

the MAGNOLIA Messenger

Volume 44 • Number 3
FALL 2022

then God Said,

“Let there be lights in the firmament
of the heavens to divide the day from the night;
and let them be for signs and seasons,
and for days and years...”

Genesis 1:14



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Mississippi's "GOOD NEWS" magazine for churches of Christ.

"Let us consider one another to provoke unto LOVE and GOOD works." (Hebrews 10:24)

from Dennis

“I was in prison and you came to me” (Matthew 25:36.)

I admit that I have done little prison visitation. Several years ago, I spent two days and a night at Mississippi’s famous Parchment prison. I was asked to help the prison accommodate a deaf prisoner which they had never had before. Once, after visiting a prisoner in the local jail, I arranged for my barber to give him a haircut. He ended up giving many incarcerated men haircuts that day. Other than a visit here and there, I have had little contact with prisoners. Until now.

Since becoming editor of this publication, I have learned that the Magnolia Messenger goes into many prisons. I have become aware of this because I get handwritten letters from prisoners regularly. Add “prison ministry” to the good work done by the Messenger.

A recent letter from Roland Thompson, an inmate at the Raymond Laborde Correctional Center in Cottonport, Louisiana, states that they have not been able to

resume church services for two years. The new warden will not let them

conduct it by themselves. “We are now required to have a volunteer,” he writes. “The volunteer does not have to be a preacher but would be good if he were one. Anyone who would be interested will need to contact the chaplain here.”

Cottonport is a small town a few miles south of Pineville, and a few miles north of Opelousas, Louisiana, off I-49. If you can help, or know of churches in this area, help us find a person(s) who can go on Sundays and help this group of Christians worship.

We are taught that “while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith” (Galatians 6:10). Here is a great opportunity for someone to serve the Lord.

“Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.” (Matthew 25:40) **MM**



Church of Christ - Kosciusko, MS

Published about every 3 months (as funds and time permit). Mailed without charge to all who ask to receive it and to others for whom it is requested. Contributions from churches and individuals make possible the circulation of more than 31,000 copies of each issue of the “Magnolia Messenger”. Your prayers and support are requested, needed, and appreciated!

Supported By Contributions

Dennis Doughty, Editor
dennis1848@bellsouth.net

Cecil May, Jr., Bible Questions Answered

Glenda Franks, Special Assistant
glendafranks@yahoo.com

Beth Beall, Copy Editor

Glenn Beall, Question Box Editor

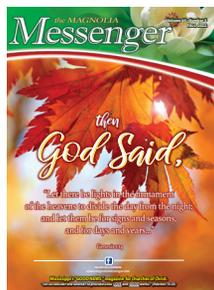
Mark Bridges, Layout, Production and Website
mabridges1757@gmail.com

Magnolia Messenger • P. O. Box 1578 • Kosciusko, MS 39090

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 (cannot) 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.

(Dennis Doughty, Editor)

E-Mail: dennis1848@bellsouth.net



NEXT ISSUES SPECIAL TOPIC



MESSENGER Addresses: Changes and/or Additions:
glendafranks@yahoo.com
P. O. Box 1578 • Kosciusko, Mississippi 39090

TEACHING IS A SERIOUS BUSINESS

“A Matter of Life and Death”

by *A.L. Franks*
(Editor, 1978-2019)

Scripture warns, “Be not many of you teachers, my brethren...” The inspired reason is, “...knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment” (James 3:1). Souls are involved. Destinies are at stake. It is a matter of life and death, eternal life, eternal death—Heaven and Hell!

Our prayer should be, “Oh, God, please help those of us who teach, to teach the truth—in love!” Teaching the Bible is a serious business—most serious! For a teacher to promise hope when there is none, and/or to deny hope when there is reason for hope, is serious. Both are tragic mistakes. Teachers of religion far too often play around with souls, thinking somehow that spiritual teaching is a frivolous game. Such is not the case, for teaching spiritual things to immortal souls is truly a matter of “life and death.”

■ CAUTION NO. 1

Sad Indeed, when those who teach on behalf of God all too often neglect to show the tragic results, both the earthly and eternal consequences, of sinful conduct. Teachers must not neglect to teach the truth which declares, “the soul that sinneth it shall die” (Ezek. 18:4). Jesus said, “... and ye shall die in your sin; whither I go, ye cannot come” (John 8:21). The apostle Paul warned, “be not deceived.” He clearly stated that sinners who refused or failed to repent, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, and extortioners, please listen to God’s word. Sin is serious. See I Cor. 6:9-10.

Our Lord, in His revelation to John, spoke of the second death—a “lake that

burneth with fire and brimstone.” Into this “lake” are to be cast the “fearful, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sorcerers, and liars.” Sin is serious. Teachers are obligated



“Al and Dennis in 1971, a few months after they met, getting ready to do some flying out of Yazoo City.”

to teach the truth about sin. To do otherwise is to become a false teacher, a liar—guilty of a most dreadful act!

Sin is serious. Error is evil. False teaching is damning. To call evil “good,” to white-wash sin, is a grave mistake. To teach that “doctrine doesn’t matter,” or to suggest that error is as good as truth, is the tragedy of all tragedies.

May God bless those of us who teach spiritual/religious matters, to never minimize the seriousness or the consequences of sin. May we who teach never make the mistake of leaving the impression with our students that “what one believes in/or practices doesn’t really make any difference.”

■ CAUTION NO. 2

There is another problem area involving those who teach. Religious teachers, sometimes, make going to Heaven seem too difficult. Such teachers fail to share with sinners the precious truths from holy scripture about the love, mercy, and grace of God. Instead they emphasize rules and

regulations, often manmade traditions, to the nth degree. I wonder. Do those of us who teach, sometimes cause our hearers to conclude, “why even try to go to Heaven? I can’t do it. I can’t make it! No way!” Do we give enough emphasis to such passages as “I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength” (Phil. 4:13)? Do we recall the comforting words written by the troubled Paul, who said, “The Lord stood by me and strengthened me” (2 Tim 4:17)?

Teachers and students, may we never forget: Salvation is by grace—God’s special favor that we don’t earn or merit. Not saved by works, “lest we should boast.” We can’t save ourselves, but God can and does (Eph. 2:8-9)! There is also the matter of mercy, not justice. Yes, there is hope for each one!

Now, of course, the Bible clearly teaches the need for the recognition, regret, and repentance of sin. Paul, who described himself as the “chief of sinners” wrote, “though I was before a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious: howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (I Tim 1:13-14).

Teaching is serious business. It is a matter of life. Be careful how/what you teach. Souls are in the balance. It’s a matter of death. Remember that “gospel” teaching involves “good news.” There is hope. Sin is terrible, but sin can and will be forgiven when the sinner turns from his evil ways. Yes, God cares. Keep in mind His love, mercy, and grace! For every believer who responds in loving obedience to the Gospel, there is hope, there is life—eternal! **MM** (The Fall issue of 2019, three years ago, was Al’s last issue before his death. We will always honor his memory and occasionally share his wisdom. -dd)

BIBLE

Questions & Answers

MM Readers' ASK: Cecil May RESPONDS

QUESTION: What is truth? (Pilate).

RESPONSE: When Jesus was on trial before Pilate, the Jewish leaders had accused Jesus of claiming to be the “King of the Jews,” in competition with Caesar. Jesus testified to Pilate that he had come as King to establish a kingdom, but it was not a material kingdom, not in competition with Caesar, but a spiritual kingdom. “My kingdom is not of this world,” Jesus told Pilate (John 18:36). Jesus continued, “for this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone

who is of the truth listens to my voice” (John 18:37). Pilate responded by saying, “what is truth” (John 18:38)?

Pilate’s response was a cynical one. Very much like many today, truth is thought of as relative.

Whatever you believe is “your truth,” and whatever I believe is “my truth;” one truth is as good as another. NO! Truth is a representation of reality. For example, two plus two is four. It is not three and ½ or seven.

Jesus said “If you abide in my word you will know the truth and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32).

“Jesus is the truth” (John 14:6). In a prayer to God Jesus said, “your word is truth” (John 17:17). The apostle Paul exclaims: “All scripture is God-breathed.” Metaphysical truth, spiritual truth, is found in Scripture, in God’s Word or, as most of us would say, in the Bible.

He who is the truth stated, “No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). The apostle Peter says, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Salvation is not in Ba’al, not in Molech, not in Mohammed, not in the Reverend Moon! Those who look for salvation in those names are mistaken. The truth is salvation is in Jesus only. **MM**



Cecil May, Jr.
Dean Emeritus;
College of Biblical Studies;
Faulkner University.
cmay@faulkner.edu

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THE AUTHORITY of Jesus

by Dennis Dougherty, editor

It is hard for us to comprehend Jesus' statement that "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). "ALL" authority? In heaven and on earth? REALLY? Yes! There is no greater power, no higher court, no weightier words, more all-encompassing control, than the authority of Jesus. His total and absolute authority was revealed in a variety of ways.

Jesus' words were spoken with Authority. As the Word of God, this "Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). His unique teachings amazed the masses, for "He taught as one having authority" (Matthew 7:29). His answers confounded His enemies, so much so that "No one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question" (Matthew 22:46). His words froze soldiers in their tracks, "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks," they reported (John 7:46).



These "words in red" carried weight in this world and the next. "The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life" (John 6:63). The one who rejects His sayings, "the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day." As Jesus explained,

"the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak" (John 12:48). His words were God's words. No authority of men can override the teachings of Jesus.

Jesus' authority transcended time and space. A high-ranking soldier asked Jesus to heal his servant back at his house. He told the Lord that He did not need to go to the house but believed that Jesus could "Just say the word" and the servant would be healed. He explained it this way, "I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one (John 8:32), 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes." Jesus spoke of the Roman soldier's great faith and his servant was healed at "that very moment" (Mt. 8:5-13).

Jesus does not have to be in the room to answer our prayers. He has the authority to "just say the word" from His throne in Heaven and our prayers can be answered.

Jesus has authority over nature. Caught in a violent storm at sea, the terrified apostles awoke a sleeping Jesus. He rebuked the wind and the sea, "Hush, be still," and the wind died down and it became perfectly calm." The Apostles stood shaking, with fear in their eyes they looked at one another, "Who is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him" (Mark 4:35-41)?

As says the song, "Whether the wrath of the storm-tossed sea,

or demons, or men, or whatever it be, no water can swallow the ship where lies, The Master of ocean and earth and skies." We need not worry about the weather. Man has no authority or control over such things. As uncomfortable as it may be for us at times, Jesus will keep our world alive and well until He comes.

Jesus has the authority to forgive sins. When that authority was questioned before a bed-ridden man, Jesus' reacted, "So that you may know that the son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" –He then said to the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your bed and go home." And the man did just that. The people glorified God, who had given such authority to men (Matthew 9:1-8).

At the word of Jesus a dying thief was forgiven and carried away with the Lord into Paradise (Luke 23:40-43). Now, by His death He is able to forgive our sins today. Jesus commands, "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). "He became to all those who obey him the source of eternal salvation" (Hebrews 5:9).

Jesus has authority over all rulers. We are to be "in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God" (Romans 13:1). Jesus reminded Pilate, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above" (Matthew 19:11). Kings and Queens, Presidents and Mayors, they rise and fall by God's will and serve at His pleasure.

Jesus has authority over death and the grave. Who else could raise a dead son and return him alive to his widowed mother, or a deceased daughter and return her alive to her father, or stand before a tomb and call the dead to "come forth" (Luke 7:14, Mark 5:42, John 11:43)?

We have assurance through Christ's resurrection that we too will be raised from the dead. "But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep...so also in Christ all will be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:20-22).

Jesus has the Authority to judge the world. As Paul proclaimed from the mountain top of Mars Hill: God "has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

Have you submitted to the total authority of Christ; in obeying his words of salvation, having faith that He will answer your prayers, in respecting your rulers, in accepting that our world is under His control, and having the hope that by His authority He can raise you from the dead and give you eternal life? Indeed, "All authority in heaven and earth!" Think about it. Be sure that in all ways you submit your life to His authority. -dd MM

Jesus!

The Master of Relationships

by David Lipe, PHD,
Minister, Sparta, Tennessee

One of the basic themes of a postmodern culture (the one in which we live) is the emphasis on personal experience.

Harry Lee Poe says "the postmodern generation has a fixation with personal experience, but it goes deeper than mere subjectivity. They focus on the personal rather than the intellectual because they feel

the greatest loss at the personal level.

They miss something personal, something relational; but they do not know what it is." John, in his Gospel, tells us "What it is," and the answer is Jesus. Loneliness of the individual is characteristic of our age. God never intended for us to be alone (cf. Gen. 2:18) but to be part of a relationship, specifically a relationship with Jesus Christ. Poe notes further that "The postmodern generation will not visit the church building. They are interested not in institutions but in relationships." Since the church is both an institution and a body (an organism in which there are relationships), it seems that we would do well to establish relationships with our neighbors. Only by doing this can we ever successfully reach out to them with the gospel. But how do we do this? Jesus shows us how to build relationships.

First, He became like us in that the Word (Jesus) became flesh (John 1:14). John's claim for the incarnation actually begins in verse 9 where John says, "... [the Word, Jesus] was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man." The emphasis is that the Light was now entering human history in a new way; thus begins John's claims for the incarnation. The Word was the true Light and He was coming into the world.

John reveals the astonishing fact that the Word who is nothing less than God became flesh. In verse one John says the Word was eternal and now in verse 14 says the Word became flesh. The Word changed in relation to the world of humanity. "Flesh" emphasizes that the Word became human nature with all of its weakness and potential for sin (Heb. 4:15). John does not say "the Word became man" or "the Word took on a body" but boldly says "the Word became flesh."

By the end of the first century, a group called "Docetists" believed that Jesus only seemed to live in the flesh. Jesus, for them, was just a phantom or just an illusion while on this earth. On the contrary, Jesus did not just "appear" to live a human life in order not to "defile Himself by real contact with humankind." Jesus really became flesh (cf. 1 Jn. 1:1). He was weary (John 4:6), thirsty (John 4:7), groaned (John 11:33), openly wept (John 11:35), bled (John 19:1), and died (John 19:30). All of this could refer to nothing less than that which was flesh. It should be noted that John 1:14 is the first time John indicates that the Word and Jesus are one and the same. Up to this point the reader might understand the Word to be some "force" in the universe but now, beyond dispute, it is clear that the very Word



of God became flesh. He identified with us from birth to death. Jesus has set the example as to the need to identify with people. As He came and walked in our shoes, so must we do the same with our neighbors. The Native American expression "walk a mile in our moccasins" suggests the importance of sharing in another's situation in life. Part of contextualization in modern culture is identifying with people on a local level. This means that we must learn the culture, understand the symbols, and use the local metaphors.

Second, He moved in with us (John 1:14). Not only did the Word become flesh but it "dwelt among us." "Dwelt" literally means "to tabernacle" or "to pitch one's tent." "It conveys the idea that someone moved into our neighborhood and took up residence among us." This is exactly what Jesus did. He was not just a passer-by or some foreigner. He did not come just for a fleeting visit. As Bruce McLarty says, "He moved in, changed His address to 'Earth,' and got His hands dirty in the everyday work of living."

In short, we must share life with our fellows just as Jesus shared life with those among whom He lived. If we are to ever establish relationships with people, we must "move in with them." By this I mean that we must be in their neighborhood, working in the neighborhood, eating the food in the neighborhood, and rubbing shoulders with the neighbors. When they see us in this light, we will be seen to be real, authentic people. Such is greatly needed, especially among preachers who frequently are seen as not that connected to the community.

Third, He let us observe Him (John 1:14). John says we saw His glory. Saw literally means "to gaze upon" and suggests more than just a casual glance. Rather, "It involves a careful scrutiny of what is before one in order to understand its significance." The word is from the same word from which we get the word "theater." At a theater one pays attention to what is before the eyes. Jesus willingly made Himself available for questioning and observation. He truly had an open-door policy. It was not difficult to be able to be with Him. When two disciples ask Jesus where He was staying, He did not give them a business card; He said to them "Come and see" (John 1:38-39). They stayed the entire night. What was the result? Andrew (one of the two) found his brother, Peter, and brought him to Jesus (John 1:40-42). Shortly thereafter, Jesus found Philip and then Philip found Nathanael (John 1:43-46). As a result of His openness, people from all walks of life wanted to be around Him. He even allowed little children to sit in His lap. He was a friend of tax collectors and sinners; friends with fishermen; friends with the downtrodden; friends with those who had given up on life. How true it is as the old song says, "What a friend we have in Jesus."

As Jesus opened Himself up to people, in like manner we must do the same. A simple statement with which we are all familiar, nevertheless true: "People do not care what you know until they

know you care." To build relationships, we must be open and inviting to people. People must know that we genuinely care about them, that we empathize with their station in life.

Fourth, Jesus paid attention to us. When Jesus met Nathaniel He said, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" The very first thing Jesus did when He met Nathaniel was to pay him a compliment. Nathaniel is confused and wonders how Jesus knew him. Jesus gave him attention because He cared about him. This attention paid to him made an impact on his life. Often the only thing it takes to motivate another is to pay him or her just a little bit of attention. This is something that does not come easy for it requires that we pay less attention to ourselves. Because we are frequently self-absorbed, we do not give the time necessary for others. So, paying attention to others will go a long way in establishing relationships.

Jesus shows us how to build relationships because He became like us, He moved in with us, He let us observe him, and he paid attention to us. We, ourselves, can similarly build relationships if we practice what Jesus did. We should not forget that He is our example and it is in His steps we should follow (1 Pet. 2:21).

1. Harry Lee Poe, *Christian Witness in a Postmodern World*. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 2001, p. 30.
 2. *Ibid*, p. 34.
 3. Cf. John Telgren's *Qohlet Web Ministry* for some insights on this point and other ideas in this application from his sermon "*Living Incarnationally*."
 4. Bruce McLarty, *Journey of Faith*. Searcy, AR: Resource Publications, 1997, p. 35.
 5. *Ibid*.
 6. Merrill C. Tenney, John: *The Gospel of Belief*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1948, p. 7.
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David is the author of several publications and his recent 2-volume commentary in the *Truth for Today Commentary Series*, "The Gospel of John," is available for purchase from him or through Resource Publications.

From 1990 to 2010 he was a professor of Bible and Philosophy at Freed-Hardeman University and the Director of the Annual Bible Lectureship through 2015. In 2012, Lipe became the Director of the Southeast Institute of Biblical Studies (formerly East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions) in Knoxville, TN; he retired as director in December 2014, but continues to teach and work in fund raising and development for the school. Lipe and his wife, Linda, reside in Baxter, Tennessee; he preaches for the Cherry Creek Church of Christ in Sparta, Tennessee. **MM**

(I have known David for over 40 years and appreciate the great work he has done in Christian education and in preaching the gospel. -dd)

We should not forget that **He is our example** and it is in His steps **we should follow**

(1 Pet. 2:21).

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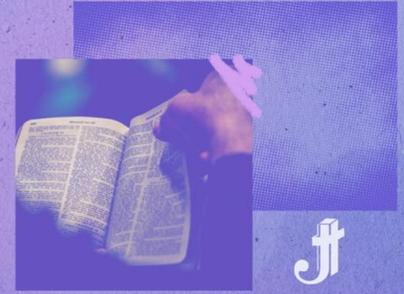
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The Preacher's Page

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This Issue's Ministry Verse: "...I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace..." (Ephesians 3:7) Our beloved brother, Paul, understood some crucial facts about preaching that all of us who preach would be wise to learn to appreciate.

He had become a preacher for the sake of others (Ephesians 3:1). Likewise, our preaching will be most effective when we realize that it is not about us but for the benefit of others.

Paul's emphasis was not on his own words or knowledge but it was what had been revealed to him by the Father (Ephesians 3:3). We must also speak what has been revealed to us in the Word of God.

He desired that everyone who listened to the teaching of truth would understand it (Ephesians 3:4). If we preach God's Word but don't help people understand, is there any value in the teaching?

This great man of God believed that being a preacher and minister was a gift from the grace of God (Ephesians 3:7). We are not able to preach and minister because of our ability, genius, creativity, or wisdom. We will serve the Lord and His people better if we understand that we are blessed to do this work as a gift of God's grace!

Research Insights: TJI has conducted over 300 surveys with thousands of respondents. Many of them can be found and accessed at <https://www.thejenkinsinstitute.com/research>.



We asked "Why Do Ministers Quit?" and heard from roughly 200 of you. Here are the top three cumulative reasons:

- Nearly 70% cited burnout in their top three. 38% listed it as the number one cause.
- A close second was "unrealistic expectations from the church."
- And third was "money matters."

Elders and ministers would do well to be aware of and strive to address these issues in both the hiring process and in ongoing ministries.

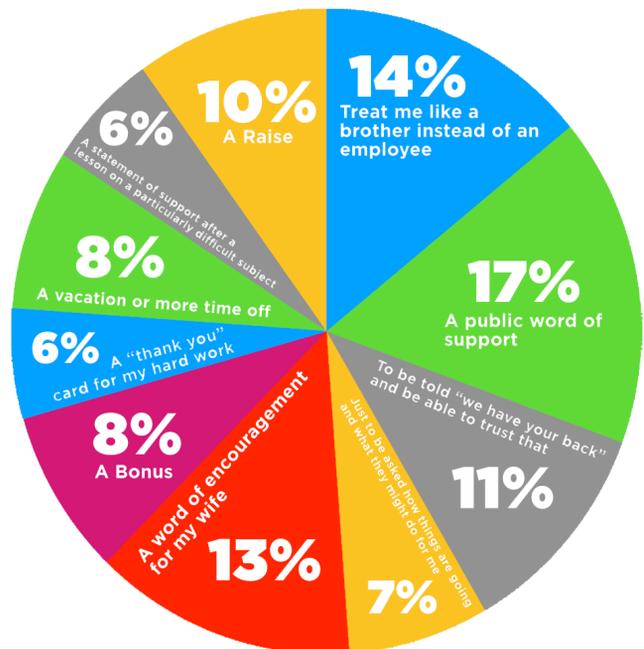


HelpDesk Answer: Send your ministry questions to TJI@TheJenkinsInstitute.com or text 972-861-2434. Each submission will receive a free copy of "Don't Quit On A Saturday." Include the shipping address in the email.

TOP TEN LIST: We heard from about 200 ministers and compiled the following list of the Top Ten Ways to Encourage Your Minister. NOTE: OVERALL, a raise or a bonus came in at #6 and #7. Our ministers are not motivated by money! Refreshing news!



TOP TEN WAYS TO ENCOURAGE YOUR MINISTER



Minister's Challenge: Everybody has a story.

When you learn someone's story you gain insight into why they behave as they do, why they treat people, for good or ill, like they do, and much more. Learning their story also assures them you care about them as a person. Want to increase your effectiveness? Listen and learn peoples' stories! Our challenge to you this quarter, **listen and learn**.

TJI Upcoming Events

- August 29-September 9 BETTER: Honduras
- October 15 Teachers' Workshop, Amory, MS
- October 17-18 BETTER West TN @ FHU
- October 21-23 BETTER Leadership Florence



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by Robin Burroughs
Co-founder

In 2015, after receiving a phone call from a special couple who had just received the news that their soon to be adopted daughter was born, Robin Burroughs and her daughter, Brittani Aiken began discussing how to make adoption possible for more brothers and sisters in Christ. They wanted everyone who had a heart for adoption, to experience the joy their friends just experienced. A Home for Jolee Foundation was born (in our and their minds anyway).

Jeremy and Jinnie Thornton allowed them to be there each step of the way during the adoption process, and it was then they began to understand the financial burden that is associated with adopting. It is a difficult journey with so much emotional turmoil. The biggest hurdles were often the conversations which began, "yes, but". The Thornton's had tried to conceive for 10 years and now her husband was at the Memphis School of Preaching. How many preachers, much less preaching students, have enough expendable income to adopt? They were no exception. One day a friend called Jinnie, and during the conversation asked her if they wanted to adopt. Jinnie would answer "Yes, but..." Jinnie's friend knew that it was possible and set out to remove the hurdles before them. She planned fundraisers, and together with their family, friends and the Looxahoma church family, the "yes, but" was conquered.

Robin and Brittani were determined to give this foundation life. After working hard to make t-shirts to sell to have enough money to start a foundation and to register as a 501c3, A Home



for Jolee Foundation became a reality. In January of 2017, the board of directors was formed. Appropriately, Jinnie's and Jeremy's first child, Jolee, would become the namesake since the inspiration came from her. Little did we know, at the time, how much her birth would change the lives of so many, including her own!

Life has a way of coming full circle. In 2018 they would be presented with the opportunity to adopt another child. This time there was no "yes, but" in that conversation. A Home for Jolee Foundation would supply the grant that would pay for the adoption. Now Jolee has a sister and her name is Jaycee.

Over the past 6 years, AHFJ has been blessed to award 11 grants to faithful members of the Lord's church, even helping 3 families during the troubling times of 2020 and 2021. The amount donated to our foundation has been over \$40,000 as of this writing. We are eager to help more families in the coming years.

Robin Burroughs stepped down as president in 2019 to become a fulltime caregiver to her mother who was battling ALS. Joshua Richardson stepped in and faithfully and fearlessly led the foundation. The board consists of both men and women who share the mission's heart for adoption. If you also have a heart for adoption and would like to be considered to sit on the board, please contact us at ahomeforjolee@gmail.com.

If you are in the trenches of adopting and need support, whether financial or emotional, please contact us at ahomeforjolee@gmail.com.

There are so many ways you can help, including: donating your time and talents like so many others have, getting involved in our annual fundraisers, serving on the board, or telling a family about this resource so they can apply for a grant. AHFJ has no paid staff so as much as possible of the money raised can go to help adopting families. Of course, monetary donations are

essential because without your support, we are limited in the number of grants we can award, which in essence means that children will remain in this world without a loving, Christian home.

A family who has a heart for adoption should not have to go through the financial process alone. We are not all called to adopt, but we are all called to help. (James 1:27). **MM**

Our MISSION is to help make as many adoptions as possible a reality for faithful members of the church of Christ who will then raise these children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph.6:4). Together we can do this!

ABORTION OR Life?

by **Joe McDaniel, elder**
Oliver Creek Church of Christ
Bartlett, Tennessee

It was Autumn 1989. Dian, my wife, and I were sitting in the examination room of an obstetrician's office waiting for confirmation of what we already knew. The doctor came in, looked at me, then at Dian, and said, "The tests results are positive. You are pregnant."

Normally we would have been just as excited and thrilled as we were with the news of the pregnancy of our first two children, who were by that time 8 and 11 years old. We had waited later in our marriage to have children when our first two were born. But now we were getting older.

Around 3 or 4 years before this doctor's visit, Dian and I had gone through a traumatic time with a still birth. Just a couple of months before her due date, Dian noticed no more movement of our baby. For some reason, the child had died in her womb. It was hard on Dian and me, but especially Dian. The doctor induced labor to force Dian's body to deliver the baby. It was hours of tough time for Dian. After the long hours in labor and then giving birth to our stillborn baby, Dian went to sleep. She was exhausted. We had been up all night.

While Dian was sleeping, I asked a nurse if I could go see our baby. She took me to a room. Our baby boy was laying on a white blanket. He looked perfectly normal in every way: ten toes, ten fingers, a cute little nose. Just not breathing, no heartbeat. I picked up his limp little body. Right then I gave him his name, which is my middle name, Lee. I whispered to him, "I love you, Lee. I look forward to seeing you in heaven."

Now, a few years later, Dian was at the office of the obstetrician again and even older, and the doctor knew her history. The doctor looked at us with concern in his eyes. Although he did not come out and say right then, I could see him thinking, "Possible complications, some can be even more severe than before for the baby and mother." The older the mother being pregnant, the higher the risks of complications leading to illness and even death to the mother and the baby. The doctor looked at us, paused and said, "We do not do abortions here. If you want to get an abortion, you will have to go to another facility."

Abortion had not entered our minds until he said the word. Without hesitation, we said to the doctor, "We choose life." Dian and I had decided: If this baby is born healthy – that's God's

choice. If this baby has health issues – that's God's choice. If this baby is stillborn – that's God's choice. If Dian has health issues, well then, we will deal with that as it comes. Eight months later, our healthy, bouncing baby boy, Brandon, was born on June 24, 1990. Praise God!

Today, Brandon is a very healthy, very athletic, married man with children of his own. And he loves me and Dian very, very much. And we love him so very much, too, and are so glad to have him.

Psalms 139: 13-16 reads, "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. How precious to me are your thoughts. O God! How vast is the sum of them!"



Joe McDaniel

Jeremiah 1:4-5 The LORD's message came to me, "Before I formed you in your mother's womb, I chose you. Before you were born, I set you apart. I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations."

Roe vs. Wade came into effect in January 1973. Thankfully, it was recently overturned. Jesus teaches us that we are not our own. Our bodies really belong to God, not us. God says, "...your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own" (1 Cor. 6:19).

Signs in protest say, "My Body, My Choice." The signs should rather read, "God's body, God's choice." So, what do we do about the baby in the womb? You let God decide. If God brings the baby to term, that's God's choice. If God aborts the child, that's God's choice. If God allows a deformity to develop, that's God's choice. That was the decision Dian and I gave for our child 32 years ago. "God, it's your baby, it's your choice." **MM**
THE_MCDZ@msn.com

(Joe preached in New Mexico for many years before moving to Bartlett, where he now serves as an elder. I have enjoyed team teaching with him and appreciate this moving and personal story he was willing to share. -dd)



Should I force my teen to attend Church

YOUTH & FAMILY

by *Dan Williams, Ph.D., minister*
Franklin, Tennessee

All conscientious Christian parents want their children to have an active faith in God. At the same time, parents recognize that as their children grow up they must increasingly take responsibility for their own decisions in life.

How, then, should the parent of a teenager respond when their child announces, "I don't want to attend church activities any more"?

This situation presents parents with a dilemma. On the one hand, they realize that a "forced" faith is no faith at all, but on the other hand they also believe it is important for their child to grow up with a strong Christian influence and an active participation in worship. How, then, should parents respond? Here are four guidelines.

First, don't panic or over-react. Allowing yourself to be drawn into an emotional fight with a teenager is always a losing proposition, and especially over an issue as important to a Christian parent as this one. If you sense your level of tension and anxiety is escalating, try to calm yourself before replying. If you cannot tame your anxiety, walk away and pray for wisdom before returning to address this subject.

Second, calmly ask your child, "Why not?" and then listen carefully to their response. Doing so indicates respect for their feelings; helps you remain calm; and will guide you in your subsequent response.

For example, it may well be that your teen feels lonely or isolated because he or she does not have any close friends at church. If that proves to be the case, then you may want to work at creating opportunities for them to build relationships with kids already in the young group or encourage them to bring a friend from school along with them to Bible class and worship.

Or it may be that your teen is struggling with issues of faith and doubt. It is not at all uncommon for teens to question everything, including such fundamental questions as the existence of God or the truthfulness of the Bible. If that turns out to be the case, then find out what their specific question is, and ask the youth minister, preacher, or shepherds for appropriate faith-building resources. Genuine Christianity is based on truth, so I am confident it can survive an honest examination.

If your teen's reluctance to attend worship with you is part of a larger pattern of defiance towards you personally, then you may well want to engage in some soul-searching. For example, have you been neglecting your relationship with your children? Have you unconsciously adopted an antagonistic attitude towards your child? Do you show respect to his/her feelings, or do you simply bark out "my way or the highway" orders from on high? God's Word warns parents not to exercise their authority in harsh and discouraging manner (Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21). Most importantly, are you setting the proper example in your own walk with the Lord?

Finally, is your teen's refusal to attend worship part of a larger pattern of troubling behavior, such as a marked decline in academic performance; atypical mood changes; secretiveness and/or dishonesty; or abandoning positive peers and running with a rough crowd? If so, then assess for drug use and/or criminal activity. Sadly, one reason why teens decide they no longer wish to attend worship is because they have begun to engage in activity that they know is inconsistent with the values they are being taught in church. If you find this is the case, then seek out professional help immediately and plan an appropriate intervention.

Third, express your expectations in a reasonable way. It is counterproductive to "force" your teens to attend worship, but it is equally dangerous to back down on a reasonable parental expectation. When parents immediately surrender and say "Sure, you're

almost grown, stay home if that's what you want," they make a serious mistake.

Well-known Christian psychologist Kevin Leman has written a book entitled *Adolescence Isn't Terminal* that is filled with excellent advice for the parents of teens. In it he makes the following observations:

"I'm often asked what to do if children say, 'Mom, Dad, I really don't want to go to church any more. It's just too boring.' Realize that your sons or daughters may be right. Some times, church really is the most boring place for sixteen or seventeen-year-olds. They have a fun Saturday night, but then they have to wake up early, get dressed, and be quiet for an hour and a half. Given the circumstances, some degree of boredom is understandable. On the other hand, all of us need to learn to do things that bore us.

"In general, I would have a conversation that went something like this: 'I know that a lot of the kids at church are geeks, and I understand you don't get much out of the (minister's) message, but realistically, if you think about it, there are only a few things in life your mom and I ask you to do, and attending church is one of them. We enjoy church very much; we get something out of the (minister's) sermons. I realize you don't, but we still want you to be with us.

"We're a family, and that means from time to time – even on a weekly basis – we're going to do some things together that might not be fun but are still important."

Notice how Leman handles this subject with a light touch: he does not come across as arbitrary or domineering, but he also doesn't back down from a reasonable expectation that the family should worship together. Leman's approach appeals to a sense of family identity and belongingness, something that (contrary to popular stereotypes) can have a surprising resonance with many teens.

Fourth, finally, work at providing opportunities for you and your teen to be involved together in positive, faith-based activities. Adolescents who do not respond well to verbal communication may nevertheless find satisfaction in time spent with their parents in some activity. For example, consider accompanying your teen(s) on a church-sponsored inner-city mission trip; join them in working on a Saturday morning Habitat for Humanity home-building project; ask him/her to assist you in staffing a VBS classroom or taking food to the needy; etc. This enables the parent to demonstrate an authentic faith (cf. James 2:14-18). This is often an issue for teens, who in their youthful idealism are hyper-sensitive to what they perceive to be adult hypocrisy.

In sum, don't panic if your teen objects to being "forced" to attend Bible class or worship service. Don't overreact by adopting a harsh or arbitrary stance (many teens are not truly opposed to what their parents are pushing so much as they are opposed to the "push").

Genuinely listen to your teens in order to determine exactly what is motivating their opposition to participation in church activities, and then try to address those concerns.

Don't back down from reasonable expectations for participation in church activities, but at the same time work at developing a healthy relationship with your teens in areas of their life other than church.

No parent can "control" the decisions of a young person once he or she is grown, of course. The good news, however, is that if you follow the guidelines above, a teen's objections to church participation often prove to be temporary, and once he or she is making decisions on their own (without their parents to rebel against) they will develop and practice a genuinely personal faith in God. **MM**
dwilliams@harding.edu

Why Do We Still Have VBS?

At this point in the year most youth ministers, youth workers, youth deacons, and parents are exhausted from a long summer of activities. Now is a good time to reflect on what worked and what did not. Is there still a need for VBS? Are they still effective? Is the amount of effort and money worth doing VBS each summer? May I encourage you and say "yes, it is still needed and can be worth our efforts. It can be one of the most rewarding things to see our children have fun while learning the Bible."



Greg Ledbetter

In both of his letters to Timothy, Paul encourages him in his ministry. In 2 Timothy 3:14-15 Paul writes, "But you must continue in the things which you have learned and

been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Paul is reminding Timothy to continue in his study of the Word of God and to remember the people who invested in teaching him since childhood. Some of these would be Paul himself; Timothy's mother, Eunice; his grandmother, Lois; certainly Silas; and likely countless others. Some ministered to him when he was physically a child, and others as he grew in the faith.

VBS is not the only way we can accomplish teaching our children, but it is a way and it is effective if we will put in the work. I want to end with a little story about our VBS this year. I was kind of down on myself because we were aver-

aging about 40 kids a night. I thought to myself, 'before Covid we would have 60-70 kids'. On the last night of VBS, one of our visitor kids came and said, "This was the greatest thing I have done all summer. Did you know that God put a rainbow in the sky? From now on when I see a rainbow, I know God did that. Mr. Greg, did you know that God saved people on a boat? I like boats." I was stunned that he did not know the lessons we studied. I then learned he had never been to church service before and was there because someone invited him to VBS. Church, this is what makes the countless hours and funds worth it. Stay the course and do not give up on our children. **MM**
Galatians 6:9 "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."

from a
Woman's
Viewpoint

"In Memory of Miss June"

WAR ROOM

by **Kathy Brummett**
Batesville Church of Christ
Batesville, Mississippi

"Cause me to hear your lovingkindness in the morning, For in You do I trust: Cause me to know the way in which I should walk, For I lift up my soul to you" (Psalm 144:8) (NKJV).

War room!! Did you see the movie? I must have watched it 8-10 times. Needless to say, I loved the movie and each time I watched it, I was challenged anew to improve my prayer life. I knew my quiet time needed some rejuvenation, and the movie



Kathy Brummett

gave me the jumpstart I needed. My quiet time each morning was something I carefully guarded. The problem was that it was at the kitchen table so when my husband woke up, it was pretty much over. I knew I needed a new location.

First, I found a spot in a closet in an upstairs bedroom that was unused and quiet. I moved the few things in the closet to a new location and moved in a small bookcase and a chair. I taped motivational verses and prayer lists to the walls and moved in. I'm an early riser, so I usually made my way to my "war room" with a cup of coffee anytime from 4 a.m. - 5 a.m. Most times I could manage to get a couple of hours in my new quiet spot. Now, before you start to beat yourself up because you don't have a two-hour quiet

time each day, be assured that wasn't always the case with me. I have an empty nest and my entrepreneurial job allowed me a lot of freedom and free time. The length of time we have for quiet times will change with different seasons of life. The amount of time is not the most important thing. It's about creating the habit of meeting with Jesus everyday that's important. And, it doesn't have to be at 4 a.m. I just happen to be an early riser.

My quiet time consists of working through six to eight different studies at the same time. I usually have one or two daily devotion books with short articles to jump start the day. I'm almost always working my way through the Bible with some study guides, and I like to work through one of the books of the Bible or do a topical study that goes a little more in depth. At this time I'm doing an in depth study of Ephesians 6:10-20.

On one morning, I was working through the book of Acts. I was in chapter 4 reading about Peter and John being hauled in because they had annoyed the priests, the captain of the guard, and the Sadducees. They were proclaiming Jesus' resurrection, and they had healed a lame man in the name of Jesus. The rulers, elders, scribes, Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and any other of the high priestly family who were available were called in for an important meeting. They set Peter and John in the middle and began to question them. Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man,



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READERS' RESPONSE

Reasons Why We Continue
Publishing the Magnolia Messenger



by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead – by him this man is standing before you well”.

He went on to tell them that they had rejected Jesus, and that the only way to receive salvation was through the name of Jesus.

When I got to verse 13 of Acts 4, I felt like I had been sucker punched. “Now, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. AND THEN, they recognized that they had been with Jesus.”

They recognized that they had “been with Jesus.” I was getting up early every morning and having an hour and half to two hours alone with Jesus, but could anybody recognize that for the rest of the day? Could my husband tell that I had been with Jesus? Could the checker at the grocery store tell I had been with Jesus? Could the telemarketer tell I had spent two hours with Jesus before that call came? Could anyone I encountered throughout the day tell that I had been with Jesus? My prayer each morning as I ended my quiet time has become, “Lord, please let the people I encounter today tell that I started my day with you.”

Shortly after that experience, I was at a retreat center where several different groups were gathered for meetings. I sat in the restaurant observing a group of “church ladies” who were there for their meeting. I was appalled as I watched how unkind, obnoxious, demanding, and belligerent they were with the waitress. A few minutes later when she came to take my order, I commented on the incident. She said, “Oh yes, church ladies are the worst group we get.” How can it be that we can “be with Jesus” and treat people so poorly? That wasn’t the first time I had heard remarks like that. We have probably all heard remarks from restaurant employees about the Sunday lunch crowd who has just come from church being the most difficult group they deal with all week.

The second way that being with Jesus had changed Peter and John was that they were now bold for Jesus. How bold am I for Jesus? Do I invite friends to church? Do I give God glory for the good things He is doing as I visit with friends? Do I pray in restaurants? Do I look for people to invite to church? Do I boldly share the gospel with unbelievers? Being with Jesus should make us bold, but not in an obnoxious way.

How can we attract people to Jesus if being with Him hasn’t changed us, made us happy, made us less likely to worry or gossip, or be critical? Is my life reflecting a life that has been changed by being in the presence of Jesus? May we all be convicted to be different because “we have been with Jesus!” **MM**

■ Thanks for the Messenger. Some very good articles...

(Ava Cleveland, Bossier City, LA)

■ I always enjoy the MM.

Thank you all for the great job you do with the MM. You are putting out a great publication and spreading the gospel... Keep up the good work and we all appreciate all you do. God continue to bless us all.

(Steve Gooch, Senatobia, MS)

■ I am a member of the Mill St. Church of Christ, may God bless you always in the works you do... May the spirit of God be with all of you always.

(Margaret Bailey, Lake Charles, LA)

■ Keep up the good work. It is greatly appreciated.

(Elizabeth Todd, Clarksdale, MS)

■ Bro. Doughty, Messenger Staff and all who wrote articles: May God bless you for such a wonderful and powerful summer edition of the Messenger. I only wish that all brothers and sisters in Christ could read it.

Thank you all for your work producing the Messenger. I look forward to the arrival of each edition. I’m always blessed with an

uplift to my Christian life and increased faith in my Lord and Savior.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

(Ken & Linda Harris, Senatobia, MS)

■ I truly enjoy reading the Magnolia Messenger and find the material in each issue very uplifting.... Thank you for this wonderful publication.

(Ann Alford, Jackson, MS)

■ I’ve enjoyed the Magnolia Messenger for many years and appreciate all the articles.

(Joann Barr, Greenville, AL)

■ The Magnolia Messenger is by far the best in the brotherhood. I miss my home state [of Mississippi] and miss the Franks. Tragic.

-David Lipe, Baxter Tennessee

■ Enjoy your articles in The Magnolia Messenger. Keep up the good work and always look forward to getting my magazine. -Peggy Fendley, Lucedale, Mississippi (Thanks for your encouragement, Peggy. She and I were part of an “Around the world” mission trip back in our college days. -dd)

■ Love every issue! Using with WBS students in prison in TN and in Africa. Also share copies with grieving, shut-in etc.

(Dwayne & Sharon Archibald, Antioch, TN)

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POLISHING THE PULPIT

Christian's Mountain Retreat

by Dennis Doughty, editor

Polishing the Pulpit is a large, family oriented, unique, weeklong gathering of churches of Christ, held each year in the beautiful setting of the Smokie Mountains. It brings together 220 preachers, teachers, elders, and youth leaders, delivering bible lessons for all ages and interests to the three to four thousand Christians in attendance.

This was my first time to attend this mountain retreat, held in the Sevierville Convention Center, August 17-25th. I set up our Magnolia Messenger display in the large convention hall and enjoyed greeting and visiting with many who stopped by. Several signed up to begin receiving the Messenger, while others stopped to express their appreciation for our work. It was common to hear, "We have gotten the Messenger for years," from those who came by.

Each day of the week there were classes and events going from 9am to 9pm. I was immediately struck by the large number of children. This is a family event, and a daily "Bible Camp" is conducted on the grounds for children up to age twelve. I would guess there were at least five hundred children involved in the many classes and activities offered throughout each day.

There was nothing scheduled for Sunday. Everyone was encouraged to attend the worship service on site or other locations. The rest of the day families were free to enjoy the many attractions in the area.

I attended the morning worship in Gatlinburg. My family had worshiped with the church in the past when we were vacationing in the area, and I wanted to return to see the new building. The old building was lost in the forest fire that swept over the mountain in 2019. As expected, there was an overflow crowd. Michael Shepherd was the guest speaker and gave one of the most powerful and inspirational lessons I have heard in many a year.

While there were a variety of sessions for women, teenagers, elders, and preachers, on many different topics, I enjoyed two sessions particularly. Each day Hugh Fulford and Alan Highers told preacher stories. These two old friends of 60 years told stories about preachers they had known. Their stories were both inspirational as well as entertaining.

I attended a session where churches looking for preachers

and preachers looking for churches came together to share information. It was moderated by Gary Hampton, the preacher at Siwell Road congregation in Jackson, Mississippi. Based on what I saw, I do think perhaps a church or two may have



found a possible preacher. One thing is for sure, we have a real preacher shortage in our brotherhood.

Attending this event put on display how large, diversified, talented, and faithful our churches are. Peter said, "love the brotherhood" (1 Peter 2:17). After attending PTP, how can you not? **MM-dd**

CHRISTIAN ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION

by John Maner
Forest Park, Georgia

Paul preached the word (2 Timothy 4:2). Jesus preached the Gospel (Luke 4:43). How shall they preach unless they are sent? (Romans 10:15)? We can see preaching is necessary in our worship and in teaching the lost. We have about 150 verses that "preach," "preached," or "preaching" is mentioned in the Bible.

There is a non-profit work assisting young men to become preachers. It is called the Christian Assistance Foundation, Inc. It helps men financially that are going to school to become preachers.

Christian Assistant Foundation has been supporting students since 1983. Brother Demar Elam talked to the elders about a program to

help these young men. The church started out by helping these men financially for \$200 per month. The students have to fill out a questionnaire, give letters of reference and show what their financial needs are.

This program is growing, and more students continue to contact the Christian Assistance Foundation. We want to help men to become preachers and we need your help.

The Christian Assistance Foundation is a separate work from the church and is incorporated as a nonprofit organization. The five board members are Stacy Ferguson, Phil Glisson,



Arvin Pistolante, attending Asian Christian University

Raphael Graham, John Maner and Steve Vice.

C.A.F. is set up as an endowment fund which we would like to see at least one million dollars invested in this fund. With the investment we could help about 7 men at \$500.00 per month. You can tell us you want us to use your money now and it would go to support one in school now, or to go into the endowment fund.

So, "How is C.A.F. going to get a million dollars? If you don't dream and plan BIG you will never reach your goal. It is like how do you eat an elephant – one bite at a time. We have a little over two hundred thousand dollars and we are making good interest on this money.

NOW, how can you help send these young men to preacher's school? Well, C.A.F. can be supported by allocating money to C.A.F. in your will. Your money in the endowment fund would be working for you until the end of time. Another way would be to support C.A.F. monthly. If we had 100 members give \$10.00 a month, that would be a thousand dollars a month and 12 thousand dollars a year. If you want to give more than \$10 a month that would be a great service.

We have requests of students who want to go to school, but we don't have the money to send them. Contributions can be sent to Christian Assistance Foundation, P.O. Box 582, Forest Park, GA 30298-0582. **MM**

(According to their newsletter they are helping to support five men in various brotherhood schools. They have helped and encouraged 45 men in becoming preachers. For more information you might also contact Raphael Graham <raphgraham@hotmail.com> -dd)

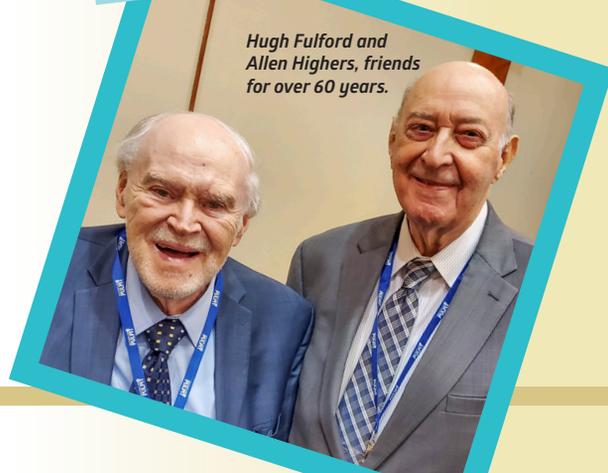
PTP is a family event offering a daily Bible camp for children of all ages.



Mississippi preachers Willie Nettle, (Vicksburg,) and Malcom May, (Jackson) stopped by our display.



Hugh Fulford and Allen Highers, friends for over 60 years.



I AM MAD

by *Hugh Fulford*
Gallatin, Tennessee

Yes, I am mad and I make no apology for it. And, yes, I know that, grammatically, I should say that I am angry, but I resort to the way we common folks talk and say that I am mad. And, yes, I know that Paul said (proof-texting from Psalm 4:4), “Be angry and do not sin” (Ephesians 4:26). I intend to obey that injunction, but I am still mad. I believe there were times when Jesus got mad



Hugh Fulford

(cf. Mark 3:5; John 2:13-17). God Himself manifested His anger and one time He stayed mad for forty years! (Hebrews 3:17). His wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men (Romans 1:18). There is such a thing as righteous indignation, and it would not hurt the world or the church for a little more such indignation to be shown from time to time.

I am mad at the mass killings that continue to occur in our country.

I am mad at the senseless war and the slaughter of innocent people that is taking place in Ukraine.

I am mad at the abortion activists who are now up in arms and demonstrating against the Supreme Court’s decision to reverse *Roe v Wade*. (A young woman on the news said, “I am 21 years old and I am scared!” What is she scared of? That she will get herself pregnant and then not be able to abort her baby? What shame and sham!)

I am mad at the “gay” activists who do not let up in their campaign to make their depraved lifestyle acceptable.

I am mad at those who play the “race card” at every altercation between blacks and whites, especially where the work of our police men and women are concerned.

I am mad at the rampant inflation that is taking place.

I am mad at the ridiculously high price we are paying for gas to fuel our vehicles and for food to feed our families.

I am mad to think that a great country like the United States cannot keep enough baby formula on the grocery shelves to feed the babies of America, and that the president of the U. S. has to make providing baby formula a high profile item of his administration—baby formula, for crying out loud!

I am mad at the ineptitude and ineffectiveness of our elected officials in Washington to lead our country.

I am mad at going to a restaurant with my Sunday lunch bunch and having an unreasonably long wait to be seated and served simply because the restaurant cannot keep a full staff of workers, all while seeing “Help Wanted” and “Now Hiring” signs at almost every place of business in town

I am mad at the immorality of preachers.

I am mad at good and faithful older preachers being “put out to pasture” or given reduced roles when they still have so much to offer the church.

I am mad that some gospel preachers are no longer preaching on the fundamental themes of the New Testament and, instead, are preaching sermons that could be heard in any denominational church on any Sunday.

MM Returns to the RSI Index

I am happy to report that the Restoration Serials Index (RSI) board has completed or developed a solution which would allow the *Magnolia Messenger* (MM) to continue being included in its index. RSI is a great online research tool.

I understand that anyone can search the RSI database; for example, if you want to search for an article on Baptism, you may search by keyword or by subject; in addition, you can search by author and or title of an article by a person who authored an article

recently or in the past. This is strictly a brotherhood publication or source; meaning, you will get Church of Christ materials at this site. Materials indexed in RSI come from the *Gospel Advocate*, *Christian Woman* magazine, and other brotherhood publications. A simple search would be searching by author, or you can even search for the title or series. Note, you have to put in a date range, and I believe RSI goes back as far as 1940.

Furman Kearley requested that RSI consider adding the MM to their list of brotherhood period-

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I am mad that our young people are not hearing sermons on what to do to be saved, baptism, the oneness and distinctiveness of the church, why the church is not a denomination, why we do not use instrumental music in worship, why we observe the Lord's Supper every Sunday, and other vital subjects. (A steady diet of these themes? No! An abandonment of these themes and them never being discussed from the pulpit? Never!)

I am mad at professed gospel preachers who are more promoters than they are preachers.

I am mad at the ignorance of many Christians of some of the most basic and fundamental truths of scripture.

I am mad at members of the Lord's church who apparently have never utilized so much as even a minute of their time in trying to comprehend the difference between the Lord's church and the denominations of men and who think that the church of Christ is just another denomination.

I am mad at how Satan has used Covid to keep people from the services of the church.

I am mad at the worldliness of many members of the Lord's church.

I am mad at the way our current culture treats Sunday (the Lord's Day).

I am mad at the failure of so many to read their Bible, to study, and to pray.

I am mad at liberal elders and preachers who are corrupting the faith of many Christians.

I am mad at those who think and say, "The Bible is wrong about many things."

I am mad at those who chide those who contend for "the old paths" (Jeremiah 6:16).

I am mad at those who say, "We don't care about the old paths" (Jeremiah 6:16).

I am mad at those who think the Bible is just a theological devotional guide and not the revelation of a divine pattern from the mind of God as to how people are saved from sin, how they can stay saved, how they are to worship, and how they are to live day by day.

Yes, I am mad, but I do not intend to allow my anger to lead me to sin. I am attempting to direct my anger into positive paths and trying to address to the extent of my ability the things that make me mad. But right now I am mad and will stay mad about the above matters. **MM**

huford@comcast.net

(Well said brother Hugh!-dd)

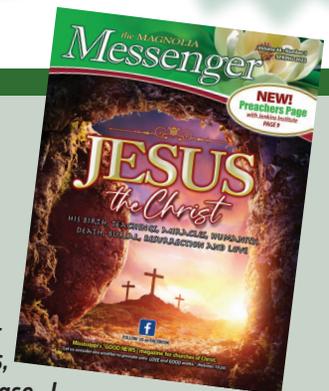
icals indexed while I was employed at MBC. I went through the process of getting the RSI board to consider adding the MM to its list of indexed periodicals. I can't recall exactly when the MM was first included in RSI; but, sometime between 1992-1999.

This is good news for sure; but, my workload just increased. I have to resume my indexing where I left off with the Spring issue of 2018, volume 40 and number 1. **MM**

Here is the link; <https://restorationserialsindex.org/>

Jim Womack
Collection Services Librarian
Nichols Library
Faulkner University

(In meeting Jim during my two recent visits to the Faulkner campus, he told me of this indexing data base. I appreciate so much what he did in the past and for his willingness to continue indexing the Messenger to RSI. I think it can be a valuable resource. -dd)



MM - MISSION REPORT • 2022

WORLD MISSIONS *Has It Made Any Difference?*

by C. Philip Slate

Several years ago I heard of a congregation here in the USA that withdrew money from a missionary couple they had been supporting, feeling they were making too little progress. Once back in the USA, the couple counted the number of conversions their supporting church had realized from their efforts during the past year. The couple discovered that the two of them had taught and brought to baptism more people than the entire supporting church had realized in the same period! The supporting church evidently had decided that all their prayers and financial support had not made much difference.

Despite our society's many virtues, it has a streak of impatience in it. You know the quip, "Lord, please give me patience, and I prefer to have it right now!" Jesus taught that kingdom growth often comes slowly (Matt. 13:31-33).



Philip Slate

A big question is, "How do we count or tabulate progress in the gospel?" We can count bodies, budgets, and buildings; but who can measure humility, thanksgiving, love, and devotion? Of course, externals are one way of detecting progress, and Luke used "body counts" to indicate initial kingdom growth (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 9:31; 11:21, 24; etc.). So, using certain visible indicators, we might ask whether worldwide efforts by churches of Christ have made any difference?

Distribution: A few years ago, Dr. Flavil Yeakley showed that "for their size the churches of Christ are the most widely distributed religious body in the USA." Many churches were started in homes and grew, some to large congregations. A couple or three decades ago some of the staff at what is now Heritage Christian University compared notes and concluded that churches of Christ as we know them were in every nation save two. In some cases, we are barely there, and in other cases work must be unadvertised because of persecution.

Several countries' churches have congregation directories. On the Internet pull up "Internet Ministries Churches Christ" and click on 'directories'. The worldwide directory lists most of the countries where there are congregations.

Our knowledge about numbers, however, is limited for three reasons: First, in many cases no one has bothered to count them! It isn't an easy task. Second, we have learned through the years that churches of Christ have come into existence through their study of

Scripture (Nigeria in the 1950s, Spain and Ethiopia in the 1960s, and others) rather than from missionary work. Third, in some cases persecution requires a low profile. Prayer, encouragement, and funding have made a difference in the world.

A Few Known Facts: Currently, according to long-term, informed workers in India, there are in that country alone likely as many as two million members of churches of Christ as we know them. African Christian Schools Foundation announced that there are as many churches in Nigeria as in the USA. In Malawi it is estimated that no person in the country is more than ten miles from a congregation, and the initial churches were a product of work by



A packed Bible Class in Korea

a brother from South Africa. Hundreds of churches are scattered throughout the Philippines. From the best figures we have it appears that between 65% and 75% of all known members of churches of Christ exist outside of North America, and that the average member (if there is such a thing!) is a person of color. Of course, more than 75% of churches of Christ should be outside of the USA since we have only 4.25% of the world's population!

Most of the churches in India and many African and Latin American countries were started by national members, not foreign workers. True, missionaries initially taught many individually and groups in training schools that they themselves were permitted and obligated to reach out to others. It is known that our brothers and sisters have gone to other countries from Canada, the British Isles, Germany, South Korea, and several African countries, and others to evangelize. Both the Sunset Institute of Biblical Studies and World Bible School have published little booklets on "How to Start a Church in Your Own Home." Initially meeting in homes is precisely the way many of our congregations in the USA began. African Christians tell us, "We can evangelize Africa, but we need your help in education and occasionally financing projects." Yes,

our money and prayers for global evangelizing has made a difference!

Churches of Christ existed in North Korea prior to the Korean War. During the war, however, some of those leaders fled to the south and began work. Teachers from the USA went to South Korea after the war, and today there are over 100 churches, a university, and a training school operated by our brothers and sisters. God alone knows how many little groups meet in homes in Mainland China today. Some churches started in Japan by J. M. McCaleb and others in the 1890s and early 1900s still exist. Japan is not hostile, but converts come slowly there.

The work of “Continent of Great Cities,” sponsored by a congregation in Amarillo, TX, specialized in planting churches in major cities in Latin America. Some of those congregations have planted ten or more congregations. Indeed, it is likely that most churches in Latin America were planted by nationals who had been taught to reach out to others just as someone reached out to them—as in Brazil where over 300 churches are known. Baxter Institute in Honduras has for many years turned out a steady supply of trained workers for Latin America, most of whom are bi-vocational or “tentmakers”. Similarly, the school in Quito, Ecuador, School of Biblical Studies, turns out several good workers annually. Yes, the money given to those works has made a difference?

A classmate of mine at Lipscomb in the 1950s, Stephen “Epi” Bilak, had broadcast the gospel by radio from Switzerland and sent literature into the Ukraine during the Soviet era. After the Berlin wall came down, many workers went into the former Soviet Union, including the Ukraine, to evangelize. Before Putin invaded eastern Ukraine in 2014, there were about 150 congregations in that country with as many as 5,000 members. Dollars, prayers, and hard work made a difference!

God deserves our best! The concept of teaching the ideals portrayed in the New Testament documents remains valid. The need remains for people to be taught about Jesus Christ our Lord, and that they can be Jesus-followers without wearing divisive names or insisting on human opinions or doctrines as divisive elements. Be thankful for those who have gone out in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (see Slate, *Lest We Forget: Minibiographies of Missionaries from a Bygone Generation*. [Winona, MS: J. C. Choate Publications, 2010]). What these and more recent workers have done made a difference, and we can know only a part of the results! God be praised. **MM**

(When it comes to mission work around the world, Dr. Slate is one of the most knowledgeable men in our brotherhood. I thank him for this encouraging report.—dd)

NEW STRATEGIC PLAN FOR MISSION GTO MEXICO

While on our March mission trip to Guanajuato, MX, last March, Fernando Arroyo, our stateside GTO Director, Les Ferguson, Sr, and I discussed the possibility of accelerating our evangelistic goal of Mission GTO to plant churches of Christ in every city of over 30,000 in population. We decided to try a different strategic mission plan that could enable us to start four new missions in 2022, using our present missionaries. Three of these missions would begin on a temporary and part-time basis until we have trained and experienced missionaries to send permanently and fulltime. A fourth mission would involve a fulltime preacher. After much prayer and deliberation with the Lake Harbour Drive congregation’s elders in Ridgeland, MS, who have the oversight, and after evaluating our present financial ability, it was determined to proceed.

Before we completed our mission trip in March, we met with three of our present missionaries, Rene Rameriz in Silao, Hector Gonzalez in Penjamo, and Alejandro Gonzalez in Yuriria, and challenged them that in addition to their present work to spend one day each week to evangelize in nearby cities that have no church and to conduct worship services on the following Sunday afternoon. We agreed to give them extra salary for the additional work and travel expenses. I’m happy to inform you that all three were agreeable. We encouraged them to take some of their members to get involved in helping them make contacts and to be present in the Sunday worship to greet visitors. The plan was to send Hector and his family to Aba-



solo (92,000) and Alejandro and his family to Acambaro (109,000). Once the elders approved the new mission strategy, Fernando started the process of locating, renting, and furnishing suitable buildings near the city center. You will be pleased to know that the first worship services were conducted in Abasolo in April and in Acambaro in June. We are hoping to start a third mission with this same evangelistic method in Romita (pop. 66,000) with Rene by the end of summer.

We were excited to learn in June from our GTO missionary in Joventina Rosas, Hector Leon and his wife Jenette, that the congregation was ready to become self-supporting, and he wanted to move his family to the fourth new mission fulltime in the city of Jerecuado (pop. 50,000). I am happy to inform you that Hector has completed his move and has conducted the first worship in July.

Mission GTO Mexico is blessed with multi-talented missionaries working with us that have a great passion for teaching and preaching the gospel to lost souls and helping us begin new churches. Most all of them were converted in GTO and trained in our Biblical Institute in San Miguel de Allende. The elders and members of the Lake Harbour Drive church in Ridgeland, MS, join with me in especially thanking all our supporters and prayer partners for continuing to be generous with your monthly and periodic contributions. **MM**
John Pigg, Mission GTO Director, johnpigg51@yahoo.com, 601-842-7801

In the SPOTLIGHT:

Brandon Glover



David Lipe told me about the work of Brandon Glover and his family. He is doing some wonderful evangelist work through his family business. I am proud to put him "In the Spotlight" -dd

Brandon Glover has a very large company which builds anything out of heavy steel.

He hosts a Bible study on Friday nights in a room above his shop. He conceived the idea of a bigger event in October. He hosted a big Halloween gathering on Saturday night. I preach on Sunday morning at Blackwater Macedonia congregation in Jasper, AL. Starting on Sunday night and going through Wednesday night, I speak in his shop, which has temporarily been adapted for a meeting place. Many come who would not otherwise go to a church building. It has proved very successful. Be sure to read his story about Utah.

He is a great servant of God Thanks, David Lipe

Exciting work in Delta, Utah

by *Brandon Glover*
Jasper, Alabama

I am a member at Blackwater Macedonia Church of Christ (Jasper, Alabama). I recently had a job opportunity in Delta, Utah. I prayed that God would use me in some way while I was away from home, so my family and I set out for our month-long journey on February 26. We took several copies of the "Back to



the Bible," and "Does it Matter" books with hopes to study with some prospects while we were away from home. We found a small congregation in Delta, Utah, the Great Basin Church of Christ.

They had only a handful of members present on the first Sunday morning we attended. I thought this was the oppor-

tunity for open doors that I was hoping for. I met with Jeff Hostetler, the man who led the worship service, the following week. We discussed the needs of the church and how my family and I could help. I also asked of him if they knew of anyone we could teach or study with. He said he would give it some thought and get back with me. That Saturday night, he called and asked if I could preach Sunday morning. I had never preached before, but I nervously and prayerfully got a lesson together and preached on Sunday. I preached for the next four Sundays.

The third time I spoke, a young mother visited the congregation. She seemed very emotional during the lesson. After worship, I made a beeline to her to find out more about her story, and I asked her to have a Bible study. She told me she had never been to a church of Christ before, and she really did not know why she was there that day. She was only hoping that the music would not distract her from worshipping God. I knew I had to get her to commit to a Bible study, so we nailed down a time that week. I called Jeff and asked him about it, and he in turn invited the whole congregation. We used the "Does it Matter" book since I thought I only had a couple of nights to study before I returned home.

We studied four nights in a row, and we covered a lot of ground. We started our study two hours earlier on Friday night because these people were so thirsty for the truth. It was so encouraging and faith building to see two baptisms Friday night, and one more on Saturday. I plan on going back to Utah (this year) and the members there are lining up friends and family for studies while we are there.

This experience has strengthened my faith so much and has been so encouraging to me and my family. Thanks for letting me share my story with you. **MM**

Thinking about HEAVEN

by Tom Keener, Minister
Mart, Texas

Early on the morning of November 30, 2018, James Baker stopped by to see his long-time friend, George H. W. Bush. Baker said when Bush was told he was there that he opened his eyes, looked at Baker and asked, “Where are we going today?” Baker replied, “We’re going to Heaven.” Bush replied, “Good, that’s where I want to go.” Later that day former president Bush died. During the next several days a nation remembered and mourned. In a world that is usually preoccupied with this life there was talk about Heaven.

When our family and friends die, their life and death do not receive the attention of a former president. But each life and death is significant. At their death the family and friends will remember and celebrate their life. The death of a loved one brings thoughts about Heaven and is a subject mentioned at the funeral. Hopefully, the death of a friend or loved one causes us to think more about Heaven. That has been my experience. Deaths are a vivid reminder, “that this world is not my home, I’m just a passing through”.

We need to think about Heaven often.

Sadly, even Christians don’t think about Heaven enough. Mark Ralls, a minister in North Carolina, observed, “There is more talk of Heaven in novels, television shows, and pop songs than in sermons. Christians must shoulder some of the blame that visions of life beyond death fail to include God.” (“Reclaiming Heaven”, *The Christian Century*, December 4, 2004, pp. 34-39)

In John 14:1-3 Jesus comforted his disciples (and us) with these assuring words:

“Do not let your heart be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

In II Corinthians 5:1 Paul writes, “Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.” In Philipians 3:20-21 he affirms, “But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.”

The son of the novelist John Steinbeck tells of an experience

where he encountered a family at a roadside coffee shop. The family arrived in a convoy of three pick-up trucks loaded with household goods. All three of the trucks had Oklahoma license plates. He was convinced they were a family in transition. He said to one boy in the family, “Your group looks like you’re from Oklahoma. Where are you bound?” The boy answered, “Oh, we’re not from Oklahoma anymore. We’re from someplace up ahead.” Heaven is home—someplace up ahead. As Mark Ralls wrote, “The desire for Heaven is a kind of homesickness, a restlessness of soul that will remain unfulfilled until we are united with the One who created us...”

The most important truth about Heaven is that God is there.

William Sloane Coffin observed, “If death is no threat to our relationship to God, it should be no threat to anything. If we don’t know what is beyond the grave, we do know Who is beyond the grave.” In an interview with Bill Moyers, Coffin was asked, “Do you ever think about what happens when we die?” His response was marvelous: “Not very much. It’s who’s there, not what’s there, that counts for me.” Someone shared an interesting statistic that said, “In America more people believe in Heaven than believe in God.” That may be true. It is also tragic.

My first acquaintance with the hymn, “What A Day That Will Be,” was in late 2011. Alva Caywood, a friend, had requested this hymn be sung at his memorial service. The problem was that neither I nor others that would be present at the service knew the song. The Internet, especially YouTube, helped me learn the tune. At Alva’s service we managed to do a fair job of singing the song, especially the chorus. In the years since that first singing, the message of the song has increased in meaning to me. When my mother died in 2015, and when my younger brother, Joey, died in 2018, this song came to mind. I sometimes have difficulty singing the hymn without choking up. It is a reminder of how wonderful Heaven will be. I am reminded to live my life in preparation for that great day. It’s important to think about Heaven.

“What a day that will be, when my Jesus I shall see,
And I look upon His face, the One who saved me by His grace;
When He takes me by the hand, and leads me through the
Promised Land, What a day, glorious day that will be.” **MM**
tomkeener@juno.com

(Tom is in his 15th year preaching in Mart, Texas, and a long time reader of MM. He has a Bachelor of Science in Education degree from Oklahoma Christian University and a Master of Divinity degree from Harding School of Theology. -dd)

Visiting among Churches in north Mississippi



congregation in singing. Gary mentioned that Matthew had recently participated in the L2L program in speech and song leading. It was encouraging to see Matthew lead the singing.

■ **May 23:** I participated in the “Preacher Therapy” workshop presented by Jeff

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

April 2022 through July 2022

We appreciate so much the opportunity to inform you about our mission work among the churches in North Mississippi. We appreciate the Germantown church of Christ sponsoring us in this ministry. This report covers twelve Sundays during the months of April through July 2022. I served three of these Sundays as an interim preacher for the Coffeerville church of Christ and two Sundays as an interim preacher for the Indianola church of Christ. I also preached for a Special Sunday at Zion Rest church of Christ.

■ **April 28-29:** Madolyn and I attended the 16th Annual World Evangelism Retreat at Maywood Christian Camp. I thank the World Evangelism team for putting together such a wonderful



World Evangelism Team

group of speakers and arranging such a great time of fellowship for all those that came to the retreat. We heard reports from missionaries from around the world. It was very encouraging to see the passion of these great missionaries for the cause of Christ.

■ **May 1:** That same weekend Madolyn and I visited with the Olive Branch

church of Christ. Mike Hixson is the preacher there. They have several mission works and broadcast ministries. They have 3 elders and around 270 in



Allen Webster and Mike Hixson

attendance. They were having a “Great Day” event with Allen Webster, editor of “Heart 2 Heart, House 2 House.” We were excited to see Allen and hear his messages and visit with the good folks at Olive Branch. We enjoyed seeing old friends and eating lunch with the congregation. It was an enjoyable day.

■ **May 22:** Sunday night Madolyn and I visited with the Burnsville church of Christ. They are searching for a full-time minister. Their former minister, Rick Jones, recently resigned. He served as one of the elders, so they are without elders now. They have around 40 in attendance. One of the former elders,



Matthew Willis and Gary Orick

Gary Orick, gave a lesson on Baptism. Matthew Willis, one of the teens, lead the



Preacher Therapy

and Dale Jenkins with the Jenkins Institute. They discussed several challenges that preachers face in their ministries. It was a good discussion and I enjoyed hearing Jeff and Dale speak from their years of experience in ministry. It was a good time of fellowship and spiritual enrichment. Jeff and Dale Jenkins were in Batesville in a meeting.

■ **May 29:** I was invited to speak at the Central Academy church of Christ near Batesville, MS. Ed Casteel has been the minister there for eight years. His wife, Iris, had been in the Oxford hospital all week, and he asked me to sub for him that morning so he could be with her. I’m always happy to help and enjoyed visiting with the good folks at Central Academy. They have two elders and around 30 in attendance. Please be praying for them during this time of trial.

■ **June 5:** Madolyn and I were invited to speak for the Lighthouse Group (singles group) meeting at the Germantown church of Christ. We got to worship with our home congregation and visit with all the good friends there. We had a meal together and then I talked to the men and Madolyn talked to the women. The Lighthouse Group is very special to me. They showed me a lot of love and support when I lost Judy. Madolyn was a great hit with the ladies, as you would expect. They loved her speech and were so happy to learn about her life. It



Lighthouse group

certainly was a great joy for us to meet with the Lighthouse group.

Sunday evening Madolyn and I began the first of four classes on couple relationships with the Batesville church of Christ. We were excited to present these lessons on marriage each Sunday night during the month of June. I talked about Communication, Resolving Differences, Intimacy, and The Blessing. I pray that the couples at Batesville have been blessed by these lessons. It was a great joy for us to visit each week with the good folks at the Batesville church.

■ **June 19:** Madolyn and I visited with the Liberty church of Christ in Dennis, MS. David Conley has done a great ministry with the church for the last 10 years. They have five elders and over 200 in attendance. They support many mission works around the world. They



David and Deborah Conley

are one of two churches in north Mississippi that have learning centers each week in their elementary Bible classes.

It's like having VBS each week. After services we enjoyed eating with the Cashion's and Moody's at the famous Sparks Restaurant in Belmont.

■ **June 26 & July 17:** I was invited to preach for the Indianola church of Christ. Their long-time preacher, Gene Hill, recently retired and has moved to Georgia to be with his children. The church is looking for a new minister. The church has no elders and around 20 in

attendance. They do offer a preacher's home. Please remember them in your prayers as they search. I will be preaching for this church once a month as they search for a minister.

■ **July 10:** Madolyn and I visited with the Acton church of Christ in Michie, TN. Jon Paul Gullede is the minister there. He is a fine young preacher, and they are excited to have Jon Paul working with them. The church has an active youth program. They have three elders and around 141 in attendance.

We were excited to be there for Homecoming. An old friend and fellow



Jon Paul Gullede and Mike Eaton

preacher, Mike Eaton, was the guest speaker. Mike served at Acton for several years during the time I was at Foote Street in Corinth. It was really good to see Mike. He is the current minister for the Pineville church of Christ in Pineville, LA. They had six responses to the invitation that day. We enjoyed our visit and getting to see old friends.

■ **July 24:** I was invited to speak for the Big Day and Decoration Sunday at Zion Rest church of Christ near Booneville, MS. Tony Brown is the long-time minister and serves as one of four elders. I appreciate Tony so much. He is a wonderful preacher and diligent supporter for Maywood Christian Camp.

The church engages in many works and has around 160 in attendance.

In the worship service I spoke on "The Great Love of God" based on John 3:16.



Tony and Nora Brown

■ **Update on CSC at MDCCC:** The spring semester ended May 6. The president of the college asked me to give the invocation and benediction for one of the graduation services at MDCC. The speaker was Rep. Bennie Thompson, U.S. House of Representatives, MS-02. He gave a very encouraging message to the graduates. I was honored to be asked to represent the Christian Student Center and the Lord's church. Madolyn and I attended three freshmen orientations in June and July. We met



Me praying at MDCC

lots of new students and pray they will attend some of our Bible studies. The fall semester began August 15th. **MM**





"The Besetting Sin"

by Timothy McCarter, Minister
Cleveland, Mississippi

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily besets us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us..." (Heb 12:1 – KJV).

Other translations use a slightly different terminology: "the sin which so easily ensnares us" (NKJV), "everything that slows us down" (CEV), "especially the sin that so easily trips us up" (NLT), "the sin into which we come so readily" (BBE), "sin which clings so closely" (ESV), "the sin that hangeth so fast on" (Geneva Bible), "the sin which holds on to us so tightly" (GNB).



Tim McCarter

These are just a few examples, but you can see that all these translations, dating from 1587 to 2001, are in basic agreement as to the translation of the idea of an "ensnaring" or "besetting" sin. So, exactly what is a "besetting sin?" Basically, it is any sin that particularly gives us problems. While there are certainly some commonalities, it will differ in specifics and degrees for each individual. For some it might be a sin of a sexual nature, for others it might be anger or envy. For still others it might have to do with habits that a person develops such as the use of tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drug use. There are those who have to deal with kleptomania (impulsive urges to steal even when there is no reason to do so). Still others may have a problem breaking such bad habits as the use of foul language. I'm sure you could add other specific behaviors to this list, but this serves as a good sampling of "besetting sins."

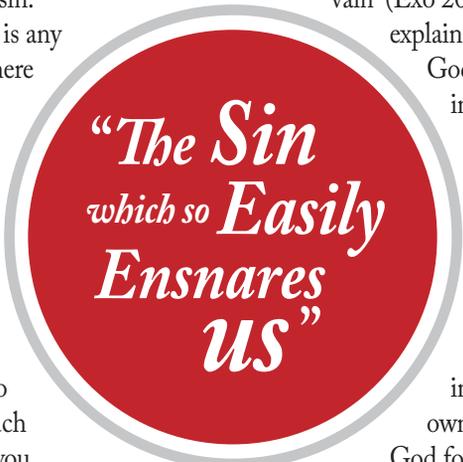
Any sin can cause one to lose his/her soul, so it is imperative that we learn to deal with those things. Often, it is very difficult. Temptation is always before us. For those who must deal with sins that would come under the category of "lust of the flesh" or "lust of the eyes," the temptations are certainly before us every day. Advertisement executives have learned that "sex sells." As a result, sexualized images are used to sell products ranging from automobiles to personal hygiene products. Have you ever seen a "non-handsome man or a non-beautiful woman being used as a model to sell a product? In his list of the "works of the flesh" (Gal 5:19-21) Paul includes

adultery and fornication, but he lists some other sins that are in the same category. "Uncleanness" is defined as "the impurity of lustful, profligate living." Lewdness/lasciviousness is defined as "unbridled lust, wantonness, shamelessness, and insolence."

But sexual sins are not the only "besetting sins." Uncontrolled anger may be a problem for some. It often takes a tremendous amount of self-control to keep from lashing out at someone with whom we strongly disagree, especially concerning religious or political subjects. Sometimes it is our spouse or our children who do something to stir the anger within us. It is not necessarily a sin to be angry, but anger is something that must be controlled because it can so easily lead us into sin (Eph 4:26). Paul included "outbursts of wrath" in his list also (Gal 5:20). Even the words we use can be a source of sin. Both Jesus and His brother, James, cautioned us about the words we use in a given situation (Mat 5:37; Jas 5:12).

One of the earliest commands given by God through Moses had to do with the use of God's name. His name is never to be used "in vain" (Exo 20:7). While that command is usually believed/explained to refer to taking oaths/making promises in God's name which one has no intention of keeping, it is also true that His name should never be used in a flippant, derogatory manner, what we would normally refer to as "cussing," but is to be revered/held in awe (Psa 111:9). After all, the very words that we speak will be taken into consideration when the Great Judge decides our eternal fate (Mat 12:36).

I'm reasonably sure each of us has an area in which we struggle mightily. Examine your own heart and identify that area. Pray about it. Ask God for His help in overcoming whatever your particular challenge may be. Do your best to keep yourself from situations where your "besetting sin" has the greatest opportunity to overwhelm you (Rom 13:14). If you need help in your battle don't be afraid to ask. And finally, when you do succumb to temptation recognize it, admit it, and repent of it. God is anxious to forgive if we will return (Lk 15:11-32). **MM**
clevepreach@outlook.com



*"The Sin
which so Easily
Ensnares
US"*

(While Magnolia Bible College closed its doors many years ago, it did produce many fine preachers. Tim McCarter is one of them and has been doing an excellent work for many years in the delta town of Cleveland, Mississippi. -dd)

by Dennis Doughty

"INSCRIPTIONS"

Some Unique Thoughts about Baptism

■ No "Above-Ground" Baptisms

The scriptures teach, "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death" (Rom. 6:4). Since baptism is a burial, there can be no "above ground" baptisms. One cannot sprinkle a little water or pour a little water, over someone's head and call it a baptism anymore than one could sprinkle a little dirt or pour a little dirt over one's head and call it a burial. Baptism is defined by scripture as a burial.

The word "baptism" is a Greek word that means to bury something (a dirty dish, or a repentant sinner) under water. The Greek scholar, Vine, defines baptism as an "immersion, submersion and emergence." This meaning is clear in the scriptures. "They both went down into the water [immersion], Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him[submersion]. When they came up out of the water [emergence]...he went on his way rejoicing" (Ac. 8:38-39).

In baptism our old man of sin is buried. This action is done to forgive our sins as we reenact Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. "Having been buried with Him in baptism in which you were also raised up with Him through faith" (Co. 2:12). It is not done above ground but under water. Have you been buried with the Lord in baptism?

■ No Postponed Baptisms

The scripture's teaching that baptism is a necessary action to forgive sins, is highlighted by it never being postponed or delayed. On Pentecost Peter told them to "repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins" (Ac. 2:38). Not later that month, or that week, but "that day" about 3,000 were baptized (Ac. 2:41).

While Philip was teaching the Ethiopian about Jesus, the man said "Look! Water!

What prevents me from being baptized?"

The chariot was stopped and "he baptized him" (Ac. 8:35-38). When Peter went to Cornelius' home and told them about "Jesus of Nazareth," he "ordered them to be baptized" (Ac. 10:38,48). The Roman Jailer was taught "the word of the Lord" and "immediately he was baptized" (Ac. 16:32,33).

Ananias was sent to a blind and sorrowful Saul. He restored his sight and said, "Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized" (Ac.22:16). There were no postponed baptisms in the New Testament. Rather, they were the same day and hour, commanded and immediate. Why? Because it is at the point of baptism that sins are forgiven by the blood of Christ. How could such an important step be delayed? Any baptism that is postponed to a later date, is not the baptism of Jesus Christ. Baptism delayed is forgiveness denied. When were you baptized?

■ No rejoicing before Baptism

The moment you realize that your past sins have been forgiven and that you are now a child of God, it is a joyous moment. When someone completes the process God set forth for our salvation, that of belief, repentance, and baptism, it is good reason to rejoice. In the New Testament we can find no rejoicing before baptism, but cheerful and energetic actions after baptism.

On Pentecost many were "pierced to the heart" by Peter's message. Some 3,000 believers were then baptized. Afterwards, we read that "they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart" (Acts 2:41,46). As believers: "pierced to the heart," after baptism: "gladness of heart". When Phillip "preached Jesus" to the Ethiopian, after he "came up out of the water" of baptism, we read, "he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:38-39).

Baptism is not what saves us, but it is the point of faith and obedience when salvation occurs, hence, the reason for jubilation. Paul "spoke the word of the Lord" to the Roman jailer. "and immediately he was baptized...and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God" (Acts 16:32-34). Have you experienced the joy that comes at baptism?

■ No Unbaptized Christians

In Corinth the Apostle Paul proclaimed, "that Jesus was the Christ...and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized" (Ac. 18:5,8). A problem would later arise in Corinth over who baptized whom. Some were baptized "of Apollos," others said, "I of Cephas," and still others "I of Paul." This was causing some division. Paul lamented, "I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius" (1 Co. 1:11-14). But all were baptized!

Do you remember who baptized you? Our local minister, John Wheeler, baptized me as a young boy. In Acts we read that Phillip baptized the Ethiopian (Acts 8:38), Ananias baptized Saul (Ac. 22:16), Peter baptized Cornelius (Ac. 10:48), and Paul baptized the Roman Jailer (Ac. 16:33). There were no unbaptized Christians in the New Testament. These men baptized because of what Jesus taught.

Jesus taught that we are to go and "make disciples." How? By "baptizing them." (Mk. 16:16). He said, "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved." (Mt. 28:18). Having heard Jesus teach this, Peter would note that Noah was saved from the sins of his day "through water. Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you" (I Pe. 3:20,21). Who baptized you? **MM**

Precious Memories

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(Moxeys, GA)

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COLEMAN & FAMILY
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FAMILY**

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COLEMAN & FAMILY
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(Coldwater, MS)

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MAGNOLIA
MM
MESSENGER

HANDLING TROUBLE IN THE CHURCH

by *Gary Hampton*
Siwell Road Church of Christ

A complaint arose among the Hellenists, likely converts from among the Greek-speaking Jews scattered throughout the world. They felt their widows were not being cared for as well as the widows of the Hebrews in the daily distribution. Whether the charge resulted through accidental or intentional oversight is not known. The perceived problem obviously threatened the peace and unity of the young church (Acts 6:1).



Gary Hampton

The apostles said it was inappropriate for them to cease devoting their full energies to the word in order to serve tables. They directed the Christians to look among their own number to find seven men qualified to carry out the work. It is good for men who will manage monetary affairs or hold positions of authority to be selected by the people they will serve. The men had to be known as good men, full of the Holy Spirit, which may have meant they possessed miraculous gifts or it may have referred to fully displaying the fruit of the Spirit. They also would need "skill in the management of affairs," which Thayer says is the definition of "wisdom." The apostles would appoint the seven selected to attend to this important matter. They planned to continue to focus on prayer and ministering to others with the word of God (Acts 6:2-4; Gal. 5:22-26).

The multitude of believers thought the apostles had a good solution. They chose Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, all Greek names. The apostles laid their hands on them after going to God in prayer. It is always good to approach God about any matter Christians are about to undertake, and especially when church problems are involved. The laying on of the apostles' hands officially placed them in office, like swearing in a new president, and may have involved bestowing on them miraculous gifts.

Handling the problem in such a way resulted in further growth in the church through the spreading of the word of God. The number of Christ's followers was multiplied, including a large number of priests who obeyed the faith (Acts 6:5-7). **MM**

<gchampton@hotmail.com>

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The MAGNOLIA MESSENGERS

Preacher SEARCH

MONTICELLO CHURCH OF CHRIST

A 150-yr old congregation in Monticello, Arkansas, is seeking a full-time minister. **Search Committee, c/o Monticello church of Christ, P.O. Box 485, Monticello, AR 71657 Marty Baker - Cell: 870-723-5192 Work Office: 870-367-8676**

THE CHRISTOPHER CHURCH OF CHRIST

Is seeking a minister for a congregation of about 33 members, located in Southern Illinois. Salary is \$36,000 per year. **Please send resume, references, and a sample sermon to jurbanmail@gmail.com Or call George Marshall at (618) 218-1401.**

DEERFOOT CHURCH OF CHRIST

Looking for Outreach Minister in the Birmingham, AL, area. We are about 400 members. **Michael Dykes hiring.outreach@deerfootcoc.com**

WEST WALKER CHURCH OF CHRIST

We are in search of a Gospel preacher, willing to work, sound in doctrine and life. Please mail resume, background, and CD to: **West Walker Church of Christ 26036 Hwy 118 • Carbon Hill, AL 35549**

CLINTON CHURCH OF CHRIST

(Clinton, MS) is currently seeking a minister who defines his ministry as preaching, teaching, and equipping others to serve. We are a congregation of 50+ families that is seeking to grow. **clintonmscofc@gmail.com; SUBJECT: "Preaching Position" If you have any questions, please contact the elders at 601-924-5300**

BURNSVILLE, MISSISSIPPI

We are looking for a preacher. We are small church, around 40 in attendance **Contact Gary Orick, 662-660-6333.**

S. WEST END BLVD. CHURCH OF CHRIST

The S. West End Blvd. Church of Christ in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, is seeking a full-time evangelist. The congregation has 75+ members, four deacons, and two elders. **profwemeyer@yahoo.com or mail to William E. Meyer, 2221 Brookwood, Cape Girardeau, MO 63701.**

SEEKING ASSOCIATE MINISTER

WESTERN HILLS CHURCH OF CHRIST

Western Hills seeks an experienced associate minister to work with an established church of Christ serving the Lord faithfully on the western edge of Fort Worth, TX. **8800 Chapin Rd. Fort Worth, TX 76116 817-244-0132 • http://www.whcoc.net job@whcoc.net**

LITTLE MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF CHRIST

Seeking a bi-vocational minister. We are a small

congregation located approximately 5 minutes from downtown Winchester, just off Hwy 64. We are a fundamental part of 2 on-site youth camps.

Email: littlemountaincofc1900@yahoo.com (931) 636-7796 – Thomas Loudermilk (931) 247-2828 – Tim Michael Little Mountain church of Christ 710 Old Holders Cove Road Winchester, TN 37398

INDIANOLA CHURCH OF CHRIST

Our current preacher is retiring at the end of May 2022, and moving to be with family. We are searching for a new full-time minister. We have office space at the building and a 3-bedroom 2-bath house within city limits in a good neighborhood. **504 Grand Ave, Indianola, MS 38751 IndianolaMScoC@gmail.com 662-887-4025 - church building 662-207-9843 - Jason Zuehlke**

THE CLARKE COUNTY CHURCH OF CHRIST

is seeking a visionary minister to assist in growing God's Kingdom. Athens is a beautiful city located 70 miles from Atlanta and is a suitable place to raise a family. For more information, visit **clarkecountycoc.org.**

THE UNIVERSITY CHURCH OF CHRIST

Associate Minister-Youth and Family Advertisement The University church of Christ at 5651 Zeigler Boulevard in Mobile, AL, currently has an opening for a full-time associate minister. **Please send resumes to the following: Richard Jay - Elder richard.jay@spireenergy.com**

SOUTH JACKSON STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST

South Jackson Street Church of Christ in Houston, MS, is seeking a full-time minister. We are a congregation of around 60 members. Parsonage provided and pay will be based on experience. **Please send resumes and contact Phillip Allen pwareb145@gmail.com 662 312 5632**

MERIDIAN CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Meridian church of Christ, located in Meridian, MS, is in search of a full-time minister. **Meridian church of Christ, PO Box 3476, Meridian, MS 39303-3476 or E-mail to both of the following: Andy Duncan (Elder), hadunca62@gmail.com, Tom Fair (Elder), htfair1@gmail.com**

PERRYVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST

We are looking for a good grounded-in-the-truth, solid gospel preacher. We are the Perryville Church of Christ in Perryville, AR. We are about a 90-member strong congregation. We have 5

Elders, 3 Deacons. We have several young people and teen agers. We are in the country and its pretty. Perryville is about 1000 population. Our last minister was here around 8 years, and went to a larger 500 member church. Please contact: **Steve Pruitt/ Elder for Perryville Church of Christ. 501-215-7241 / or stevepruitt@hodgeauto.com**

SECOND STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Second Street Church of Christ in Belmont, MS, seeking full time minister. We are fifty members serving the Lord in our community and seeking strong pulpit minister and teacher. **contact number is 205-412-4377 Email: wallace-andglendawilliams@gmail.com**

14TH AND MAIN CHURCH OF CHRIST

The congregation at 14th and Main in Big Spring, Texas, is seeking an experienced full-time minister who has in-depth understanding of the Bible and its application to the church. We are a well-established congregation of over 125 active members, 3 elders, 7 deacons and a full-time associate/youth minister. The compensation will be based on experience. If you would like to be considered for this position, please send resume, references, and a link to current sermons to **14thmaincoc@gmail.com in care of the Minister search committee. You may also call Trey Cauble at (432) 466-4885.**

SOUTH HUNTINGTON CHURCH OF CHRIST

The South Huntington Church of Christ in Kosciusko, MS, is looking for a full-time preaching minister. This church has a long history of serving the community and the state of Mississippi as a whole. The church has been served by a bi-vocational preacher for the past 5 years, but is ready to find someone to serve full-time. The S. Huntington church is a diverse group that desires to serve God and others. The church is currently served by two elders and three deacons. If interested, please contact: **Will Anderson at willanderson@yahoo.com or text 662-832-0457.**

ROCKY CREEK CHURCH OF CHRIST

Youth Minister Search. We are in the process of losing our Youth Minister of 8 years. He is moving back home to work with his original home church. Contact: Rocky Creek Church of Christ in George County. **Stan James Email: Stanjames4him@gmail.com**

COFFEEVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST

A congregation of 45-50 members, Salary based on experience. 3 bedroom, 2 bathrooms house is provided. **Jim Peters 662-675-8623 John Allen 662-473-8702**

“ON THE ROAD AGAIN” with the Editor

It is always a joy to visit churches and meet people that support and enjoy this publication. On May 31st I drove down to Batesville to attend a gospel meeting they had with Jeff and Dale Jenkins. Arriving early, I stopped in at the Cracker Barrel restaurant to get something to eat and ran into the Jenkins and Michael Bates and his family, who invited me to join them. Michael is the preacher for the Batesville congregation. I am sure that many a good fellowship has been enjoyed at Cracker Barrel restaurants across the country.

Dale preached an excellent sermon on Baptism, and I was able to speak to a couple of the elders and thank them personally for their support of the Messenger. I was also able to meet Kathy Brummett, who wrote for our ladies section in this issue.

The last of June I was invited to come speak at the Huntsville congregation outside of French Camp, Mississippi, just off of the Natchez Trace Parkway. They were inviting men who they supported in mission work to come speak to and report on their work. I was more than happy to report on the growth and influence of The Magnolia Messenger and thank them for their long-time support.

Nathan Wright has been preaching for them for many years and is the football coach for the highly respected French Camp Academy school. They had an excellent fellowship in their beautiful fellowship building and I enjoyed my

food and time with these good Christians.

Let me brag about the Tunica congregation, where I preached for fourteen years. I was back with them recently and each time I go back I see that they have continued to make improvements to the building, inside and out. I am proud to see them remain so active and faithful these past two years.

I went down to Montgomery, Alabama, to spend some time with Cecil May. My thanks to Steven Franks, who flew me down and back, and to Jim Womack, who



Kathy Brummett and the editor, taken by Robert Rawson



Communion Table: I noticed their unique communion table. It was made by a member many years ago. Notice the symbols on either side, one of the bread, the other of the cup.

These young ladies helped prepare an excellent fellowship meal.



Cecil and Janice around his desk, Cecil and I visiting



gave us a ride to and from the airport over to the Falkner University campus. I had a good visit with brother Cecil in his nice office in the V.P. Black School of Biblical Studies. We discussed the future work of the Messenger, and I enjoyed hearing of his work at Magnolia Bible College, where he served as its president for twenty-two years. It is always a privilege to be in the presence of greatness, and such was my time with Cecil and his good wife Janice. **MM**

I made one more trip, to the Smokie Mountains for “Polishing the Pulpit.” Read about it on page 16- dd

These Sent In Answers to QB, Last Issue

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362. Sherry Townsend
363. Bryan Crow
364. Rick Bishop
365. Henry Norris
366. Kathy Waycaster
367. Doralynn Felton
368. Shirley Richardson
369. Shelia Williams
370. Ora Gladney
371. Laura Brannon
372. Bert Tingle
373. Alice Humphries
374. Glenda Wilson
375. Claranett Hathorn
376. Tishia Williams
377. Sue Fisher
378. Maggie Edmonds
379. Sonja Shelley
380. Brenda Green
381. Florine Riley
382. Shirley Carroll
383. Donna Gullely
384. Ima Jean Fogus
385. Wanda Charlene Jent
386. Jerry Fleming
387. Lynn Hovater
388. Sylvester & Linda Burton
389. Ed Lyon
390. Nadine Patton
391. Kamri Westbrook
392. Aaron Williams
393. Levi Burnett
394. Seth Burnett
395. Ryleigh Holliday
396. Roger King
397. Ellen Welsh
398. Averi McKinney
399. Ainsley McKinney
400. Carla McKinney
401. Michael Harvill
402. Natalie Stewart
403. Sawyer Hyatt
404. Barbara Standard

Bible Winner

Tracy Jaco. Tracy worships at the Carthage Church of Christ in Carthage, MS. Mary Adams from Coldwater, MS, was the Bible winner but she wanted to give it to someone who could use a new Bible.



Question Box SEPTEMBER 2022

SALT

is used to enhance our food and to preserve some of it. As Christians, as "salt" we are an influence. Read the following scriptures about salt and fill in the blanks. (NKJV)



1. (Matthew 5:13) You are the _____ of the earth; but if the salt loses its _____, how shall it be _____?

2. (Luke 14:34-35) Salt is _____, but if salt has _____ its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the _____ nor for the dunghill, but _____ throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

3. (Colossians 4:6) Let your _____ always be with _____, seasoned with salt that you may know how you ought to _____ each one.

4. (Genesis 19:26) But his wife looked _____ behind him, and she became a _____ of salt.

5. (Numbers 18:19) All the _____ offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel _____ to the LORD, I have given to you and your sons and daughters with you as an _____ forever; it is a _____ of salt forever before the LORD with you and your descendants with you.

6. (Job 6:6) Can _____ food be eaten without salt? Or is there any _____ in the _____ of an egg?

7. (Ezekiel 43:23-24) When you have finished _____

it, you shall _____ a young bull without blemish, and a ram from the flock without _____. When you offer them before the LORD, the priests shall _____ salt on them, and they will offer them up as a _____ offering to the LORD.

8. (Ezekiel 16:4) As for your _____, on the day you were born your navel _____ was not cut, nor were you _____ in water to cleanse you; you were not _____ with salt nor _____ in swaddling cloths.

9. (2 Kings 2:20-22) And he said, "Bring me a new _____, and put _____ in it." So they brought it to him. Then he went out to the source of the _____ and _____ in the salt there, and said, "Thus says the LORD: 'I have _____ this water; from it there shall be no more _____ or barrenness.'" So the water remains healed to this day, according to the word of _____ which he spoke.

10. (2 Samuel 8:13) And David made himself a _____ when he _____ from killing eighteen thousand Syrians in the Valley of _____.

Prepared by Glenn & Beth Beall, foyfoyirish@gmail.com

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 31). ALSO, by random drawing, the name of ONE student will be selected to receive a beautiful New Study Bible.

"The Question Box"

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