a local residential and commercial REALTOR®, serving Amarillo and the surrounding area for almost 6 years. Consistently a top producer in her brokerage, she was Nominated for the Best of Amarillo the last 4 years, and was the winner of KFDA Viewer's Choice in 2020. As a REALTOR®, Frances is held to a higher ethical standard than just an agent. She will provide you with real service to get real results, for all of your real estate needs.

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Trevor Fleeman

The Lady Buff Women's Track Team Wins the 2022 Outdoor NCAA DII Track and Field National Championship!

## How perseverance, patience and togetherness equated to being a champion

Dr. Aaron Hunt and Gracen Key

The Lady Buff Women's track program won their first ever NCAA DII Outdoor Track and Field National Championship in 2017. It was a different team then, with a different head coach. This time around, the team has a new head coach Matthew Stewart. Coach Stewart cut his teeth learning from legendary Texas Tech University Head Track and Field coach, Wes Kittley, who won multiple national championships at Abilene Christian University and a National Title in 2019 at TTU. This is Coach Stewart's second national championship, after winning the indoor women's title in 2018. He did it this year by bringing a team together from different cultures, backgrounds, religions, and ethnicities.

Eleonora Curtabbi from Turin, Italy in the northwest part of the country near the Alps, was patient and persevered after facing an injury last year. She returned this year to win the individual crown in the steeplechase, a grueling 3000-meter race in which participants are required to run over a hurdle and into water every lap. Another team member, Zada Swoopes from Whitewright, Texas, came to WT to play basketball and throw the discus and shot put. After persevering through her freshmen year in both sports, she decided to focus on throwing and became a seven-time national champion, winning the outdoor shotput and discus titles this year and placing fourth in the hammer throw. She has a tattoo on her arm that says faith, and she has used her faith to become the greatest outdoor track athlete in WT's history. Lastly, Leah Belfield, a Kiwi (the National Bird in New Zealand) from Te Awamutu, New Zealand, a small town on the northern island in the country in the South Pacific Ocean, swept the 200-meter dash in 2022. Leah won the indoor 200-meter dash earlier in the spring.

She came to WT in the fall of 2019 and had her first outdoor season cancelled due to the pandemic but returned to become one of the best sprinters in WT history.

She has demonstrated perseverance by staying with WT and making vast improvements to become the two-time national champion as a sophomore!

The team scored 77 points to win the national championship with 14 All-Americans. They won by believing in each other and cheering for one another until the end. They exhibited the theme expressed in Colossians 3:12 & 14 "Therefore as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity." If you ever get to meet one of these girls you will see the kindness, humility, and gentleness that they used to unite and become champions!



Dr. Aaron Hunt

Aaron has been the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Athletic Chaplain at West Texas A&M University since 2016. Before that he was a high school Spanish teacher and coach, a junior high Assistant Principal and an Assistant Professor of Education at WT. He loves spending time with his wife and six children. They enjoy, reading, travel, and myriad of sport and outdoor activities. May God bless you and keep you and may you seek His face all of your days.

## Kat's Culinary Delights

### INGREDIENTS

- 12 wonton wrappers, \*I found them in the produce section of my local grocery store
- 4 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 c. sour cream
- 12 oz. bacon, cooked & crumbled (reserve 2 Tbsp.) Or bacon bits
- 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese, reserve 2 Tbsp.
- 3-4 jalapeños, seeded and chopped (\*\*for more spice, do not remove all the seeds) Or diced pickled jalapeños



## Jalapeno Popper Wonton Cups

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- Spray muffin pan with cooking spray.
- Place one wonton wrapper in each muffin cup; bake 10 minutes or until lightly browned.
- Remove from oven and cool slightly.
- In a medium-sized mixing bowl, stir together cream cheese, sour cream, bacon, cheddar cheese, and chopped jalapeños.
- Spoon filling into wonton cups, then sprinkle with reserved bacon and cheese.
- Return to oven and bake for an additional 8-10 minutes, until wontons are golden brown and cheese is melted.

Submitted by Katrina Bell



# Forgiveness

by Karen Benckenstein

There's a saying: Bitterness or resentment is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die. When we hold space mentally and emotionally by holding resentment toward another, we forfeit real estate that could be used positively.

Ever wonder why we remember old song lyrics or childhood phone numbers but forget why we went to the kitchen? We only have so much space in our hearts and minds-particularly as we grow older. When we give up space to negative feelings, we have less room for positive ones. When those resentments are formed earlier in our lives, it's harder to give them up (but not impossible!)

Scientists have found that we are able to reach new states of focus, creativity, and calm when we release anger and resentment. We can not only feel better when we forgive; we can also get more done.

The Bible talks frequently about forgiveness, perhaps most famously in the Lord's Prayer: "Father, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Elsewhere, Jesus tells us to love others as we love ourselves. Forgiveness is an expression of love-both for those we're forgiving and for ourselves.

It's worth it to actively work on forgiving others.

Start with easy ones that are easier to give up and work up to those you know you hold the biggest grudges against.

Hold that person in your mind with compassion. Try to think of reasons they might have acted against you. Practice empathy by imagining other factors in their lives.

Change your perspective. Look at the situation from an outsider point of view or even the point of view of the person you're working to forgive. Sometimes the situation was not what we once thought.

Release the person. Let go of the hurt and anger. Some people find it useful to write it down and literally burn the paper.



Remember that this forgiveness is as much for yourself as anyone. How can we love others if we don't first love ourselves?



**Karen Benckenstein**

Karen Benckenstein was a nonprofit executive and fundraiser for a decade. She is now a freelance writer in addition to being a wife and mom to 4 teenagers. Karen writes about ways to achieve wellness in mind, body, and spirit.

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