

the MAGNOLIA Messenger

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**NEW WAY TO DONATE TO
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Daniel 2:21

- **BLOOD & GRACE** page 3
- **Q&A-ABORTION** pages 4
- **FIRES OF PERDITION** page 6
- **MISSION REPORT** page 16-17
- **YOUTH PAGE** page 18-19
- **SPIRITUAL REMINDERS** page 28

Holding another's hand...

After the passing of your mate

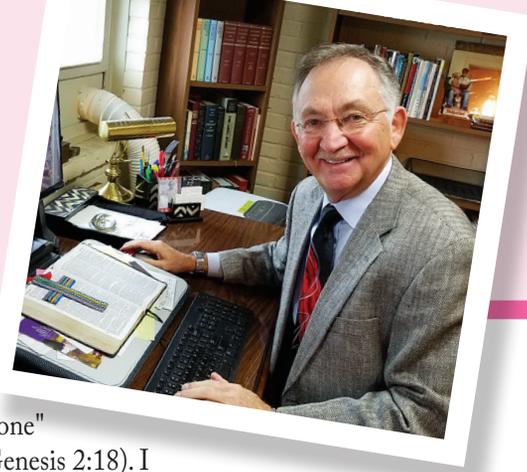
PAGE 10-12



Mississippi's "GOOD NEWS" Magazine
Serving Mississippi, Louisiana, and Adjoining States

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

From Dennis



Over the holidays two members of our staff, after losing their first spouse to death, had found new mates and were married in separate ceremonies. I was honored to perform one of those ceremonies. Afterwards, I realized that four of our staff have now married a second time after the death of their long-time mates.

A 2007 study found that 7% of widows and 29% of widowers marry a second time. The study found that these second marriages helped deal with loneliness and social isolation, as well as provide emotional support and companionship. Having performed a few of these weddings, I also believe that falling in love is not just for the young.

God realized early on that "It is not good for man to be

alone" (Genesis 2:18). I

know that remains true for young men, but is true of older men as well. Of widows the New Testament scriptures approve, and even encourage them to marry, that is "only in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 7:39, 1 Timothy 5:14).

I am certain that there are hundreds, if not thousands, of Christian couples who read this publication who, having lost their spouses to death, have found a second love and have been richly blessed by their second marriage. The Magnolia Messenger is proud to honor such Christian marriages with the testimony of our staff on this subject as can be found on pages 10,11 and 12. **MM**

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Editor's Note: The mention of a person or church in the Messenger does NOT necessarily mean that we either endorse or approve all the person or church may believe, teach and/or do. We do not (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)

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Summer Issue Special Topic: HEAVEN & THE HEREAFTER

We want to focus our next issue on the topic of Heaven and the Hereafter. We need to think about and learn more about Heaven. To do so we need to learn more of what the scriptures teach about death, resurrection, Judgment Day, Hades, and Hell, as well as "the City Foursquare."

We are inviting all writers to send us your articles on any of these subjects. -dd

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the BLOOD & GRACE OF JESUS

by James Pilgrim

When preaching about baptism, or in private discussions regarding baptism, one may hear “Churches of Christ place more emphasis on baptism than they do on the grace of God and blood of Jesus.” Is this true?

FIRST, one would have to be aware of every remark made publicly and privately in every church of Christ to accurately make such a remark. That is unlikely.

SECOND, singing in churches of Christ suggest otherwise. For example, a favorite and often-used song is, “Amazing Grace.” Many other songs about the grace of God are frequently used, such as, “O Thou Fount of Every Blessing,” “Where He Leads Me,” “Grace Greater Than Our Sin,” and so many more. Songs about the blood of Jesus find usage frequently. We often sing, “Are You Washed in the Blood,” “Nothing but the Blood,” “There is a Fountain,” “Redeemed,” and many others.

THIRD, sermons and private Bible studies stress the need of the blood of Jesus to be saved. This penman frequently uses Titus 2:11-12 when speaking of grace. He often speaks of God’s grace to Noah (Genesis 6:8), Moses and the people (Exodus 33:12-17), the children of Gad and Reuben (Numbers 32:1-5), Gideon (Judges 6:12ff), and many others in the Old Testament.

He has often spoken of Him who is “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Audiences are reminded that “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17), that all the saved were redeemed by the blood of Jesus (1 Peter 1:18, 19), and that all should “continue in the grace of God” (Acts 13:43), and so on. Salvation by grace through faith as, and when, one walks in the works which God has before ordained (Ephesians 2:8-10), is faithfully taught.



James Pilgrim

God ordained the following: Faith (John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6); Repentance (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 17:30, 31); Confession (Matthew 10:32, 33; Romans 10:9, 10); and Baptism (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:20, 21).

FOURTH, churches of Christ observe the Lord’s Supper every “first day of the week” (Acts 20:7). The body and blood of Jesus (Matthew 26:26-29) are remembered every Sunday, even Sunday evening for any who could not assemble that morning. The communion (1 Corinthians 10:16) is “in remembrance of me” (1 Corinthians 11:23-25), Jesus.

Yes, churches of Christ stress baptism (Acts 10:48), by burial (Romans 6:1-5), in water (Acts 8:38, 39), to wash sins away (Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:20, 21), to enter Christ (Galatians 3:26, 27), and His Body, Church, Kingdom (1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22, 23; John 3:1-5, 23), being added thereunto by the Lord (Acts 2:41, 47).

Baptism is stressed because Jesus sent His disciples forth to preach it (Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:18-20), but not more than the grace of God and blood of Jesus. Grace, the blood, and baptism are inseparably tied together in the Word of God. It is in baptism that one reaches the blood Jesus shed in His death (Romans 6:3, 4).

No one believes in or teaches about the grace of God and blood of Jesus more than knowledgeable members of the church of Christ. The blood of Jesus is faithfully remembered no less than weekly in the observance of the Lord’s Supper, in every baptism, in sermons, in home Bible studies, and in so many other ways. Come and see for yourself. **MM**

jamesandrewpilgrim@gmail.com

(I appreciate this excellent article. James has preached throughout the south, spending many years with the West Concord congregation, Hueytown, AL, from 1978-2017, where he also served as an elder the last few years. He is retired but still preaching by appointment. -dd)

BIBLE

Questions & Answers

MM Readers' ASK: Cecil May RESPONDS

RESPONSE: *"You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13). That is the answer to the question asked. This column could end with that reference.*

In the Bible, the baby in the womb is a person. There are those, however, who do not believe abortion is murder. The much-touted "woman's right to choose," and the "right of a woman to control her own body," both overlook the fact

that there is another human life at stake in any abortion decision.

From the time a man's sperm is joined to a woman's ovum, a unique human being is conceived.

The elements of the adult person are already present. Ultrasound shows the baby's arms and hands and legs and feet developing. A



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doctor's stethoscope soon, too, hears the baby's beating heart.

To obscure the fact that what is removed from the woman's body in an abortion is not just a blob of protoplasm like a diseased appendix, words like "fetus" and "embryo" are used instead of "baby." The Bible consistently speaks of persons as persons while they are still in the womb. "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" (Psalm 139:13-14).

"Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you and before you were born I consecrated you. I appointed you a prophet to the nations'" (Jeremiah 1:4-5).

Exodus describes what action is to be taken in a case of injury to a pregnant woman's baby. 'When men strive together, and hit a

QUESTION:
What does the Bible say about abortion? (A.P).

pregnant woman, so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall be surely fined, as the woman's husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine.

But if there is harm, you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand

for hand, foot for foot" (21:2-24).

"If there is harm," that is, if the baby dies or is born deformed, the penalty on the one who caused the harm is the same as if the baby in the womb were an adult human, "life for life, eye for eye," etc.



So many abortions performed. Too many Christians have no idea how pervasive abortion is in our country, to say nothing of how it may occur in the world today. The following paragraph from Apologetics Press is eye-opening:

"Every year in the United States of America, more than one million children are butchered by abortion doctors. Since 1973, when the Supreme Court legalized abortion-on-demand, some forty-three million babies have been slaughtered in America (see "Consequences," 2003). Every year, an estimated forty-six million abortions occur worldwide (Alan Guttmacher Institute, 2002). In three decades, an entire generation of children has been forever eliminated. In fact, more than 20% of all babies conceived in this country are killed before they ever see the light of day (Finer and Henshaw, 2003, p. 6)—and the slaughter continues.... (Dave Miller, "Abortion and the Apologetics Press") **MM**

CONCLUSION

A baby aborted never grows up to fulfill his or her potential. No one can know whether the medical doctor who would have found a cure for cancer or discovered a vaccine for COVID-19 might have been among those aborted. One thing is for certain however: none of the present-day advocates for abortion rights were ever aborted.

DOUBTING Thomas

by Dennis Doughty

The list of eyewitnesses of Jesus' resurrection is an extensive one. In first Corinthians 15 Paul lists the following: Peter, the twelve apostles, James the Lord's brother, "to more than five hundred brethren at one time," and then to Paul himself (1 Corinthians 15:3-8).

Even this is not an extensive list as it does not mention Mary Magdalene, the first to see him, or the two men on the road to Emmaus.

But something in Paul's list caught my eye; in these appearances he first mentions "the twelve," then later "all the apostles" (1 Corinthians 15:5,7). Perhaps he was referring to the events surrounding the apostle Thomas.

When Jesus first appeared to "the twelve" that resurrection evening, we are told that "Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came." ("Didymus" means "the

*"Because you
have seen me,
have you believed?
Blessed are they
who did not see,
and yet believed"*



twin."). When told of Jesus' resurrection by his fellow apostles, he refused to believe them. He "doubted" that a crucified and buried man could have been seen alive. Wouldn't you have as well?

The next Sunday, now with "all the apostles" together, Jesus came and "stood in their midst." He called out to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands and reach here your hand and put it into My side and do not be unbelieving but believing."

Spellbound as he must have been, he proclaimed, "My Lord and my God!"

While Thomas is often criticized for his skepticism, his doubting nature increases my faith. He wanted proof, undeniable proof of his Lord's resurrection. He would not accept even the testimony of his fellow apostles. He must touch the nail prints himself! Otherwise, he would not believe the tomb was empty.

When the proof stood before him, he accepted the resurrected fact of his "Lord and God." Jesus replied, "Because you have seen me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed" (John 20:19-29).

We did not look upon the pierced side of Jesus, but thankfully, Thomas did that for us. The "doubter," turned "believer," gave to all of us yet another assurance of the resurrection of our Savior.



Did Thomas Touch?

In response to my thoughts about Thomas, I received a response with a question. I do love a good question. I also love reading between the lines. The question was, "Did Thomas 'touch the nail prints?'"

Well, let us back up a little to that first Sunday when Thomas was not there. When Jesus appeared to "the twelve" and greeted them, "He showed them both His hands and His side; the disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord (John 20:20).

I cannot imagine, once they recognized the Lord, them not embracing Him, examining, and touching His wounds. They "rejoiced." Oh, the excitement and awe that must have filled the room. I can also imagine that when they were telling Thomas about the experience that he wanted the same proof they had received and touch the wounds as they had. Whether he did so or not, well, add that to our list of questions we will ask in Heaven. The Holy Spirit has a way of keeping us in suspense.

Personally, I think Thomas, and many of the apostles, embraced the risen Lord, and lovingly touched His wounds as He now offered them. I would have. Wouldn't have you? **MM**

"And by His wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). -dd

PULLING PEOPLE FROM

The Fires of Perdition

by John Pigg

One of the most faithful supporters of the Magnolia Messenger has been Wilburn Dulancy, a former member of the Yazoo City church of Christ, where brother Al Franks was minister for many years. A few years ago following his wife's death, aging Wilburn moved to Delhi, LA, to be near and help take care of his seventy-one year old paraplegic daughter, Susan. On the evening of November 24, 2020, while Wilburn was on a hunting trip, the house they shared in Delhi, became engulfed in flames. Her dedicated 64 year old nurse and friend, Gwendolyn Theus, somehow managed to get Susan out of her hospital bed and push her out a bedroom window to escape the house fire and to save her life, but unfortunately, Gwendolyn was overcome by smoke inhalation and died. It was her final and fatal act of compassion. The state Fire Marshall was quoted as saying, "Mrs. Theus' valiant efforts to put her patient's life before her own are both admirable and heartbreaking."



John Pigg

Gwendolyn will be long remembered by her family and friends in Delhi, LA, for her commitment, courage, and compassion.

Reflecting on this heroic, sacrificial, true-life, physical story reminds me of the short book of Jude's final and spiritual, soul-saving admonition, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (v.21-22 KJV). Our Lord's Great Commission to the church calls for urgently pulling lost souls from the fires of perdition with the same commitment, courage, and compassion that was incredibly demonstrated by Gwendolyn Theus. But unlike her selfless, sacrificial deed, snatching souls from the flames of Divine Judgment demands caution. It is the responsibility of every Christian to reach out and rescue people from the destructive and deadly consequences of sin. But it is equally critical that we do not rush in blindly and succumb to the sins from which we are trying to save others. Jude warns us to beware of the horrible dangers to our own soul as we attempt to rescue others from the fires of hell. I've known a few gospel ministers and missionaries who once were passionate about soul-winning, but eventually became fallen shepherds. Jude's call for all saints to "have compassion" on wayward souls and to "save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the

garment spotted by the flesh," also admonishes, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

As a young preacher I recall years ago on a Thursday evening, I was conducting a home Bible study with an unfaithful member of the church and his unsaved wife. I was trying my best to pull both from the fires of perdition. His wife was almost persuaded, but he stubbornly procrastinated. Sadly, on the following Saturday morning while duck hunting his boat accidentally capsized, and tragically, he drowned! As far as I know, his wife never obeyed the gospel. He was only 27 years old, and in preaching his funeral, I focused on the 27 books of the NT that proclaim the good news of a loving Savior that came from heaven to earth, lived and died, so that lost humanity could be saved from sin and inherit eternal life.

On another occasion one of the members where I preached, who was a reformed alcoholic, had been missing worship services for several weeks. The elders and I wondered if he had forsaken the assembly because he had backslid from sobriety. We thought it might be a good idea to send another brother who had a past drinking problem to go to his home and check it out. We believed if drunkenness had kept him away, since this brother could best empathize with him, he could encourage him to be restored. However, we figured wrong! As it turned out, the spiritually strong brother, who we felt could be the best soul-winner in this situation, found his weaker brother had gone back to drinking again. Regrettably, he yielded to the temptation to join him in wine-bibbing, and the next Sunday both were missing!

Paul warned, "Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted" (Gal 6:1-2 ESV). Paul wrote concerning himself as a passionate gospel preacher, tireless soul-winner, and faithful church builder, "But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified" (1 Cor 9:27 ESV). Pulling lost souls from the fires of perdition can be challenging, but it is commendable. Courage, commitment, and compassion are essential qualities for successful soul-saving. However, we all must be cautious to "show mercy, mixed with fear" as we reach out to share the gospel story with our lost friends and family in 2021.

In pulling people out of the fires of perdition, let's pray we will stay faithful in the process! **MM**

D.R.T. Come and See

by Bud Wranosky

I walked into Paul Franks' office one day and asked, "What's it like in Lithuania?" He said, "Come and see." I didn't just say, "OK, I'll go!" (I'm cautious) But over time, I got used to the idea of me going to Lithuania and participating in the Church of Christ Youth Camp. I went, and because I did, my life was "richly blessed!" Paul set before me an open door, and I chose to step through it and experience the world of missions.

The Church of Christ Disaster Response Team (DRT) is saying to you, "Come and See," just like Paul Franks said to me back then. Come and see what it's like to be a volunteer with DRT as they serve the communities ravaged by a disaster. Male or female, young or old, skilled or unskilled, there is a place for you to be Jesus for others in DRT.

DRT responds to the initial emergency by delivering the basics like food, water, etc. Secondly they concentrate on eliminating hazards that threaten families. Once that's done, they assist families in restoring their homes. All this takes time and effort. Mark and Laura Cremeans of DRT in Tipp City, Ohio, oversee each deployment and the summons for volunteers.

Just the movements of equipment like a mobile kitchen, a laundry trailer, a shower trailer, an equipment trailer, a generator trailer, along with Box trucks hauling food, water, cleaning supplies etc. to the disaster is a big and ongoing task. Many volunteers drive their own trucks to the disaster and fill them with needed supplies as they go. Others just see the need and fill it, like Rusty Lambert who trucked in a load of bottled water from Texas to the Enterprise Boulevard Church of Christ in Lake Charles, LA, during the response to the Hurricane Laura disaster.

Everything is done by the volunteers, men and women just like you. Volunteers cook for the public in a big way and they cook meals for other volunteers in work crews. Volunteers do housekeeping, laundry, and drive as needed. They install tarps on roofs, cut up trees, haul debris, gut homes of moldy sheetrock, move soiled furniture away from living areas, and make things safe for people.

A volunteer confided in me that she didn't know how to cook, much less cook in big quantities, when she first started volunteering. Another more experienced volunteer mentored her into being the cook that she always wanted to be. I asked, "that's kind of like OJT (on job training), right?" Well, sort of, she said, but I like to call it 'living into my calling.'" Volunteers help each other. Volunteers train each other and make each other better. Volunteers keep other volunteers safe. **MM**

Visit their website: Church of Christ Disaster Response Team
<churchesofchristdrt.org>

The door is open. Go through it. Who knows, it might be your calling. Come and See - BW

"I was in prison, and you came to me..."

Matthew 25:36

THE "MESSENGER" GOES TO PRISON.

There are several prison ministries across our brotherhood. They do a great job bringing the gospel to these men and women, and many are converted to the Lord.

We know many of these incarcerated Christians do receive the Magnolia Messenger. We hear from them regularly. Here is a recent letter we received.

"I was added to His church back in 2015 in the county jail of Marshal County, Tn. In 2016 I was moved to the Trousdale Turner Correctional Complex where I worked to bring a church of Christ service.

"After three chaplains, I was finally able to see the Tennessee Prison Outreach Ministry send us brother Tom Watson. Brother Watson preaches for the Philadelphia congregation in Lebanon, Tn. He visits us on Thursdays, and we study the Bible, pray, and sing hymns. We have 33 active church of Christ registered inmates here at TTCC.

"Our current Chaplain has started bringing communion to us on Sundays, Glory to God! Since Covid-19 we have not had volunteers, so no church service either, although we have studies and prayer calls among ourselves." **MM**

In Christ,

Clyde Ray Bradford, Jr

TTCC Hu-CB-120 • 140 Macon Way
Hartsville, Tn 37074

(God bless these men and women who are trying to turn their lives around and seek God. Feel free to drop brother Bradford, or other prisoners you may know of, a note of encouragement- dd)

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Amen & A-woman

by Brett Petrillo

According to longstanding tradition, the 117th Congress was opened with a prayer. As Rep. Emanuel Cleaver came to the end of his prayer, he concluded with “Amen and a-woman.” Yes, you read that correctly, “a-woman.” As if, in some way, “amen” was actually some chauvinistic masculine word.



Brett Petrillo

To set the record straight, “amen” is an ancient Hebrew word that has been used for thousands of years. It simply means “may it be so.” In other words, after a

prayer, we are collectively requesting that the words of the prayer would happen.

There is a tantalizing desire to take this article into the dumpster-fire discussion of politics, but there is a much more important lesson to learn about our culture right now – The United States is ignorant about Christianity. While Rep. Cleaver may have shown us an extreme example, this religious ignorance is more common than you might think.

Personally, I’ve had conversations with people who have “heard of Jesus but didn’t know what He did.” Another person hadn’t heard of Moses or knew anything about the difference between the Old Testament & New Testament. Let’s not even

get started on complex Bible words like redemption, sanctification, and righteousness. The days have long passed when we can make religious assumptions in our nation.

We need to stop assuming people know Bible words.

We need to stop assuming people know Bible people.

We need to stop assuming people know about Jesus.

We need to stop assuming people know how to pray or worship.

We need to stop assuming people know what is happening during worship.

We need to stop assuming people know the basics of Christianity.

The bottom line is...we need to stop assuming. At this very moment, we’ve reached a place in our nation where people may not know Jesus, know the Bible, or know that “amen” isn’t a gendered word. We very well may be heading towards another time when people are darkened in their understanding because of the ignorance that is in them (Ephesians 4:17-29). If we’re going to reach our world today and fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), we need to change. We need to change how we think. We need to change how we teach. We need to change how we talk. We need to change what we do. We need to change how we evangelize. **MM**

Brett Petrillo serves as the youth and family minister at the Bear Valley church of Christ in Denver, CO. He is also an instructor for the Bear Valley Bible Institute. He is a graduate of the Bear Valley Bible Institute (Th.B; M.B.S). He and his beautiful wife, Julie, are blessed with 4 wonderful children. You may contact Brett at: brettpetrillo@live.com>

Give your community an

Introduction to Christianity



with the July issue of House to House Heart to Heart

People are looking for truth! The HTH program had 370 baptisms reported in 2020—all in the U.S. So far in 2021, we are averaging two baptisms a day. This has never happened before.



We need your help to reach a larger audience while people are so receptive to the gospel. This summer’s HTH will focus on “An Introduction to Christianity.” Our aim is to make this issue the largest mailing in HTH history.

Will you join more than 1000 congregations in this effort to reach three million families? Please contact Matt Wallin by May 15.

matt@housetohouse.com | get.housetohouse.com | 1-877-338-3397

COMFORT WORDS and Phrases

by Hugh Fulford

From my childhood to the present there have been various words and phrases that have brought me much comfort and happiness. As we close out an exceedingly trying year, I thought it might be beneficial to share a few of those words and phrases with my readers. (Each of you will have your own words and phrases). Beginning with my earliest memories, here are some of the random words and phrases that have brought solace to my soul for over 80 years.

- **Mama, Daddy, Bigmama and Bigdaddy** (*what all the grandchildren on both my mother and father's side of the family called our grandparents.*)
- **Home, Supper, Family, School's out! Summertime! Baseball! Sweet milk, Homemade Ice Cream, Watermelon, and Fried fish** (*of almost any kind, salt water or fresh*)
- **Butter Beans, Fried Okra, Fried Corn, Fresh Sliced Homegrown Tomatoes, Corn Bread, and Sweet Tea** (*in the South "sweet tea" is pronounced as one word with two syllables*)
- **Banana Pudding, DeFuniak Springs (the hometown of my youth) and Florence, Alabama** (*where I finished my last two years of high school*)
- **Mars Hill Bible School, Freed-Hardeman College** (*now University*)
- **The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want, My Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ "...the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" Let us go to our heavenly Father in prayer, and The church** (*no further descriptor is needed for me. I have not the slightest doubt but that I am a member of the church that Christ died for and established—nothing more, less, other, or else. The church has been my life.*)
- **The Book, The Lord's Day, The Lord's Supper, Brethren** (*I prefer it to the more contemporary term "brothers"*)
- **Gospel meeting**, "Brother Hugh, we would like to schedule you for a meeting with us next year or as soon as your schedule will permit."
- **Football!, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Snow! Coffee, Fruitcake** (*Yes, I honestly like good fruitcake*)
- **"Well, here we are on another New Year's Eve." Blackeye peas, Cornbread, Tomato gravy, Country ham, and Sweet potato pie** (*Jan makes the very best*)
- **The Alabama/Florida Gulf Coast, The Smokies**

May pleasant and comforting words bless all of us in the New Year! **MM**

December 29, 2020

**NEW ON
THE WEB!**



The Digital Messenger

Now you can have the latest articles, news, and information with you wherever you go. Just pull the webpage up on your phone, tablet, or laptop, and read, the latest issue of the messenger

■ CURRENT UPDATES

You will also find new information and news that has arrived between our publication dates. This will allow us to share important information with you between issues.

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■ GRAPHICS SUPPORT

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www.magnoliamessengermag.com

Holding another's hand...

After the passing of your mate

A Second Time Around

Glenn & Beth Beall

Companionship with a Christian brother/sister who shares that same belief in God goes a long way in building a marriage, especially a second marriage, where one has lost a spouse in later years and is left alone to try to make it through those remaining years as a single person. There are so many challenges to be met, and no one to share them with.

We had not embraced or kissed, Beth and I, until the evening before the morning we “ran off” across the border to Oklahoma and married. Oklahoma requires no blood tests, or “wait” time. Going across the border between Texas and Oklahoma, we were back across Red River and on our honeymoon within a couple of hours. We often tell people we married on our first date.

We knew each other long before our marriage. We grew up within a few miles of each other around Sherman, Texas. We saw each other in congregational services often when we were young, and graduated from the same High School. One of Beth's best friends was my nearest neighbor and, in fact, it could be said Linda was like my sister. Beth and I had conversed enough by email and telephone to know each other regarding the important things in life, mainly our common love for God, the Word, and our goal of Heaven. Discussing the Bible and praying together on the phone was our agenda. I'm just saying that knowing each other as friends came before any actual dating or expression of affection in what many people would consider the usual manner.

There have been very, very few surprises. My main surprise is seen in this statement: “Wow. That was good! I did not know you could cook.” At the same time my daughter said, “Dad, you didn't tell me she could cook.” Beth's main surprise: my housekeeping!

We have just celebrated five years of marriage. Should we be asked if we would make that decision again, the answer would be a resounding “Yes;” without hesitation. Life is so much better, easier, with someone who understands the loss you've been through, and who cares for your welfare on every level—spiritually, physically, mentally, and emotionally—a very good blessing.

Something we've talked about many times: our relationship has three levels: 1) we will always be brother and sister in Christ, 2) we will always be friends, and 3) we will always be husband and wife, and that's the icing on the cake of life.

A Modern-Day Fairy Tale

By Madolyn Gibson Lewis

This could start out with “Once upon a time” and end in “lived happily ever after.” Or it could begin with “God works in mysterious ways when we least expect Him.” Both would be correct in this case. There is no wicked witch, but there is a dark cloud. There is no magic, but there is romance. My story simply begins with two hearts filled with excess love and no outlet to receive that love.

Two families, the Lewises, and the Gibsons, lived 140 miles apart. Both families were strong, loving, Christian families complete with children and grandchildren. Then one day a dark cloud covered both families taking the wife from the Lewises and the husband from the Gibsons. This left a big empty hole in two people's hearts, Eddie and Madolyn. Both tried to live each day filling time with work, long walks, and prayerful nights. Family was around or constantly in touch to fill the long, lonely hours, but eating alone and the silence of an empty house was always there at the end of the day. Was this it? Was life going to be like this until the end of life? It could have been, but no, this is where the unexpected enters

Eddie and Madolyn Lewis, Glenn and Beth Beall, Jeff and June Booker, (not pictured) Cecil and Janice May

the story. God had a plan.

Two hearts came together, not really looking for a happy ending, but simply because they were filled with love and compassion for others. As a preacher, Eddie came to see how Madolyn was doing and was prepared to offer grief counseling if needed. The visits became more frequent, and without even realizing it time was spent laughing instead of crying. Meals were enjoyed together, and happy times embraced the hours shared. The brightness of smiles and companionship was chasing the dark clouds away from both of their lives and, once again, love began to grow. A new love was planted in two hearts that could give and receive. Like all things when a seed is planted, it is God who gives the increase. When you see God's hand, you know it is not just a fairy tale but rather a Godly blessing.

But for Eddie and me, it is our fairy tale, and we pray for a long "happy ever after".

Finding Love Again

By Eddie Lewis

It has been quite an adventure, Madolyn and I finding love in each other. Both of us were married to our first loves for over 50 years. After their deaths, we really did not think we would marry again, but we feel God had a hand in bringing us together. We were encouraged by our love for each other and strengthened to do His work in our individual ministries.

I have known Madolyn for over 20 years. I first met her and Gene as they founded the Christian Student Center at Mississippi Delta Community College in Moorhead, MS. The ministry there has been a successful work reaching many unchurched students. Judy and I were at Greenville at the time.

In February 2020, I stopped by the CSC to visit with Madolyn. I wanted to see how she was doing after Gene's death the year before. We both talked about our grief and cried together. We both saw each other's hearts and consoled each other in the losses we felt. I think both of us realized that we had found someone that understood that loss. She told me later that she did not feel that I would come back because of all the emotions we expressed. Well, I did come back because I could see in Madolyn a woman that I could love and build a life together. Over the next few months, all during the pandemic, Madolyn and I only saw each other outside of family and our relationship began to grow. We did a lot of traveling back and forth between Olive Branch and Moorhead. We started visiting churches together. I guess the church in Coffeerville, where I was serving as an interium preacher, saw us the most. We even made the town newspaper as they talked about our engage-



ment and upcoming marriage.

On August 24th I asked Madolyn to marry me and she said "yes." I think it was a joyous and scary time for both of us. Being newlyweds again was not something we had planned on. We knew that we loved each other and wanted to be together as husband and wife. We made a couple of trips together to talk and learn about each other. It has been a blessing to both our lives to grow in love and understanding. We set a date for the wedding, but had to cancel it because of family and COVID-19 concerns. We set another date and planned a wedding with family, but again COVID-19 concerns caused us to cancel our plans and have a simple wedding at our home in Olive Branch. A few of our children were able to attend, along with the preacher. December 18th will always be a special day for us. We were married in the middle of a pandemic, but love conquers any difficulties that comes along.

It has been quite a journey, but one that we have enjoyed and are thankful for. As we begin our marriage, we are growing every day in our love and commitment to each other. We know how to make love last for 50 years. We are only sorry that we will not get to have 50 years together.

Underneath the Chandelier

by June Franks Booker

The 2019 winter issue of the Magnolia Messenger was dedicated in loving memory of my beloved husband, Alfred L (Al) Franks. Al had been the editor of the Messenger for forty-one years at the time of his tragic passing on October 16, 2019. My world was turned upside down, and I was devastated. After my great loss, I began to travel this road of grief. At the time of my sweet hus-

Continued on next page

Holding another's hand...
After the passing of your mate

Continued from page 11

band's death I was asked to write an article for the tribute issue of the Messenger about our love story (Winter issue, 2019, pp 28-30).

Almost a year and a half later, I have been asked to write about another love story: The story of June Franks and Jeff Booker: A Mississippi Woman Meets a Tennessee Man.

In September of 2020, my daughter-in-law, Glenda, and I were visiting my cousin in Tupelo, MS. My cousin, Patricia Putt, told me I needed to meet her husband's cousin, Jeff Booker. She said, "He is a fine Christian man, and he lives in Savannah, TN."

After connecting on Facebook, we learned Jeff owned a lamp shop as a hobby and sold chandeliers out of the basement of his house. I had been searching for a chandelier for my new carport addition to my house. Glenda and I both love chandeliers, so we decided to travel to Savannah to shop for a chandelier.

Glenda and I went to Corinth one weekend to deliver a Bible to our most recent Bible winner at the Northside Church of Christ. We were only about forty miles from Jeff's hometown of Savannah, TN, so we decided to go there and shop for a chandelier. That really was our main reason to go to Savannah, to perhaps purchase a chandelier. Jeff was very kind to both of us, and I found the perfect chandelier for my new carport.

After our first meeting, Jeff and I had several occasions to be together. He traveled with us (Glenda and I) in November to see the beautiful Fall foliage in the Smoky Mountains, and he made several trips to Kosciusko for a visit.

During the next few months Jeff and I continued our friendship. We both were lonely and missed each other when we were apart, so we began to talk about marriage.

On one occasion, I was able to visit with Jeff in Savannah. He took me to meet his two sons, Barry and Trent, his sister-in-law, Nancy, and her husband, Johnny. Jeff had met most of my big family.

Jeff and I took our relationship seriously. We discussed both the negative and positive reasons of getting married. The positive reasons won: We enjoyed being together, and we had a lot in common. Jeff was a faithful

member of the Savannah Church of Christ, and everyone spoke well of

him. Barry Binion, the preacher for the Savannah church, said "The Savannah church thinks the world of Jeff Booker!"

Our wedding date was set for December 27, 2020. It was great timing because my whole family was in town for Christmas. My carport and porch renovation were complete, and my beautiful chandelier from Jeff was hanging in the center. Dennis Doughty, long-time friend and editor of the Magnolia Messenger, performed

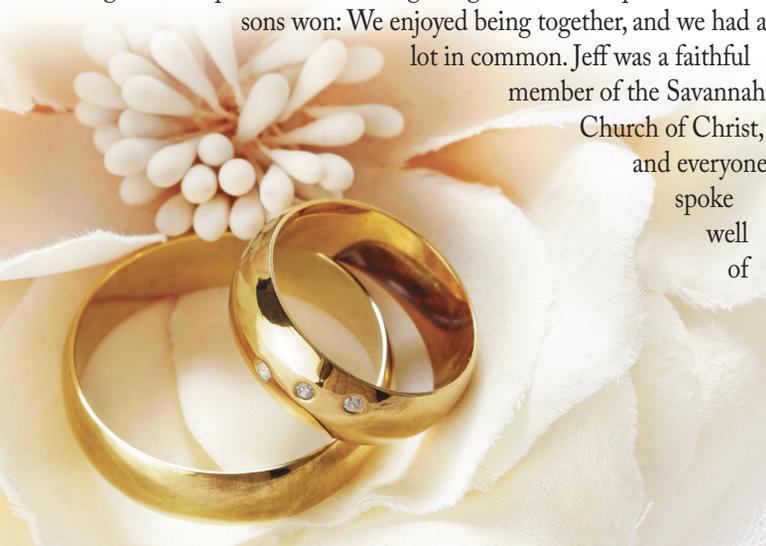


"It is a great blessing to love and be loved again."

the ceremony with our family surrounding us underneath the beautiful chandelier that started it all.

Jeff and I have found a way to love each other and also honor the wonderful spouses we lost. Jeff was married to his beloved wife, Martha, for 58 years when she passed away three years ago. I was married to my beloved husband, Al Franks, for 63 years when he suddenly passed away on October 16, 2019.

I Corinthians 7:39 states "A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives, but if her husband dies she is at liberty to be married to who she wishes, only in the Lord." If it had not been for the chandelier, Jeff and I probably would have not met. It is a great blessing to love and be loved again. **MM**



Going with the GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

Paul the apostle set the standard in doing missionary work, but thousands have followed, traveling to new lands to share the gospel.

In 1971 my parents, Ervin and Jane Doughty, took a year out of their lives and went to Singapore, with the encouragement of their friends, the Hogan's, to work with the young people and help print and distribute gospel tracks.

While there they met Don and Ann Green, who were missionaries in that part of the world. They enjoyed many good times together in Malaysia and Singapore. Don spoke at my dad's funeral and he and I stay in regular contact. Don is a great encourager to me in my work. He sent me this email recently and I thought it worth sharing. Read this and be inspired to do a little "going" yourself. -dd

Don Green Reporting:

I am studying Philippians, and I thought how we give Paul all the credit for his letter but neglect to look at his friends in the letter: Luke, Silas, Lydia, the folks in the household of the Jailer. Household does not mean mom, dad, and the kids. It is a unit of relationship in the economy, and would have included those who worked under his leadership. (see Acts 16:10-40.)

God be with us as we plant his Gospel seeds in other countries. The Great Commission was not only to the men and women who took it to every ethnic group, but to all of us! Dennis, I would have never known your mother and father if the Lord had not sent them to Singapore to print one million tracts. We are not getting our people out into the world to spread the Good News that Jesus loves and forgives and answers our prayers. Even the Holy Spirit lets God know our prayers when we do not get the words exactly right.

I am glad you are the editor of the Magnolia Messenger. Tell your story of how your family led you to worship God. Look what good they did for all who loved and knew them. Gordon Hogan who is 94, is still going with the Gospel. We had a trip planned to go to Hungary but haven't been able to go to date because of the

Virus controlling our country and other countries.

Brother Ira Y. Rice, Jr. did some good in times past. Did you know Norvell J. Brickle, the owner of Dale Carnegie Courses here in Memphis? Ira took "Brick" Brickle to Singapore with him once, and the Church was strengthened in Singapore. They also went to Kuala Lumpur with the Carnegie Course and baptized a large number of people.

What happened next? My wife Ann, our two-year-old son Timothy, had planned to go to Singapore, but our Visa application was in K. L. Malaysia. Singapore left the federated states of Malaysia in 1965, so our visa was not good there. About the same time J.K. Whitefield, with the Mattlok and Wright family, came to work in Seremban, Jud planned to go to K. L. So, Ann, Tim, and I took a train to Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia, and started the work there. One of the converts was Lau Kin Fatt, who has started several good works in Malaysia, with his wife Krissy, of Penang.

The point is, I didn't do this on my own, but like Paul I had a lot of help from the Lord and brethren like Francis Pavlas, and many, many others. It's good to have been supported sixty years by East Frayser church of Christ [Memphis] when we worked in Malaysia, Indonesia, and finally in Singapore, with the Hogans and many others like your mother and father.

I believe the Lord God would encourage more to go if they really understood what the Kingdom of God is all about, and that evangelizing is not just preaching from a pulpit. **MM**

In Christ,
Don Green



What a great picture! It was taken at a Bible lectureship in Indonesia in 1993. Pictured are many great missionary couples, all of whom I have been blessed to know: Don and Ann Green, Gordon and Jane Hogan, Joe and Rosa Bell Cannon, and Dave and Debbie Hogan. Also pictured is Everett Huffard who grew up in Jerusalem as his parents were missionaries there. This picture represents 300 years of experience in "Going with the Gospel." Thanks to Everett who sent us this photo. -dd

God's Steps to Salvation

From the beginning with Adam and Eve God has desired obedience from man.

"...as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice" 1 Sam. 15:22

HEAR

1

■ **Acts 4:4** However, many of those who **heard the word** believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

■ **Romans 10:17** So then **faith comes by hearing**, and hearing by the word of God.

■ **Ephesians 1:13** In Him you also trusted, after you **heard** the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,

*And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him. **Genesis 7:5***

2 BELIEVE

■ **Acts 8:13** Then Simon himself also **believed**; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip

■ **Acts 16:31** So they said, "**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.**"

■ **Romans 1:16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who **believes**,

■ **Hebrews 11:6** But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must **believe** that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

*And the children of Israel did according to all that the Lord had commanded Moses; so they did. **Exodus 39:32***

CONFESS

3

■ **Romans 10:9** that if you **confess** with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

■ **1 Timothy 6:12** Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have **confessed** the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

■ **1 John 1:9** If we **confess** our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

*So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; **2 Kings 5***

REPENT

4

■ **Acts 2:38** Then Peter said to them, "**Repent**, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins;

■ **Acts 3:19** **Repent** therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

■ **Acts 17:30** Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to **repent**,

■ **2 Corinthians 7:10** For godly sorrow produces **repentance** leading to salvation,

*Thus Moses did; according to all that the Lord had commanded him, so he did. **Exodus 40:16***

BAPTISM

5

■ **Matthew 28:19** Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

■ **Romans 6:3** Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were **baptized** into His death?

■ **Acts 2:38** Then Peter said to them, "**Repent**, and let every one of you be **baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

■ **1 Corinthians 12:13** For by one Spirit we were all **baptized** into one body

*Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, **1 Corinthians 10:1-3***

REMAIN FAITHFUL

6

■ **Colossians 1:23** if indeed you **continue in the faith**, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard

■ **Revelation 2:10** **Be faithful** until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

*But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin **1 John 1:7***

The Plan was illustrated by inspired men with the authority given by Jesus! Matthew 28:18-20

The Eunuch: Acts 8:27 ■ **Saul:** Acts 9:18 ■ **Cornelius:** Acts 10:1 ■ **The Jailer:** Acts 16:33

A Case of Mistaken Identity

by Dan Williams

You wouldn't believe the junk mail we receive at the church office. Evidently marketing companies have our congregation confused with those high-powered TV preachers wearing \$2000 suits and sporting expensive haircuts, because from the sheer volume of advertisements they send us it is obvious they believe we have sacks and sacks of money heaped up behind the pulpit.

When it comes to the mail, however, I have a pet peeve that goes beyond the usual aggravation at wading through a daily load of circulars and catalogs. It really irritates me when those computer-generated mailing lists can't get our name right. For the record, we are known as the "College Avenue Church of Christ." If I were an automobile salesman I would try not to call you "Mildred" if your name is "Sally" or address you as "Mrs. Jones" if you are a man; but companies repeatedly send mislabeled mail soliciting our business.

One of the most common problems is that some mailing labels accommodate a limited number of characters, so we often receive mail for the "College Avenue Church of Chris." I have known several guys and gals named "Chris" and most of them were good folks, but I hope they won't take it personally when I say I'm not willing to worship any of them. Only the name of Jesus is worthy of my adoration (Philippians 2:9-10; Acts 4:12), and all that we do should glorify his name only (Colossians 3:17).

The mailman also routinely brings us circulars addressed to the "College Ave Church," as though the sender had been too lazy to finish the address.

Again, I object: we are not some generic gathering of anonymous adherents. We wear the name of Christ because we belong to him (James 2:7). It is a humbling privilege and a serious responsibility to be known as "Christians" (Acts 11:26). When the first-century followers of Jesus were being persecuted for their faith, the apostle Peter told them "if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name" (1Peter 4:16).



Dan Williams

Recently the Christian Music Club offered to send 12 free CDs to "Mr. O. F. Christ." I was momentarily tempted to send that one in, but then I decided "Mr. Christ" already has all the music He needs, what with the praise He receives from those worshippers who obey the command to "sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:19-20).

But perhaps the most mangled missive I have encountered was a postcard carrying the words "FREE SAMPLE" in big, bold letters. Intrigued, I examined it more closely to determine the lucky recipient. Imagine my surprise to find that this exciting offer was addressed to "Mrs. Lege A. Christ!" Confused as it is, that address contained at least a glimmer of truth: after all, the church is the "bride of Christ" (Ephesians 5:25-27).

When Paul wrote to the believers at Rome, he told them "all the churches of Christ send greetings" (Romans 16:16). Our congregations do not wear that designation as a source of sectarian pride or denominational distinctiveness, but rather as a constant reminder that the church belongs to Jesus by right of purchase: He paid for it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). We live in a time when some congregations are dropping the phrase "Church of Christ" and adopting a generic, nondescript title like "Lake Hills Church" or "Journey Church." It is true that the Scriptures do not designate one exclusive name for the gathered followers of Jesus. A variety of descriptions are employed, including "church of God" (Acts 20:28); "church of the firstborn" (Hebrews 12:23); "church of the living God" (1 Timothy 3:15); "temple of God" (1 Corinthians 3:16); or simply "the church" (Ephesians 5:23; Revelation 2-3). We thus acknowledge that the Scriptures allow for latitude in identifying a specific congregation.

That said, every congregation should want to truly be a church "of Christ", that is, to be like Jesus in all things. It is altogether fitting for the church to wear the name of Christ, not only because she is His bride, but also because "He is the head of the church, His body, of which He is the Savior," and a true church of Christ will submit to His authority in all things (Ephesians 5:23-24; Colossians 1:18; Matthew 28:18). Moreover, no church should ever downplay its allegiance to Jesus as part of a marketing effort to broaden its appeal by softening the demands of discipleship (Mark 8:34-38).

So, the name on our sign out front is not a presumptuous boast but a personal challenge: are we truly living in such a way that outsiders identify us as belonging to Christ? It doesn't really matter when computers are confused about our identity, but it does make a difference whether the world sees Christ in us. **MM**

-Dan Williams was the preaching minister for the College Avenue Church of Christ in El Dorado, Arkansas, for over 28 years. He is now the Vice-President for Church Relations at Harding University. -dd



The “Good News” from Venezuela

Venezuela Ministry Update:

My wife and I spent a weekend with our dear friends Steve and Jane Watson. We wanted to see their Venezuela work up close. After meeting and converting a Venezuelan couple, Christian and Anjelica, they joined in helping them send food and other needs to family members back in their country ravaged by a socialist dictator.

The Pegrum church outside Nashville provides staffing and facilities for this growing ministry. With the January shipment of some 3,500 pounds of supplies, they have now sent in the past year and a half around 40,000 pounds

of food, medical supplies, and clothing to families, hospitals, and churches.

After worship services, we enjoyed a good lunch with Steve, Jane, and Christian. He and his wife fled Venezuela in hopes of a better future. They have learned our language and are passionate in their support of their home country.

This work is in constant need of support to buy and ship these supplies each month. If you would like to help, you can contact Steve Watson at steverwatson8@gmail.com or 706.207.9513. -dd



My wife, Kathy looks over the room where supplies are stored. All those boxes on top shelf are filled with medical supplies and have now been shipped to Venezuela.

I was impressed with Christian, a wonderful man serving the Lord and those in need back home.

Enjoyed lunch with Steve, Jane, and Christian.



There are a tremendous number of mission efforts around the world supported by churches in the south. The Magnolia Messenger is pleased to report about these works. Like the mighty Magnolia tree, which grows in seven of our states, Central America, Asia, and China, the Messenger is proud to report on the “Good News” being spread around the world. -dd

North Alabama Christian Children’s Home

We are looking for a Christian couple who are faithful members of the Church of Christ, to work with us as Houseparents for one of our girls’ homes. Benefits include an excellent salary for both Houseparents (even if the husband works outside the home), Life Insurance, free housing, food, gas, help with Health Insurance & a bonus for anyone who works with us 3 years.

For more information, call Don Williams, Director (256-366-3327) or Melinda Jackson, Social Worker (256-757-4212).

PREACHER SEARCH

COFFEEVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Searching for a minister. A congregation of 45-60 people. A 3-bedroom 2-bath house is provided and also has a storage building. House is adjacent to the church building.

Contact: Jim Peters 662-675-8623 or John Allen 662-473-8702

JACKSON GROVE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Jackson Grove congregation in Enid, Mississippi, is in need of a preacher on Sundays. It is a small group of about 15 members, and is one of the oldest congregations in the state, going back to 1870.

If interested contact: Buddy Kiihmi at 662.647.5346.

Honduran Brethren: 300 Days+ . . .

of COVID and masks—a minor irritant for them. Really!

Compare that minor irritant with the addition of two hurricanes and attendant, devastating floods! Add wind damage, virtually uninhabitable homes, insufficient funds, food, clothing and bedding, electrical outages, and damaged road networks—one 4-wheel-drive Toyota pickup to negotiate those roads to other church locations where the need for assistance was even more severe than their own situation . . . because of the track taken by the two storms.

The brothers and sisters in La Esperanza, Honduras, are living proof of “. . . be patient in tribulation . . .” (from Romans 12). Tribulation! Try these “twos” on for size: 2 hurricanes in 2 weeks—both category 4s (that’s 2 X 2!)—when they first made landfall. Hurricane Eta was first, bashing Nicaragua-Honduras and neighboring Central American countries. It was November 3rd, 2020. Eta’s initial sustained winds: 140 mph. Hurricane Iota, just 13 days later, hit the region once more making it to land just 15 miles south of where Eta came ashore.

What was the response of the La Esperanza church to this tribulation (affliction)? They responded as a group to help one another meet all the basic needs! Once that was accomplished, they prepared to meet those same needs for their brethren in other congregations. Food and shelter first priority. Clothing, bedding, cooking utensils next. Finally, for the children, school supplies.

The brothers in La Esperanza, Honduras, also are living proof of the biblical encouragement to “Rejoice in hope . . .” (from Romans 12). How did that happen? By serving each other and those distant from them, they became “hope” from Jesus for others. They became His feet, His hands, His voice because these brethren already constitute His body—with Jesus as head, directing their godly service. In short, “hope” directed the steps of these disciples of Jesus. “Hope” motivates action, and the genuine rejoicing increases as “hope” is transformed into reality. Our brothers and sisters in



Honduras have, with God’s help, made this necessary service to others possible.

The brethren in La Esperanza, Honduras—more than anything else—are living examples today of following Paul’s encouragement, “. . . be constant in prayer.” (from Romans 12). None of these gargantuan needs could have been met without prayers lifted up to The Always Present One, God. Our Honduran brothers and sisters in La Esperanza, indeed, are a people of prayer!

Now let’s put Romans 12:12 into the exact order of Paul’s pen: “Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.” Paul continues with verse 13: “Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.”

La Esperanza Christians truly give to God’s Word the motive force for its fulfillment so that others can see it and feel it—part of God’s divine plan for human beings who are made in His image!

Leading this work of Christian love are Tomàs Martinez (minister of La Esperanza church) and his daughter, Irma. For inquiries regarding this Honduran work—as assisted by The Great Smoky Mountains Church of Christ (Pigeon Forge, TN)—please email gsmchayes@gmail.com (subject of email must read as follows: HONDURAS). **MM**



*Marc Hayes shepherd for the GOOD Shepherd
Great Smoky Mountains Church of Christ
Pigeon Forge, TN • 731.608.4148
gsmchayes@gmail.com
Irma Martinez and Tomàs Martinez*

Honduras: *The Great Smoky Mountains congregation has been involved for several years in sponsoring mission work in Honduras. With the effects of flooding, Hurricanes, job loses, and Covid, many Christians and their neighbors have faced extreme poverty and hunger. Thanks to the contributions of GSM members and sacrifices of the La Esperanza church, a large number of people have been served with food, clothing, bedding, and other supplies. Thank you for being part of a wonderful work which brings glory to God and others coming to Christ for salvation.*

*Al Bebel, minister,
Great Smokey Mountain Church of Christ*

Challenge

Youth

Conference 2021

With A Twist

The theme for the conference for this year was, "In Need". We began Friday night with a lesson from Kyle Butt on "In Need of Love". Kyle shared with us that we use the word love a whole lot. In using the word, we lose the effectiveness of it. He reminded us in our time of Bible study that God is love. We should never be asked to do something outside of scriptures in the name of love. Then on Saturday, we heard two



by Greg Ledbetter

We waited months with the looming question of whether or not we would have Challenge Youth Conference, also known as CYC, held each year in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. How with Covid-19 would we be able to gather together in one place safely? This question would soon be answered. In January, we were told we would be able to have the conference, and we would be able to do it safely. CYC would look different, but the hearts of the young people would

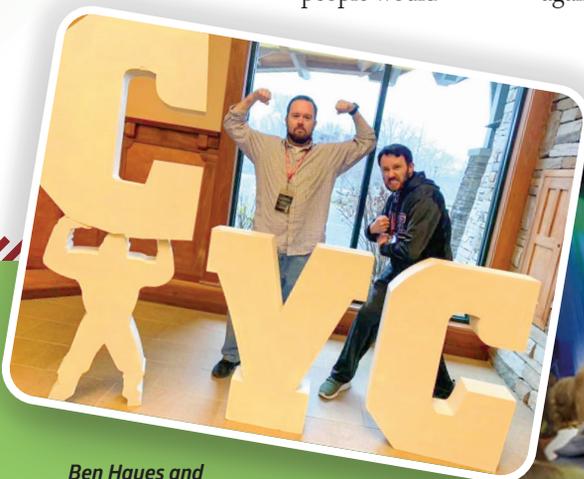


Greg Ledbetter

be the same. The LeConte Center has a capacity for 12,000 people, but the attendance was limited to just 3,500 for each session. The chairs were set up into pods of 8 chairs with 6 feet of distance between each pod. We encouraged each other to sit with our group. There was a mask mandate to have a mask on at all times inside the conference center and in Pigeon Forge. Staff were continually cleaning all high contact areas in between use. The center had air handlers that had the capacity to replace the entire volume of air in one hour. These are just a few things that the LeConte Center and the CYC board did to keep us safe. Finally, after a year for most groups, we would be able to be together again.

great lessons, "In Need Of Christ" and "In Need of Someone to Listen". Chris Miller shared with us that more than anything else in this world, we need Christ. We cannot do it on our own. Jesus loved us so much that he went to the cross for you and me to save us from ourselves.

He began and ended his lesson with Isaiah 53:5, "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed". Reed Swindle reminded us that we all need someone



Ben Hayes and Travis Creasy (above) and Kyle Butt (at right) during his lesson.



to listen to us.

We are searching high and low for someone to hear us when God is listening. He explained that God does as much to show us that He is listening as He does showing us He is speaking to us. We need to take more time to talk to God.

This weekend, with everything going on in our world today, was one of the most uplifting things that someone could be a part of. I asked one of the teens, who is 16, if he could tell his youth minister/group leader one thing about CYC 2021 what would it be? He said, "I am not sure, but I will say I will never take gathering together like this for granted again. We are not promised next year, so I will soak it up this year." This young man is wise beyond his years. We are not promised tomorrow so we need to make each moment count.

For 22 years this conference has been going on and Larry Davenport, the CYC president says, "Lord willing, we will see you here for year 23." I would encourage you to look into this conference for 2022 for your young people. In the words of my youth kids - it's life-changing. Please go check out their website for more information, pictures, and resources. <https://www.cyconline.com>. **MM**



The Ben and Travis Show, with help from some of the youth.

the JOYS OF OUR YOUTH

by Will Myhan

As I have continued to reflect over the past year of life in youth ministry while dealing with a pandemic, I have concluded: The Church is an incredible place because of young people. Here are just several things on my heart as of the past couple of weeks:

- 1. The desire to grow spiritually has not gone away in our young people. I have had numerous occasions where some of my own group, and I am sure in other groups, where teens were quarantined but texted and called to make sure zoom or FaceTime would happen for them.*
- 2. A lot of our young people have become the spiritual leaders of their families. It has amazed me how many young people I have seen push the parents and friends to be involved in Bible study, worship, and things that promote their faith. (We adults could take a lesson in what we are prioritizing to our young people!)*
- 3. Many of the young people I have been around from all different places seem to be more concerned with Jesus and His place in our world versus which political party should be first. I sure do thank God daily for this one.*
- 4. They want to be together and will do whatever necessary to make that happen, whether it's wearing an uncomfortable mask, social distancing, or whatever is needed because they see the importance of being with their brothers and sisters in Jesus!*

Matthew 18:3 comes to my mind often when talking about youth ministry. Jesus made it very clear that unless we become like children, we will not enter the Kingdom. This pandemic has taught me that our young people possibly have a greater grasp of what Jesus wants for our lives than maybe

some of the adults who teach and lead us each week. The young people I have had the privilege of being



Will Myhan and Lynsey Myhan, Will is the youth minister for the Highland Park Church of Christ in Muscle Shoals, Alabama.

around have shown a greater trust in Jesus than myself and many others. In many ways, they have been more motivated for Biblical knowledge than many adults who instilled in them the importance of Biblical growth. There is joy in my heart because of the faith of our young people. They often get a bad rap, but I write this article to motivate and inform any young person reading this to press on! You are not in this by yourself, and many other young people are standing for the Kingdom alongside you, even if you do not see it personally! I also write this article to our older brothers and sisters in Jesus to let you know that the Church is doing great! There is much to be joyful about, and your younger brothers and sisters in Jesus should be at the top of your list! I write all this not to guilt people but to show you the joy I have in being around young people in the Church. I pray their example challenges you to be better as it has me! **MM**

*Greg Ledbetter, Youth Editor
gregledbetter@yahoo.com*

News, Notes & Information

Thanksgiving in January

Robert Rawson was born January 26, 1947, in Kosciusko, Mississippi. On Sunday, January 24, 2021, Robert came back home to Attala County. Robert's mission this Sunday was to thank his home congregation, the Nile Church of Christ, for the encouragement they have given him through his 60 years of preaching the gospel.

Robert spoke of the good time he had growing up at the Nile congregation.

Robert referred to the scripture, "...And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?" (Romans 10: 14, 15)

He thanked the Nile congregation for the part they had in helping to send him to preach for many congregations.

Robert preached 35 years at the Batesville Church of Christ. When he decided to retire from the work in Batesville, he was able to leave the work in good hands with Michael Bates. Robert is working now with the Crockett congregation which is 7 miles east of Senatobia on Highway 4. He has been at Crockett for 9 years. Robert's Bible class lesson was, "Importance of Preaching" and the sermon was, "Rearing our children in the Lord."



Robert Rawson

In closing, Robert referred to David and Saul (I Samuel 20:3). David said, "there is a step between me and death." Robert added, "This is the reason that it is very important for churches like Nile to help those who preach." It is so important to preach the gospel because there is only one step between us and death! It was a very good thanksgiving service in January at Nile. Happy 74th Birthday, Robert. We pray you will be blessed with many more years to preach the gospel.

June Franks **MM**

"THE MESSENGER STAFF: On the Road Again"

● TUPELO MEMORIES

While traveling through Tupelo, Mississippi, recently I made a little trip through memory lane.

When I first came here fifty years ago, this was the East Main church of Christ building. John Wheeler preached here and helped me get some preaching appointments as I had just graduated from school in Dallas and was looking for my first full-time work.

Just around the corner from this building is the birthplace of Elvis Presly. It had not been restored to its present condition back then, nor had become much of a tourist stop as it is now.

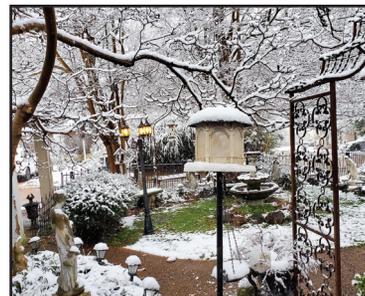
About a mile up from the old building is the present location of the East Main church. It is a beautiful building on a beautiful lot. Barry Kennedy is the minister now. -dd



● KOSCIUSKO SNOW

I spent a couple of days in January in Kosciusko, Mississippi, the home office of this publication, where we had an excellent staff meeting. I spent two nights at Glenda Frank's B&B and woke up that morning to a beautiful snowfall. Around three or four inches fell that morning in this central Mississippi town.

If you are traveling and need a great place to stay overnight, or a week, Glenda's beautiful two-bedroom cottage is the best place in town. -dd



Lawrence D. Montgomery passed away

Mr. Lawrence D. Montgomery, long time Elder at the East Frayser church of Christ in Memphis, passed away on January 12, 2021. He was 84 years old. He and his wife, Kay, have four children. He was



an army veteran and former Alderman for the city of Atoka, Tennessee. He had a heart for benevolence and served on the Board of Directors for Christian Cares, a senior nursing facility.

Through his leadership he helped establish many congregations and mission efforts. He was also involved in supporting East Frayser's

deaf ministry. He became an elder in 1987, and served until his death. He will be missed, but remembered.

New Preacher for Ruston Church of Christ

Jonathan Long, who for a few years was the director of our Christian Student Center for LA Tech, will be the pulpit minister beginning the first of April. I am personally delighted that Jonathan and his wife, Jayde, and their two lovely children are coming back to Ruston to work with the congregation following my retirement at the end of March.

Jim Davis, Ruston Church of Christ
2300 W.Woodward Ave. • Ruston, LA 71270

MM READERS' RESPONSE

Reasons Why We Continue Publishing the Magnolia Messenger



- I really enjoy the MM magazine.
(Mary Jacobs, Memphis, TN)
- This is a "Super Great" Christian work to produce missionary literature!
(Elizabeth & Steven Coleman, Madison, MS)
- Thanks for the wonderful paper. We enjoy it very much. God bless everyone in the New Year. Love and prayers.
(Randle & Joyce Gray, Amory, MS)
- May God continue to bless you in your good work with the Magnolia Messenger.
(Vernal Lampley, Louisville, MS)
- We enjoy and appreciate the Magnolia Messenger. Keep up the good work.
(Mr. & Mrs. Joe Burford, Coldwater, MS)
- Keep up the good work.
(Janis Watson, Newton, AL)
- I enjoy the Messenger very much. In Christian love,
(Carol Palmer, Gadsden, AL)
- ... Thanks for all you do. Really enjoy the Messenger.
(Scotty Balentine, Florence, AL)
- Appreciate your work.
(Ray & Melba Penna, Holladay, TN)
- ... Thanks for a wonderful paper! Always enjoy!
(Ann Sims, Harvest, AL)
- Keep up the great work! Best regards,
(Jim Presley, Satsuma, AL)
- Keep up the good work.
(Paul & Tina Turnage, Taylorsville, MS)
- Enjoy the Magnolia Messenger very much and have for years. So sorry about the passing of Al & Paul. I know they are missed by many. Best of luck as you carry on, seems you're doing a good job. A faithful reader,
(Helen Minton, Beaumont, TX)
- Dennis, Thanks for all you and the staff do to keep publishing the MM. I grew up in Clarksdale, MS, and brother Al preached my mom, Dot Walton's funeral in 2006. The MM keeps me updated on the MS congregations. Thanks again,
(John Walton, Madison, AL)
- June & Glenda, I received the latest issue of the Messenger on Friday. I want to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for all the hard work and dedication that goes into publishing such a quality publication. I consider the MM to be one of the finest

papers in the brotherhood. I was thrilled to see the digital version on the website. I just know that Al & Paul would be so, so proud of your continued work.....

(Rick Jones, Iuka, MS)

- Love the different articles in the MM.
(Dan & Carol Briggs, Columbus, MS)

- May God bless you in your work for the Lord!
(Kenneth Harris, Senatobia, MS)

- I enjoy the Magnolia Messenger very much. I read every page. Thanks so much.
(Shellie Hancock, Corinth, MS)

- Thank you so much for sending the magazine! I really enjoy reading it! It's so interesting and you all do such a good job! May God Bless!
(Barbara Bailey, Harrison, AR)

- The Magnolia Messenger is a light that we all need.
(Linda Workman, Hemphill, TX)

- Thank you for your excellent Gospel paper.
(Wayne Crum, Caledonia, OH)

- Mr. Dennis, I look forward to getting it and I read it from the first page through the back page. The messages are so uplifting. So please keep it going.
(Velma Mitchell, Pulaski, TN)

Thank you for all the work you all do to get the Messenger to us. I have enjoyed it for many years.....
(Willie Thames, Brandon, MS)

- Brothers, Thank you for your work on the Magnolia Messenger. I look forward to receiving and reading each issue.
(Jerri Barber, Nashville, TN)

- Thank you for your dedication to the truth. Your determination to persist in the Lord's work in the face of tragedies and difficulties is inspiring. I look forward to reading and learning from your fine journal. Brotherly,
(Steven T. Eddy, Cape Coral, FL)

- Dear Magnolia Messenger, Vicki and I look forward to receiving the Messenger. We love the wonderful upbeat outlook that permeates through every page. Through the dark time it is so important for us to relish in the love of God. The Magnolia Messenger does a great job of heralding the good news of Jesus, and the good works being done by His church in many locations.

Very encouraging! Thank you all very much. Thank You,

(Gary & Vicki Woodham, Newton, AL)

- Thank you for the wonderful work you are doing. I always look forward to receiving the Messenger.

(Elizabeth Todd, Clarksdale, MS)

- Thank You for the magazine (newsletter) I receive from you. I enjoy reading the articles in it. I also share the contents with others. Thanks again.

(Greg Cerminara, Shelton, CT)

- You do a wonderful job in the Messenger about Christ and what He means to us!

(Charles Pritchard, Steel, MO)

- Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ, Thank you for the opportunity to read a Christ-centered magazine.

(Brady Walton, Only, TN)

- Thank you for continuing Bro. Franks' work. We always look forward to receiving our next MM, where we can scan every page & see the wonderful messages. But for Bob & me, it's often like going to a reunion to hear news from so many in the brotherhood, having lived in Dequincy, LA, & Cleveland, MS, in the past. Our little congregation here is a generous group & we want to show you our support.

(Peggy Newson, Franklin, LA)

NOTICE TO READERS

Send all mail, address changes, and new subscriptions to:

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Kosciusko, Mississippi 39090

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VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE:

magnoliamessengermag.com

YOUR GRANDMOTHER WAS ONCE A TEENAGER!

(There Is A Lesson Here!)

When a mother proudly introduces her little child to an adult, I have sometimes heard such responses such as: "Time passes so rapidly that she'll be in college before you know it!" This concept reminds me of recently looking through some old family pictures and seeing one of my grandmother Horton. Although I remember her only as an older woman, I came upon a picture of her as a very young woman. That's when it occurred to me that my grandmother was "once a teenager," filled with youthful energy and great expectations for her future!

She grew up to marry G. W. Horton of Middle Tennessee where she, in time, gave birth to six strapping boys and two girls (in addition to a set of twins who died of Whooping Cough at age three.)

As a young girl, Grandma Horton could hardly imagine the children she would bring into the world and the satisfaction she would experience in the obedience and life-long faithfulness to the Lord of each of them! Now, think of this: are you sitting down?

It is difficult for any parent to imagine they may be leading about a future grandmother or grandfather who will, one day, many, many years from now, be looked upon by their children and grandchildren as the patriarch, or matriarch, of their family, and to whom their family's faithfulness to the Lord is a direct result of the teaching and training you provide for them (your children) today!

But before you say, "This is too deep to think about," take a moment to reflect upon your own family. You are what you are today because of the spiritual influence and training your parent (s) received from their parents and grandparents, etc., etc.

Now you know the importance of teaching and training your children and living as an example of Christ before them. Serious? It sure is! Read Deut. 6:6-9. **MM**

James A. Horton, (jahortn@yahoo.com)

(Glad to have brother Horton's wise thoughts. He has preached at Ripley and Beech Hill, Mississippi, in addition to many years preaching in Texas. He is a long-time friend of the Franks and of this publication. -dd)



Grandmother's PRAYER PLACE

Luke 12: 22-31

By: Alma Lindsey Mitchell

At times you could see her lips moving,
And you knew she was in prayer.
It might be on the high front porch
While she was rocking in her chair.

It might be at the kitchen sink
That you knew she was in prayer,
Washing the same coffee cup
over-and-over.
With her eyes, unfocused,
at the window there.

But when Grandmother had something
that really troubled her,
We knew where she would climb.
Up the hill and away from the house,
Something was on her mind.

Her problem might be the lack of rain,
On the family farm, our bread,
Or a son who wanted to go off to war,
Or a daughter too young to wed.

At times like these, to her God she went,
Eager to sort things through.
She headed for her special place
To ask God what she should do.

She knew Jesus said not to worry,
As she gazed at lilies growing wild
in field beds.
Or when she heard the tiny sparrows call
From the trees above her head.

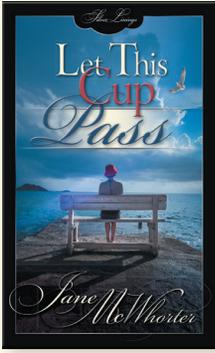
There Grandmother was
listening and praying,
Just as God's word told her to do.
Watching her there in her prayer place,
Her children learned to talk with God, too.

So when you find yourself troubled
With problems that seem too large to solve.
Find yourself a solitary prayer place
And have a quiet talk with God.

(Alma and her husband, Jerry, are members of the Bethel Church of Christ, Athens, Alabama.)

NEW BOOKS FROM PUBLISHING DESIGNS, INC.

Books with Class



Let This Cup Pass

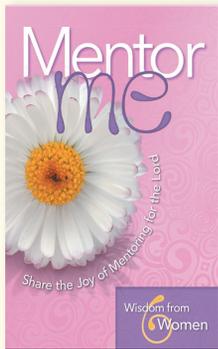
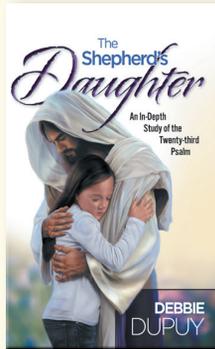
by Jane McWhorter

Join the thousands of women who have gained strength in times of distress. Delight in this revised edition now added to her series "Silver Linings." You can blame God, or choose a path of understanding affliction. Examine "The Cup of Loneliness", "The Cup of Feeling Inadequate," and other topics in 13 chapters with questions. **9781945127106, \$12.95**

The Shepherd's Daughter

by Debbie Dupuy

Perhaps you recite the 23rd Psalm. But do you know the Shepherd? Do you quote "I shall not want" but convey a feeling of "I lack"? Do you want the strength, comfort, and love of the Shepherd? Jump into His arms and say with Debbie, "Oh the benefits of being the Shepherd's daughter!" 14 chapters, questions, extra study motivation. **9781945127175, \$13.95**



Mentor Me

by six women

Sit at the feet of Betty Bender, Becky Blackmon, Brenda Birkholtz, Judy Cofer, Martha Coletta, and Laura Dayton, who are passing the mentoring baton on to their readers. Study specific phases of a woman's Christian journey such as "Mentor Me, I'm Single" and "Mentor Me, I'm a Busy Parent." Also included are topics of marriage, mothers-in-law, caregiving, and many more. The reader reaps twofold: she is mentored and she learns to mentor others. 13 chapters with questions. **9780975596227, \$11.95**

Coming in January 2021

The Girl for My Son

by Cynthia Guy

Single girls of any age will gain insight from the perspective of Cynthia Guy. Each young woman is encouraged to look at herself as the mother of a son. Would you want a girl like you for your son? This study is not a crystal ball; it is definite guidelines for self-improvement that please the Lord and shape your future. See yourself through God's eyes, date wisely, become a spiritual swan.

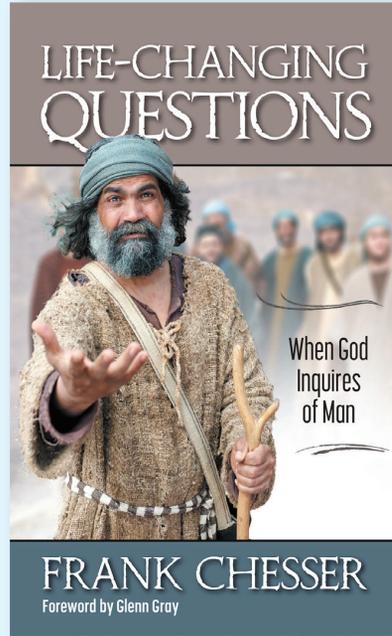
13 chapters with questions. **9781945127182, \$11.95**



NEW BOOK BY FRANK CHESSER

Available December 2020

Life-Changing Questions



Study with Frank Chesser Old Testament events when God questioned man. "Questions from God are arrows to the heart containing every principle essential for man's journey from earth to heaven," he says. Consider how different our lives would be if we made a deliberate choice for personal inven-

tory by asking God's question, "What have you done?" And when we are hesitant and insecure about our service to God, we would do well to remember His gripping question to Moses: "What is that in thine hand?" The timeless, divine questions contained in this book are motivating, convicting, and pertinent. Applied to the Christian, they are indeed life-changing. **9781945127199, \$12.95**

Other books by Frank Chesser:

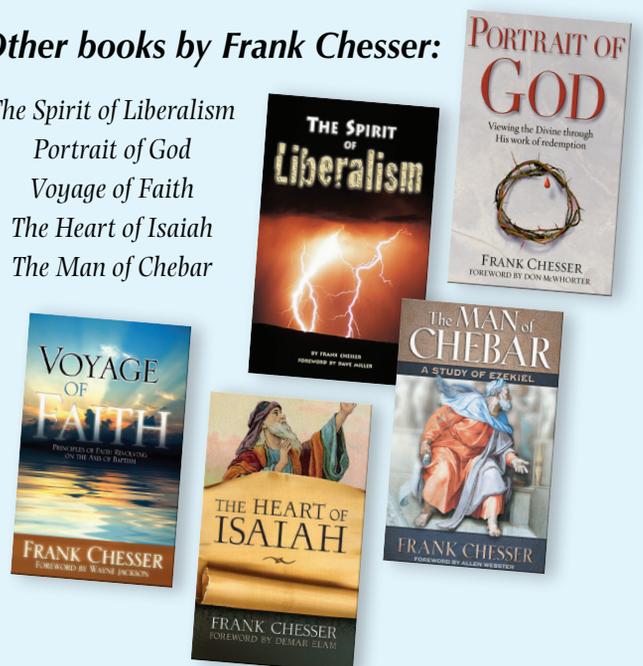
The Spirit of Liberalism

Portrait of God

Voyage of Faith

The Heart of Isaiah

The Man of Chebar



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Visiting among Churches in north Mississippi



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

November 2020 to January 2021

by Eddie Lewis

I appreciate so much the opportunity to inform you about my mission work among the churches in North Mississippi. I appreciate the Germantown church of Christ sponsoring me in this ministry. This report covers fourteen Sundays during the months of November through January 2021. I served seven Sundays as an interim preacher for the Coffeerville church of Christ and two Sundays as an interim preacher at the Tunica church of Christ. I also visited with four other churches.

During the months of November to January, I preached for the Coffeerville church of Christ seven times. They continue to look for a full-time minister. They have no elders and around 50 in attendance. They offer a preacher's home and pay the utilities. It is a good congregation with a good mix of ages. I always enjoy my visits with the church.

I have been considering several of Jesus' parables. I spoke on the parable of the Soils in Matthew 13. I presented a lesson on the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31. We looked at three scenes: their lives, deaths, and after-lives. I talked about some things that death cannot do. I spoke on the parable of the two sons in Matthew 21.

I preached on two parables that talk about the value of the Kingdom. The parables are in Matthew 13:44-45, the parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Precious Pearl. I preached on "What It Means To Be A Disciple of Jesus" based

on Luke 14: 25-35. Jesus challenges them to "Hate" their parents and family and follow Him. He gives the parables of the man counting the cost before he builds a tower and a king considering the cost of going to battle with his enemy. The challenge is we must count the cost before we become a Christian. I preached on the parable of the "Rich Fool" in Luke 12:13-21. It is a great teaching on covetousness and greed.

■ **November 1:** Sunday night Madolyn and I visited with the Midway church of Christ in Maben, MS. Shawn Nygard is the bi-vocational minister there and has worked with the church for over 20 years. They have around 50 in attendance. It is an integrated congregation. It was wonderful to see love in action in the congregation. It was good to visit Shawn and his family.



Shawn, Bronlynn, Silar, Ember, and Sharkin Nygard-Midway-Maben

Shawn presented a challenging lesson on Dreams from the book of Jude. He talked about verse 8 and the dreams of

the godless individual. They defile the flesh, reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. He said the Christian's job in the world is to tell God's truth to the lost. It was a good lesson. I enjoyed visiting with the brethren there.

■ **November 29:** I visited with the Chapman church of Christ. Mark Lindley has been the preacher there for 18 years and has done wonderful work. They have four elders, and before COVID-19 had 140 in attendance. This day they had 119. They are practicing all the safety precautions. I enjoyed my visit and enjoyed especially seeing Kim, Mark's wife, who I have known from a teenager in Indianola.



Mark and Kim Lindley

In Bible class, Mark has been studying the "Scheme of Redemption," beginning in Genesis. He did a short recap and then talked about the Jews that came back to the Promised Land from captivity and restored Jerusalem and the temple. It was a good lesson.

In the worship Mark is doing a series of lessons on the book of James. Today's lesson was on chapter 2, "The Law of Liberty." He talked about the Judgement coming and our need to be prepared by obeying the Law of Liberty. It was a powerful lesson and challenged all of us to make ready.

■ **December 13:** I was invited to preach for the Tunica church of Christ. Dennis Doughty resigned as their minister January 2021. He and Kathy moved to Bartlett, TN, to be close to their children. They had wonderful work with the congregation. The church has around 30 in attendance and no elders. Please remember the church in your prayers as they search for a new minister.

In the worship I presented a lesson on the parable of the two sons found in Matthew 21. It is an interesting parable in that it is a condemnation of the Jew-

ish leaders for their rejection of John the Baptizer and their future rejection of Christ. Some of the applications of the parable are, our responsibility to answer the call of God, the work that we have of teaching others of Christ, and the importance of us being a worker in the vineyard.

■ **January 24:** I returned to the Tunica church of Christ and presented a lesson on Luke 14:25-35, the cost of being a disciple. The two parables are the man building the tower and the king going to war. Both illustrate the importance of counting the cost.

■ **January 3:** Sunday night we visited with the West President church of Christ in Greenwood. I wanted to meet their new minister, Luke Quinn. He and his family have been in Greenwood for a year and a half. He is a 2014 graduate of MSOP. It was good to visit with him and his wife Laura. They have three children. The church is served by four elders and has around 120 in worship. In the worship Luke presented an interesting lesson on God communicating to us through the Word (John1:1-5). Of course, Jesus is the word in that passage. He did talk about the importance of reading the Bible and reasoning as the foundation of our faith. He did say that God wants us to find him through reasoning. It was a thoughtful lesson.



Luke and Laura Quinn

■ **January 17:** Sunday night we visited with the Starkville church of Christ. Because of Covid 19 and the students at MSU just returning for the spring semester, the church had not resumed their Sunday evening service. Instead, they were having Life Groups. Madolyn and I got to sit in on one of the two groups that met at the building. John Giesmann and Steve Phillips were leading the group of 16 students on "How Christians Are Different From The World." It was a very good discussion

and we enjoyed hearing what the students and leaders had to say.

■ **January 31:** Sunday evening Madolyn and I attended the Hernando church of Christ. Andy Scott is the minister there. He has been there for several years. Chris Keeton is the youth minister. They have four elders and around 100 in attendance. The last time I was there was in 2017. It is a wonderful congregation full of friendly people. We enjoyed our visit with the congregation.

In the worship Andy has been presenting a series of lessons on the Parables and Teachings of Jesus. This night he spoke on Jesus' teaching about us being a light to the world based on Matthew. 5:14-15. He gave many illustrations of how light can penetrate the darkness. He emphasized that we must be lights in this dark world. We shine as we reflect the light of Christ. It was a good lesson.



Andy Scott

Report on the Christian Student Center at Mississippi Delta Community College.

During the months of November to January, I have been teaching a Zoom



Bible Study MDCC

Class on Wednesday night for the Christian Student Center at Mississippi Delta Community College. The lessons have been recorded and placed on the CSC Facebook page, if you are interested in viewing them. Madolyn and I have been working with the student center each week and contacting students and faculty. Beginning January 27, we began an in-person Bible study group in the Student Union on campus. We have been contacting students and had 30 students to attend. Only one student was a member of the church of Christ. Many are unchurched students and are open to Bible study. We are excited to have an opportunity to reach out to so many unchurched students. **MM**

In Memory of Philip Franks

Another tragic event has struck the Franks family in Kosciusko, Mississippi. **Philip Franks** passed from this life on February 26 after complications of double Pneumonia. He was 60 years old.

Al and June Franks were blessed with three sons, Paul, Philip and Stephen. In the past sixteen months June has lost her husband Al and two of her sons, Paul and Philip. Such losses over a brief period are difficult to comprehend.

Philip is survived by his wife, Tammy, two daughters, JoAna Roos (Derek), Alison June Myer (Chris) and son, Philip Dale II, and grandchildren, Addison Roos and Matthew Myer. He is also survived by his mother June Franks Booker and a brother Stephen Franks.

Our sympathies to them and the entire Franks family. Let all of us who love this family keep them in our prayers as they deal with grief upon grief.



The Great Architect

by **Dennis Doughty**
Tunica church of Christ

An architect is someone who “designs,” “who plans buildings, and oversees their construction” (Webster). God the Father is the Great Architect throughout mankind’s history.

He designed the Ark, giving Noah very specific instructions for size, material, and floor plans. “Thus Noah did according to all that God had commanded him” (Genesis 6:22). God’s design saved all animal life as well as human; “that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water” (1 Peter 3:21). God’s design saved mankind.



Dennis Doughty

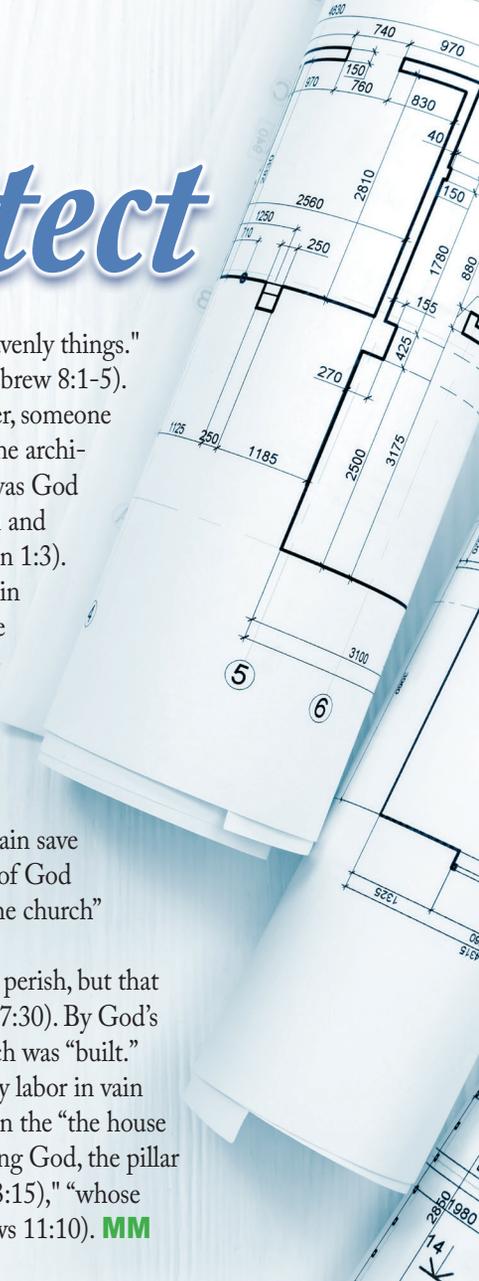
God designed the tabernacle, giving to Moses “the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture;” then emphasized “just so you shall construct it” (Ex. 25:9). The tabernacle gave a new nation a structure and system to worship the Almighty. God’s design saved Israel.

The word “tabernacle” means “a tent.” It was a temporary structure in more ways than one. God, the Great Architect, designed the tabernacle with a greater purpose in mind; to

“serve as a copy and shadow of the heavenly things.” which the Lord pitched, not man” (Hebrew 8:1-5).

Every architect needs a good builder, someone who will follow the plans and will of the architect: from the beginning that builder was God the Son; “All things were made by him and without Him nothing was made” (John 1:3). Do we think it was a coincidence that in human form Jesus was a carpenter? He spoke like a builder; of beams, foundations, and faulty construction (Matthew 7:3, 26, Luke 13:4). Like a true carpenter he proclaimed, “I will build my church?” (Matthew. 16:18). God’s design of this spiritual building will again save the world, “that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church” (Ephesians 3:10).

God is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (Acts 17:30). By God’s design, and Christ’s sacrifice, the church was “built.” “Except the Lord builds the house they labor in vain that build it” (Psalms 127:1). Are you in the “the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15),” “whose architect and builder is God?” (Hebrews 11:10). **MM**



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Now I lay Me Down to Sleep

By David Haddock

Decades ago mother's used to teach their young children this short prayer:

*"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take."*

The short prayer makes a point about being ready for death at any time. And although children below the age of accountability will go to a place of comfort, the point that death could come during the night is valid.

James 4:14 says: "whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away." Eighty, or even 100 years, seems like a long time to us, but it's nothing compared to eternity.

Many people worldwide will go to sleep tonight and not wake up tomorrow. One writer said: "If you're like me, you secretly believe that you will never die." I think he's right. Many of us can't conceive of our own death. We will make the statement that "everyone dies" or "we're born to die," but do we really believe it. Would this be a good time to ask ourself if we're ready to face eternity?

*"Tomorrow may never come,
Of that we can be sure,
And although that troubles some,
For sure there is a cure,
Study the Bible and do what it says,
The plan of salvation is your all,
Because our God wants none to fall."*

— David Haddock



Precious Memories

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Four spiritual reminders *from the* Coronavirus

by Dr. Willie Nettle

People do various things to remember important matters. Some tie a string around their finger or make a “to do” list. Others put up colorful post-it notes or record a reminder in their smart phone. Some even tattoo a message to their body like, “Don’t forget to love yourself.” Even with all of these efforts, however, we still forget sometimes to remember.

But there are many things that we dare not forget. Solomon says, “Remember your creator in the days of your youth” (Eccl. 12:1). In another place, he advises his son, “Do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity” (Prov. 3:1, 2). Jesus warned the church at Ephesus, which had forsaken her first love, “Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first” (Rev. 2:5). Part of being a good minister is putting the brethren in remembrance of



Dr. Willie Nettle

the truths of the faith (1 Tim. 4:6).

Life has its own unique way of giving us many valuable spiritual reminders. When it does, old folks often say, “God is trying to tell you something.” Many times the obvious lesson(s) are something God has shown us before, but we just conveniently forgot, or maybe the first time the lesson did not make a very good impression.

The Coronavirus Pandemic has given us all at least four spiritual reminders.

REMINDER #1:

How Quickly Life Can Change!

Some churches have not met together for in-person worship since March 2020, when the coronavirus first gripped the United States. Now, one year later, the “new normal” for most of us consists of wearing face masks in public, social distancing ourselves, avoiding large indoor gatherings, refraining from handshakes and hugs, frequently washing our hands, using hand sanitizer, and being served in stores behind plexiglass walls. How quickly and how drastically life can change!

But when we think of accidents, natural disasters, random shootings, economic

downturns, job changes, sicknesses, surgeries, and death, such has always been the case. Job reminds us, “Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble” (Job 14:1). Jesus echoes the same sentiment when He cautions, “Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Matt. 6:34). “Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow,” says James. “What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes” (Jam. 4:14). Life can and does change quickly.

REMINDER #2:

How Important It Is To Prepare!

Experts are repeatedly telling us we need to prepare ourselves for the possible exposure to COVID-19. They have underscored the importance of disinfecting, staying hydrated, self-quarantining, etc.; now the big push is to get as many people as possible vaccinated. All these measures are wise, but all for something which may or may not impact us. Indeed, we take similar precautions every year to avoid the flu, which many of us have never had the misfortune of contracting.

If we find all that preparation wise, how much wiser is it to prepare for what we most certainly know WILL impact us. Each of us “is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,” according to Hebrews 9:27. Yet, many folks act as if they will live forever. Francis Chan wisely states, “People accuse me of going overboard preparing for my first ten million years in eternity. In my opinion, people go overboard in worrying about their last ten on earth” (Google quote). Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people (John 14:1-3). None of us will get there accidentally (John 14:6).

REMINDER #3:

How Unproductive It Is To Go Overboard!

Imagine a 120-pound, male bodybuilder trying to lift a barbell weighing over 800 pounds. Or someone trying to lose 100 pounds, but doing so by working out in the

THE *if* FACTOR!

*in the search for
Biblical Truth by asking why?*

if

God excepts any type of worship today...

Why did God not respect Cain’s offering? *Genesis 4:5*

Why was King Josiah correcting the way of worship? *2 Kings 22*

Why does the Bible say, “and in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men?” *Matthew 15:9*

Why did Paul change and become a Christian? *Acts 22: 3-15*

Why does the Bible mention true worshipers “will worship the Father in spirit and truth?” *John 4:23*

*He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him
—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. John 12:48*

STOP! Consider the examples and truth the scriptures give us.



Global Warming?

gym 8 hours every day, 7 days a week. Both are extreme examples of people going overboard in the area of reshaping their bodies.

We can identify at least two unproductive ways that people have gone overboard regarding the coronavirus pandemic. One is by overreacting or panicking, exemplified by hoarding such items as toilet tissue, KN95 masks, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant spray and wipes. Another way is by overanalyzing – making rash, unjustified, sweeping judgments as to why and how COVID-19 got started in the first place. Many believe that “the Chinese started all of this on purpose” or that “God is punishing the whole world for rejecting Him.”

This sounds very similar to conspiracy theories regarding tragic deaths during the time of Jesus. Could it be that those whose lives ended so unfortunately were worse sinners, or more guilty than others because they suffered this way? Twice Jesus answers, “I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish” (Luke 13:3, 5). Instead of overreacting and overanalyzing with regards to COVID-19, each of us should take responsibility for our own lives, repent of all known sins, and draw nearer to God every day.

REMINDER #4: How Foolish It Is To Be Led By Fear!

As serious as the coronavirus pandemic is, our ongoing response to it should not be driven by fear. Jesus warns, “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28). The fearful will have their part in the lake of fire, which is the second death, right along with “the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters, and all liars” (Rev. 21:8).

Christians should approach all of life by faith (John 14:1; 2 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 11:6). Jesus encourages His followers, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). **MM**

*Dr. Willie Nettle, Evangelist & Shepherd
Bypass Church of Christ, Vicksburg, MS*

by Mark Bridges

Ok, I'm no scientist, expert in air quality, not even a jack-of-all-trades. I have stayed at a Holiday Inn Express before, so here we go!

Well-educated people, politicians, scientists, even 12-year-old kids are talking global warming. I've heard politicians say we have about 12 years left to fix the problem or else. I've checked the Internet and it's loaded with everything you need to know about this theory. They go all the way back in history (as far as we've kept records --1800's) that show the temperature is on the rise and icebergs are melting.

The temperature maybe on the rise, and I have no problem with that, or new fuels like wind, solar, or whatever the next best thing could be. My issue with this theory is it sounds like they're saying we're in charge of this globe and we can control the thermostat. I know in this past year we've heard the experts say "follow the science," I understand some of that, but science tells us the earth is billions of year old too, so there you go with science.

Let's let our Bible knowledge take us down another road, for instance, the book of Job. Most know the story of Job and his faith and the trials he went through and his complaining about his problems. In chapter 38 God had to remind Job of a few things.

Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said: "Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me. Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know!" I suggest reading this whole chapter to have a better understanding of who's in charge of this Globe, sounds like the builder. Maybe we need to remind those (that have become "futile in their thoughts, and professing to be wise) who have their finger on the thermostat.

Ok, I'm no English scholar or a word-smith either, but here's another point to ponder! I notice the scripture that talks about God's promise is not slack, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation. (Gen. 8:22) Our season!

In 2 Peter 3:6-7 ... *by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*

Preserved: conserve, protect, maintain, take care of, look after, save, safeguard, keep guard, protect, defend, secure, shelter, shield, screen, watch over.

Reserved: put aside, set aside, lay aside, keep back; save, keep in reserve, hold back, retain, put away, withhold, arrange for, pre-arrange for, secure; charter, hire; retain, keep, hold, secure, defer, postpone, delay.

If I understand these words correctly, God has done the same thing my mother used to do with the pears we picked in the summer. She would preserve those pears for us to eat some other day in the future, and we did. (Pear tarts ! UNREAL!) God has made a reservation for the end of the world, and this scripture also says it's preserved until then.

I know these words may not explain the rise and fall of the earth's temperature ...but the thought that WE are controlling the thermostat? No!

Stop and think about it. A lot of things in this life can be made simple by using the scripture and common sense, by taking greed, selfishness, money, (the love of) bribes, man's ego, and power out of the equation.

Also remember it was the religious leaders and experts of the Old Law that rejected Jesus and his Disciples. Something to think about! Remember these words, "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." 1 Corinthians 3:19. **MM**

by Dennis Doughty

"INSCRIPTIONS"

SAINT PETER'S RESOLUTIONS

I doubt that they made New Year's Resolutions in Biblical times. If they did, here are a few I think the great apostle Peter may have had on his list;

1. Stop trying to walk on water (Mt. 14:28).
2. Quit keeping count of how many times I forgive others (Mt. 18:21).
3. Keep Satan's influence out of my life. (Mt. 16:23).
4. Be braver in confessing Christ among others (Mt. 26:75).
5. Stop sleeping on the job (Mk. 14:37, Lu.9:32).
6. Cease overestimating my own faith (Mk. 14:31).
7. Start thinking before I speak (Mk. 9:5).
8. Treat everyone equal, without being prejudice (Ga. 2:11).
9. Study the writings of Paul more (2 Pe. 3:16,17).
10. Keep running toward the tomb (Jn. 20:3,4).

If the apostle Peter could find so many ways to improve his life as a disciple of Christ, I am sure you and I can as well. So, skip the resolutions about diet and exercise, and start listing the ways you can improve your life as a Christian.

THE NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

On the first day of the seventh month God instructed Israel to "sound the trumpet," to present a "fire offering," and take a "Sabbath rest" (Lev.23:23-25). This began a month of feasts and sacrifices to Jehovah. In the Talmud it is called ROSH HASHANAH and was celebrated by the Jews as the beginning of the New Year. (This falls on September 6th this year in our calendars.)

It was on this "New Year" day that Solomon carried the Ark of the Covenant from the old tabernacle to the newly built Temple, among great fanfare, sacrifices, and prayers (1 Kings 8). It was on this day, after the return from exile, and the completion of the wall, that Ezra assembled Israel and read the Law of Moses from a pulpit of wood to a large assembly and "all the people were attentive to the book of the Law" (Neh. 8:1-8).

As we enter our "New Year," let us also begin the year with attention to godliness, worship, and a renewed study of the scriptures. Let us "sound the trumpet" as we offer our bodies "a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God" (Ro. 12:1). Let us enter the house of the Lord with prayers, praise, and partaking of communion. Let this New Year be a time of rededication to the Lord, as it was in Israel.

I started writing this weekly column for our class newsletter. Now sixteen years later, it has grown to over seven hundred readers each week. These short articles are designed for bulletin use, and are also a good source for devotional and sermon material. If you would like to start getting it each week send me an email at dennis1848@bellsouth.net -dd



Good Morning!

Cause me to hear
Your loving kindness
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 143:8

The Berean Children's Home

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"A FAMILY with a HEART"

Our mission at Berean Children's Home is to provide children with a loving home and to assist each child to mature spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically.

We are looking for a set of House Parents for our Home and if anyone is interested please contact me at my cell number or personal email.

These Sent In Answers to QB, Last Issue

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THE QUESTION BOX

1 Corinthians 3

(NKJV)

___ 1. Which one of the following terms does Paul not use to identify God's group of saved people according to the New King James Version of 1 Corinthians 3?

- a. Temple b. Building c. Church d. Field

___ 2. In this chapter, what is the primary problem Paul sees in the Corinthian congregation?

- a. Giving as a mere token b. Following Apollos rather than Paul, c. Division d. Burning a temple.

___ 3. It may be that the Spirit dwells in some or all of these choices below, but according to this chapter—I Corinthians 3—where does the Holy Spirit dwell?

- a. Christian b. Congregation c. the Bible d. Apollos, and especially Paul.

___ 4. The Corinthians were not yet able to receive what?

- a. Instruction b. Milk c. Advice d. Solid food.

___ 5. When Paul said "all things are yours," he included who/what as one of the examples of "all things?"

- a. Phillip b. Apollos c. The sun d. The wayside.

___ 6. What did Paul tell the Corinthians to avoid?

- a. Worldly wisdom b. All wisdom
 c. Hebrew wisdom d. Factual wisdom.

___ 7. God catches the wise in their own what?

- a. Worldliness b. Excesses c. Craftiness d. Foolishness.

___ 8. What foundation did Paul lay for God's people as he proclaimed the gospel?

- a. Straw b. Christ c. Stone d. Holy Spirit.

F	S	O	L	L	O	P	A	E	N	V	Y
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Prepared by Glenn & Beth Beall, foyfogyirish@gmail.com

Please Send Your Answers To Us

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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.

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