MAGNOLIA
Messenger

Volume 41; Number 3; FALL, 2019

"Mississippi's GOOD NEWS" Magazine

Serving Mississippi, Louisiana and Adjoining States

"Let us consider one another to provoke unto LOVE and GOOD works."

Serious Statements

From MM Editor

(1) Paul is very ill and unable to work
(2)Volunteers have "Stepped up to the plate"
(3) The Messenger Continues

Our son, Paul, has recently been diagnosed with two very serious diseases. As MM readers may recall, a few years ago (2013), Paul gave up serving as the full-time preacher for the church in Lake Charles, Louisiana in order that he and his wife, Glenda, could help us with the mission efforts of the Magnolia Messenger. But, sadly, at this point, Paul is unable to work. We are asking that you join with us in fervent prayer that our gracious and loving God restore Paul's health, enabling him to resume his work with us.

In the meantime, in addition to Glenda who plans to continue her vital efforts, we are blessed with four other talented and dedicated servants of the Lord who have agreed to "step up to the plate", and help us not only continue, but expand the mission influence of "Mississippi's GOOD News Magazine." The servants are Dennis Doughty (Tunica, MS), Glenn and Beth Beall (Gonzales, LA) and Greg Ledbetter (Brandon, MS).

Dennis Doughty is already well known to MM readers. He is a capable preacher, an excellent writer and one who has special abilities in many areas. (Please read his article on page 9) Dennis has also agreed to coordinate the efforts of our upcoming 5th Annual Preachers' Retreat. (Kosciusko at MBC; March 8-11, 2020)

We also welcome Glenn and Beth Beall into our team effort. Both Bealls are very capable people with excellent qualifications. Please read their "Polishing the Pulpit" report on page 6. We are also thankful that Greg Ledbetter has agreed to assist by providing information and articles relating especially to younger people in the Lord's church. (See his report about SALT on page 27. Also, read an article Greg sent to us from the pen of Derek Broome who works with younger Christians in the Siwell Road church in Jackson, MS.)

Your prayers and suggestions (See page 23 and 31) are sincerely requested and greatly appreciated. Please keep Paul and Glenda in your thoughts and daily prayers. With God in our sight, the future looks bright! (Editor) **MM**

5th Annual
Preachers' Retreat/Recharge
March 8 - 11, 2020
Sunday thru Wednesday
MBC
Magnolia Bible Center
(Church of Christ)
Kosciusko, Mississippi
Lodging/Meals Provided
Contact: **Dennis Doughty**, Coordinator
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Editor's Note: The mention of a person or church in the Messenger does NOT necessarily mean that we either endorse or approve all the person or church may believe, teach and/or do. We do not (can not) have full knowledge of every person or church mentioned in the 'MM; furthermore, we do not believe that our role before God is to be that of a judge. We pray, however, that we will never lend encouragement to anyone or anything in conflict with, or not in harmony with that which is plainly taught In Scripture. Your comments invited and encouraged.
(A. L. Franks, Editor)

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Our Lord Commanded; The Dead Obeyed!

"Arise." "Arise." "Come forth."

"JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD!"

Example No. I

The Widow's Son

A coffin containing a young man's dead body was being carried by pall bearers to a burial site outside the city of Nain. Providentially, along came the One who had power over death and interrupted the funeral procession. With compassion, Jesus spoke to the grieving mother, a widow, saying, "Weep not." He then touched the bier (casket) and spoke again. This time, he spoke not to the living, but to the dead. Jesus gave the dead man, lying in his casket, an "impossible" (?) command." He demanded the dead boy to come alive. He said simply, "*Arise.*" **And, he did!** The dead boy heard and obeyed the voice of God's Son. (Read Luke 7:11-19.)

Example No. 2

Jarius' Daughter

A synagogue ruler named Jarius had a little daughter, about 12 years old. She was very sick. The Bible says she "lay a dying." The desperate father found Jesus and begged him to come to his house. But, before Jesus could respond to his urgent request, news came saying that the little girl had died. Those who brought the sad news encouraged Jarius to "not trouble the Master"; it was too late. But the carriers of "bad news" did not know of the "good news"-- that Jesus could speak to the dead! And, that the dead would hear and obey.

Upon hearing that the little girl had died, Jesus spoke with compassion to the grieving father saying, "Fear not; only believe...." After reaching the house of Jarius, where the dead child was, Jesus asked all to leave the room except three disciples and the mother and father of the little girl. Jesus then took the hand of the lifeless child and, once again, He uttered an "impossible (?) command as he spoke to the dead, saying simply, "*Maid, arise.*" He commanded the dead girl to come alive, to arise! **And, she did!** The dead girl heard and obeyed the voice of God's Son (Read Luke 8:41-56.)

Example No. 3

Mary & Martha's Brother

Lazarus of Bethany, the brother of Mary and Martha and a very close friend to Jesus, was very sick. When the news about the illness of Jesus' friend and loved one, He was about two days away from Bethany. Jesus' response was delayed. In the meantime, Lazarus died!

A.L. FRANKS
Editor

Four days after the death of Lazarus, as Jesus approached the home town of Lazarus, He was met by one of the grieving sisters who said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Jesus comforting response to Martha [and to those of us who grieve now], was, "*I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.*" Jesus added for her benefit [and for ours], "*Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.*" He then asked Martha, "Believest thou this?"

Jesus was escorted to the grave of Lazarus, the entrance of which was covered with a stone. Jesus gave a command concerning the stone which had been placed on the mouth of the cave (grave). He said, "Take away the stone." Martha objected, responding, "Lord by this time he stinketh; for he hath been dead four days." Nevertheless, the stone was removed.

After the stone was removed and the entrance to the cave (grave) was open, Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven and prayed, giving thanks for the opportunity to demonstrate the power of the Living God over physical death. Then, after his prayer, Jesus uttered an "impossible" (?) command. He spoke to the dead, crying with a loud voice, "*Lazarus, come forth.*" **And he did!** The man who had been dead for four days heard and obeyed the voice of God's Son (Luke 11:1-46).

Jesus, by miracles, wonders and signs, often, evidenced His relationship to the One and Only God, His Almighty Father. The most impressive way Jesus, during His earthly ministry, confirmed his Son-ship, was by speaking to and giving commands to the dead who not only heard, they obeyed!

Let's review. To a young dead man, Jesus commanded, "*Arise!*" The widow's son **arose**. Again He commanded a twelve year old dead girl, "*Arise!*" Jarius' only daughter **arose**! And, on another occasion, he issued a command to Mary and Martha's dead brother, saying, "*Lazarus, come forth.*" He **came forth**!

Someone may ask: "Who is this man that commands the dead and the dead not only hear, they obey?" And, "Who is this man who, Himself, died and was raised from the dead?" The answer is clear. **He is the Son of God**. Yes, Jesus proved His divinity (Son-ship) by speaking to and raising the dead. He further declared His relationship to the Heavenly Father when He Himself, came forth from a borrowed tomb, ***alive*** for evermore!

What a glorious event! "Resurrection morning." Truly, the greatest of all demonstrations of power! An event to celebrate. And celebrate, faithful Christians do -- every first day of each week when they

Continued on page 5

BIBLE QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

MM Readers' ASK: Cecil May RESPONDS

QUESTION:

(1) What is "the perfect" in 1 Corinthians 13:10? (C. T.)

(2) What does "Be ye perfect" mean in Matthew 5:46? (U. S.)

RESPONSE:

The passages inquired about, as translated in the English Standard Version; are as follows: "*For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away*" (1 Corinthians 13:9-10). "*You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect*" (Matthew 5:46).

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Regular readers of this column know the three most important considerations in determining the meaning of a passage are **context, context and context**. That is true with regard to both of these questions asked. However, a second consideration is also necessary for each. The important definition is not that of the English word "perfect," it is the definition of the Greek word teleios, which is translated into English as "perfect."

What Is "the Perfect" in 1 Corinthians 13:10?

Paul announces the topic of 1 Corinthians 12, 13 and 14 as "concerning spiritual gifts" (12:1). It is what we call "miraculous spiritual gifts." A list of such gifts is found in 1 Corinthians 12:7-10. They include such gifts as "healing," "working of miracles," "prophecy" and "tongues." Since "the utterance of wisdom," "the utterance of knowledge" and "faith" are included in the same list, it seems that wisdom, knowledge and faith are also, in this context, miraculous gifts.

The English word "perfect" brings to mind something like "without fault or flaw" or "without sin." That is not, however, the meaning of the word translated "perfect," teleios. Teleios means either "***complete***" or "***mature***." That teleios does not mean "sinless" or "without flaw" is shown by its use in Hebrews 5:8-9, "Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him." Jesus, of course, was not made "sinless" or "without flaw" by his death; he was already sinless. He was made "complete" as our Savior. That work was completed only by his death.

Here is the immediate context of the phrase the questioner asks about:

> *As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues they will cease; as for knowledge it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.*
>
> *So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

The contrast between "in part" and "complete" is obvious. The King James Version translates, "Prophesies will fail." Certainly, no genuine, inspired prophecy will fail to be true. Rather, no single prophet knew all of God's revelation. Those with the gift of miraculous knowledge did not know all of God's will. The New Testament

> ***When all of the inspired writers completed their work and all had been collected and circulated among the churches, about the end of the first century and beginning of the second, in contrast to the partial knowledge that came by the spiritual gifts, the complete revelation of God's will, "the perfect," had come***

was in the process of being written. This passage we are examining was part of it.

When all of the inspired writers completed their work and all had been collected and circulated among the churches, about the end of the first century and beginning of the second, in contrast to the partial knowledge that came by the spiritual gifts, the complete revelation of God's will, "the perfect," had come. Then tongues would cease and prophecy and knowledge pass away. The spiritual gifts, needed in the childhood of the church, will no longer be needed by the mature church.

But faith, hope and love will "abide," that is, will continue on after miraculous gifts have ceased.

Other indications of when miraculous spiritual gifts ceased point to about that same time.

The apostles of Christ received their power to work miracles directly from Jesus (Matthew 10:2-4; John 20:21-23). They also uniquely received power to lay hands on others and impart miraculous powers to them as well. It is the consistent testimony of Scripture that only by the laying on of the apostles' hands did anyone receive miraculous gifts. The singular exception is the household of Cornelius, who were baptized with the Holy Spirit directly from heaven and spoke in tongues, in order to convince Peter that he should preach the gospel to them.

The conversion of the Samaritans in Acts 8 is a case in point. Philip, one of the first deacons appointed in Acts 6, where the apostles laid their hands on the appointees, went to Samaria to preach. As he preached, he worked signs and wonders, casting out demons and healing the sick and the lame. Although he worked miracles, he could not pass that power on to others. Peter and John, apostles, had to come from Jerusalem to do that. It stands to reason, then, when the last apostle died and the last person on whom an apostle had laid hands died, miraculous spiritual gifts would be no more. Again, that brings us to the end of the first century and beginning of the second.

The major purpose of miracles was to "confirm the word" (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:4), that is, to demonstrate that the person who claimed to be speaking for God actually had God's authority. Since God is no longer giving new revelations, there is no longer any need to confirm the messenger. Again, that brings us to the end of the first century and beginning of the second.

When we say miracles were no longer experienced as the church reaches maturity, **please do not misunderstand** us to say, "God does not do wondrous things for his people anymore." God answers prayer, provides providentially, provides a way of escape with every temptation Satan presents, and brings good for his people even out of calamity. But miracles that serve as signs, such as giving sight to one born blind, restoring strength to paralyzed and withered limbs, walking on water and raising the dead are no longer being performed.

Miracles have served the purpose for which God intended them. The fully completed God-breathed word, "the perfect," is now available. It has been miraculously inspired and miraculously confirmed. It is now ours to read, believe, and obey.

When we say miracles were no longer experienced as the church reaches maturity, please do not misunderstand us to say, "God does not do wondrous things for his people anymore." God answers prayer, provides providentially, provides a way of escape with every temptation Satan presents, and brings good for his people even out of calamity.

How Can We Be Perfect as Our Heavenly Father Is Perfect, Matthew 5:46?

"Context, context, context!" and "definition," not of the English word "perfect" but of the word Matthew used, teleios, are keys to the answer.

In context, Jesus is urging us to love our enemies, not just our friends whom we expect to love us in return.

But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends his rain on the just and the unjust . . . You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:43-45, 48)

"That you may be sons of" equals "that you may be like," "that you may share in, inherit, the characteristics of." The Father is "complete" in his love, blessing and loving the evil and the good, the just and the unjust. "You therefore must be perfect (complete, well rounded in your love) as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

Being "perfect' in the sense of being without sin, is certainly a good thing to strive for, if we do not allow its impractically to over-discourage us. We might depend on God's promise to continually cleanse our sins by the blood of Jesus to be the sense in which we are "perfect." However, it seems, "Be complete in your love by loving those who do not love you," fits the context and the definition of teleios, "perfect" very well.

Consider a passage in Luke in what we call "The Sermon on the Plain" (ESV, "on a level place" 6:17) parallel to "The Sermon on the Mount" in Matthew ("up on a mountain," 5:1).

> *But love your enemies and do good, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.* (Luke 6:35-36).

It is always good to be like God. MM

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"Arise." "Come forth."

Continued from page 3

partake of the Lord's Supper, remembering his sacrificial offering on the cross at Calvary and His triumphant resurrection (Read Luke 24:1-6; Romans 1: 4).

"Marvel not at this."

Jesus once said, as quoted by the apostle John, "*Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which **all** that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*" (John 5:28.29)

Will you be ready for His call. Are you ready to die? Are you ready to "rise"? Are you a Christian? Are you a faithful Christian? Can we be of any assistance? MM

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Polishing The Pulpit, 2019

5,249 Gather in Sevierville

Five-thousand two hundred and forty-nine souls attended Polishing the Pulpit on its twenty-fifth anniversary this year. It's origin, from years ago, included three preachers swapping sermon ideas. These men decided they would invite others. The first actual year of PTP had an attendance of about a hundred participants, preachers of our brotherhood. August 2019 experienced an attendance in Sunday worship of just under 4,000 people as shown in the picture of that assembly.

In addition to preachers participating, today there are classes for all ages. In fact, some entire families come. One hundred and sixty-five speakers participated in 2013. This year there were over 700. There are classes and lessons for women, teens, elders, deacons, members, and just about anyone over two years of age. People come to this meeting from all over the world and practically every state of the United States.

In 1994 three friends met together to brainstorm sermon ideas and to enjoy fellowship with each other. The friends who first met together in 1994 soon invited a few other people and someone suggested they should tell others. A speaker was invited to discuss sermon preparation and give sample sermons. When a larger interest group developed, the wives of preachers wanted their own activities at these meetings. They later added classes for elders and then youth workers and deacons became interested.

A Beall Report
Glenn and Beth Beall

When attendance grew to about 1,000, PTP then moved to the Wilderness at The Smokies Convention Center in Sevierville, TN. The number included Christians from other nations. Someone asked why there were not classes for regular members of the Lord's family. They added Spiritual Renewal Weekends for members, teens, and children. Attendance grew and this brings us to 2013 when the attendance goal was 3,000. Then in 2018, just over 5,000 attended.

The program is under the elders of the Jacksonville church of Christ in Alabama: **Ralph Harman, Homer Smith, and Robert Whiten**. David Barker, Trinity, AL; Eddy Gilpin, Salem, VG; Mark Howell, Jasper, AL; and Allen Webster, Jacksonville, AL, are directors. Their purpose statement is: "'*Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you' (2 Timothy 1:6). To assist preachers, church leaders, and Christians by providing instruction by mature, capable preachers.*"

Entering the front door one comes face to face with a display of information, replicas, and figures of importance in the field of Biblical archaeology. The Bible Land Museum directed by Bob Stancell, is responsible for the organization. They will bring their impressive models to Memphis where John DeBerry preaches for the Coleman Avenue church of Christ in February of 2020. They are from Oregon City, Oregon. Brother Stancell has said, "Archaeology has confirmed again and again the accounts recorded in the Bible are actual places and events."

All would agree that a great highlight for 2019 was the sermon of Don Blackwell, who appeared after a serious all-terrain vehicle accident. His greatest prayer, and in fact, the prayer of many of us was that he would come forth with his mind still intact and sharp. He has done that in glowing colors. Sain publications has the CD of that sermon. Everyone should see his presentation: "The Frailty of Life: What I Have Learned Since Getting on a 4-wheeler Three Months Ago."

Group of Children Meet for Class

Betty Winkler was presented the Lifetime Service Award this year. Possibly you can recall how she and her husband, Wendell, attended and supported those early lectureships. To have influenced, supported, and encouraged her husband, children, and grandchildren is a tremendous achievement. We are happy sister Betty has seen the growth and development of the event. Her son, Dan Winkler, one of the more popular and sought-after speakers, spoke during several of the sessions.

Worship on Sunday Morning

Rob Whitacre, director of House to House/Heart to Heart Personal Evangelism, with his wife Nicole, is to be in Gonzales, Louisiana, October 4th and 5th this fall. Brother Whitacre is an evangelist for House to House/Heart to Heart. He did a rousing personal evangelism presentation during several PTP periods. Early in his presentation he named many methods of personal evangelism with which we are acquainted. He stated that he was glad people used other methods, but most Christians and sometimes preachers have no method at all. He stated that 2 Timothy 2:2 was for all Christians and that each Christian should have some method and he would be glad to recommend his. He suggested many valuable tips applicable and helpful to the serious personal worker.

Replica of the Cyrus Cylinder of Persia

Tom Wacaster from the Olive Branch congregation did a lesson called: Will We Be Bored in Heaven? The obvious answer is, "Of course not!" That Jesus prepared it for us as described in John 14:1-4 is a guarantee of its beauty, comfort, fellowship, and eternity. He also teaches courses at Memphis School of Preaching.

Several speakers and attendees from the Magnolia states of Louisiana and Mississippi were present. The Gretna congregation from the New Orleans area had a number of members there. Scott Cain, as in lectureships of the past, delivered several lectures. The congregation in Gonzales, Louisiana was well represented in attendance.

Terrance Brownlow-Dindy, once the preacher for the Kinder, LA congregation, now from Lakeland, FL and the Florida School of Preaching staff, spoke regarding the title: The ABC's of Christian Fellowship. There were a number of ideas regarding fellowship made evident:

1. How is fellowship born;
2. Who makes up the participants of spiritual fellowship;
3. Why is fellowship beautiful;
4. What is the outcome broken fellowship;
5. Upon what is fellowship based; and
6. Where is fellowship beneficial? Through brother Terrance's outline one can see the possibility of obtaining preaching material from these lectures.

A first-time presenter for the women, Tanja McRady, from middle Tennessee, expressed the thought that presenting at PTP is different from teaching ladies' classes in the home congregation because women attending here are smart in the Bible. Her comment was: "It's like speaking to a room full of Dan Winklers."

Many, especially those present with their families, before, after, and during PTP, take in various features available in the Smokies. For example, some go to Skylift Park in Gatlinburg to experience the longest suspension bridge in North America. There one can experience a breath-taking view of the Smoky Mountains at a reduced price. Teens especially enjoyed this event. An apologetics field trip to Knoxville Natural History Museum was also provided. Jeff Miller and Dewayne Bryant led the tour and discussed, "Ancient Man: How to interpret the Physical Evidence from Paleontology, Geology, and Archaeology in light of Scripture." Those who brought young people to the event also could visit these two areas, Knoxville and the Smoky Mountains, before and after PTP.

Pray-cation

The booklet outlining PTP fondly refers to the gathering as a Pray-cation. Families use vacation time to come and enjoy the spiritual feast and the area concurrently. The whole family can look forward to the event. Children love it and teens can't wait to see the friends they met the year before and to make new friends. Moms enjoy classes taught from a woman's perspective. Dads also receive many opportunities to expand their Bible knowledge and challenging sessions designed for spiritual growth. During the same trip, families can drive through Cade's Cove, play miniature golf, and shop the outlet malls. Many find that for the same or less cost required for a family vacation, the Pray-cation can be afforded.

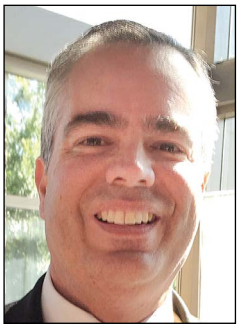
How is the Lord's body, His family, doing in other places than the Bible Belt? Michael Cooke and his family came to PTP from East Rockaway, NY as members of the Long Island church of Christ, a congregation of about 250 people. Last year Michael's friend from Long Island, Anthony Green, called him from Sevierville to tell him about the program. He found the fastest way he could to register for this year. Sixty-six of their congregation came with him in 2019.

One of the blessings of coming to PTP is to meet people like Michael and Anthony from places we didn't even know had existing congregations. This question was asked: "Michael, this is your first time to come; you came all of the way from New York; in one word, how would you describe your experience here." He had two words, but that's okay: "Spirit-filling!" He was asked if the experience met his expectations. "There is so much, so many opportunities that I am frustrated in deciding which session to

Continued on next page

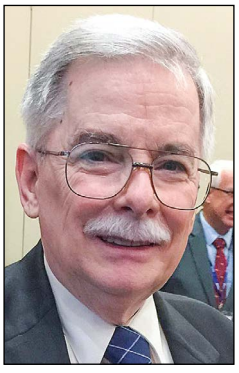
Two Familes Rented Cabin; Stayed Together for 3rd Time

attend. However, each thing I attend is so very beneficial." He said his high point was to hear Don Blackwell speak after his ATV accident and loss of the ability to walk. What spiritual effect did brother Michael experience? The answer: "I learned something about how critical scholarship relates to Christianity." He learned that Christians have good answers to the questions and criticisms of critical scholars.



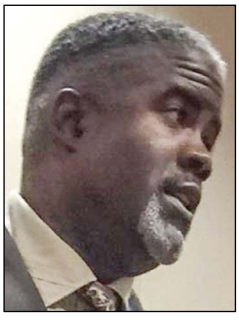
Rob Whitacre

Later Michael Cooke sent an email: "It was indeed a pleasure speaking with you both as well. Am so sorry Candace (my wife) wasn't present. She'd offer a different perspective. She grew up in the church in the West Indies and is quite familiar with events like this. There's an annual event in the Caribbean for which I'll include a link. If we run into each other again, I'll make sure you have a chance to talk with Candace. Peace and God's Blessings! Mike."



Tom Wacaster

From Atlanta, Texas came two families, the McCormacks and the Orrs. On the front row is Alan Orr, Emma McCormack, Evan Orr, Noah McCormack, and Lucy McCormack. On the back row of the picture: Adam Orr, Julie Orr, Jon McCormack, and Holly McCormack. This was the third time the two groups have come together. They rent a cabin with one family on the top floor and the second family on the ground floor. At times the kids go to the basement and enjoy their time together. You know they had fun if you can let your imagination go back to your youth. Of course, they look forward to this event and to more in the future. Beth Beall is the extra in the picture and it was taken at Sunday evening services in the Sevierville congregation.



Terrance Brownlow-Dendy

Interviewing one family of eight from Gonzales, Louisiana, would tell you the event can be the height of the year for a family. "Uplifting" was the word Patrick used to describe PTP. Mary: "Inspiring." Ethan said, "I enjoyed the class where we had the hands on experience of building a tent." According to Blake Adkins, he enjoyed being an active participant in one of his classes, and "amazing" was his one word description. It was Peyton who said, "I like everything about PTP." "What do you like best? "I loooove the singing." Ayden: "Amazing." Amy and Emillee also had comments of praise regarding this gathering. This family drove from South Louisiana, 622 miles, from between New Orleans and Baton Rouge coming to PTP. Growth, development, and encouragement are received by men and women, boys and girls.

Among all the writers whose books were for sale, it was interesting to meet the following three women writers: Abigail Parish and Jenalyn Wilson, two sisters from Arkansas, who had written a book for teenage girls based on their teen-year experiences. Their purpose for writing the book was to point teenage girls "to the source of all answers, the Bible," and help them see they are "not alone in their daily struggle;" and Barbara Barnes from Florida, who had two books of encouragement for women. While there are many good books by various Christian women whose names are more well-known, it was encouraging to see the enthusiasm and passion these "new writers" had to help and encourage others.

The Adkins Family:
Amy (Mom) and Patrick (Dad) in the back. Blake, Peyton and Emelee (middle row). Mary, (Grandmom) between the twins (Ethan and Ayden)

Our thanks go out to the leaders and elders who work hard every year to sponsor and arrange the event called Polishing the Pulpit. What an excellent opportunity for people to recharge their batteries, gain greater Christian fellowship, meet old friends, find new ways to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to just get away from the daily grind of home and work responsibilities. We will look forward to the dates of August 12-20, 2020 and the 26th Anniversary of PTP at the Sevierville Convention Center. **MM**

Mike Cooke & Beth Beall
Soldier of Darius (Between)

Next Year - August 12-20, 2020 -- Lord willing

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THE "Greatest" TRUTH

By: Dennis Doughty

The great, or "Greatest," boxer Mohammad Ali, mixed his boxing skills with his skill as a poet. Before many of his famous fights he quoted some verse he had written. When he fought George Foreman he wrote;

"Float like a butterfly sting like a bee,
His hands can't hit what his eyes can't see.
Now you see me, now you don't,
George thinks he will, but I know he won't."

In addition to these humorous "fight poems," Ali did write some serious poetry as well. He was a good poet and a thoughtful thinker. He wrote an excellent poem called "Truth." The final two stanzas were;

Facts are but its shadows, Truth stands above all sin;
Great be the battle in life, Truth in the end shall win.
The image of truth is Christ, Wisdom's message its rod;
Sign of truth is the cross, Soul of truth is God.

The most important quest of any man is the seeking of truth. Pilate's question "What is truth?" was powerfully and forever answered as Jesus told him, "Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice" (John 18:37,38). Jesus before had affirmed, "If you continue in My word… you will know the truth and the truth will make you free" (John 8:31,32).

Salvation, if you believe the scriptures, only comes through a "knowing" of the truth. God "desires all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4).

In Ali's words, the "image of truth is Christ." Salvation's truth came through God's Son, and His inspired apostles. Like a treasure, it is there for the finding in the scriptures. It is a search every man must make for himself, and beware, as "many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

It has become all too common to believe what one hears from the pulpit, or to accept the creed a hierarchy hands down, or to follow a parent's faith, then to seek the truth of God's word for oneself.

DENNIS DOUGHTY

When truth is found the challenge then becomes what to do about it? Jesus said of the kingdom of heaven, that "it is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it" (Matthew 13:45,46). When you seek the truth in the scriptures and find it, do you "buy it" or ignore it?

What one does with the truth he discovers is the most important decision in life.

Listening to others is not searching for truth. It is something you must find for yourself in God's Word. The noble listeners of Paul in Berea "received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11).

Truth-vs-Error has been the heavyweight fight of the centuries. Make sure you are in the right corner. For as Ali stated; "Truth in the end shall win." **MM**

(dennis1848@bellsouth.net)
(Dennis preaches for the church in Tunica, Mississippi. He also writes a weekly column called "Inscriptions;." If you would like to receive it send him an email and he will add you to his mailing list.)

Jesus said of the kingdom of heaven, that "it is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it" (Matthew 13:45,46).

The Lexington Challenge

"A Church Building; But, No Church!"

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

by the

(Hanging Moss Church of Christ)

In the Summer issue of the MM, we published "The Lexington Challenge." It was about a beautiful little church building sitting **idle/empty** in a community of 1,500 in a county of over 18,000 souls. There was a church building, a sign, but no church!

Church building in Lexington is beginning to get special attention as it is being prepared for the replanting of Christ's church.

Magnolia Messenger readers responded immediately. Some sent money right away. Others offered skilled laborers. Some even showed up on the premises with muscle power and equipment to do what needed to be done! Several others indicated they were willing and ready to help in whatever ways they could.

We are very thankful and greatly encouraged. We are pleased to report that the church grounds have been cleaned, the roof has been repaired, utilities have been turned on, long overdue bills have been paid, deposits made and plans have been formulated to renovate the facilities so that, once again, followers of Jesus Christ can assemble to worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth.

During this time, we learned about the interest of the Hanging Moss church of Christ in Jackson, Mississippi. This led to a meeting in Lexington with church leaders (elders and preacher) who came to investigate. Several days later, we also met with a group of eight men who came to the building to physically survey the needs and prayerfully consider the possibilities.

We are pleased to report that, after serious consideration, the Hanging Moss Church in Jackson, Mississippi has accepted the challenge of taking the oversight in the re-establishment of the Lord's church in Lexington. So, we ask: Please keep this church in your prayers in their efforts to build a faithful and loving church of Christ in the mission area of Central Mississippi. Curtis Pittman is the long time preacher at Hanging Moss. He is also one of the four elders of the church. **MM** (ALF-editor)

Brothers from the

Hanging Moss

Church of Christ

A few weeks ago, these eight men from the Jackson congregation came to Lexington to personally survey the grounds and the facilities. Their desire was to determine exactly what was needed to properly prepare the existing church properties for use in their efforts to re-establish the church which closed its doors about two years ago. We are thankful that the Hanging Moss church has accepted the "Lexington Challenge."

The Rich "*Rich*" Family

By: Glenn Beall

May I tell you about a "rich" family from Ohio. Jeffrey is the daddy, Crystal is the Mom; and, the son is Don with his helper, Euka (the dog). They are the Rich family: Jeffrey Rich, Crystal Rich, and Don Rich. Each one is a story within himself or herself, regarding the harvest of true riches.

Jeff, first of all, demonstrates a good definition of what a husband and father can be. His wife, Crystal, had a stroke four years ago and remains paralyzed on the left part of her body. Jeff has been by her side. Don, his son, has multiple problems, autism and Downs Syndrome. Jeffrey has stood by his family in the most exemplary manner. My experience tells me that many "men" leave their family in such a situation. Other "men" remain but they are immobile, depressed, and ineffective. But there stands Jeff, with a beautiful smile on his face, attending Polishing The Pulpit, helping, assisting and loving his precious family. Does he possess the real riches of life or not -- this Jeffrey Rich?

True riches. Yes, we remember the Scripture: "*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures [riches] on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures [riches] in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure [riches are] is, there your heart will be also*" (Matthew 6:19-21, ESV).

And Mom, a tragedy, right? She has sustained serious damage, as far as her health is concerned. (In the picture you see a woman communicating with Crystal in her wheel chair.) For all practical purposes, Crystal is enjoying life; at least, at this point. And, it appears she is doing so to the best of her ability. She and Euka, the dog, provide companionship and love for Jeffrey and Don. As far as possible she, too, supplies what she can to a beautiful, rich family of God: **true riches.**

What a model of companionship we see between Don and Euka. Actually, Euka was a second or "successor dog" for Budley. Budley was trained at the state prison at Chillicothe, Ohio. Many of us have owned a four-legged friend and we remember moments of fondness, fun, and pleasure. This young man, in the past, would go out and roam the neighborhood. It would not be good to lock him in. Think of the danger in an emergency. So Dad kept a watch on him and noted that he always came back; often all he did was go out and sit on the porch swing. But this young man made his dog his best friend. Now when he wakes in the middle of the night he doesn't roam, he reaches over in fondness toward Euka, talks, pets and admires him, then falls back asleep.

There are four characters in this story, actually five, when I include a group of "death-row" inmates in a maximum security prison. Budley, the first dog, was trained by the prisoners to be a service dog. There was a potty-training problem with the young man in this family. Budley would go outside and Don would watch the dog go, actually on command. "H-m-m, maybe I could do that," was perhaps Don's thought, if I can interpret what happened.

Isn't it true: "*Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken*" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, ESV). In this case there is a five-fold cord, and one is Euka (and previously Budley). If a dog can be a friend like this, what kind of friendship and fellowship do you offer?

"Euka", Don's service dog

The Rich Family at "Polishing the Pulpit" in Sevierville, TN (from left) Jeffery, Don and His Helper, "Euka" and Crystal (in wheel chair). The lady talking with Crystal is unknown to us.

(For information regarding service animals, write to the email below.)

Here is the fifth cord. The death-row inmates in Ohio are not allowed to meet or know the person or persons for whom they train a dog. However, our brother Jeff thought up this idea: "I'll make a digital video of what the service dog does for us. These inmates need to know what their work produces." He made the video and sent it to the warden. Yes, he allowed the inmates to view it. Not a dry eye in that cell-block.

If you find yourself locked in Maximum Security, can you see that you can still do a service for humanity? Can you see that you, for that matter, can come to a saving relationship with God? It is rewarding to write about the Rich family. I hope you will read it to your spiritual advantage. The Rich family lived it. Will you live it as well? **MM**

Our thanks to Glenn Beall, who serves as a preacher for the church of Christ in LaPlace, LA. Email: foyfoyirish@gmail.com. *Address: P.O. Box 114, Brittany, LA, 70718 or P. O. Box 1578; Kosciusko, MS 39090"*

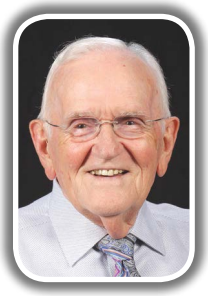
(Information regarding support animals: http://www.CCI.org).

MILLENNIALS... & OTHER STUFF

By: Ken Joines

We hear this term tossed about with uncertain and sometimes confusing applications. "The Millennials" will do this or won't do that." Just who are the millennials? "Millennials" is the term used to reference that loosely defined segment of society who reached adulthood early in the 21st century. We constantly hear how they are different—different in the way they think and learn—that millennials cannot understand the gospel as it has traditionally been presented. Millennials, they tell us, resent and will reject anything with a negative feel or sound to it. At the outset, please know that not all millennials fit this description.

May I say just here that I'm not entirely naïve; I certainly know that methods of reaching people are necessarily different in different places and at different times. The cultures of Asia, Africa, the Middle East or the Islands, for instance, are vastly different from our own. To be effective, we must take this into consideration. But in some churches the knee-jerk response is that entire teaching programs are geared solely to what they think the millennials will like. And in not a few cases, programs are being revamped with disastrous results. It is one thing to take note of the different segments but to allow the world to dictate the teaching program of a congregation is to invite Satan to turn the church into his own training camp.



Here's something of what I'm talking about: It is not popular to preach about hell these days (has it ever been?), so we don't hear much about it from our pulpits. I dare say that the teens in the average church have heard almost nothing about what hell is like and why there is such a place. Be reminded, though, that it was Jesus himself who gave us most of what we know about hell. We're not telling people that they must repent or go to hell. But Jesus did! (Luke 13:3).

We hear very little about the necessity of being baptized into the death of Christ to reach his cleansing blood. But it was an apostle (Paul) who gave us that directive (Romans 6:3-6). How long since you heard a sermon explaining why the practice of sprinkling is not the baptism of the Bible? Or that infant baptism is not the baptism of the Bible? Sermons on the Lord's supper are rare. And how much are we hearing from the pulpits about the punishment for sin? On and on we could go. Why is this? No doubt we've been told that modern ears won't listen to negative preaching, so we refocus our preaching to accommodate this.

The net result is we are allowing the world to dictate how we present the gospel, and even what we preach or don't preach. In Isaiah 30:10 we read, "…..do not prophesy to us what is right; speak to us smooth things." The world doesn't like to hear the gospel, so little by little the gospel has been watered down and diluted until there's not much distinctiveness about the message anymore. If you doubt this, try keeping a journal of the sermon topics in your congregation and at year's end look back and see what has been the thrust of the messages. Prepare to be shocked. Even saddened. Maybe angered.

Fifty years ago we were reading and hearing a lot about how the sectarian world was moving toward a "social gospel", meaning that the bulk of preaching and emphasis was geared toward such things as relationships, good citizenship, being a good neighbor, getting along in the business world, etc., all of which are good. As I recall, the Methodists were taking a lot of the heat for this because a couple of generations earlier, some of the greatest revival preaching was done by fired-up Methodist evangelists. By mid 20th century the Methodists had just about quit evangelizing, and pretty soon their growth stopped altogether. By the way, when was the last time you

It is time for the millennials and everyone else to know that there is a Heaven and a hell. Heaven is still perfect and hell is still hot. You will live forever in one place or the other.

The trouble with too many modern churches is that we think worship assemblies have to have the smoke and lights and deafening music to attract these millennials. Give 'em the razzle dazzle they get at the concert and they'll like us! How sad.

heard of a Methodist church having a revival meeting???

Well, soon the other churches were pulling back on evangelizing. You were seeing fewer and fewer Baptist revivals. In the 1930-1980 period every Baptist church in this country had a least one and sometimes two revivals every year. (The Presbyterians had long since bailed out of the practice). And since Billy Graham died, you're not hearing much of anyone reminding this nation of sin's dangers, not on a national level.

And wouldn't you just know it, churches of Christ began putting less and less emphasis on evangelizing. Our revivals had earlier lasted two weeks and by the 1950s were trimmed down to ten days and then to one week. Whereas in years gone by so many of our churches hosted a Spring and Fall Gospel Meeting (revival), we soon cut that to once a year. Then we cut the time to a "weekend meeting" because we said our people just weren't attending those week-long gatherings. These days, more often than not, we try to pack everything into a Sunday-only affair with two sermons before lunch, a pot-luck, an early afternoon abbreviated service and that's it for the day. Forget Sunday night.

Now mind you, we have our reasons for this: "People are so busy these days, the kids have so much piled on them, people are more mobile, there's so much more calling for people's attention and energy", etc. But I wonder if you're ready to hear the real reason why we're doing less and less reaching out to the lost. Are you ready? Are you sure?

The reason we've just about quit reaching out to the lost is that ***we're not even sure anyone is lost!*** I mean you can let the vilest, most despicable person in town die and at the viewing and funeral everyone is saying, "He's in a better place." Now, I'm no one's judge and I'm in no position to pronounce the sentence; God alone occupies that seat and the last time I checked, thrones have only one seat. But when a person lives his life in rebellion to the world's only Savior, and dies in that condition, I'm just not ready to say he's in a better place!

The problem is laid squarely at the feet of us preachers and elders in the church. We preachers are just not teaching the people about Heaven and hell, and our elders are not demanding it anymore. The 20th century's humanistic culture really did a job on the minds of people everywhere. Do we even fear that anyone is going to hell? If we do, we're doing a good job keeping it a secret!

Back to the Millennials, for what it's worth it may interest you to know that in Louisville, KY, the Southeast Christian Church (independent, more conservative as modern churches go) one of the largest churches in America with Sunday attendance of more than 20,000 recently reported that of the millennials surveyed 47% believe it is actually wrong to evangelize—wrong to try to convince anyone of a different point of view! To their credit, that church was showing that we cannot let the world decide how we present the word of God.

Wrong to evangelize??? Does truth matter? Indeed, is there such a thing as truth? Jesus Christ is the one who commanded, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you….." (Matthew 28:19-20)……never mind that, "if the millennials don't like it, then stop doing it" seems to be the way to think these days.

I am aware of Paul's philosophy which said, "*…I have become all thing to all people, that by all means I might save some.*" (I Corinthians 9:19). **But that does not mean God rewrites the Bible to suit the whims of every generation**. To be sure, it is getting late when any church turns to this or any other group to determine whether we obey the will of God. Criminals don't conduct the trial. Boats don't sink because they sail on the water; they sink when water gets into the boat. A church is not destroyed because it is in the world; it is destroyed when too much of the world gets into the church.

Continued on next page

MILLENNIALS...
and OTHER STUFF

Continued from page 13

It is time for the millennials and everyone else to know that there is a Heaven and a hell. Heaven is still perfect and hell is still hot. You will live forever in one place or the other. There is a God who is above all. Jesus Christ is his son and this world's only savior. The Bible is God's only written communication with his creation, his inerrant will. And this book—not our likes or dislikes—will judge us in the last day (John 12:48. Don't kid yourself—the millennial has the exact same human nature as men have always had. He has a conscience and an awareness that he is lacking something. God built this awareness into his very psyche and no amount of fun-filled living can cause it to go away.

He may present the false front of the macho he-man who fears nothing. But don't let him fool you; he has a conscience. In his serious one-on-one conversation he may confess he has an emptiness in his life that he just can't seem to fill. He soon finds that alcohol and other drugs only make it worse. If he mistreats his spouse or does something really bad, although he works all day with a computer and drives a new Tesla, his conscience bothers him just as it did the pioneer walking behind a plow. When he pillows his head, he may need a couple sleeping pills or a strong drink or two to block out his troubles and let him sleep.

But in some churches the knee-jerk response is that entire teaching programs are geared solely to what they think the millennials will like. And in not a few cases, programs are being revamped with disastrous results.

God's word, when preached to him plainly and in love, can pierce that guilty conscience and show him a better way. He may never have heard that he can be completely forgiven and live in peace. This will appeal to him. The trouble with too many modern churches is that we think worship assemblies have to have the smoke and lights and deafening music to attract these millennials. Give 'em the razzle dazzle they get at the concert and they'll like us! How sad.

A few more words are in order now about preaching. We all know that our preaching and teaching has lacked zeal and passion for the lost. Listen to our preachers at the close of a sermon--in fact we've about quit calling it a sermon; it's a "lesson". "If you need prayer or anything we can do, just come forward." That's about it. No urging the unbaptized to come and take that important step. No explanation even of what baptism is or is for. We know that we have allowed the pulpit to be weakened. So what do we do now?

First, the church itself can demand of its leaders that our assemblies hear us preach *"the whole counsel of God"* which will include more messages on the fundamentals of the faith. **We simply must get back to educating our people on such things as**: *why Jesus had to die, why he had to rise again, what sin is and what to do about it. We must teach them about God's grace and how it is applied, teach them about baptism and how it is tied to the death and resurrection of Jesus, about the Lord's Supper and why we eat it every Sunday. About Heaven and why we want to go there; Hell and how to avoid it. We must emphasize that when we come to Christ our lives must be different from the world; that we have to change.* This is by no means an exhaustive list but even this much will keep a preacher busy preparing great soul-stirring messages rather than meddle in the church-management business which the elders are charged with doing.

I am appalled that some preachers are given "pastor status" and are calling the shots in their congregation. The preacher's job is to "preach the word, be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort with complete patience and teaching, for the time will come when people will not endure sound teaching…." (2 Timothy 4:2-3) If preachers do this well, they won't have time to take over the management of the church's affairs. This is what God appointed elders and deacons to do in the first place! Have today's elders completely forgotten this?

I'm glad to see increased interest in training young men to preach. Harding University, for instance, is this summer hosting a new training session for young men preparing to preach. Harding now has a Center for Preaching. When I was a freshman at Lipscomb in 1953 we had a "Preacher's Club" with close to a hundred men in it. In most of our colleges we were actually training young men to preach.

Our first inclination is to ask, "Why are the schools not turning out more preachers?" Good question, but...HELLO! -- just remember that the schools can train only what our homes send to them. The fact is, preachers are not made at the colleges or schools of preaching; a young man's interest in becoming a preacher is kindled first in his home when he is very young. THEN he is sent to school for training. So the responsibility falls on the home. What are YOU doing to arouse this interest in a son or grandson?

Years ago I heard a famous old preacher named Gus Nichols say, "The church is a divine institution established by God himself. I know that because if it wasn't we would've killed it by now." I love the church. Jesus died for it. I just want us to get back to the simple business of introducing people to Jesus and helping them come to know him better. **MM**

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M.B.I. A School of Preaching in Mississippi

That is what **M**agnolia **B**ible **I**nstitute is: *A School of Preaching!* And, it is located in Kosciusko, Mississippi, on the campus of the former Magnolia Bible College. These facilities are again being used, howbeit on a limited basis, for which they were originally constructed: **to train gospel preachers**.

The Institute begins its second fall semester on September 5. At the current time it is a Thursday night and Saturday morning school. The Thursday night class meets from 6:00 – 8:00 and will be studying **Pauline Epistles I** (I & II Corinthians, Galatians, I & II Thessalonians). I (**Les Ferguson, Sr.**) will be serving as the instructor for this class. The Saturday morning class consists of two courses of study. **Will Anderson** will teach **Romans** from 9:00 – 11:00. **Dr. Ray Paseur** will teach the History of Israel from 11:15-1:15.

We expect to have 20 men taking these classes. They come from **Kosciusko, Grenada, Cleveland, Oxford, Meridian, Vicksburg, Brookhaven, McComb, Union** and **Tylertown**. The majority of them are taking the classes for credit, working toward a ***certificate level Bible education***. Some are already involved in some phase of work in a local church of Christ. Most have other jobs and are limited to a night or Saturday morning school. We feel really blessed to be able to provide these opportunities to help brothers and sisters grow in their knowledge and ability to teach and preach God's word.

Their education is *without cost to <u>them</u>* with the exception of purchasing text books the instructor may require. A number of brethren and churches across the state have seen the value of providing gospel preachers with these opportunities and have helped us with the costs involved in this endeavor. ***We are thankful!*** And we are still looking for others who may be able to help support the training of gospel preachers in Mississippi. If that is you, please *give me a call* (**601 562-4226**).

This past summer we had 10 men involved in a "summer school format." Another of our former MBC professors, **Dr. Roger Hines**, taught the summer school class on Survey of the New Testament. Then we followed that up with a short course on Church Leadership. Our professor was **Dr. Willie Nettle**, an MBC graduate, and now the preacher and one of the elders of the 61 By Pass church in Vicksburg. That class met on the first two Friday nights and Saturday mornings of August. Those students driving in for the Friday night class *spent the night in the dorm* and were present ready for class on Saturday morning. That worked really well for the first short course class offering.

It is our hope and prayer "…that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified…"(2 Thessalonians 3:1) in all the places where these men attending classes at MBI live, work and worship. It is also our hope and prayer that our classes will help prepare these men to better reach the fulfillment of this goal in their home churches. We humbly ask you to join with us in this prayer.

How can you help? There are a number of ways. To **prayer** already mentioned, I would add these two: **(1)** By sending prospective students our way and **(2)** by helping us raise the necessary funds to grow the school beyond where it is at present. If you have names and telephone numbers of prospective students, please let me know. *If you would allow me a personal visit with your congregation, **let me know***. I would be so very happy to come your way. May our Father bless you in every way! **MM**

Les Ferguson, Sr., Director, Magnolia Bible Institute
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Magnolia Bible Institute; P. O. Box 763; Kosciusko, MS 39090

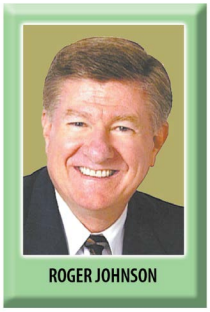
HOW YOU CAN HELP

1. Join With Us In PRAYER.
2. Send Prospective STUDENTS.
3. Provide Necessary FUNDS.

How Much Authority Do Elders Have?

By: Roger Johnson

Without a doubt elders of a local congregation have a grave responsibility. God has charged them to watch over the souls of those under their oversight (Hebrews 13:17). They are to protect the church from false teachers who would lead disciples astray from the truth (Acts 20:28). They are to exercise oversight of a congregation without lording it over them, but leading by their example (1 Peter 5:1-3). To accomplish these responsibilities requires many hours spent in prayer, Bible study, contemplation and discussion among themselves about the best course to follow.


ROGER JOHNSON

One of the strongest denunciations in the Bible is that of God against those who were given the responsibility of being shepherds in Israel. Through the prophet Ezekiel He said, "Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them. They were scattered for lack of a shepherd, and they became food for every beast of the field and were scattered. My flock wandered through all the mountains and on every high hill; my flock was scattered over all the surface of the earth, and there was no one to search or seek for them" (Ezek. 34:4-6, NASB).

To decide whether or not we use mechanical instruments in worship is not within the realm of their authority. That decision has already been made by God (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

Just as God was not pleased with the leadership of these shepherds in Israel who failed to look after the nation, neither is He pleased with failure on the part of shepherds in the church who do not provide guidance to spiritual Israel, the church.

A question often contemplated is, "***How much authority do elders have in exercising oversight in a local congregation?***" The Bible affirms that they do have authority when it urges us to obey them and submit to them (Hebrews 13:17). But, the question is, how extensive is their authority? Do they have authority to lay down the terms of salvation or how a person becomes a member of the church? Do they have authority to dictate the actions of worship in which a congregation may engage?

The answer is, "No." Jesus Christ is the One who has all authority (Matthew 28:18). He alone is the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22). He exercises that authority through His word, the Bible. It contains all that we need to know concerning life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). So, Jesus has all authority; that of the elders is delegated authority.

Their authority ceases at the point of divine revelation. They have authority only in matters of expediency. For instance, with input from the congregation they may decide what time we meet together for worship on the first day of the week and partake of the Lord's Supper. They are not authorized by God to decide what day of the week we are to partake of this memorial. To decide whether or not we use mechanical instruments in worship is not within the realm of their authority. That decision has already been made by God (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

Christians should daily pray that God will bless the elders with good physical health and wisdom as they exercise their responsibilities as shepherds of God's flock. Their task is monumental, deserving of our support and prayers. **MM**

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Fernando's Family
Finally Came to the U.S.A.

Report by John Pigg, Director

"Mission GTO Mexico"

Eighteen years ago the elders of the church of Christ in Kosciusko, MS sent Fernando and Toni Arroyo and his two children to San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, MX to preach the gospel in this city of over 100,000 people and to plant the Lord's church. Thanks to God's wonderful providence, Fernando and his family were finally, after all these years, approved for visas and passports and were able to come to visit the USA on July 6-20.

Fernando is the director in GTO who works in partnership with me as the U.S. director. He is also preacher for the San Miguel church and is the administrator for our Biblical Institute.

Our overall strategic plan of *Mission GTO MX* has been, from the beginning, to train workers and send them out to evangelize every major city throughout the state of Guanajuato, with a population of six million people and is 90% Catholic. Glory to God that, to date, hundreds have become Christians and 18 churches of Christ have been planted! Presently we support 10 preachers under the oversight the elders of the church of Christ in Ridgeland, MS.

The Fernando Arroyo Family: Missionaries in Mexico

Last April, Willie Nettle, an elder and preacher for the Bypass church of Christ in Vicksburg, and I were blessed to spend two weeks in GTO, MX, teaching and preaching the gospel. We participated in a medical campaign in the city of Silao with 200,000 residents where we planted a new congregation last January. Over 300 people were helped with medical care from three Christian doctors: a chiropractor, a dentist, and a general physician. We also fitted scores of people with eye glasses. Willie and I taught and preached at the local church on the following Sunday to a packed room of visitors that had never heard a gospel sermon! Since we have returned, there have been numerous conversions to Christ and we are anticipating greater growth in the coming months.

The second week in October, brothers Les Ferguson, Sr and Don Robertson, from Ashland, MS, and their wives, Margie & Lynn, will return to GTO to visit for two weeks with all the churches and the Mexican missionaries we support. They will also place a recent graduate of our Biblical Institute in San Miguel de Allende, Eric and Angeles & their four kids, in the city of Victoria to start a new church.

We are also happy to report that one church of Mission GTO became self-supporting in January, two in July, and another will be so in September. Plans are for another to be ready next April, 2020. This numerical and spiritual growth is enabling us to shift our financial support to additional missionaries and to accelerate our goal of evangelizing every major city in Guanajuato and planting more new congregations. We ask all the MM readers to please pray for God to continue to advance his kingdom in GTO MX. **MM**

I want to thank everyone who has ever made a contribution to *Mission GTO Mexico*. If you wish to make a donation to this good work, you may send it to the Church of Christ, 338 Lake Harbour Drive, Ridgeland, MS, 39157 and earmark it for Mexico missions. If you would like me to visit your congregation with a power-point presentation or desire more information you may contact me at johnpigg51@yahoo.com or call 601-842-7801.

Playing Instruments and Preaching Women

Gifted or AUTHORIZED?

By Hugh Fulford

In the worship of the church, the New Testament authorizes Christians to sing and make melody in their hearts to the Lord (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; et al). Singing was the specified kind of music to be offered in worship to God by Christians. It was over 600 years, after the establishment of the church, before instrumental music first began to appear in worship. Some historians say it was at least 1000 years after the church began before instrumental music appeared.

Hugh Fulford

When the Protestant Reformation began, most if not all Protestants rejected the use of instrumental music in worship. They viewed it as a part of the apostasy of the Roman Catholic Church. Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists, early in their history, opposed instrumental music in worship. David Benedict, in his book, *Fifty Years Among the Baptists*, published in 1859, stated: "Staunch old Baptists in former times would have as soon tolerated the Pope of Rome in their pulpits as an organ in their galleries" (as cited by Alan E. Highers, editor, The Spiritual Sword, Volume 35, No. 2, January 2004).

The New Testament authorizes only men to serve as elders, deacons, and preachers in the church, and to take the leading roles in the worship of the church. Women are commanded to be silent in the assembly of the church (I Corinthians 14:34). They are instructed to "learn in all silence with all submission" (I Timothy 2:11). By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the apostle Paul plainly declared, "And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression" (I Timothy 2:12-14).

It was over 600 years, after the establishment of the church, before instrumental music first began to appear in worship. Some historians say it was at least 1000 years after the church began before instrumental music appeared.

Yet, in spite of these clear Bible instructions concerning the kind of music God desires in worship and concerning the role of women in the church, there are those who argue that there are those gifted to play instruments and their giftedness should not be denied them in the worship of the church. It is likewise argued that there are women who are gifted to preach and teach and lead the church in other ways and their giftedness should not be stymied.

What about it? Is "giftedness" the standard by which what we do in service to God is determined, or does His divinely inspired word serve as the standard? Consider the following.

1. Cain was a gifted farmer, but his sacrifice of the fruit of the ground was unacceptable to the Lord and rejected by Him (Genesis 4:3-5). Cain's "giftedness" did not make his offering acceptable to God.

2. Nadab and Abihu were gifted priests, but their sacrifice was unacceptable because they did that which the Lord "had not commanded them" (Leviticus 10:1-2). Their "giftedness" did not make their offering acceptable to the Lord.

3. No one can possibly argue that Jesus was not gifted to serve as a high priest because when He ascended back to heaven he became for all Christians their great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14). While on earth, however, He was not authorized to serve as a priest because He was not of the priestly tribe (Hebrews 7:14; Hebrews 8:4). His "giftedness" had nothing to do with it and His "giftedness" could not be substituted for what the law of the Lord did not allow.

4. The Judaizing teachers who caused so much trouble in the early church were no doubt gifted, but the apostles and elders of the church at Jerusalem said of them, "to whom we gave no such commandment" (Acts 15:1,15).

Their "giftedness" as teachers did not make what they taught right. They had no authority to teach what they taught.

5 Apollos was an extremely gifted preacher and is described as being "mighty in the Scriptures" (Acts 18:24), but he was wrong about the baptism which he preached and had to be taught "the way of God more accurately" (verse 26). His "giftedness" did not make his doctrine right.

...there are those who argue that there are those gifted to play instruments and their giftedness should not be denied them in the worship of the church. It is likewise argued that there are women who are gifted to preach and teach and lead the church in other ways and their giftedness should not be stymied.

What we need to learn from these examples is that acceptable service to the Lord is not determined by one's giftedness, but rather by the authority of God's word.

Christ declared: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). He alone is the head of the church with the right to determine how His church functions (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18). Paul wrote: "And whatever you do in word (what we teach and preach, hf) or deed (what we practice, hf), do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (by His divine authority, hf), giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Colossians 3:17).

"Giftedness" does not determine what we do in our worship and service to God. What God in His word authorizes is the determining factor in all acceptable service and worship. As my friend Matthew Morine in a brilliant presentation at the 2019 Faulkner University Bible Lectures rhetorically asked, "Was Paul a cultural coward in not telling us how culture would change the role of women in the future? Did the Holy Spirit succumb to culture?" Good questions, Matthew. The answer is obvious. Matthew went on to quote Everett Ferguson who said, "The text itself is our authority, not our re-construction of the text." He further noted: "The Bible changes culture, culture is not to change the Bible."

Let us not succumb to and be governed in our service to God by a hermeneutics of culture, but by a respect for what God's word clearly authorizes and plainly forbids. It is the authority of the Scriptures, not giftedness, that determines the acceptability of our service to the Lord. **MM**

Hugh Fulford huford@comcast.net
Taken from Hugh's News & Views. Used by permission.
(Thanks, brother Hugh! alf, MM Editor)

Bay Springs Church Conducts Gospel Meeting

Assisted by Booneville's "Golden Circle"

The Bay Springs church of Christ welcomed Jim and Jeaneta Estes and part of the "Golden Circle" from the Booneville church of Christ for a summer gospel meeting in June.

Charles Jones

Members of Booneville's Golden Circle accompanying Jim and Jeanete were Bill and Virginia Moreland, Merle and Maylena Crowe. The time given to door knocking and seeking to study the scriptures with those interested brought encouraging results.

Merle and Maylena Crowe

Jim Estes, an associate minister and an elder of the Booneville church, brought six very good power point lessons from Sunday morning (June 16) through Wednesday (June 19). Sermons included such topics as "Where are the dead?" and "Why did the 'Sinner's prayer' not work for Paul?" We had visitors from area congregations and the community.

Bill & Virginia Moreland

We had a wonderful week of fellowship with our visitors. We enjoyed eating several meals together, including Sunday lunch at Bayless Restaurant, furnished by the church. Tuesday evening Steve and Carolyn Palmer treated us to a delicious steak dinner in their home. Lunch on Wednesday, compliments of Paul and Tina Turnage, was enjoyed at the Main Street Cafe. Thursday morning, Charles and Gilda Jones treated the group to Shoney's breakfast bar. After breakfast we said "goodbye" as the group headed back to Booneville.

Jim & Jeaneta Estes

We had a great gospel meeting. We all really enjoyed meeting Jim and Jeaneta Estes, Bill and Virginia Moreland and Merle and Maylena Crowe. **MM**

(Report provided by Gilda Jones, wife of Bay Springs' preacher, Charles Jones)

Magnolia Messenger's News

Camp Ruta (2019) A Christian Camp in Lithuania

Our son, Paul, who is presently unable to travel, has made a total of 22 mission trips to the country of Lithuania in Europe. He, along with many others from the USA, make the trip each summer to assist with Bible teaching programs at Camp Ruta (near Vilnius) in which thousands of young people have been taught the gospel of Christ.

The above picture was made at one of the sessions this past summer. Regrettably, because of his illness, Paul was unable to go and assist this year. He has asked that this picture be published in order that MM readers may remember the mission efforts that are still being made in the former Soviet Union. (*Al & June Franks*)

Jean Paseur Celebrates 90 Years of Life

Jean Paseur, the "Card Lady" (Accompanied by her son, Ray)

On September 13, 2019, Jean Paseur was honored by the presence of nearly 3 score and 10 "well wishers" (brothers and sisters in the Lord) who came together for a joyous birthday celebration in Kosciusko, MS.

Sister Jean is thankful she is still able to safely drive her car and faithfully attend Sunday services. She is perhaps best known in the church as the "Card Lady." She carefully keeps up with what is going on in the congregation and faithfully sends cards to members who are sick, suffering, in sorrow and/or who are going through either bad or good times.

Advancing age, according to the example of sister Jean, is not an excuse for inactivity, but is even more reason to stay busy in the "work of the Lord." (alf, editor)

LOOKING FOR PREACHER

Eupora, Mississippi

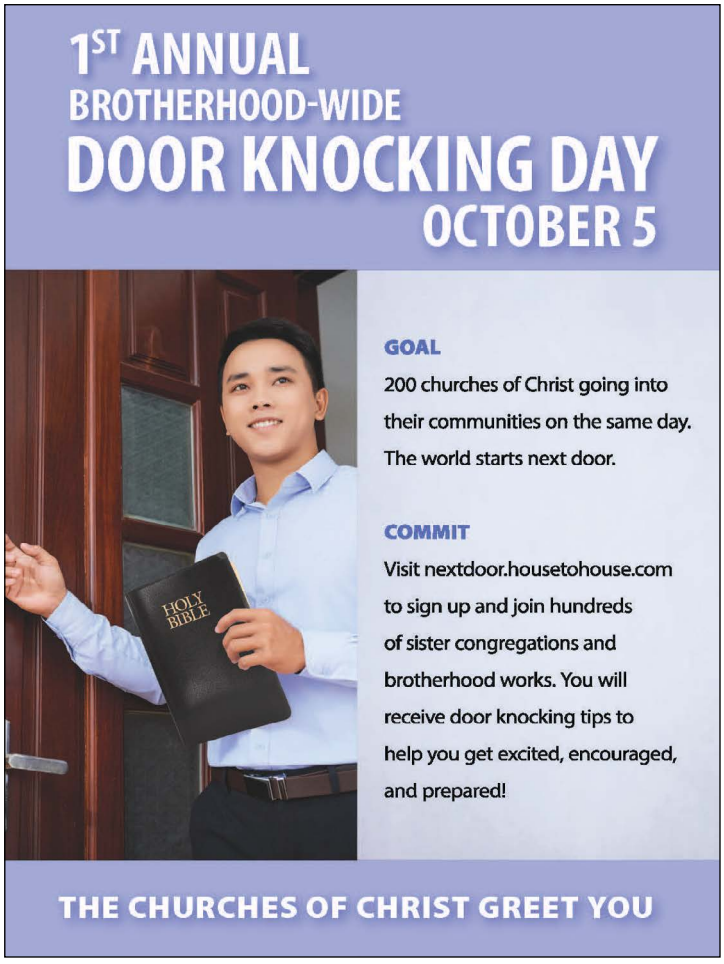
The Eupora Church of Christ is searching for a new preacher. July 28th was the last Sunday for their former preacher, James Hill. They could also be looking for preachers to fill in until a permanent replacement is found.

Contact Paul Hunt: 662-258-2892 or 662-634-1651(cell).
His email: huntpe@yahoo.com

Winnsboro, LA

The Winnsboro Church of Christ, located in Winnsboro, Louisiana, is seeking a preacher. At this time they do not have elders. This congregation of 65-70 is "the most loving group of people you will ever meet." If you are interested in more information, please contact: *Buddy Frost · 318-334-0469*

MESSENGER Contact info:
franksmm@aol.com
662-289-3559 or 662-792-2800
P. O. Box 1578; Kosciusko, MS 39090
Addresses: Changes and/or Additions: glendafranks@yahoo.com



Notes & Information

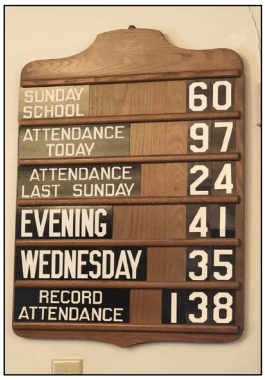
At a Preachers' Meeting in Clinton

Usually, on the first Monday of each month, preachers from Jackson and central Mississippi gather at the Clinton church building about 11:30 A.M. for lunch, fellowship and to share study notes.

On August 5, 2019, I was blessed to meet with the group pictured. They are (*from left, going back and around the table*) Glenn Newell, Robert Shelton (Clinton); Larry Harris, Willie Nettle, Larry McComber (Vicksburg); Tim West, Greg Ledbetter (Brandon) Derek Broome (Siwell Road); Dustin Abbott (Lake Harbour); Gary Hampton (Siwell Road) and Ben McRee (Clinton). "***Time well spent!***" (alf)

Two Magazines,
Same Mailbox; Same Day!
"Good Reading"

Some Still Conduct
Gospel Meetings
We thank the Good Lord!



"Somewhere
in Mississippi"

LADIES' DAY
South Huntington Street
Church of Christ
Kosciusko, Mississippi
November 16, 2019
Registration: 9:00
Speakers
Teresa Hampton
Jackson, MS
June Woods
Selmer, TN
Theme: John 13: 15
"I am the Sacrifice"
Lunch will be served

LADIES' DAY
Bay Springs, MS
Saturday,
October 19, 2019
Speaker
Lisa Newell
(Clinton, MS)
Registration & Breakfast -- 8:30 a.m.
Program & Events -- 9:00 a.m.
Lunch & Fellowship -- 12:00 noon
Bay Springs
Church of Christ
326 MS-18
Bay Springs, Mississippi

Nile Church

in Central Mississippi

Celebrates 100 Years of Service

1919 - 2019

The country church, known as "Nile church of Christ" in south Attala County, Mississippi, had its beginning in 1919 in the old Nile School Building. Records show that H. D. Jeffcoat was the preacher. Among the first new members was Belle Ray, Maggie Lewis (grandmother of Jim Dendy, Kosciusko) and Estelle Crowe Williams (mother of Marnece Moore, Kosciusko.) The Nile church, as we understand, assisted in the planting of congregations in Kosciusko and Carthage.

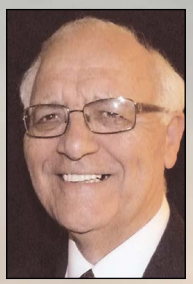
Among those present on "Celebration Sunday", (September 15, 2019), was Lois Crockroft, a 90 year old lady, the oldest member. When sister Lois was born on March 30, 1929, the Nile church was only ten years old. My June and I were also pleased to be with the Nile church on their special Sunday.

Lois Crockroft
Oldest Member at 90

To help celebrate their anniversary, a Gospel Meeting began with former preachers doing the preaching. I was not a former preacher, but was privilege to fill in for Lennis Nowell, who was unable to attend and preach. Ken Gardner presently serves as their preacher. Our congratulations to the 100 year old Nile church, which may be considered the "mother church" of Attala county churches of Christ. (editor)

"Don't Stand Next to Paul!"

Some time back, while teaching a Young Adult Bible Class on the subject of the Judgment, I remember the various ideas expressed about how it might be conducted by Jesus, "the righteous judge." (2 Tim. 4:8) The usual line of reasoning followed the traditional image most Christians have of each person "appearing before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Cor. 5:10) and the books are opened (Rev. 20:12) and everyone being judged according to the things which were written in the books, according to their works. (Rev. 20:13b)



James Horton

We all recognize the teaching of the Scriptures that one becomes a child of God by being "washed in the blood of the lamb." (Eph. 1:7; Acts 2:38) In the Judgment, there will be recognition, by the Lord, of all the good deeds His servants have done in their lifetime. (Rev. 20:13c; 2 Cor. 5:10) In the Parable of the Talents, when Jesus commended the good servant with the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant. . ." (Matt. 25:23), it is obvious that what one has done in service to Christ will be rewarded by the Lord in the Judgment.

We will certainly be saved by God's grace (Eph. 2:8), but one must remember that the grace of God will only save those who have been obedient to the will of God. "He has become the author of salvation to all who obey Him." (Heb. 5:9) Faith is never valid without works. (Jas. 1:17, 24) The obedience that one renders to God in this life is prompted by love for God (I John 5:3) and faith in Jesus Christ (John 8:24).

The life of the apostle Paul was filled with faith and good deeds which he did. As a matter of fact, in Corinth, when he opposed those who said they were apostles, and were not, he challenged them to match his deep commitment to Christ and the level of suffering he had been willing to endure as a genuine apostle.

Paul listed some of the hardships he had gone through in proof of his true apostleship. Here is a partial list of what he suffered for Christ, beginning in verse 24: five times scourged – three times beaten with rods – once stoned – three times escaped death is ship wrecks – a night and a day floating in the sea – often in perils of robbers, by heathen, by his own countrymen, in the country, in the city – in weariness & painfulness – in hunger & thirst – in cold & nakedness, just to name some of what he suffered for Christ's sake!

After Paul's obedience to the gospel (Acts 9, 22, 26) his entire life, from then on, was one of intense and deep devotion and loyalty to the Lord, in advancement of His kingdom!

Therefore, being reminded of Paul's sincere commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ, perhaps you can better identify with the heading of this article, and you, too, will admit, "*I don't want to stand next to Paul!*" in the final Judgment!

Imagine how embarrassing it would be for the Lord to call Paul up before Him and say to him, "Tell me, Paul, what all did you do for me while you lived upon the earth?" Paul begins to explain all that he had been through in his sacrifices in spreading the gospel to all who would listen. In addition, no doubt, he would mention all the hardships he experienced in his work for the Lord! Then, the Lord calls your name: "Come up here! Tell me what YOU did for me in spreading the message of salvation to the whole world!"

How would you respond?

Paul said that he labored and toiled and "was in sleeplessness often." (2 Cor. 11:27) Most congregations today make sure the morning worship service on the Lord's Day does not run over into the lunch hour! It is true that in our day churches do not often make the same stringent demands upon us as the first century did upon servants like Paul, but we can still sacrifice on our own for the cause of Christ! Sacrifice is difficult in a land of plenty and in a time of prosperity for most, but the well-ordered life of a Christian is not patterned after the world, but after Christ Jesus and His faithful servants like Paul.

> ***We will certainly be saved by God's grace (Eph. 2:8), but one must remember that the grace of God will only save those who have been obedient to the will of God. "He has become the author of salvation to all who obey Him."***
> **(Heb. 5:9)**

Isn't it interesting that Paul closed the chapter about the resurrection (I Cor. 15) with this charge to us all: "Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain." (v. 58 NIV)

Examples like Paul of loving service and sacrifice for the cause of Christ Jesus are intended to inspire us to work hard – to give of ourselves in service to our King. Of course, we know that we do not earn our salvation, but we also know that there will be no eternal reward without faithful service. Jesus will say to the righteous at the Judgment, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" (Matt. 25:21) Indeed, our "labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Nevertheless, I still don't want to stand next to Paul! **MM**

(James A. Horton, a long time minister of the gospel, lives in Ripley, MS. His email: jahortn@yahoo.com)

Life refocused

By: Derek Broome

Hobbies, entertainment, school, work, friends, family, Church, God. I think we all can understand just how busy life gets sometimes. We all have things in life we are responsible for, and we have a variety of interests and hobbies that entertain us that are really quite enjoyable. While there is nothing wrong with being active in a variety of activities, there is a problem when we let our busy lives consume us, take control, and become the idols which we serve.

Take a quick look back at our list (see first paragraph). Notice how the Church and God have been pushed to the end of the list and things like our hobbies and entertainment have taken a dominant role. The world seems to move faster each day, and as it does, we attempt to fill our days more full than the day before. Work is definitely important to God and, it is totally appropriate to take some time for rest. But many times, as we add activities to our schedule, God gets set aside as if He is just another item on the list. Let's look at what the Word of God says about our priorities in relation to the Almighty God.

If each of us were to examine our lives and be completely honest, what would we say has been the focus of our lives recently? What kinds of things have been at the forefront of our minds? What has consumed our time? Where have we spent our money?

Matthew 6:33 is a very well recognized verse in scripture. "*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*" This passage is in the context of a discussion on worry and the daily necessities. Notice that in Matthew 6:25-34 we are told not to worry about even the basic necessities in life such as food, water, and clothing. This passage is trying to teach us to trust in God and know that He is going to take care of us. It is also trying to teach us that God is more important than those basic human needs.

As humans, we think first to our basic needs, and we do so with our human eyes. With those eyes, we see the things that we need for a physical life. In order to provide for those things, we recognize the need for schooling, training, jobs, etc. We think about our homes, our families, and our friends. After all of those things, we think about rest, relaxation, and entertainment. Do you see how quickly our lives can become focused on the physical and not focused on God?

In Luke 10:38-42, Jesus was welcomed into the home of Martha, who was there along with her sister Mary. While Martha was busy serving and taking care of the other needs, Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and listened to His Words. Martha was upset that her sister Mary was just sitting and made her complaint known to the Lord. Jesus corrected Martha and her thinking and showed her that Mary was focused on something that was more important than all the rest. Mary was focused on Christ.

If each of us were to examine our lives and be completely honest, what would we say has been the focus of our lives recently? What kinds of things have been at the forefront of our minds? What has consumed our time? Where have we spent our money? The answer I hope we all want to give is God, His people, and His work, but that might not be the answer we can *honestly* give today.

As Christians, we are not to think how the world thinks. Like it says in Romans 12:2, our lives and our minds are to be "transformed" and "renewed". God is not to be just another item on the list. According to Mark 12:29-30, God is to be our all. It is with His strength we live every day, so let us live every day for Him. **MM**

(Note: This article originally posted at ofabondservant.com. Submitted to MM by Greg Ledbetter)

Derek Broome, associate minister
Jackson, Mississippi
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Visiting among Churches in north Mississippi

EDDIE LEWIS

By Eddie Lewis, Missionary to North Mississippi, 9423 Laurel Hill, Olive Branch, MS 38654. E-mail: lewis7946@gmail.com

October 7: April through June, 2019 By Eddie Lewis

I appreciate so much the opportunity to inform you about my mission work among the churches in North Mississippi. This report covers April through June. As most of you know, I had knee replacement surgery at the end of March, so I missed three Sundays to recover. I was able to attend Germantown and taught Brother Glenn Daily's Auditorium class one Sunday.

I visited with nine churches this quarter. I preached or taught Bible class at five congregations: Germantown, Bean's Ferry, Antioch, Coffeeville and Pine Bluff. I have served Antioch as an interium for several months. They have hired a full-time minister. I will miss visiting with them each month. I began in June helping the Coffeeville church as one of their interium preachers as they search for a new minister. Please remember these churches in your prayers.

April 28: I visited with the MARLOW CHURCH OF CHRIST out in the country from Walnut, MS. Cameron Hutchins is

Amy and Cameron Hutchins

the new bi-vocational minister there. He has been working with the congregation for over a year. Josh James continues as their bi-vocational associate minister. The church has no elders and around 81 in attendance. The church has a mixture of all ages and is active in the Lad to Leaders program. It was a joy to visit with them and eat a fellowship meal together.

Cameron was converted by his wife, Amy, with the help of G.W. Childs. Brother Childs and other area preachers have encouraged him over the years to preach. Cameron did a wonderful job of teaching and preaching. In Bible class he presented a lesson on Psalms 94. He did an excellent job of bringing to life the meaning of the text and what it means for us today. He talked about God's care for us even when things go wrong or when we face the trials of life.

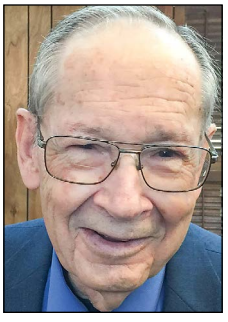
In the worship he preached on "The Gospel Of Christ." He used several texts to point out that the world wants Christians to be quiet about the blessings of the Gospel. They do not want to hear about it. But as Christians we must be ready to share the Gospel with those, who in the end turn to the Lord for help. I pray that we will be those Christians ready to share the Good News.

May 5: I preached at the ANTIOCH CHURCH OF CHRIST in Independence, MS. This was my last Sunday serving as an interim minister for them. They have hired Alan Underwood to serve as their bi-vocational minister. Alan has served several churches in the area, but wanted to return to the classroom. I know the church at Antioch has been looking for someone to work with them as a full-time minister. I am so happy for the church to find such a wonderful Christian father, husband and friend to serve with them. My prayers are with them.

In Bible class I finished up a series I have been teaching on "Images Of The Church." We considered the "Identity Of The New Testament Church."

In Worship, I finished up a series on 2nd Corinthians. The lesson was on chapter 11, "Father Knows Best." Paul is trying to remind the brethren of his love for them. He mentions three evidences of his love. First, his jealousy over the church. He did not want them to be deceived by the Judaizers. Secondly, his generosity to the church. He had sacrificed much for them. Third, his concern for the churches. It is a good lesson on how to show your love for someone.

May 12 and June 23: I was invited to preach at the COFFEEVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST. Ben McRee was the minister there. He has moved to Clinton, MS to work with the church there. I plan to help the church in Coffeeville during the interim. I will be preaching for them a couple of Sundays a month, at least for the time being. They have four other ministers that are helping. It was good to see the brethren there. Several were out of town for the holiday on May 12. The church there has around 65 in attendance and no elders.


Jim Peters

One of the members, Jim Peters, led the Adult Bible class in a study of "If You Are A Christian, You Are A Burden Bearer." Brother Peters did a great job of leading the class in a discussion of Christians bearing each other's burdens Galatians 6:2. He looked at Job and several other characters in scripture that faced trials. He said we are to rejoice with those rejoicing and weep with those that are weeping.

On May 12: I presented a lesson on "The Blessing." It's important that we learn how to encourage our family and friends. We need to be people who bless others. In the PM Service I presented a lesson on "Wired For Connection" based on Philippians 1:1-11. Paul talks about his relationship with the brethren in Philippi. It is a good lesson on Christian Fellowship.

On June 23, John Wayne Purdy, one of the leaders, taught the Adult Bible class. They are using the book "If You Are A Christian." It discusses several things that should happen in a Christian's life if they are a child of God. The lesson for the day was about the importance of spiritual growth as a Christian. John mentioned several passages that talk about us maturing as a Christian. He emphasized the importance of study of the word of God as a source of spiritual growth. It was a great lesson and challenged all of us.

On June 23 my sermon was entitled, "Creeping On The Promises of God." I talked about the power of Faith. I defined faith as trust in God and emphasized that the Word of God is the source of building our faith (Romans 10:17). I mentioned that faith works by love and shows itself in actions. I also reminded them that our faith will be tested as we grow and mature.

John Wayne Purdy and Eddie

May 19: I visited with the WATER VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST. David Floyd is the long time minister there. He was supposed to be out of town, but had to delay his trip. In his place, two of the members substituted. The church has no elders and around 40 in attendance. It is wonderful that they have men that can step up to teach when David is out of town. It was good to see everyone. It has been a couple of years since my last visit with the church.

Mick Smith taught the Bible class.

David Floyd, Larry Schmitz, and Mick Smith

They are using the Gospel Advocate Annual Lesson Commentary. They were studying Judges 17:1-13. The title was "Micah Mirrors All Israel." Mick changed the title to "Micah Mirrors All America." The key verse in the study was verse 3, "Everyone did what was right in his own eyes." When that motto is followed, then rebellion against God follows. It was an interesting study.

Larry Schmitz preached in the worship service. He presented a wonderful lesson on Prayer. He made the point that the church followed the Apostolic teachings (Acts 2:42). The apostles presented the teaching of Christ on prayer and how Jesus demonstrated pray in his life. It was a good lesson and one we all need. I enjoyed my visit with the church there.

May 26: I visited with the FULTON CHURCH OF CHRIST. Matthew Thigpen is the preacher there. He has worked with them about a year and is doing a wonderful job. I had met Matthew last year, but I wanted to visit with him and hear him preach. I enjoyed eating lunch with him and visiting.

The church has two elders and 140 in attendance. They are involved in many good works. I helped them last year as they searched for a new

Matthew and Paula Thigpen

preacher. Matthew led the Auditorium Bible class as they studied "Prayers for Wisdom and Insight." He defined wisdom as "right knowledge used in association with right judgement." He gave examples of prayers: asking for a sign, to gain a basic understanding, and to apply what is known. It was an excellent study.

In the worship, Matthew began a new series on "The Parables Of Jesus". He asked "What is a Parable?" and explained why Jesus used them and how we are to interpret them. It was a good lesson and I know in the weeks ahead the brethren there will be blessed by this study.

June 2: I visited with the BEAN'S FERRY CHURCH OF CHRIST near Fulton, MS. Steven Shappley has been

Beth and Steven Shappley

the minister there for several years. He works part-time with Goble Missions which is also in Fulton. The church has

two elders and around 40 in attendance. It was good to see everyone and eat lunch with Steve and Beth.

They have been studying my book, "Finding The Heart Of Christ" in one of their Adult Bible classes. Steven had asked me when they started if I would come one Sunday and teach a lesson from the book. They had just finished lesson 12, so I came just in time to teach lesson 13, "The Third Kick." The lesson is about our dependence on material things instead of depending on God. The class gave me some good feedback on my book and I enjoyed the discussion.

In the worship, Steven presented a powerful lesson on "Christianity Is A Religion Of Faith." He considered two examples of great faith: First, the Syrophoenician woman whose daughter was demon possessed (Matthew 15:21-28). She pleads with Jesus to heal her. Second, the Roman Centurion whose servant is ill (Luke 7:1-17) and he pleads for Jesus to just say the word and his servant would be healed. Steven gave us six points we can learn from these examples of great faith.

■ **June 9:** I was invited by one of my co-workers, Ron Roberson, at the GERMANTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST to teach his Adult Bible class. Ron was away attending a Homecoming at one of the former churches he served. I appreciated the invitation and enjoyed my time with family and friends.

In the Hope of Glory class they are studying a book, "A Shepherd's View Of The Chief Shepherd And His Sheep." I decided to let Ron continue his study and I presented a lesson from Nehemiah. The lesson was "What Motivates Me" based on Nehemiah 2:9-20. Nehemiah is a great example of leadership and in this text he is trying to motivate the people of Israel to start building the wall around Jerusalem. I considered two types of motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic. Both are good, but our motivation to do the work of God must come from within.

In the worship Dave Philips preached on "Turning The World Downside Up" based on Matthew. 5:13-16. When Jesus came he told us he was going to do things differently but consistent with the will of God. What God wanted, man did not expect or desire. It was a challenging lesson. I enjoyed my visit.

■ **June 16**: I was invited to preach at the PINE BLUFF CHURCH OF CHRIST near Oxford, MS. Allen Drewrey is the bi-vocational minister there. Allen was away in a meeting and asked me to substitute for him. I was happy to fill in. I have preached at Pine Bluff several times over the years, so it was good to see everyone and get to visit. I got to eat lunch with the Coleman brothers and visit with the Miles family. The church has around 45 in attendance and about to appoint elders. I enjoyed my visit.

Tony Coleman taught the Bible class. They were in Acts 19. He did a good job of leading the class in a discussion of Paul's return to Jerusalem and the arrest that awaited him.

Eddie and Tony Coleman

In the morning worship service I preached on "The Blessing." Since it was Father's Day I wanted to bring a lesson on the family and how we can give a blessing to each member of our family. In the PM service I preached on "Wired For Connection" based on Philippians 1:1-11. Paul talks about his relationship with the Philippians. He mentions three connections he had with them.

■ **June 30:** I visited with the STRICKLAND CHURCH OF CHRIST in Glenn, MS. Brad Dillingham has been the preacher there for as long as I can remember. Terry Smith is the Youth minister. He was leaving that afternoon to co-direct a session of camp at Sardis Lake Christian Camp. They have 190 in attendance and elders. They have a special speaker on Fifth Sunday in place of having a meeting. They have a fellowship meal and early afternoon service. This week their special speaker was Steven Hodgin. He is a bi-vocational associate minister at Booneville church of Christ. Steven teaches at the Booneville High School. They had 210 in attendance for this special Sunday.

Brad Dillingham and Steven Hodgin

Steven taught the Bible Class. His theme was "What God Wants Us To Know About Time." He used Ecclesiastes 8 as the basis of the lesson. He made five points about our use of time and challenged us to use our time for God. It was an interesting study.

In the sermon he presented a lesson on "The Judgement Day Is Coming." He answered the questions of How, What, When, and Why of the Judgement. He said that we will all have to give an account of ourselves to God. Romans 14:14-15. It was a good lesson. **MM**

Zomen, A Group of Former MBC Students

Will Collins, Mike McCafferty, Jon Mark Smith, Alan Coker and Jeff Frank

These young men returned to Kosciusko on 7/27/19 to conduct a benefit concert to raise funds for Eastern European Missions. EEM provides Bibles in eastern European countries free of charge to people who are in need, physically and spiritually.

Magnolia Messenger

IN MEMORY OF

KENNY COLEMAN
By: Mary C. Freeman
(Senatobia, MS)

IDES & MARY GLENN RUTHERFORD
By: Shirley Spain

GENE GIBSON
By: Madolyn Gibson
(Moorhead, MS)

ROSE MARY STEEN
By: Carroll & Amy Foote
(Somerville, AL)
By: J.H. & Carolyn McCoy
(West Monroe, LA)

MARGUERITE COKER
By: J.H. & Carolyn McCoy
(West Monroe, LA)
By: Carl & Vera Spencer
(Jackson, MS)

CHRISTOPHER COLE
RHIANNON HAMMONS
By: Barry & Diane Cole
(Mathiston, MS)

BARBARA CAVIN
By: Margie McKinney
(Natchez, MS)
By: Alice Humphries
(Natchez, MS)

GEORGE LEWIS, JR.
LILLIE M. LEWIS
By: Nelson & Prince Lewis
(Kosciusko, MS)

VELMA DELANCEY
MIKE MOORE
SHERRY PLUNK
JOHNNY HEBERT
By: Wilburn DeLancey
(Delhi, LA)

JOHN GARDNER
By: Gaynelle W. Hickey
(Hermitage, TN)
By: Jimmy Moffett
(Memphis, TN)

WILLIAM "ROD" HYATT
By: Ray Hyatt
(DeQuincy, LA)

DORSA SPARKS
By: Lamar & Nancy Bolton
(Belmont, MS)

BILLY F. SMITH
By: Lou Smith
(Arlington, TN)

TYLER RUTLAND
By: Betty Butler
(Star, MS)

ZOLAN & JEWEL STINSON
By: Gerald & Linda Lockler
(Chunchula, AL)

SHEILA YOUNG
By: James A. Young
(Rogers, AR)

GORDON BANKS
By: Dorothy M. Banks
(Brooksville, MS)

EVIE G. SMITH
By: Rhenda Miltner
(Coldwater, MS)

MARK STEVEN GREER
By: Dale G. Terrebonne
(Carlisle, MS)

A. D. CARTER
By: Nelma Hazlip
(Natchez. MS

JOHNNY EDWARDS
By: Shelia Goolsby
(Oxford, MS)

IN HONOR OF

PAUL FRANKS
By: Frank & Rita Smith
(Utica, MS)
By: Wilburn DeLancey
(Delhi, LA)

MARY HENLEY
JOHN PIGG
DELAINE HARRIS
RAY FRANKS
CHARLES FULGHAM
JOHN DIAL
By: Wilburn DeLancey
(Delhi, LA)

S.A.L.T Youth Rally, 2019
(Seeking A Lasting Truth)

(**Report by Greg Ledbetter**)

We enjoyed a great weekend together at Siwell Road Church of Christ for S.A.L.T youth rally, August 2nd-4th. One hundred twenty (120) kids came together for a weekend of learning about God.

The topic was "My Story" with the speaker being Derek Broome, the youth minister for Siwell. Derek did a wonderful job explaining how *our* story can be *Christ's* story because of the change He makes in our lives when we follow Him. He showed us from scripture how we are created for a purpose and how our choices can change ***our story*** for the better or for worse. If we are living transformed lives, then we are living for Him was Derek's final thoughts for the weekend.

Greg Ledbetter

We were privileged to have break-out classes with teachers **Greg Ledbetter**, minister at North Brandon Church of Christ, **Drew Dulaney,** a deacon at Siwell, **Andy Dulaney**, an elder at Siwell, and **Will Case**, youth intern at Siwell. We enjoyed an afternoon of fun at the Clinton bowling alley. We finished the night with singing and a final charge to live my life as a Christian.

What a great encouragement it was to see all of these young people together in one place when they could have chosen to do so many more things that weekend. The future looks bright for the church. I am reminded of what Paul says

in Romans 15:13, after talking to his people about glorifying God together. He wrote, "*Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*" MM

Greg Ledbetter, Associate Minister
North Brandon Church of Christ
Gregledbetter@yahoo.com

from a Woman's Viewpoint

The *Goodness* and *Severity* of God

By: June Franks

"*Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee [God's] goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou shalt be cut off.*" (Romans 11: 22)

To have a balanced view of God, we must consider *both* His goodness and severity. We should not think only about God's goodness, but also remember that God does punish those who continue to disobey. In today's world, we hear a lot about God's goodness, but little about His severity. How long has it been since you heard a sermon on Hell? Some say, "I can't believe that a loving God would send someone to hell." It doesn't seem to matter how wicked some live; yet, when he dies, preachers often "preach him/her into heaven."

JUNE FRANKS

The true God, as revealed in the Bible, is a loving God. Scripture says, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3: 9). The Bible also says, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (II Peter 1: 4). We can be assured that our loving God will keep His promises!

One of the most familiar and loved verses in the Bible is John 3:16, where we read, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." What a gift? This precious gift is for everyone! God loves us so much. He doesn't want us to perish! He wants us to have everlasting life.

God has blessed us in so many ways, but His greatest gift was to give His son to die on the cross! The love of God saves us from the wrath of God. The Bible says, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." (Romans 5: 8, 9)

God's goodness is extended to us through His PRESENCE. Over and over in His Word we have assurance that He is always with us. The Bible says, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he said, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*" (Hebrews 13:5). Jesus commanded and promised His disciples: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, *I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*" (Matthew 28: 20)

Other scriptures also promise God's presence. Speaking to Joshua after Moses' death, God said, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, *for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go*" (Joshua 1:9). Yet, another scripture: "*Fear not, for I am with you , be not dismayed, for I am your God: I will strengthen you, I will help you*, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10). God's promise to be with us is evidence of His goodness.

Thank you God for your goodness evidenced by your presence with us on this journey of life.

God's goodness PROVIDES for our NEEDS. The Bible says, "*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 4:19). "Therefore take no thought saying, What shall we eat? Or, What shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek: for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and *all these things shall be added unto you*" (Matthew 6:31-33.)

Thank you God for supplying our needs on this journey of life.

God's goodness PROVIDES us with COMFORT. "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of mercies and God of all comfort. Who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort which we ourselves are comforted by God*" (II Corinthians 1:3,4). God comforts us in our time of trouble, enabling us to comfort others in their time of trouble. We are able to more effectively reach out to others who are suffering if we have been there ourselves.

Thank you God for the blessing of being comforted, empowering us with greater ability to comfort others.

The expression, "God is so good all the time, All the time God is so good" is so true. We need to remember this every day as we thank God for His Goodness toward us. Please consider the words of this little song and, in times of difficulties, stay focused on these words.

God is so good. God is so good. God is so good. He's so good to me! He cares for me. He cares for me. He cares for me. He's so good to me!

The Bible, however, does also teach the SEVERITY of God. The story of Noah and the ark is not a fictitious story (Genesis

6-8). God truly did destroy the earth and every living creature in it except Noah and his family. This should make us think more about the severity of God. Noah and his family were the only righteous people found on the face of the earth at that time. Yes, it is sad and tragic to think about the flood destroying all human and animal life outside the ark. But, God gives us, as a people, the opportunity to make our own choices. Remember also how God rained hail and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah for their abominations (Genesis 19:24).

The wrath of God, the severity of God, is emphasized, not only in the Old Testament, but also in the New. The New Testament warns, "For we know Him who said, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay says the Lord. And again, The Lord will judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:30,31). He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3: 36) The New Testament promises that Jesus will come, "In flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (II Thessalonians 1:8).

No one loves us more than Jesus. However, Jesus spoke about Hell and Judgment more than anyone else. Jesus warned about the reality of Hell. He pleaded, "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it (Matthew 7:13). Jesus also said, "And do not fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

The Bible admonishes, "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). Don't forget: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10).

Have you considered the severity of God? His severity is real; it is a truth we must accept, along with the goodness of God. We need this truth to restrain our ways and actions.

We can escape the wrath of God by truly believing in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, repenting of our sins, and being buried with him in baptism. The apostle Peter commanded, "Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). The Bible says, "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3,4).

Heaven is a place being prepared for a people who are preparing. Are you preparing now? If not, we pray you will ponder these words on the goodness and severity of God and make preparation before it is too late. **MM**

(Mrs. A. L. Franks; email: franksmm@aol.com)

READERS' RESPONSE

Reasons Why We Continue Publishing the Magnolia Messenger

- You are doing a great work and we are glad to help. In Christian Love, **(Charles Pritchard, Steele, MO)**
- Love the paper and love answering the Question Box. God bless you in your efforts. **(Ann Hulsey, Haleyville, AL)**
- Appreciate the Magnolia Messenger. Keep up the good work. **(John K. Wills, Owingsville, KY)**
- If 31,000 people would contribute just $1 it would surpass your goal. God bless! Ask and it shall be given unto you. **(Alice Waldon, Ball, LA)**
- I love the Messenger. Such good Christian enriching reading. Y'all do a great job. Praying for Paul. **(Sara Jo Adams, Newton, AL)**
- So sorry to hear that Paul is very sick. I'll keep him in my prayers. God knows best in all things. I am 94 years old and not in good health but I sure like your MM. I don't have much income, but I have heard that a little is better than nothing, so I am sending $5.00. God bless you and all your good work. **(Ruby Wright)**
- MM is so great and appreciated. I'm praying, praying, praying for Paul and all the family. **(Hatsene Milligan, Caddo, OK)**
- I enjoy the MM and pray that it can continue. I pray Paul can get well. **(Inez Burroughs, Pensacola, FL)**
- Enjoy reading. Keep up the good work. Magnolia Messenger is a great work for churches in Mississippi. **(Rachel Allsup, Macon, MS)**
- Thanks for the great work you have done for the church and all of us. **(Patty Henson, Kilmichael, MS)**
- Love the new booklet. Now I can copy and not mess up my book. **(Barbara Loden, Amory, MS)**
- Dear Bro. Al, So sorry to learn of Paul's serious illness. Please convey to him my concern and prayers. Enclosed is a check to help MM. This a great work you are doing! God bless- In Him, **(Jimmy Moffett, Memphis, TN)**
- Dear Bro. Franks, Every good work faces difficulties. But we press on. We have never met but I feel like, in my spirit, that we are well acquainted. I will be 90 years old this coming March. "Nobody knows the trouble I have seen." I am sure you remember the song ... Your work with the Messenger is of great importance. Our brethren desperately need that publication. It is with great joy that I am able to send __ at this time and will help in the future. The Lord knew that at times, brethren need to be provoked. As you know 'PAROXUSMOS' in Heb. 10:24 lit., "unto stimulation (of love).' The Messenger does that very thing. Just keep making your appeal; it will bear fruit. I am thankful to have a part. Yours in Christ, **(Ben Sherfield)**
- Dear Brethren. Sorry to hear about Paul. Will be praying for his recovery. I enjoy the Question Box so much. I enjoy all the articles. I pass the magazine on to someone else after I read it. I'm enclosing a check... which I hope will help in your printing MM. Yours in Christ, **(Dorothy Laws, Clarksburg, TN)**
- What a Great Paper! I'm 91 years old and I love reading all the things, good works to our Great God. So sorry about your Paul. Prayers for all. In Christ. Thank everyone for their hard work and all the good work that's being done. My thoughts and prayers are with Paul and the family of the Magnolia Messenger. God bless and keep you. Christian Love, **(Mary Carr)**

These Sent In Answers to QB, Last Issue

1. Michael Brotherton
2. Natelle Waugh
3. Eather Craft
4. Sherry Gordon
5. Rosie Lee Odoms
6. Ricky Van Munn
7. William Sutherland
8. Dorsey & Margie Burton
9. Carson Moss
10. Betty Chattman
11. Elnora Mack
12. Sue Mason
13. Brenda Miles
14. Sandra Graves
15. Ruby Nell Parham
16. Shelia Hall
17. Sonya Ballard
18. Michael Harvill
19. Tommy Muirhead
20. Kaye Howard
21. Betty Standard
22. Wanda Orman
23. Paul & Elsie Bryson
24. Betty Spears
25. Marvin England
26. Doris Britt
27. Eddie & Lucille Clark
28. Lois Nielson
29. Faye Garrett
30. Rosie Shepherd
31. Betty Skinner
32. Ruby McCrory
33. Doyle Sebring
34. Maxine Hooks
35. Scotty Balentine
36. Jimmy Black
37. Ann Whetstone
38. Gertha Small
39. Marie Lively
40. Bobby Lively
41. Margie Burton
42. Trayton Hughes
43. Karen Williams
44. Tori Brown
45. Sherry Martindale
46. Ed Lyon
47. Judy Willis
48. Christene Holliday
49. Sylvester & Linda Burton
50. Evelyn Netterville
51. Lawrence Horn
52. Kimberly Easterling
53. Edie Motes
54. Lou Thomas
55. Billye Wiygul
56. Kim Marshall
57. Thomas Forrest, Sr.
58. Ann Kimble
59. Mary Adams
60. Sarah Hill
61. Earlean Williams
62. Wanda Robinson
63. Velva Dykes
64. Jerry Fleming
65. Nancy Akers
66. Patrilla Maddox
67. Geneva Baird
68. Carolyn & Freddie Ogleshy
69. Althea House
70. Dee Kepler
71. Judy Walker
72. Dorothy Mallett
73. Franks Patti
74. Frances Patti
75. Bobby Brown
76. Mary Grigsby
77. Nadine Patton
78. Arthur Burnett
79. Annie Mae Pipkin
80. Nellie Lester
81. Bernita Booker
82. Elledith Harris
83. Jean Lewis
84. Roscoe Slate
85. Sandra Morris
86. Linda Crosslin
87. Linda Cook
88. Jenny Thompson
89. Mack Moore
90. Lucille Anders
91. Betty VanBuren
92. Artis Hinton
93. Garry Gooch
94. Debra Michael
95. Alice Dempsey
96. Vera Spencer
97. Linda Keirn
98. William Pyron
99. Nancy Floyd
100. Dee Collier
101. Carolyn Miller
102. Peggy Hartman
103. Mary King
104. Charlotte Rauchle
105. Ray Gambrell
106. Melba Ogg
107. Joyce Talbert
108. Rhenda Miltner
109. Terry Miltner
110. Faye Stamps
111. Maggie Edmonds
112. Laverne Corley Becker
113. Bobbie Sindle
114. Kathy Perry
115. Steve Moore
116. Doyce Britt
117. Carolyn Garrett
118. Joyce Swain
119. Jimmie Brown
120. Carole Shelby
121. Faye Stanford
122. Sue Glenn
123. Ruby Wright
124. Fredrick Alan Jones
125. Bettye McCool
126. Sarah Dantzler
127. Emma Grahm Spiva
128. Barbara Baker
129. Betty Blair
130. Donna Gulley
131. Ora & Florine Riley
132. Frances Williford
133. Rosie Felton
134. Sharon Dantzler
135. Shirley Carroll
136. Sue Keener
137. Jeff Ennies
138. Iman Jean Fogus
139. Billy Willingham
140. Bill Moore
141. Mary Lois Moore
142. Ray Parham
143. Jerry & Pat Moore
144. Charlotte Ritter
145. Betty & Arvel Miles
146. Velma Isom
147. Julius Lee Wales
148. Admiral & Ruth Tidwell
149. George Lowrey
150. Edward Yancey
151. Dale Housh
152. Gwen Cauley
153. Elizabeth Dickerson
154. Pat Shadle
155. Stan Neuenschwander
156. Dorothy Winslett
157. Emily Overton
158. Pearlie Hurst
159. May Dyer
160. Missy Ivey
161. Paul Pounds
162. Dorothy Brunson
163. Carol Jean Bonner
164. Ken Harris
165. Cheri Moore
166. Nell Millsaps
169. Patricia Glover
170. Carolyn Stanford
171. Sherian Martin
172. Pamela Loving
173. David Delatte
174. William Free
175. Sharon Praytor
176. Brenda Redd
177. Linda Bridges
178. Jimmie & Anita Taft
179. James Savage
180. Kay Shiers
181. Mary Brannan
182. Betty & Lyman York
183. Theresa Henderson
184. Vivian Covington
185. Sandy Johnson
186. Melvin & Kay Linton
187. Derek Lowery
188. L B & Annie Winters
189. Gloria Wilborn
190. Joe Holmes
191. Joyce King
192. Hedy Lewis
193. Fannie Johnson
194. Lena Barber
195. Brenda Broderick
196. Mary Ellen Patrick
197. Patsy McKee
198. Meredith Peek
199. Vera Winfrey
200. April & Rebekah Gough
201. Jack Fall, Sr.
202. Geraldine Wilbanks
203. Peggy Jackson
204. Ann Cockroft
205. Sherry Townsend
206. Bobbie Clayborn
207. Beverly Miles
208. Doris Darnell
209. Grace Grant
210. John Gates, Jr
211. Bronwen Pollard
212. Charles Coffey
213. Katheryn Lee
214. Glenda Jefcoat
215. Geri Spears
216. Amy Hutson
217. Michelle Simpson
218. Nell & Tommy Lawson
219. Wm. & Atlean Snow
220. Brinda Morris
221. Brailey Bryan
222. Neil Marshall
223. Janice Galloway
224. Brenda Burlison
225. Nan Conley
226. C W O'Kelley
227. Ann Hulsey
228. Charlene Jent
229. Gregory Mac Hawkins
230. Stacey & Melinda Hawkins
231. Daniel Carter
232. Brenda Green
233. Janie Green
234. Elizabeth Todd
235. Sharon Huckaba
236. Steve & Joann Gooch
237. Wanda Cochran
238. Perkins Cochran
239. Gary Willis
240. Carolyn Perry
241. Michael Barnes
242. Beulah Rupert
243. Marie Witte
244. Sidney & Jean Clemmer
245. Bethany Stephens
246. Don Lee
247. Joseph Bolden
248. Madonna Langford
249. Eddie Vermillion
250. James Vermillion
251. Gwendolyn & Gary Bryant
252. Debra Sigmund
253. Dannie Davis
254. Cath Roberson
255. Bonnie Howell
256. Mark Hayden
257. Barbara Rinard
258. Melissa Nugent
259. James Hurlbut
260. Henry Norris
261. Herschel Ford
262. Inez & Laura Brannon
263. Glenda Wooldridge
264. Rosa Sanders
265. Mattie Ann & Foster Owens
266. Jane Barnett
267. Arcadio Devera, Sr.
268. Charlane Stanfield
269. Carrie McGrone
270. Irene Wright
271. Alice Humphries
272. Rick Bishop
273. Gail Saxon
274. Gayla Lang
275. Sandy Dean
276. Dorothy Banks
277. James Puckett
278. Glenda Wilson
279. Bertha Rockingham
280. Brenda McDougal
281. Sandra Grisham
282. Lynn Grisham
283. Reagan Hall
284. Wanda Yancey
285. Frances Mingea
286. Janice Griffin
287. MacArthur Mullins
288. Millie Goode
289. Noah Crider
290. Lee Ehret
291. Areatha Johnson
292. Bobbie Loggins
293. Eva Almon
294. Elsie Ridley
295. Stephanie Slaydon
296. Randy Henry
297. Shirley Bostick
298. Macy Fowler
299. Jeanette Williamson
300. Jamia Brandon
301. Gus Stacy
302. Mattie Ann & Foster Owens
303. Ronald Elliott

304. Seth Burnett
305. Caiden Holliday
306. Zavvion Danner
307. Keneley Wofford
308. Braxton Williams
309. Grace Eckford
310. Samuel Eckford
311. Alex Williams
312. James Bricker
313. Nell Tipton
314. Lloyd & Barbara Beard
315. Flossie Lee Hernandez
316. Kavan Young
317. Lillie Williams
318. Fred Wesson
319. Melvin Taylor
320. James & Judy Hill
321. Sandra Sturdivant
322. Herb Smith
323. Carolyn Ware
324. June Faulkner
325. Taisheivya Smith
326. Esther Hall
327. Hilda Laster
328. Linda Sue Kennamore
329. Patsy Howard
330. Wilda Pounds
331. Karen Bolls
332. Jermiah & Shelia Woodard
333. Jermiah Woodard, Jr.
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335. Ma'Nia & Bralan Womack
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337. Elvis Dilmore
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393. Clyde Ray Bradford, Jr.
394. Carolyn Harvill
395. Miami Smith
396. Lisa Dettor
397. Bonnie Lipsley
398. Victor Boone
399. Bonnie Holcomb
400. Jennettea McCory
401. Phyllis Spiers
402. Ginny Luther
403. Channing Ashbaugh
404. Lady Garth
405. Cortney Franklin
406. Tatona Garth
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408. Johnnie Mobley
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423. Johnnie Perry
424. Martha Leggett
425. Leora White
426. John Brooks
427. Nettie Doss
428. Melody Woodruff
429. Josephine Edwards
430. Sarah Morton
431. Brenda Harvill
432. Natalie Stewart
433. Dana Morgan
434. Bruce Lewis
435. Lydia Smith
436. Martha Lewis
437. Karen Hobbs
438. Sister A
439. Sister B
440. Jean Starkey
441. Ann Cook
442. Jewell Trice
443. Gilbert Lamb
444. Marcia Lamb
445. Milton Phinnessee
446. Ann Phinnessee
447. Eddie Walker
448. Ethel Wade
449. Sherry Taylor
450. Carolyn Swift
451. Joan Swift
452. Joe Burton
453. Jean Hogan
454. Evelyn Jack
455. Charlene Adams
456. Joe Arnold
457. Floyd Good
458. MacArthur Williams
459. Millie Goode
460. Altha McKinney
461. Bonnie Dixon
462. Jerry Neighbors, Jr.
463. Shelia Williams
464. Valen Green

New Bible Winner

Sandra Grisham
(Ripley, MS)
Congratulations!

Our Paul and Your Prayers

Many MM readers have learned, and others are now learning, that the oldest of our three precious sons (Paul) is seriously ill. Recently, he has been diagnosed with both A.L.S. and dementia. His illness has, for the present, rendered him incapable of functioning normally.

As parents to Paul and co-workers with him and his devoted wife, Glenda, in the ministry of the MM, my June and I feel the need to express our appreciation to all who read these words. At this point, however, mere words seem so inadequate; but, be that as it may, we simply must try.

"Thanks you for your outpouring of concern and loving care. We deeply appreciate your generous expressions of love as shown by cards, letters, phone calls, messages, emails and personal visits. We ***especially*** *thank you for your past, present and future* **prayers**. ***Our God is able!*** *Nothing can separate us from his love -- not even sickness or death. Living by faith, one day at a time, we have assurance that all is going to be okay.*

(Al & June Franks)

Recent Bible Winner (center, front) Betty Standard

Betty's Bible was presented by Sean O'Neal (on right) who preached for the Jackson Grove Church (Enid, MS) on the Sunday Bible was awarded by Paul Franks. Family members of Betty pictured are (from left) Tina Oglesby (Senatobia), Lisa S. Frazer (Greenville), Jessica Standard (Batesville) and Kelly Standard (Batesville). Our congratulations to sister Standard!

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THE QUESTION BOX • *Jesus' Greatest Miracle (?)*

(To Begin)

Jesus did many wonderful works and miracles while He was in the flesh. So many that "*if every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that should be written.*" (John 21:25.)

But which miracle was his greatest?

I. Which Was the Greatest Kind of Miracle? You Decide!

Rank these miracles #1 to #5 with #1 being the kind you think was the greatest, #2 the next greatest and so forth.

_____ Fishing Tips: Luke 5:4-6

_____ Food Production: Mark 6:33-44

_____ Medical Cures: Luke 4:40

_____ Raising the dead: Luke 8:49-56

_____ Control over Nature: Mark 4:35-41

Which did you rank as the Greatest Kind of Miracle?
While all miracles have their own unique aspects,
Most might say that raising the dead was the greatest kind of Miracle.

II. Jesus Raised Three People From The Dead. Identify Them.

(1) _____ Luke 7:11-15

(2) _____ Luke 8:40-56

(3) _____ John 11:1-53

III. Answer the Following Questions

ANSWERS. Choose from:
Widow's son; Lazarus; Jarius' daughter

1. Which of these three did Jesus know personally?
_____
2. Which of these three was done near Jerusalem?
_____
3. Which of these three had already been buried?
_____
4. Which of these three caused Jesus to weep?
_____
5. Which of these three caused the Jewish council to meet and decide to kill Jesus? _____
6. Which one of these three did the Jews also want to put to death? (Read John 12) _____

(In Closing)

In view of all these things, perhaps, we could say that the Raising of Lazarus was Jesus' greatest, most dramatic and influential miracle!

It certainly gives us assurance that He can raise us from the dead also!

(Question Box, this issue, by Dennis Doughty)

Please Send Your Answers To Us
(Print your name... Please. Thank you!)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____

NOTICE: Each person who sends in answers will be recognized in the next issue of the "MM" (see page 30). ALSO, by random drawing, the name of ONE student will be selected to receive a beautiful New Study Bible.

"The Question Box"
P. O. Box 1578 • Kosciusko, MS 39090