

JANUARY 2012



**Denton Baptist
Association**

Volume 46, Issue 1

Connection

A PUBLICATION OF DENTON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Leading Forward

The Inaccurate Map Gets You Lost



Gary Loudermilk

Recently, I looked online at a world map drawn by a Venetian map maker in 1452.

While it was most interesting to study, it would be useless for travel today. It presumed a flat world and included only the areas known as Europe, Asia, and Africa. The city of Jerusalem is located near the center of the map. The purpose of a map is to serve as a guide so that a person might follow the roads and typography on the map to reach his chosen destination. An old world map that doesn't have all of the continents on it or a city map that doesn't include all the local streets and roads are not useful guides. Instead, they could cause a person to become lost and fail to reach his chosen destination.

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TAX \$eminar

- presenter: **Verne Hargrave**



January 19, 2012
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

\$5 for lunch
(reservations required)

First Baptist Church
1901 Timbercreek Rd.
Flower Mound

To register for this seminar contact
Lora Thomas:
lora@dentonbaptist.org
or call 940-498-5200

New Format for Tax Seminar

There is a new format for the January tax seminar. It will not be split into two sessions as in previous years. It will start at 9:00 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m. and lunch will be included. During lunch you will have opportunity to visit with Verne and ask your tax questions. Who will benefit from this seminar? Pastors, ministers, church administrators, church treasurers, financial secretaries, and anyone else involved with church administration, finance or human resources profit from this session.

There are new requirements for churches due to the new Health Care Law that will be covered. Also, the medical insurance tax refund will be explained. Some of the other items we will learn include:

- Minister Housing Allowance
- Taxable Compensation
- Tax Credits available for Ministers
- Nontaxable Fringe Benefits
- Reimbursement Plans
- What's New in 2011
- Definition of an employee
- How the minister status is determined by the IRS
- Definition of a contract worker



Our presenter is **Verne Hargrave** of **PSK CPA Firm, Arlington, TX**. PSK specializes in helping churches and small businesses with financial management, fraud prevention and financial audits.

Practical Tips for 2012

Looking for some practical suggestions that are consistent with the Christian life and better than the typical New Year's Resolution? Consider some of the following as ways to improve your personal life and your witness in the community:

1 Invite people over instead of going out.

A cookout or traditional meal at home is cheaper than a restaurant. It is also a great way to make new friends or to strengthen old friendships.

"Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling." - 1 Peter 4:9

2 Give service instead of items.

Many people are in need of various types of help. Cleaning someone's yard, making a fence repair, offering free babysitting, or taking a meal during a busy season are just a few ways that you can show an elderly neighbor, new parents, or a person in need that you really care.

"...serve one another humbly in love."
- Galatians 5:13

3 Become selective in what you buy.

All of us struggle with knowing the difference between what we want and what we really need. By cutting out some of our "want" purchases, we not only demonstrate the ability to manage our resources, we also have more money available for charitable causes that meet real needs in the lives of others.

"I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances." - Phil 4:11

4 Follow the rules.

Driving the speed limit; eliminating cell phone conversations and texting while driving; obeying the watering restrictions; and covering the mouth when coughing are simple rules that all of us could easily obey. People around us notice our behaviors even when we don't know they are looking.

"Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law and obey it with all my heart." - Psalm 119:34

5 Be conservative with natural resources.

Turning off lights when leaving and using a programmable thermostat are ways to save energy. Fixing leaky faucets and turning off the water while brushing your teeth conserves clean water. God created a beautiful world for us to inhabit, but He gave us the responsibility of upkeep.

"The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it..."
- Psalm 24:1

6 Take care of yourself physically.

Drink more water. Exercise regularly. Eat nutritionally. In our day, the saying is "Less is more!" Maybe that is true of our physical bodies as well. The body is to be a sanctuary for the Holy Spirit.

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?"
- 1 Cor. 6:19

7 Take care of yourself mentally.

Our mental state is greatly affected by what we allow to enter our thoughts. Be selective in what you watch, what you listen to, and what you read.

"...whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things." - Phil. 4:8

8 Take care of yourself emotionally.

A good night's sleep, a Sabbath day of rest, and one or two weeks of vacation at a time can help keep us emotionally stable.

"Then Jesus said, 'Let's get away from the crowds for a while and rest.'"
- Mark 6:31

9 Take care of yourself spiritually.

Despite the claims of some people, we are not our own god. We have a built-in need to know the God who created us and loves us (faith); to converse with the God who sustains us (prayer); to worship the God who saves us; and to understand His Word to us (the Bible).

"...not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing..."
- Hebrews 10:25

10 Find a place to volunteer.

While many of us are still employed, there are many places that we can volunteer a few hours even once a month. Communities, non-profits, schools, hospitals, and churches all have needs that will only be met through the efforts of volunteers. Besides helping out, volunteering also brings you into contact with many people you might not otherwise have met and had opportunity to share your faith.

"So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."

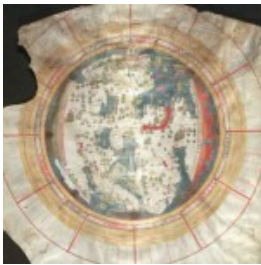
- Gal. 6:10

Leading Forward continued...

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Maps are not the only guides that we use in our lives. Recipes are guides for preparing food. Blueprints are guides for constructing a house or a building. Just like an old map that can lead you astray, a missing ingredient from a recipe can result in a disappointing meal. Even worse, a mistake in a blueprint can lead to a building collapsing from faulty construction. The truth is that in every area of life we must rely upon an accurate, up-to-date guide.

As a new year begins, I am giving a great deal of thought to



what guides the direction of churches and their ministries. We all would want to say that God is our guide through the work of the Holy Spirit. However, there are some indicators that some of the activities and actions of churches may be guided by personal preferences, time-honor traditions, or the latest book on *How to Do Church*.

Everything about the work and ministry of a church has something that has shaped or guided the decisions it makes and the areas of ministry that it emphasizes. Churches determine the time and number of worship services they will conduct; the items in a budget and the amount of money allocated to each item; the way a pastor or staff members are called or hired; who can join the

church; and how business meetings will be directed. The reason they do what they do in the way that they do it may have been the result of much prayer, the reading of Scripture, the influence of a pastor, the gift of an affluent member, or a denominational suggestion. As much as we don't want to admit it, we have followed many guides, some good and some faulty, in the shaping of our churches.

Let's be clear – old is not the issue here, but accuracy and effectiveness are. For instance, many churches are still using “*Come and Hear*” as the basis for reaching people. In the Bible, Jesus instructed us to “*Go and Tell*.” Some churches follow the guide “*Me First*” when developing their church budget to ensure that the members are comfortable in their surroundings and with the programming. But Jesus gave emphasis to caring for the poor and ministering to those in need.

Numerous practices of the church began through practicality rather than biblically mandated directives. Sunday evening services began in earnest when the local church was often the first building in a frontier community to have electric lights. Covering the elements for communion with a cloth was designed to keep the flies off the bread and cup in a church with open windows. Every generation of believers has had contemporary music as God gifted individuals to compose the message of the gospel in song. A building looks like a church only because we have a human conceived image in our minds of what

a church should look like. Democracy in a church is more the result of our own nation's emphasis on democracy than it is a biblical principle.

Don't misunderstand - I am not trying to criticize the way anyone does church. I do, however, believe it is time for all churches to examine why they do what they do. Some human determinations or preferences work well in the church because the Bible does not cover everything about how you should do church. While the scriptures give qualities for pastors, the Bible doesn't cover the job descriptions for student ministers. The Bible does cover sharing the work load as in the case of Moses appointing leaders to help solve the problems people were facing during the exodus.

It is important that you know why you do things the way you do. If what you are doing doesn't fit with God's Word and His purposes, it is time to reconsider and change what you are doing. If what you are doing is not fulfilling God's mission for your church, it is time to pray and seek another approach or ministry that is in the will of God and does result in reaching the goal and destination that the Lord has for your church.

An inaccurate map can get you lost. A misdirected guide can cause you to be disoriented. Maybe that is why Jesus specifically used the words with His disciples - **follow me**. The Year 2012 is a great time to discard what is misdirected within our churches and do that which results in following Him.



Connections
 (USPS 106550)
 Published monthly by
 Denton Baptist Association
 1406 N. Corinth St., Ste. 408
 Corinth, TX 76208-5448
 Periodical Postage
 Paid at Denton, Texas

POSTMASTER:
 Send address changes to the above address

We're on the web:
www.dentonbaptist.org



Upcoming Events

Executive Board

Southmont Baptist
 2801 Pennsylvania, Denton

February 21
11:45 AM

Lunch \$8 per person
 Contact Lora at 940-498-5200 for reservations.

Guest speaker:
Dan Leal, Executive Director
Children's Advocacy Center for Denton County



Dan will present information on a training opportunity, detecting and preventing Child Abuse, which is available free of charge to DBA churches.

Senior Pastors:
We Need Your Feedback

Senior Pastor's Meeting/Lunch

Wednesday, January 25, 2012

11:30 AM - 2:00 PM
 Lunch provided for all pastors - reservations required

The Speedway Club, Texas Motor Speedway
 3445 Lone Star Circle, Ft. Worth

The Vision Team would like to extend an invitation to all Senior Pastors to attend a meeting/lunch to discuss the future of the Association. We need to hear from you and get your input. DBA will provide your meal, but you must make a reservation.

To make your reservation contact Lora Thomas,
lora@dentonbaptist.org or call DBA at 940-498-5200.
 Deadline to make your reservation: **Monday, January 23.**