

MAGNOLIA Messenger

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“Mississippi’s **GOOD NEWS** Newspaper”

Serving Mississippi, Louisiana and Adjoining States

**Magnolia
Messenger**

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

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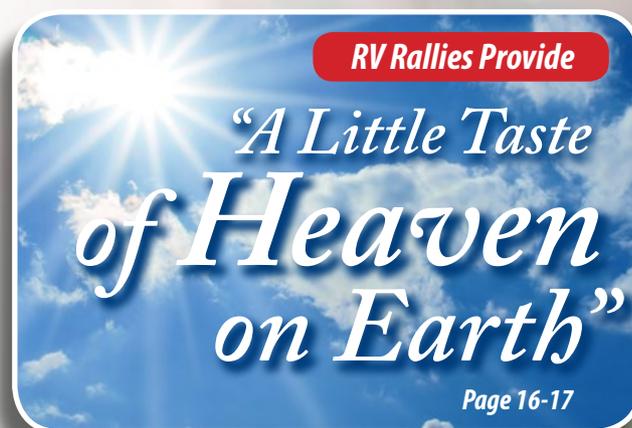
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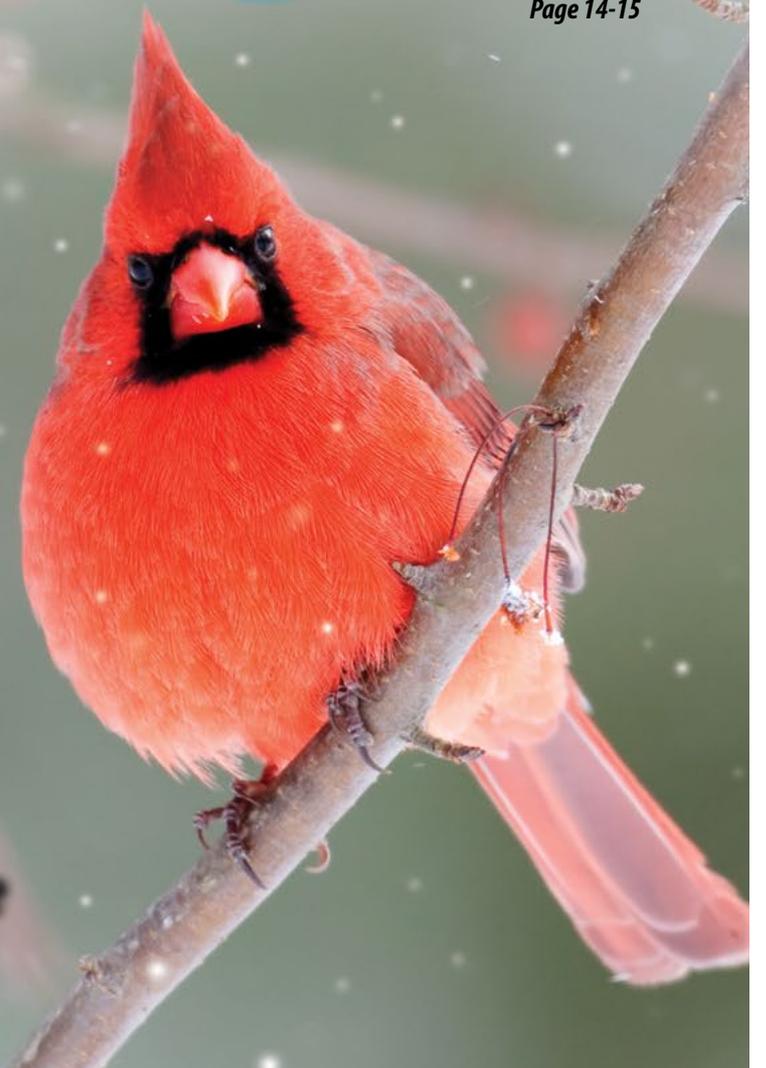


Look at the birds of the air,
for they neither sow nor reap nor
gather into barns; yet **your heavenly
Father feeds them.**

**Are you not of more value
than they?**

Matthew 6:26

Magnolia Messenger
South Huntington Street
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A PERSONAL NOTE

From the Franks

The very first issue of the Magnolia Messenger came off the press in October of 1978. Two thousand copies of the new tabloid-size paper were printed and circulated over a very limited area, primarily through personal distribution. We were very grateful for that first issue and for everyone who helped make it possible.

Now, thirty-seven years later, the latest issue has been printed with more than 27,000 copies mailed throughout the nation into all fifty states. We continue to be grateful for every congregation and each individual who has fellowship with us in this work. We especially thank Almighty God, our Father, and His Son, Jesus, through whom all things are possible.

We wish we could look you in the eye, shake your hand and/or hug your neck and **personally** thank YOU for receiving and reading "Mississippi's GOOD NEWS Newspaper. Since this wish cannot come true, please accept this written note as our sincere expression of thanks to each of you who holds the latest issue of the MM in your hands. Will you continue to pray that God will bless our cooperative mission work which now includes, not only Al and June but also Paul and Glenda Franks.

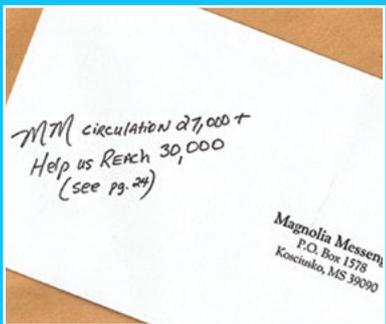


Al & June Franks,
Editor and Special Assistant

Look for the Envelope

(Inside this issue)
Help Us Exceed 30,000 Circulation

Magnolia Messenger
Dedicated to Distinctive Doctrine
Publishing the "Truth in Love"



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Church of Christ - Kosciusko, MS

Published about every 3 months (as funds and time permit). Mailed without charge to all who ask to receive it and to others for whom it is requested. Contributions from churches and individuals make possible the circulation of more than 27,000 copies of each issue of the "Magnolia Messenger". Your prayers and support are requested, needed and appreciated!

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Editor's Note: The mention of a person or church in the Messenger does NOT necessarily mean that we either endorse or approve all the person or church may believe, teach and/or do. We do not (can not) have full knowledge of every person or church mentioned in the 'MM'; furthermore, we do not believe that our role before God is to be that of a judge. We pray, however, that we will never lend encouragement to anyone or anything in conflict with, or not in harmony with that which is plainly taught in Scripture. Your comments invited and encouraged. (A. L. Franks, Editor)

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Matters that Matter

Many matters don't matter. Some matters do matter. How can we know the difference? The Bible is the authority. It is our Guide in determining what matters and what doesn't matter. This issue of the "Messenger" is, we believe, filled with many things that do matter. We earnestly pray you will find each of them helpful in setting priorities for your life. We are thankful to call attention to a few of the matters that matter in this issue.

- 1. Understanding Predestination:** Responding to a MM reader's questions, brother Cecil May, Jr. shows by the Scriptures how not to be led astray by false teaching regarding predestination. (See page 3)
- 2. Putting God First:** Brother John Gardner stresses Biblical teaching about the danger of "Crowded Lives" pushing God out of everyday living. (See page 4)
- 3. Realizing Obedience is Necessary:** In a world that has come to believe that obedience to God is not really necessary, brother Norman Maranto effectively deals with the statement, "I Desire Mercy and Not Sacrifice." (See page 7)
- 4. Providing A Retreat for Preachers:** Periodically, it is helpful for those who have dedicated their lives to full-time ministry, to take a break from the routine and retreat to be renewed, recharged and rejuvenated. Preachers' Retreat in Kosciusko, MS March 6-10, 2016. (See pages 8 & 9)
- 5. Believing Baptism is Essential:** Opinions about baptism often differ from plain Biblical teachings. In the study beginning on page 14, brother Will Anderson shows from Scripture that baptism is essential; and, in so doing, he responds effectively to some who object to the necessity of baptism. (See pages 14 & 15)
- 6. Considering Daniel, Islam and America:** Beginning on page 24, brother Ken Joines brings together the trying days of Daniel, the Old Testament prophet, and the perilous days in which we live. He asks the sobering question that each of us should be ready to answer: "Am I ready to die for my faith in Jesus Christ?" (See pages 24,25)
- 7. Looking at Fear Through the Bible.** From a woman's viewpoint, June Franks shows from scripture, using the acrostic F-E-A-R, how we can fear less in our desire to be fearless. (See page 22)

Retreat for Preachers:



Gary Hampton plans to join Dan, Kirk and Jody as instructors in our upcoming Preachers' Retreat in Kosciusko. Looking at Gary's picture, it appears he may be saying, "Come on now, my preaching brother... Join us for the retreat... Call Will or Paul and put your name in the pot to attend the first annual Preachers' Retreat in Kosciusko." (Details on pages 8,9)



(MBC Dorm) This can/will be your home at the Preachers' Retreat

19th Annual Magnolia Messenger RV Rally
April 26-29, 2016

The 19th Annual Magnolia Messenger RV Rally will be held, Lord willing, April 26-29, 2016 (Tuesday through Friday) at Lake Tiak-O'Khata in Louisville, Mississippi.

This beautiful resort in central Mississippi has a great RV park with full hook-ups, including cable. If you do not have an RV or want to leave your RV at home, you can stay in the resort's many cabins or in the resort lodge. Lake Tiak-O'Khata is also famous for its award winning restaurant.

We are expecting to fill up the RV Park. If you are thinking you might go, please call the park at 1-888-845-6151 and reserve a RV site, hotel room or a cabin.

For more information you can go to their website at www.ltok.com. We have reserved all of the RV sites, some hotel rooms and some cabins. You must call before February 15, 2016 to secure a place. After that date, they will release what we haven't reserved. If you have any questions, please call me at 662-792-2700 (Paul Franks)

BIBLE

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

RESPONSE: The view described is called Calvinism, both by its advocates and by its detractors, and it is based on what I believe is a serious misunderstanding of a number of biblical texts, including Romans beginning in chapter nine.

This view of unconditional predestination and election is point two in a five-point belief system going back through John Calvin to Augustine. Each of the five points clearly contradicts specific Scripture texts as I understand them.

Calvin (1509–1564) was a prominent figure in the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century and Augustine (353–430) was an influential fourth and fifth century theologian.

The Five Points of Calvinism

Calvinists and those opposed to Calvinism alike remember the five points of the Calvinistic system from the acrostic **T-U-L-I-P**.

1. Total hereditary depravity
2. Unconditional election
3. Limited atonement
4. Irresistible grace
5. Perseverance of the saints

■ **ONE.** Everyone is born a sinner, according to Calvinists, having inherited the sin of Adam. Everyone is totally depraved, unable to do any truly good thing, including being unable to respond favorably to the gospel.

This point seems to be contradicted by Ezekiel 18:20, “The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity

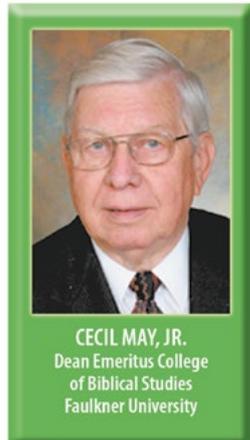
I am involved in a discussion with some religious friends who believe God, before the worlds began, predestined, elected (picked out ahead of time) who would be saved and who would be lost. If you are one He elected, you will be saved, and there is nothing you can do to keep from it. If you are not one He elected, you cannot be saved regardless of how much you may want to or whatever you may do.

I know the Bible talks about “predestination” and “election,” but I do not believe the Bible teaches that we have no say in our salvation. Will you comment, please? (T.M.)

of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself” (Ezekiel 18:20). Children being born sinners is also hard to square with Jesus’ statement, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:2-3).

Some have noted that Augustine would have used and been influenced by Jerome’s Latin Vulgate version which mistakenly translated Romans 5:12 regarding Adam as “in whom all sinned.”

■ **TWO.** Since everyone is considered totally depraved, election is unconditional; no one meets any condition. Since God’s election and predestination are “before the worlds began,” no one then had done anything to meet any condition. However, the Bible says, “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined” (Romans 8:29). Peter also says “those who are elect” were elect “according to the foreknowledge of God the



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Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood” (1 Peter 1:1-2). He foreknew who we would be and what we would do before He predestined.

The foreknowledge of God is absolute--He knows everything--but His knowing what we will choose to do does not negate our freedom to choose as we will.

He knows who will have living, saving faith.

■ **THREE.** Since surely everyone for whom Christ died would be redeemed, Calvinists say, His atoning death is limited. He died only for the elect. The Bible, however, says clearly, “He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2). The gospel invitation is for “whosoever will.” “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). “And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21).

■ **FOUR.** One point in this system leads to another. If each is true, the ones that follow are necessarily true also. However, if any link in the chain is not true, that nullifies all that follow.

Unconditional election would indeed mean grace would need to be unconditional and, therefore, irresistible, but election, as we have seen, is according to God’s foreknowledge of our obedient faith response.

God sends His Holy Spirit, they say, to regenerate the depraved sinner who has been unconditionally elected and thus enable him to come to faith. The Bible says, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17) and “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16).

“Irresistible grace” makes the sinner’s salvation a matter wholly of grace, completely an act of God, man having no say in it at all. Salvation is initiated by God and is a gift of God but the recipient must willingly accept the gift. The Bible makes faith the condition of salvation by grace (Ephesians 2:8-9) and obedient response a condition of saving or living faith (James 2:14-26; Romans 6:1-6, 17-18). Faith is

not a supernatural gift of God; it is believing what God said (Romans 10:17) and acting on it. If salvation were completely by grace and no faith-response were required, then all would be saved, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people” (Titus 2:11). All people, however, will not be saved. Jesus said, “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many” (Matthew 7:13). Since grace is for all and yet not all will be saved, some response on the sinners’ part is logically required.

■ **FIVE.** If God gave salvation unconditionally, then obviously the recipient cannot lose it. The final point in the Calvinistic system is “perseverance of the saints,” which is also stated as “once saved always saved.” While many wonderful promises are made to believers in Christ, including the present possession of eternal life (1 John 5:13), there are no positive promises to unbelievers, and Scripture teaches clearly that believers can become unbelievers and depart from the faith. “Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God” (Hebrews 3:12). “Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1). There are no precious promises of God to those who believed last year.

Church Provides Mail Boxes For Members

For several years Don Lee of the Liberty Church of Christ at Dennis, Mississippi has been sending mail to his friends and members of the church. Most of them sent through the U.S. Postal system.

Don and his wife, Cindy, who have been married for almost 9 years and are faithful members of the church, love to send cards such as birthday, get well or “we missed you” cards. It was Cindy’s idea that they needed to be able to send cards to the church family at Liberty without having to send them through the mail.



She got the idea from where her parents, Curtis and Jean Majors, went to church. They had a special place at the church building where people could leave cards during the holidays. Don and Cindy decided to find mail containers that could be used for this purpose. “I think we got the first ones at Office Max; they are called ‘mail sorters’. At first, we bought two sections for the church that will hold 48 slots each. Since then it has doubled in size and another section will be installed soon.”

Thanks to the elders at Liberty for allowing this ministry to begin and thanks to God Almighty that it has grown. The name of each family is placed on a mail box in the church building. Our members are happy to look in their mail boxes each week. It encourages communication between the members.

(Idea and article by Don Lee. Shared with MM readers by Catherine Mitchell, a member of the Liberty church.)



Lavon Henley Departs 1932-2015

Lavon Henley of Daphne, Alabama, passed away on Saturday, October 10, 2015, at the age of 83, leaving behind a legacy of dedication to Christ and his community.

A native of Andalusia, AL, he earned a B.A. from Georgia State and a graduate degree from Ohio State before launching a successful career as a hospital administrator.

Though he excelled professionally, he was most passionate about walking with Jesus, spending time with family and helping others. Married for 64 years to his loving wife Virginia,

by Mike Benson

I HAD JUST finished delivering a devotional at the Christian Student Center and was headed towards Oak Grove. I’d left my only pair of casual shoes back in Tanzania the previous week, and so I decided to run by Belk for a few minutes and grab another pair before going home. It didn’t take me long to find a pair like I wanted, but they weren’t in my size and I couldn’t find a sales person in the same zip code.

Then an announcement came over the store intercom. “Code Adam,” the voice said. That sounded a little ominous. Not, “Code Red,” or “Code green,” but “Code Adam”—an actual name. Sales people and employees immediately stationed themselves at all of the exits. A child was missing—presumably somewhere in the store. His mom had been perusing the women’s shoe department when she suddenly realized that her little one had gone off radar.

That new pair of brown Dockers would have to wait. If this were my child or grandchild, I’d want folks to help pitch in and look—so I did. I searched the nearest clothing racks, the back of the men’s shoe department, the closest dressing room, and even looked under a couple of draped tables. Nope, no child.

Several minutes elapsed. New information. The missing child was three-years-old, blonde boy wearing a blue shirt with khaki shorts.

More time went by. Now employees, mall security, and customers alike were scouring Belk. “Maybe he’d wandered out into the mall itself?” A few of us ventured out a few steps. Nope, no lonely three-year-old in sight.

A dad pushing his young daughter in a stroller passed by me. His eyes were running up and down the aisles of the store. As it turned out, he wasn’t the father of the missing boy, but he had a three-year-old of his own, and was convinced the toddler was probably much closer than we all realized.

Then came the boy’s mom. Her face was ashen white; her lips were parched. You could read panic in her eyes. The manager of Belk was escorting her around the



parameter of the store, hoping the two might spot her lost offspring. But as soon as I saw her, her complexion changed. “There he is!” she cried.

The father-daughter stroller crew had found him sitting under a rack of clothes near the south mall exit. The boy had left his mother in women’s shoes and wandered, alone, across the length of the entire store before deciding to stop in the children’s department. Where else do you find lost children—but in the children’s department? LOL. The poor little fella looked pretty shell-shocked at first. He’d been alone for 20-25 minutes or so, when he realized his plight. Mom snatched him out of the dad’s arms and hugged him until I thought his eyes were going to pop out.

A new announcement came over the intercom. “Cancel Code Adam.” Whew. He’d been found. Alive. Okay.

I wonder. When members of our own spiritual family have strayed, why aren’t we all looking for them too? “Maybe he’s sick...” “Maybe she’s having problems at home...” “Maybe they’re out of town...” “Has anybody gone by and checked?”

Most folks don’t just wake up and decide to leave our fellowship. For whatever reason(s), they simply do. They incrementally wander from our midst until one day somebody asks, “Hey—where’s so-and-so? I haven’t seen him in weeks.”

I’m not disagreeing that shepherds have a primary role in looking for wandering sheep,

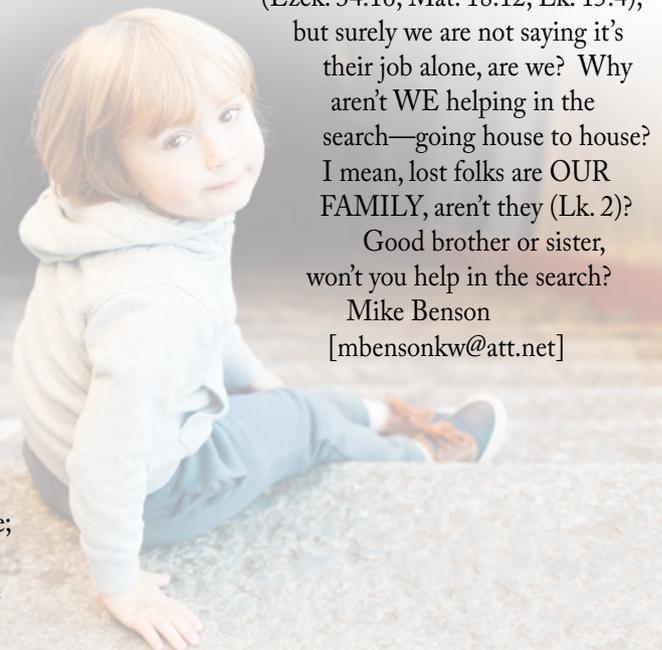
(Ezek. 34:16; Mat. 18:12; Lk. 15:4),

but surely we are not saying it’s their job alone, are we? Why aren’t WE helping in the search—going house to house? I mean, lost folks are OUR FAMILY, aren’t they (Lk. 2)?

Good brother or sister, won’t you help in the search?

Mike Benson

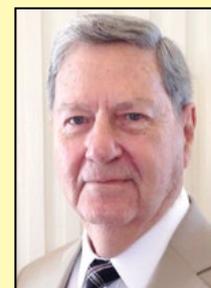
[mbensonkw@att.net]



Henley raised two sons and served as an elder, Bible class teacher and spiritual mentor in his various church homes.

Henley relished his role as “Granddad” to his five grandsons and seven great-grandchildren, tirelessly supporting their individual pursuits and accomplishments. In addition to his love for the Lord, they will remember him for his masterful storytelling and his ability to build and fix just about anything.

During his fight with cancer, Henley maintained his signature sense of humor and remained active in his home congregation at the Spanish Fort Church of Christ. His positivity, kindness and generosity will be greatly missed.



Note: This report was sent to the MM by Lynn, one of his two sons. My June and I are grateful to have known Lavon and Virginia for the past thirty years. For a short time, their home became our home. They were a great encouragement to us in our efforts, back in the mid-eighties, to help with the newly planted congregation which became known as the Meridian Church on Highway 19, North. May God richly bless Virginia and the family. (Editor)

CROWDED LIVES

The Parable of the Sower

By John Gardner

One of the most familiar parables Jesus taught is the widely studied Parable of the Sower (Luke 8: 4 –15). Although called “the parable of the sower” by Jesus himself (Matthew 13: 18), it is clear that the emphasis of the teaching is on the quality of the soils rather than the faithfulness or skill of the sower. Nor is the power of the seed in doubt. “The seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11, New King James Version).

Jesus identifies three types of soil, representing different hearers of God’s word, that fall short of fruitfulness and true life in God’s sight. Then he describes one type of soil and hearer that bears spiritual fruit in abundance as evidence of true life and for the glory of God.

I submit that probably the greatest challenge facing those who fill our assemblies week-in and week-out is to determine honestly from the Scriptures if they (we) are the third type of unprofitable soil that ultimately disappoints or the good ground that truly honors God. I offer that suggestion for the following reasons.

The first type of soil in the parable is the hard packed foot-path or cart path that does not receive the seed that falls upon it (Luke 8: 5). Such are hearers who have the word of God directed to them, but who refuse to believe it (V. 18) because it does not make sense to them in their worldly state of mind (Matthew 13:19). They do not become disciples of Christ, nor should we



JOHN GARDNER

So what is the big test facing those of us who study God’s word and worship Him Sundays and Wednesday nights with “faithful” regularity? Is being there enough? Is continuing in some aspects of the Christian faith real assurance that all is well with our souls?

expect to see them with any regularity in the assemblies of the saints (although there may be exceptions). The danger of becoming hardened after once obeying the gospel is real (Hebrews 3:13), but the hardened hearer

does not remain very long in the assemblies.

The second type of faulty soil is the shallow soil represented by the rocky ground (Luke 8:6). Such represents the hearer who enthusiastically receives the word of God and begins to obey it. They “believe for a while” (V. 13). But they are unwilling to pay the price for discipleship that requires tribulations and persecutions (Matthew 13:21). They soon quit. They are no longer joyfully sharing in the assemblies; in fact, you only rarely, if ever, see them there anymore.

So what is the big test facing those of us who study God’s word and worship Him Sundays and Wednesday nights with “faithful” regularity? Is being there enough? Is continuing in some aspects of the Christian faith real assurance that all is well with our souls?

It seems that the third type of soil, the thorny ground (Luke 8:7), may represent many who consider themselves faithful to Christ, but who in fact “bring no fruit unto maturity” (V. 14). The frightening part is, they may be unaware that the powerful word of God is not being allowed to make transforming changes in their lives. Aren’t they in classes and worship often? Aren’t they pretty good people? Don’t they look like other religious people around them?

Yes, the word of God is still in their lives, and it is growing some. But it is choked by too much of what the world offers to make a dramatic, God-honoring difference. Instead of doing those special works that show God is at work in them (Philippians 2:12,13) and doing all for His glory (Matthew 5: 16), they maintain a form of religion, but not its power (2 Timothy 3: 5).

“Crowded lives” describes many who fill the pews and Bible class seats in the churches. They are filled in one way or another with the thinking, feelings, and actions of the world. Check their daily and weekly planners. Check their talk, text, and data logs on their phones. Check the mileage on their multiple vehicles.

Jesus describes such over-stuffed lives as being “choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life” (Luke 8:14). Now it is true that after so much crowding, some so described may cease to assemble and be involved in others aspects of life in the body of Christ. But is it not also true that many may remain at a level of involvement that is comfortable for them, but which chokes the transforming power out of God’s powerful message? They certainly do not show an abundance of distinctive fruit which the word of God can produce in good hearts (Luke 8: 8,15).

Think how the cares of this life (fears, worries, and losses) can erode faith and sap energies unless we turn to

God with renewed dedication. We are tempted to put our service to God on hold until “things get better” for us. A mistake. We need to rally our faith and ask our God to increase our faith for the daily tests we face.

But then again, it may be the numbing, deception of affluence (Matthew 13:22). When we were truly content to have bread sufficient for one day (Luke 11:3), our faith and priorities were focused. Life was all about God, not how much we had and what it could do for us (Luke

“Crowded lives” describes many who fill the pews and Bible class seats in the churches. They are filled in one way or another with the thinking, feelings, and actions of the world. Check their daily and weekly planners. Check their talk, text, and data logs on their phones. Check the mileage on their multiple vehicles.

12: 15). But now we require much, much more of this world’s goods. And the love of material things crowds out the true, vital love of God (Matthew 6: 24).

But what can we say about pleasures? Ours is a pleasure-driven society. Everything must be fun. The good life is seen as the unfettered pursuit of “the desires of the flesh and of the mind” (Ephesians 2:3). But such giving of ourselves to pleasure is spiritual death (1 Timothy 5:6). If the course our Father lays out for us in spiritual service does not seem fun or pleasurable, will we do it anyway and bear fruit for his glory?

Another article is needed to fully appreciate the nature of the good soil (Luke 8: 8), but needless to say, that heart is prepared, ready, and open to God’s transforming word. That life is not crowded with so much of the world’s rocks and roots that the word is choked. That heart is a “noble and good heart” (V. 15) that patiently bears fruit in wonderful measures (Mark 4:20).

So am I a regular, nominal member of Christ, comfortable with my commitment, but bearing little distinctive fruit for my God? Or is He working mightily in me, bringing forth over-flowing abundance of spiritual fruit for His glory? That’s the difference between the third and fourth types of hearers Jesus describes in his parable.

(John preaches for the North Brandon congregation. His address: John Gardner; P. O. Box 251; Brandon, MS 39042-0251; E-mail: gardner.john43@gmail.com)

(Louisiana State Prison at Angola) Where Christians Sing:

“This World (Angola) Is Not My Home”

By Paul Franks

When Jesus separates the sheep from the goats on judgment day, He will ask about visiting Him in prison. On Sunday, November 15, 2015, at Angola State Prison -- just north of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, I was able to visit with some very godly men who have been members of the Lord's church for many years. Over 30 years ago **William (Bill) Netterville** began a volunteer prison ministry at Angola which is Louisiana State Prison north of Baton Rouge over 30 years ago. When it was apparent that, because of failing health brother Bill was going to have to give it up, Richard Felix took his place as a chaplain for the prison. With the support of the South Baton Rouge Church of Christ, brother Felix's ministry continues after 21 years. Over 1,400 men have been baptized. Approximately 900 men presently incarcerated at Angola are members of the body of Christ. The prison at Angola is the largest maximum security prison in the United States with over 6,000 inmates.

A normal Sunday begins with Richard Felix leaving his house in Baton Rouge at 6:30 AM and driving the 60 plus miles to the prison. There are several “camps” scattered throughout the 18,000 acres that make up the prison grounds with each camp being run independently. Richard preaches at four different camps each Lord's day. At the end of the day he goes to the hospital to spend time with the sick and dying. He usually is able to leave around 6:00 to 6:30 PM to begin his drive back home.

On Sunday, November 15, 2015, I was privileged to go with Richard Felix to the prison for church services. Of course, I had to get special permission for the visit. With the assistance of brother Felix I was approved for a one-time visit. Before going to Angola, we first went to the meeting house of the South Baton Rouge church where over 400 were gathered for morning worship.

Their new pulpit minister, **Mark Hadley**, introduced me at the beginning of services and we were given the opportunity of presenting a special plaque to Richard Felix on behalf of our program, “Who's Who among Leaders in Churches of Christ.” It was an exciting time. In Richard's speech to the church he gave most of the credit for his success as a minister to his wife **Prissy**. Richard and Prissy are the parents of six sons, all of whom are members of the church.

As soon as we finished with the presentation, Brother Richard and I got in his car and started out to Angola. When we arrived at the gate, the lady said, she didn't have a record showing I could visit that day. I was afraid I might have to wait at the gate. However, brother Felix

was patient with her and showed her the needed documents; after which she looked again and then agreed to let me in. The main thing they wanted from us was our cell phones. We got out of our car, went into a building and got into a “closet”, one at a time, with a fan at the top blowing air down to the bottom where a dog decides if we have drugs or not. We passed!

We continued our journey into the prison, deciding to go to the hospital since we had missed the first two services of the day. When we walked in I was surprised with what I saw. All of the sick men were in one large room. There must have been 30 to 50 beds. There were cells on the side of the hospital room where, if someone was not doing what the staff wanted them to do, they would have to go into one of these cells. The hospital is divided into two different categories. If you are expected to die soon, you are in one large area and if you have a chance to live then you are in the other area. I could easily and quickly tell from the men who were in both of these areas that they were very thankful to see Brother Richard. Each of them gave him and me a hug. For those who desired, we offered communion. To get into each the prison areas, you have to go through several locked doors and gates and register at each place.

After leaving the hospital we went to Camp “C” and enjoyed a great service with 35 to 40 men. We sang songs; I was given the opportunity to preach and we partook of the Lord's Supper. The men at this camp did most everything in the service. Each Sunday a bulletin is handed out to each inmate, telling different things that are going on in the church at Angola. After we concluded the services at Camp “C”, we got back into our car and drove to Camp “F”. Each of these camps has their own church building. These buildings were donated by different people and companies. At Camp “F” you have the most trusted of the men in the prison who are called “trustees.” After worshiping with these 30 to 40 men, I decided to include them in my “Top Ten Churches” where I would want to worship! The spiritual maturity of these men was very

obvious as you heard their prayers and listened to them as they participated in the services. This camp is next door to the infamous Death Row Camp. Richard has had the opportunity to baptize several who are on death row. I learned that the first two camps (two we did not visit on the day I was in Angola) have the most people who attend services with 60 to 80 present at each camp service. So on most Sundays 180 to 200 Christians meet and worship God in connection with the prison ministry of churches of Christ. Brother Richard has developed a deep trust and respect from these men at Angola.



Richard Felix and Wife (Prissy)



Angola: Richard Felix at Entrance to Angola Prison

As we left Camp “F” and headed back to the main gate, I confess, it was a wonderful feeling to think that I was able to leave this place. When we got to the exit gate, we had to open our trunk so the authorities could make sure no one was hiding in the trunk. Headed back to Baton Rouge, I felt exhausted and wondered how Richard feels each week after spending the entire day in Angola prison.

It was a very encouraging day, one that I won't forget for a long time. It was a visit I would like to repeat. Soon! Richard is blessed to be able to engage in this ministry and is thankful for the elders, **Jimmie Carter, Jimmie Lawson, Chuck Morris, Mickey Pounders, Darryl Sanderson** and **Herb Vessel** and the South Baton Rouge congregation for their faithful support.

A Final Note: When we sing, “*This world is not my home*” the men at Angola prison sing, “*Angola is not my home.*” I am thankful that this world is not my home and I am thankful that Angola is not their permanent home as well. I am looking forward to spending eternity in a place where there will be no prisons and no suffering. I encourage you to pray for the mission efforts of brother Felix and for our other brothers in Christ, incarcerated at Angola. I look forward to spending eternity with them in heaven.

“I Desire Mercy and Not Sacrifice”

By Norman Maranto

I think it's because I came out of denominationalism that I now tire easily of the charge often heard that “Many within the church are too legalistic.” Some are saying that the teaching of the church should be more like a “stretching balloon” than a “rigid box.”

I've also grown tired of the phrase, “You can't draw a line in the sand.” Upon first hearing the phrase, I assumed the line in the sand had reference to an attempt to make a spiritual law without any underlying basis in Scripture. However, I now realize that it is being used to teach that one can't draw a line in the sand regarding Bible teachings -- even when God actually does draw a line.

Members of the Lord's church are often mocked for believing truth can be understood and can be interpreted correctly. Having believed and followed error for so many years within the denominational world, I was excited to have been shown the simple truths found within the Bible. I'm afraid, however, that many -- including some who have been “raised in the church,” have found themselves less than satisfied with those simple truths that I found refreshing.

Many have embarked upon a search within Scripture for what they believe would give a higher spiritual meaning to Jesus' teachings, rather than viewing the commands [“prescriptions”] necessary for salvation. We are being told that “old timey” teachers and preachers have placed too much emphasis on such commands or prescriptions as baptism, and not enough emphasis on Jesus and His mission. The idea of rigid box teachings and lines drawn in the sand do not fit into the way many believe God wants Scripture to be viewed, read and/or interpreted.

Such teachers think they have found what they were looking for in the phrase, “The great-

est of these is love [mercy].” In doing so, they have forfeited obedience to God's instructions for what they have prioritized as a “weightier matter of the law.” Their contention is that too much time is spent on those divisive issues (usually the commands found in the Bible) and more time should be spent on allowing God to “transform lives” through the knowledge of His love, mercy and forgiveness.

Personally, I find that one grasping for a “more holy” interpretation of scripture while de-emphasizing obedience to be very confusing. Consider just one of the many direct commands given by Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20, “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: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded....”

The argument is presented, “Do we really want to say absolutely that the Son of God will not save or show grace to an unbeliever?” It is further argued that since Jesus cleansed from sin many while He was on earth, the question is asked, “Can He not do the same while in heaven?”

The answer is “Yes, He can.” However the real important question is actually, “Will He?” “When the Word of God clearly instructs one as to what to do to be saved, why wonder if He will accept something else in lieu of what He has said?”

In this “new” methodology of viewing Scripture, it is believed, by those espousing this view, that “mercy” (love of God) would trump “sacrifice” (commands) even in an area of a direct command from Jesus. I fail to understand how anyone could place their entire trust in such thinking. Surely our spiritual lives rest easier when one builds their faith upon the promises of God rather than the “what ifs.”

The terms in Matthew 28:19-

20, “making disciples,” means to make followers; while “teaching them to observe all things” doesn't leave much to be left out of Jesus' teachings. Baptism is certainly a direct command of God. Consider Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21.

A person's Godly sorrow should lead to baptism. That same sorrow should act as a “transformation” force throughout their lives causing them to continue to be an obedient child of God. I contend that submission or obedience to God's commands is a transformation in and of itself. I could see it and feel it within my own attitude in my conversion story of having obeyed the command to be baptized and to begin the Christian walk in life.

We are instructed in Hebrews 5:7-9, “...and He [Jesus] was heard because of His godly fear; though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which he suffered. And having been perfected, he became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him....”

The mission of Jesus was to obey the Father. In turn, as His disciples, we are to learn obedience because it's through faithful obedience that we have eternal life. This is no magical formula. No one should get side tracked because of a “5 step plan.” The plan is simply obedience to God's will which consists of a number of things found within God's Word.

I have been told that belief

is, “What saves? mercy or sacrifice?” Again, it's not an “either, or.” Both must work together in order for one to be pleasing to God. It's not a situation where one is greater to the total exclusion of the other.

Those who place such a high degree of emphasis on “mercy” often conclude that it doesn't matter what you believe or do about the lesser items. Such teachers of error place them in a category deemed “unessential to salvation.” As a result, those who preach the “plan of salvation,” are charged with “binding where the Lord didn't bind” and/or not placing proper emphasis on the “weightier matters of the law.” This is not true.

Just because God's Word may call something “greater” does not make void other valid commands calling for obedience. Any faithful Christian will quickly admit that even with the obedience of the “five-step plan” one is obligated to provide to others the compassion, mercy, grace and forgiveness that our loving God freely provides to us as His children.

One becomes a member of God's family by being obedient to the “will of the Father” as we are told in Matthew 12:50.

According to 1 Peter 1:3, as a member of God's family, we then have the right to the benefits of His compassion -- mercy, grace and forgiveness; in other words -- everything we need for life and godliness.

Another verse on my mind is 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 which states, “...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The punishment associated with “do not obey” indicates the importance of “obedience.” It certainly draws a line in the sand. Some may not acknowledge the line that has been drawn and others may not want to believe it has been drawn; but none the less -- that line is there and it's crystal clear.

Norman Maranto
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In this new methodology of viewing Scripture, it is believed, by those espousing this view, that “mercy” (love of God) would trump “sacrifice” (commands) even in an area of a direct command from Jesus. I fail to understand how anyone could place their entire trust in such thinking. Surely our spiritual lives rest easier when one builds their faith upon the promises of God rather than the “what ifs.”

The charge, as often set forth against those of us who believe in the necessity of obedience to the commands of Jesus, is that we are too pre-occupied with a “test,” being in a five step plan of salvation (Hear, Believe, Repent, Confess and Be Baptized), rather than in understanding the love, mercy, story and mission of Jesus. Why would anyone ridicule the use of the word “plan”, which could easily be substituted -- “Instructions from God”? Please, do not be fooled; this is nothing more than semantics or word games. What is it that validates the thinking of those who say because one believes in obedience to the commands of Jesus, he has failed to grasp the overall “central message” or “mission” of Jesus? I reject that line of thought!

Jesus states in Luke 6:40 that, “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.”

in obedience to His commands is like a litmus test of our love for God and is not what God intended. However, if obedience to God's commands is not what Jesus intended, then why did Jesus tell his disciples in John 14:15, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”

In a question, reminiscent of the Pharisee's attempt to trap Jesus, it is asked, “What saves? The church or Jesus?” “It's easy for us to fall into that trap. Should one say “Jesus,” then, by default, the teachings of/about the church, found in Scripture, become secondary and thus irrelevant. On the other hand should someone answer “the church”, then he quickly finds himself open to ridicule by now relegating the “blood of Jesus” moot in regards to salvation. Any attempt by one to reconcile Jesus and the church would be a futile effort in their eyes.

Likewise the question before us

The Value of the Preachers' Retreat

Editor's note: On November 3, 2015, my June and I traveled to Columbia, TN to get a first hand look at an annual "Preachers' Retreat" conducted by the Graymere church of Christ. We were greatly impressed with the quality of the intensive 4 day program designed especially for preachers. I asked Tim McCarter, preacher in Cleveland, Mississippi, who was present and who has attended the retreat since its beginning, to write his personal observations as to what the "Preachers' Resource, Renewal, Retreat" had meant to him. The following is his response to my request. (alf)

By **Tim McCarter**

A little background: In 1995 my wife and I purchased our first computer and "got online." In an effort to use that computer for good my wife began to search for an online Bible study. What she found was World Bible School. She enrolled and, in God's Providence, was assigned Margaret Reeves as her study helper. Margaret and her husband Bob were members of what was at that time the Memorial Parkway church of Christ (now the Lincoln Park church of Christ) in Huntsville, Alabama.

As a result of their study together and some other common interests my wife, Debbie, and Margaret became fast friends, communicating via both internet and telephone. We even had opportunities to visit in person occasionally. In 1998 I became the preacher for the Jamestown (New York) church of Christ. Shortly thereafter Tom Holland kept a preaching appointment at Memorial Parkway. While there he made an announcement about a new work he and William Woodson were beginning in conjunction with the brethren at the Graymere church of Christ in Columbia, Tennessee. Bob Reeves telephoned me to encourage my participation in this "Preachers' Resource, Renewal, Retreat. I immediately began to make plans to attend and am forever grateful to Bob Reeves for making me aware of this event.

I am also grateful to Tom Holland, William Woodson, John Vaughn, the Graymere elders, and so many others who have and continue to make this event possible. With the passing from this life of brother Woodson and brother Holland's health issues, others have stepped in to continue the work and carry the load. Currently, Dan Winkler, Kirk Brothers, and Jody Apple, along with the Graymere elders and many others work diligently to continue the good things begun in 1998.

What happens at this "Preachers' Resource, Renewal, Retreat?" There is a delving into the Biblical text that I'm not sure is equaled anywhere short

of graduate school. It is my opinion that the Biblical knowledge imparted during the week spent at this event is worth at least as much as a semester of study at any of our institutions of higher learning.

There is a camaraderie that is developed with others who face the same challenges and temptations that we, as preachers, face on a daily basis. Friendships are formed that will last through eternity.

Preachers sometimes come to this event who are mentally, emotionally, and spiritually spent. Yet they leave with a renewed sense of vigor, purpose, and zeal for the Lord that enables them to continue to reach lost souls and edify the body of Christ where they serve.

If you, as a preacher, elder, Bible class teacher, or "just a church member" desire to improve your Bible knowledge, develop lifelong friendships with others who understand your challenges and temptations, and be encouraged to be more zealous and vigorous in your work for the Lord this event is for you. If you serve as an elder or leader in the Lord's church, sending your



preacher to this event is one of the best continuing education opportunities available.

I have been attending this event since its inception in 1998. I regard it as the one educational opportunity that is not to be missed. That is not to take away anything from other events that are also educational and encouraging, but this event is more concentrated and "hands on" than lectureships, workshops, and other such events. *Try it. You'll like it!*



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Magnolia Bible Institute

Kosciusko, Mississippi
Presents First Annual

Preachers' Retreat

March 6 - 10, 2016

(Sunday P.M. -- Thursday A.M.)

Theme:

JESUS

(Connecting His Life to Ours)

Instructors

Jody Apple **Kirk Brothers**
Gary Hampton **Dan Winkler**

HOSTED BY

**South Huntington Street
Church of Christ
Kosciusko, Mississippi**



Instructors Dan Winkler, Kirk Brothers and Jody Apple, pointing finger, seems to be saying, "Hey, you preacher man... Come, join us in Kosciusko March 6-10, 2016!"

Using the facilities of Magnolia Bible College

(a) Meals and Materials provided

(b) Lodging in the Dormitory

(bring linens, towels, pillow, soap)

Share in Costs: \$100.00 per person

(Scholarships available)

For More Information/to Register, Call:

Will Anderson at 662-832-0457 or Paul Franks at 662-792-2700

“Preacher Retreats” Provide Opportunities To Refocus, Recharge, and Rejuvenate

“I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching... As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

(2 Timothy 4:1-2, 5 -- ESV)

By Russ Vickers

There is a tremendous value in training ministers in the church. There is also tremendous value in allowing a minister to take time to recharge. Preachers must deal with so much during the week above and beyond the preparation of lessons, it is only natural for ministers to pause and take a break once in a while. We read in Mark 6:30-32, “The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, ‘Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.’ For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves.” Preachers need rest to refocus, recharge, and rejuvenate to avoid the possibility of burnout. This is needed because our mission to carry out the Great Commission is so great (Matthew 28:16-20).

Since 2004, I have had the privilege of attending the Columbia Bible Institute (CBI) “Preachers’ Retreat” located in Columbia, Tennessee. Several years ago **William Woodson** and **Tom Holland** were coming back home after conducting a school for preachers. On the plane, they began discussing the possibilities of a school in Middle Tennessee. They agreed that it should be located in Columbia, Tennessee as a work of the Graymere church of Christ. They also agreed to present their idea to the elders and ministers as soon as possible.

One of their guidelines was to teach the Bible to increase preaching knowledge and ability. Another



George Brazelton (left), an elder at Graymere and Russ Vickers

guideline was that the example of Jesus and His apostles would be followed with the conviction that extraordinary things can be accomplished by ordinary people.

The Columbia Bible Institute began in 1997 under the leadership of William Woodson and Tom Holland. Their work was begun in a small house under the oversight of the elders of the Graymere church. A gift, given by Herman A. Langhans with his wife Hazel, his son David, and daughters Nancy & Emily, made possible the construction of the Columbia Bible Institute’s Graymere Hall in 2002. CBI became a “Preacher’s Retreat” for ministers who desired to regain their energy and focus. **John R. Vaughn**, former minister at Graymere, also served as a director of CBI, along with William Woodson and Tom Holland. The current directors are Jody Apple, Kirk Brothers, and Dan Winkler.

What does this preacher’s retreat mean to me? I enjoy these special times with fellow ministers. We study together, learn together, share ideas and difficulties. We laugh together and cry together. Each day, we are fed like royalty by some of the finest cooks in the church. The retreat is the highlight of my year and of every preacher who participates. Time spent at the retreats you will take with you for the rest of your days. I treasure in my heart spending time with such faithful and loving brethren.

The best news of all is that we are going to have our very own preachers’ retreat right here in Mississippi. The retreat is planned for March 6-10, 2016 in Kosciusko, MS. The instructors will be **Jody Apple**, **Kirk Brothers** and **Dan Winkler** joined by **Gary Hampton**. The theme is: “**Jesus: Connecting His Life to Ours**” and is sponsored by the South Huntington church of Christ in Kosciusko. I hope all the preachers reading this will make plans to attend. You will be so blessed during that week. I close with a statement found at the bottom of a plaque honoring John Vaughn: “*Though life is sweet, death is sure, eternity is without end.*”

*A special thanks to George Brazelton and John Vaughn for their assistance with this article.

Russ Vickers

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North MS Annual Ladies’ Retreat at Sardis Lake Christian Camp

Sixteen ladies left Kosciusko in a van to attend the Sardis Lake Ladies’ Retreat near Batesville, MS. Four congregations were represented in the van. The congregations were Nile, South Huntington and Tipton Street (Kosciusko area) and the church in Durant. When we arrived at camp we met ninety seven other ladies. Some were old friends; many others were new who had come for the first time. We had an hour or so to visit and talk to the new ladies.

Twenty eight congregations, from Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee, were represented. The youngest person in attendance was a three year old and the oldest was eighty. There were a number of three generations in attendance. It was so good to see family coming together. We saw mothers and

grandmothers teaching their families and encouraging them to come to the retreat. Family is so important!

Ann Nunnally, Jennifer Blake, Kari Martin and Doris Stricklin put the retreat together. These ladies and others worked very hard so we could have a good meeting that would mean a lot to all. Lessons presented showed the reasons we need to become one in the Lord. The theme was “One In The Lord.” We all were so happy to see Jane and Minnie. Jane had the Questions and Answers session. This time is always eye opening to the Word. Jane gets her answers from God’s Word and tells us just where to find the answers in the Bible.

In the group picture you can see we still have room for more ladies to attend. Let us all try to fill it up. There are two handicap cabins for those who may have

special needs. A year goes by so fast, so plan for September 23,24, 2016. Mothers bring your daughters and granddaughters. Being together at the retreat will help bring you closer together as you learn about women of the Bible and their part in God’s Word.

We need to thank Jane Maynard, Stella Winters and Minnie Young for having the love and friendship to start this retreat. They worked together for eighteen years teaching God’s Word. They have now turned the retreat over to new leaders. We all need to support our Christian sisters in spreading God’s word through the retreat which has been going on for more than twenty years. Mark your calendars and plan to attend the retreat in 2016. Hope to see you there. God bless and keep you all. (Report given to MM by Betty Moss)



Ann Nunnally, Jennifer Blake, Kari Martin and Doris Stricklin Group -- Sardis retreat

HUNTSVILLE LADIES' DAY

“It Was a Wonderful Day”

The ladies of Huntsville church of Christ, French Camp, MS, hosted Ladies' Day October 24, 2015. Our theme for the day was “In Times like These--You Need a Savior!”

It was a wonderful day beginning with a light breakfast, followed by our Ladies' Day program, and ending with lunch. Our keynote speaker, Prissy Sellers, used her personal experiences to urge those present to rely completely on Jesus who she explained is the only true source of “hope” in times like these.

Prissy used many scriptures in her presentation; however, these two served as a foundation: “And my God will meet all our needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever, Amen.” Philippians 4: 19. “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;” Hebrews 6:19

Prissy's presentations were about the hard “times” and the good “times” in her personal life.



Prissy Sellers

Her struggles and joys are very similar to anyone's struggles (the death of a parent, illness and death of a spouse, and financial struggles) and to anyone's joys (births of children, marriages of children and births of grandchildren). Prissy stated that throughout the years, she and her husband felt the “hand of God's presence; guiding and directing our lives and our paths.” She described their lives as “always being surrounded by water and weathering the treacherous waves, tossing and turning at random... never sinking... always staying afloat.” She attributes be-

ing able to stay afloat to Jesus who is the anchor in times like these, both difficult and joyful!

During her final presentation, Prissy explained a program, “Missing Link Children's Tutorials,” that she installed in the local congregations where she is a missionary. The Missing Link Missions is an evangelistic tool through which local Filipino congregations can reach out to their surrounding communities using God's word. Over the span of five years, 400 souls (and counting) have responded to the gospel of Christ!

Prissy Sellers, from Park Hills, MO, is a missionary, having worked in many countries including Philippines, Malawi, Ghana, Zambia, Nigeria, Uganda, and Tanzania. Her father was in the military; consequently, she grew up in Japan, Italy, and Germany! She attended Oklahoma Christian College and completed her education at Harding Graduate School of

Religion in Memphis, TN.

Prissy and her late husband served together in the mission field for years before settling in the Philippines and serving as missionaries for twelve years. They had four children who also served with them before their father died and continue to serve with her now. Since her husband's death several years ago, Prissy is continuing her mission work in foreign fields teaching women and children, teaching in prisons, working with camps and VBS's, and writing articles for magazines. She also counsels and encourages others who are walking with the LORD. Prissy stated, “Through it all. God [her anchor] has sustained me, provided for me, challenged me, loved me, and blessed me. I am indeed blessed among women!”

*Judy Lollar
Huntsville church of Christ
French Camp, MS*

The Gospel Under A Tree

by Les Ferguson, Sr.



As a result of our work in the State of Guanajuato, Mexico, a man and his wife obeyed the gospel in the city of Comonfort. Their names: Aleyandro and Judith Oladle. They have four children of which two have also been obedient to the gospel. The other two are not quite old enough to make that kind of decision. Due to circumstances beyond Aleyandro's control, the church had some problems and lost their preacher.

At that point the church needed some men to step up to the plate and keep the church together and going forward. Aleyandro and another young man by the name of Ismael Galvin stepped up. They took on the responsibility of teaching, leading singing, praying and preaching. Along the way they both entered our branch school of preaching in San Miguel. They and their wives graduated in July 2014.

We then asked Ismael Galvin if he would be willing to relocate his family to the city of Juventino Rosas and plant the church there. He and his wife agreed. Then we asked Aleyandro to take on the work in Comonfort fulltime. He and his wife agreed. Both of these men and their families are doing good work and the churches in Comonfort and Juventino Rosas are growing.

This past summer Aleyandro asked me if it would be okay if he went to a small community called San Pablo on Sunday afternoons in an effort to preach the gospel there. Of course I said “Yes!” I asked him why this community which is located about a 20 minute drive from Comonfort. He said,

“Because I grew up there and I want to give those people an opportunity to know Jesus.”

So, he and his physical brother, Miguel, who is also a Christian, went out to San Pablo on a Sunday afternoon at 3:30. They found a tree in a good location and secured permission to do a devo under it. They sang a number of hymns, prayed and read scripture out loud and then left. The next Sunday they did the same thing. And the next. After about the fourth Sunday afternoon one man from the community came and joined them.

On Sunday afternoon, October 4, 2015, John Gardner (elder/preacher for the N. Brandon church in Brandon, MS) and I also joined them. On this day they moved from the tree to an individual's yard. There were 28 from the community present and it started under a tree! John led a prayer and I delivered the sermon. Aleyandro and Miguel led the singing. What an encouraging service and it had its birth under a tree!

On Friday, October 16, Don Roberson (preacher for the Ashland, MS church) and I were with Aleyandro and I asked him what his long range thoughts were for San Pablo. Without hesitation he said, “I want to see a church planted there.” Don Roberson could be heard saying AMEN! I believe it will happen. And when it does, we will be reminded that it started under a tree with two brothers singing, praying, and reading out loud God's word.

Would to God that each of us could find a tree in a place that needs a church and do what they have done!

Les serves as a missionary to Mexico on behalf of the South Huntington Street church of Christ in Kosciusko. Address: Les Ferguson, Sr.; P. O. Box 1399; Kosciusko, MS 39090 or E-mail: lfergusonmm@hotmail.com

Now You Take It From There

John Simpson

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By John Simpson

By an Associated Press release we learn that *The Freedom From Religion Foundation* has sent 22 letters to law enforcement agencies in Missouri and one each to Cave City, Arkansas police department and to Hemstead County, Arkansas sheriff's department requesting the removal of "In God We Trust" decals from their patrol cars. Their Reason: "Non-religious citizens may feel intimidated if stopped by police cars with the logo on them".

All U. S. currency that I have examined, both printed and coined, proudly advertises in bold print:



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN GOD WE TRUST

Unexplainable about this is, the officer(s) in the patrol car may carry as much of this currency, visible or in his/her pockets, display it across the counter while in uniform, to pay one of these atheists for goods and services, without question. We live "in the land of the free and the home of the brave", with the constitutional right to express ones religious preference. "In God We Trust" is not just a phrase, it is a fact!

The God of creation is, without debate, the God of the universe! He speaks to us through all creation and through His Word. David phrases it well:

"The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words that their voice is not heard" (Psalm 19: 1-3).

When America quits trusting in God she will surrender to Satan and become a socialistic society; then a communist nation, driven by atheism.

Then we must "preach the word, be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching" (II Tim. 4: 2), declaring: "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4: 12) *ESV*. In God we trust and through Christ we are saved!

And another thing; I am grateful that my money has "AMERICA" and "GOD" written on it in bold capital letters!



Readers' Response

Comments & Suggestions Invited (Criticisms Considered)

■ Dear MM,
Greetings on this lovely day. I am writing in regards to the Magnolia Messenger. You and your staff are doing an excellent job proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world. Please keep up the good works. Thank you. Sincerely in Christ Jesus, (Reginald Davis, Homer, LA)

■ Dear Bro. Franks & Ms. June,
I love reading the Magnolia Messenger. Keep up the great work. You both are wonderful people. Would you please send a friend of mine the Magnolia Messenger? Thank you so much. (Lila Wilson, Paris, TN)

■ Enclosed is a check for the good work Magnolia Messenger does. (Robert McCory)

■ I love "Magnolia Messenger." Thank you for sending it to me. Thanks. (Celia Hopkins)

■ Dear Bro. Franks,
I do enjoy your publication and read all of it. The new format is easier to read. Thank you for all your efforts in glorifying our God with your good works. In Him, (Madonna Langford)

■ Dear Magnolia Messenger,
I appreciate the Messenger, even though I haven't lived in Mississippi for many years. I read about what others are doing and even get some ideas now and then. I appreciated Bro. May's article about Homosexuals and felt he was spot on in his assessment of the problem. (Monroe Bentley, Prairie Grove, AR)

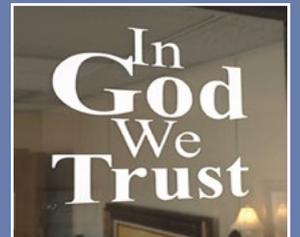
■ Dear Friends,
May God bless you in this good work. We pray for you. Please remember us in your prayer. In Christian love, (Jerry & Jean Lewis, Okolona, MS)

■ Greetings to all the Franks!
Wishing you and the Magnolia Messenger much continued success. Also "good" health and happiness! Thanks, (Bonnie Strickland, Brandon, MS)

■ Dear Brother Franks,
I received the Magnolia Messenger recently. What a surprise and blessing. I am sending a donation for the furtherance of the Messenger. In Christian Love, (Russell Grimmitt, Tuscumbia, AL)

"In God We Trust"

If you would like a decal to put on your car or other windows, please send \$3.00 to Doug Berry, Enterprise Blvd church of Christ 2801 Enterprise Blvd Lake Charles, LA 70601.



MAGNOLIA Messenger

IN MEMORY OF

<p>FLOYD BLAIR Mattie Owens (Chattanooga, TN)</p>	<p>SHIRLEY FOWLER Hart & Sandra Chamblee (Duck Hill, MS)</p>	<p>BILL BUCK Mr. Charles L. Conley, Jr. (Paragould, AR)</p>	<p style="color: green; font-weight: bold;">In HONOR of</p> <p style="font-weight: bold;">BILL & HELEN LAMBERT</p> <p>Bonnie Strickland (Brandon, MS)</p>
<p>LILLIE L. WILLIAMS Pamela Nichols (Haughton, LA)</p>	<p>BOBBY IVY ASHLEY H. SANDERS Teresa Anderson (Philadelphia, MS)</p>	<p>EVIE G. SMITH Terry Miltner (Coldwater, MS)</p>	
<p>JAMES "BUTCH" DAVIS Carol A. Davis (Maryville, TN)</p>	<p>W. L. "DUB" KEMP Jerry & Shirley Sanders (Ackerman, MS)</p>	<p>CARLTON CRANE Jan Crane (Fulton, MS)</p>	

In addition to the name of the person being memorialized or honored, please include your name and address and the address of a family member to whom a written acknowledgement may be sent.

Thanks from the Franks



Next MM RV Rally • April 26-29, 2016

Beautiful Lake Tiak-O-Khata in Louisville, MS

(Read article on page 2 and/or call Paul Franks at 662-792-2700 for more information)



from Paul's Pen

Calhoun, LA Church Celebrates 50th Anniversary

Glenda and I were privileged to be in Calhoun, LA on the second weekend of September where we attended the 50th Anniversary of the Calhoun Church of Christ. Also that same weekend was the 22nd annual *Prayer Enrichment Workshop* which was attended by people from several states. An entire workshop on the subject of prayer was a faith strengthening event. **Keith Roberts**, who has been the preacher for this congregation since 1981, has spent much of his life encouraging the church to be more focused on prayer.

According to the history of the church, "In January of 1966, **Percy Keene** became the congregation's first full time preacher. During that year, 54 people were baptized into Christ and the membership rose to 110 with a contribution of \$250.00" **Jerry Keene**, the son of the late Percy Keene, who preaches for the Farmerville Church of Christ, northwest of Monroe, spoke at the anniversary service.

J. L. Barnard and **Keith Roberts** serve the church as its elders. The congregation worked hard for that weekend, making all of us who were visiting to feel at home. The Calhoun church in North Louisiana is already planning their 23rd Annual Prayer Workshop for the second weekend of September, 2016.

Church Celebrates 40 Years in Bay St Louis

The church of Christ in Bay St Louis, on the beautiful Mississippi Gulf Coast, recently celebrated their 40th Anniversary. On Sunday, October 4, 2015, the church had special services, a fellowship meal and singing. Normally, between 60 to 80 people assemble at 501 Pine Street in Bay St Louis to worship God in spirit and truth. During the month of September, we were pleased to learn that 14 new people have asked to be identified with this congregation. **Charlie Buckley** has been their preacher since 1989.

On the anniversary Sunday, the church in Dickson, TN was represented.

This church has helped the Bay St Louis congregation from the beginning. **Bobby Cathey**, one of the elders of the Dickson congregation, and his family were in attendance.

The Bay St Louis church suffered great loss when Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast in 2005. This church was encouraged greatly by assistance received from brethren around the nation. Most of the members had to leave the area and it has taken months, even years, for folks to return. Even today, as you drive along the coast, you realize that many have still not returned to the coast.

Former members came from other states to attend this special day. Also, **Tommy Gaither** and his wife came from Texarkana, AR and **Don and Jean Delukie** came from the Jackson Street congregation in Monroe, LA. Tommy preached for the Orange Grove congregation in Gulfport many years ago during the time that Charlie came to the coast. Don is a former teacher of Charlie and is currently working with the Sterlington congregation north of Monroe.

Charlie preached a great message on the Sunday of our drop-in visit, stressing that we still have a "ministry of reconciliation" to preach and that people still need Christ -- more than ever! He concluded his remarks by saying that he was 'looking forward to the next 40 years.'" (Paul Franks)



May we never forget that the youth are vital to every church!



Charlie Buckley



Don Delukie



Tommy Gaither

"A Drop In Visit"

At Archibald

I have heard of the Archibald, LA congregation for most of my life. My father, Al Franks conducted gospel meetings with this congregations in years past. Glenda and I enjoyed our first visit with this church a few weeks ago and were thankful to find a very vibrant congregation out in the country, a few miles from Rayville, LA.

One of the first things I was told was that my father's picture was on a bulletin board back in their fellowship hall. I was also told that many of their members took their first airplane ride, over 40 years ago, with my father as the pilot.



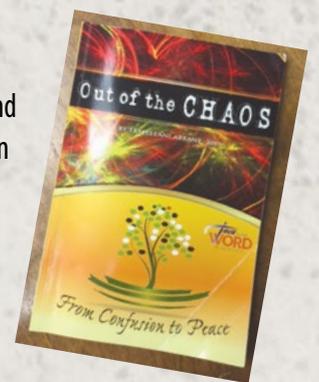
Travis Arrant has served as the full-time preacher for the Archibald congregation during the last eight years. (Attendance runs between 70 to 80 people each and every



service!) Brother Travis has stressed working with young people in his ministry. He oversees a "Bible Challenge" program for area congregations of the Lord's church in northeast Louisiana. Travis and another preacher co-sponsor a kickball league for the area Christian youth.

Travis also has recently written a book entitled "Out of the Chaos, From Confusion to Peace". I have read the book and would encourage you to get your own copy. There are two ways to order the book: (a) Call Travis at 318-547-8565 or (b) go to his website: www.truetothewordministry.com. This book is the

"compelling story of one man's journey from religious confusion to the peace and harmony of the New Testament. Written in a friendly, conversational style, the book is an excellent evangelistic tool to lead others to Christ. Non-confrontational in tone, Out of the Chaos



demonstrates how to use the Bible only in a simple, systematic approach in guiding others to Christ. This is a book you will want to share with loved ones and friends."



DROP IN VISITS

Pine Vale and Wenasoga

Several weeks ago, Glenda and I had the opportunity to visit Pine Vale Children's Home in North Mississippi. A great friend, **Tommy Baragona**, has been serving as Director; however, he is working his way *out of a job* and Randy Collum, who serves as Campus Manager, is working his way *into that job*.

We also were blessed to visit the Wenasoga congregation, which is around the corner from the campus of Pinevale and enjoyed a great Wednesday night service there. **G. W. Childs** and his wife, **Sherra**, have been with this congregation for many years. G.W. not only serves as the preacher but also one of the elders. The other elder is **Clarence Hinton**. **Larry Benjamin** taught a great class that night and **Chris Clevenger** led the singing. Chris and his wife, Melissa, are house parents at Pinevale and help as much as they can with the Wenasoga congregation as well. They bring their house filled with children to every service. We had a great visit! *For more information about PineVale you can call Randy at 662-286-6555.*



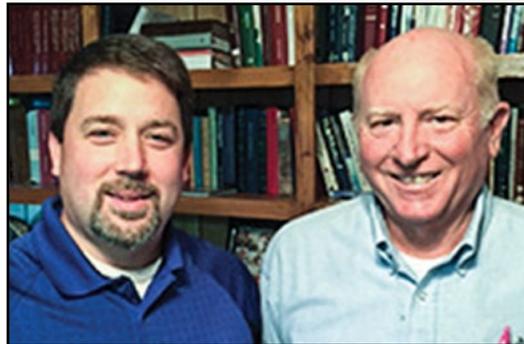
Iuka, MS—Glenda and I were in Iuka and went by the church building on a Saturday night. We found over 200 people there, about to eat a great catfish supper. We joined in and had a wonderful time. I was able to preach the next morning and really enjoyed our visit with the congregation and with **Lance Foster** who has been their preacher for many years. The church has two elders, **Dwight Pharr** and **Mikey Shea**. **Lamont Borden** and **Amos Shrock** serve as deacons.

Fulton, MS—Vladimir is a friend of mine from Vilnius, Lithuania. He was in this country a few weeks ago during which time I took him to several places including 21st Century Global Missions in Fulton, MS where we visited with J.C. Enlow and his family. Vladimir is working on raising funds to help with a very small church in Kaunas, Lithuania. His sponsoring church in the states is the Enterprise Blvd Church of Christ, 2801 Enterprise Blvd, Lake Charles, LA 70601. Vladimir needs our support and prayers.

Dennis, MS—We attended the Liberty Church of Christ and heard their preacher **David Conley** deliver a great lesson. We had the opportunity to tell the Liberty church about our work with the Magnolia Messenger. This is a wonderful congregation in North Mississippi. We plan to go back sometime soon. The congregation has four elders, **Harold Oswalt**, **Ron Deaton**, **Raymond Carr** and **Tommy Moody**.



Paul and Glenda Franks



Randy Collum and Tommy Baragona



Chris & Melissa Clevenger



J.C. Enlow and Vladimir Rancev

Searching for Preacher

■ Yazoo City, MS

The Yazoo City Church is looking for a sound dedicated Gospel preacher to work with them. They are looking for a man with pulpit experience who is willing to teach both publicly and privately. A three bedroom house is provided with a good salary and some expenses.

Please send resume, along with references, to Church of Christ; 1230 E. Broadway; Yazoo City, MS 39194. You may call Charles Fulgham at 662-746-5865

■ Ferriday, LA

The Ferriday Church in Ferriday, Louisiana, is seeking a full time minister. The congregation, consisting mostly of middle age to elderly, has 30 to 35 members. A brick home, located just down the street from the church building, is furnished. This would be a great work for an older preacher who would appreciate lots of opportunities to get into the community. The compensation package will be discussed with interested persons. Please contact by phone or email the following:

J. L. Barker; 601-870-2535; hjbarker@hughesn.net; Mike Barker; 318-719-0671; michaelbarker@bellsouth.net; Jamie McCartney; 225-933-9154; Jamiemccartney2@yahoo.com; Church of Christ; 1101 EE Wallace Blvd; Ferriday, LA 71334

■ Lucedale, MS

The Lucedale church in Lucedale, MS is in need of a full time preacher. They have an attendance of 60 to 70 each Lord's day and would be pleased to talk with interested preachers looking to relocate. Contact Ralph Tipton at 601-947-5045

Delta Enrichment Series

"Reaching the Lost"

Saturday, January 23, 2016

Speakers:

Ray Paseur

Kosciusko, MS

"Reaching the Lost in Foreign Missions"

Willie Nettle

Vicksburg, MS

"Reaching the Lost Across Barriers of Color and Culture"

Dennis Doughty

Tunica, MS

"Reaching the Unchurched"

Ken Joines

Southaven, MS

"Reaching the 'Churched' (Unfaithful)"

This seminar will include the "how to" of these subjects as well as practical suggestions for engaging in these efforts to win souls to Christ. Please make your plans now to be with us for these two great spiritual feasts.

Cleveland Church of Christ

212 Ronaldman Rd

Cleveland, Mississippi 38732

For more information on these events please contact the Cleveland church of Christ at

(662) 843-5073 or clevechurch@cableone.net
(Tim McCarter, Minister; Cleveland Church)

Are You Saved by

BAPTISM

“Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ”

(1 Peter 3:21, ESV).

By Will Anderson

Baptism is one of the most highly debated topics in the religious world. A current idea in religious circles is that one needs to be baptized to obey God, but not for salvation. Since when has obeying God become optional with salvation? Jesus states, “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). Others say that baptism is a work, and we cannot work our way to heaven. Many of those who teach that idea fail to realize that belief is defined as a “work” by Jesus. “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent” (John 6:29). Very few would deny that belief is necessary to our salvation. To be a good Bible student, we must be honest with ourselves and with scripture. Let’s notice what the Bible teaches about baptism.



Will Anderson

Baptism, when added to belief, leads to salvation

“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:16). Jesus, after His resurrection, tells his disciples to go and teach the good news of Jesus to the world. When explaining to them what one needs to do to be saved from sin, He puts belief and baptism together. Some very interesting arguments have been made in an effort to twist baptism out of this verse. Many of those arguments go against the logical use of English grammar. Because the coordinating conjunction, and,

connects belief and baptism, it shows that both have equal value. Both acts are necessary to achieve the result, being saved.

Much is made of the last part of the verse, but one must understand that the one who does not believe cannot be scripturally baptized. The latter part of the verse does not say “he who is not baptized shall be condemned” because it doesn’t have to. If one does not believe, he is condemned already, so it does not matter what else he does. “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18). Jesus’ statement in Mark 16:16 is clear. Will we believe Jesus, or not?

Thus far, we have noticed verses that connect baptism and salvation. While much of the religious world does not believe baptism is essential to our salvation, truth is determined by God’s Word, not a consensus. Let us notice some other verses which show the importance of baptism in the process of salvation.

Repentance and baptism lead to forgiveness

“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’” (Acts 2:38). When asked what to do to take care of the recognized sin problem, Peter answered the Jews very precisely. The request of the Jews showed their belief in what Peter was preaching, and their question shows a willingness to change. Based on their belief in Jesus, Peter told them that repentance and baptism would allow them to have their sins forgiven. The coordinating conjunction “and” is used to show the shared importance of both; one is not more important

than the other. That repentance and baptism lead to forgiveness should be obvious.

While some say the word translated “for” in the phrase “for the forgiveness of sins should be translated “because,” a simple study of another verse which uses the exact same Greek sentence construction will show us that is not the case. “For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28). In this verse, Jesus explains that His blood would be shed “for the remission of sins.” His blood was not shed because sins had already been forgiven. That would negate the Hebrew writer who described the necessity of the blood of Jesus; “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins” (Hebrews 10:4). What the word for means in Matthew 26:28, context shows it means the same in Acts 2:38.

If one were to ask what they needed to do to take care of their sin problem, shouldn’t we answer in the same way as Peter? “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.”

While there are many other passages which deal with the importance of baptism, let’s notice some of the reasons given by those who teach that baptism is not essential to salvation.

Again, we do not affirm that baptism alone

New Testament Conversions

Every conversion account in the book of Acts clearly states that baptism is a part of God’s plan for salvation.

**BELIEVE
REPENT
CONFESS
BAPTISM**

RV Rallies Provide

"A Little Taste of Heaven on Earth"

By Dean Caldwell

The 19th annual Louisiana-Texas RV Rally was held in October, 2015 at Salmon Lake Park in Grape-land, Texas. The "official" dates for the rally were Wednesday, October 14 through Sunday, October 17th, but as usual, several Christians began arriving several days early, and extended activities until Monday.

By Sunday evening October 10, twenty people were assembled together. On Monday evening that number increased to 31, to 41 on Tuesday, 63 on Wednesday, 81 on Thursday, and (with several members from the Crockett Road Church in Palestine present), a total of 110 were assembled on Friday night.

During the week, 26 RV's were parked around "The Sunshine Inn", the building where the rally activities were located. Several people stayed in cabins at Salmon Lake, or in nearby motels.

The theme of the rally was "If Life is a Bowl of Cherries, Why am I in the Pits?" Several lessons were presented to help Christians recognize and avoid the "Pits" of life, but with the joy, love, and fellowship shared at the rally, no one was in the "Pits" during that week.

On Wednesday evening **Ray Franks** presented a moving lesson on "The Pit of Apathy" and on Sunday morning during Bible Class hour gave a lesson on "The Pit of Unforgiveness". **Audrey Manuel** from Palestine, Texas spoke to the ladies on Thursday morning on "The Pit of Insecurity", while **Michael Hony** from Greenwood, Mississippi talked to the men on the subject, "The Pit of Unthoughtfulness".

A lesson on "The Pit of Bitterness" was presented by **Gary Selby**, minister for the church in DeQuincy, Louisiana on Thursday evening. **Dan Manuel**, minister of the Crockett Road Church in Palestine, Texas, gave a lesson on "The Pit of Political Apathy" on Friday evening, and a lesson on "The Pit of Fear" during the worship hour at the Crockett Road Church on Sunday morning.

Events on Friday evening featured an inspirational patriotic program, including a "Presentation of the Colors" by a veteran Honor Guard from Palestine, and a special tribute to veterans. Every veteran present was given a small gift in appreciation of their service, and a special award was given the oldest veteran.

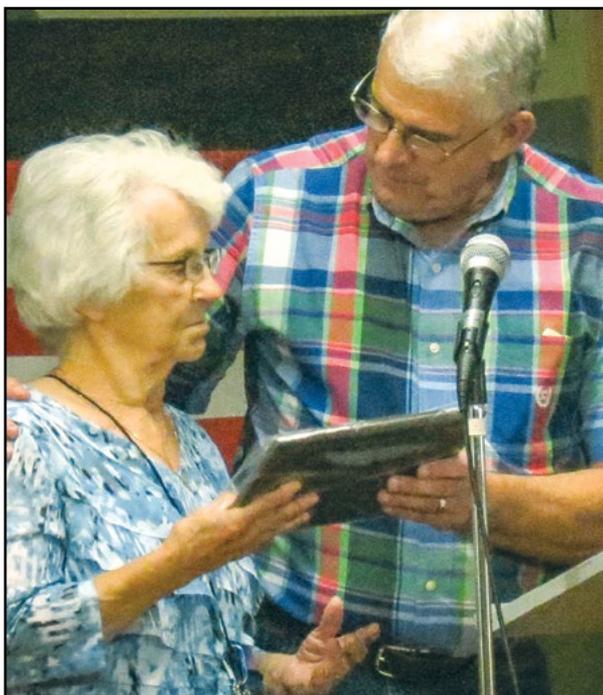
There was also a special time in memory of several

people who loved the rallies and have passed on within the past several months. These included **Ann Welch, Bill and Barbara Richards, Jerry Nisbett, Wilford "Pud" Waltman, and Velma DeLancey.**

John Morris of Palestine, an educator who has spent a lot of effort researching the history of the founding of The United States, gave an interesting and educational talk on the history on the meaning of The Declaration of Independence.

Also on Friday evening, **Garnett and Betty Harris** from Brandon, Mississippi were honored and presented a special plaque for their leadership, support, and dedication to the rallies. For the 2nd year in a row, the Harris's made it to the rally in spite of severe troubles. Last year they were in an accident on the way to the rally, and this year Garnett had health complications but was released by the doctor on Tuesday morning and was able to be at Grapeland by 10:00 P.M. that night! Through determination and dedication, they made it to the rally both years. Garnett and Betty also serve as hosts of the Magnolia Messenger RV rally held in Central Mississippi during the Spring.

We also honored **Elaine Byrd** with a special plaque for her continued expert medical and nursing help and advice to many rally members through the years. She has been on call at every rally without hesitation. She



Larry Askew caught delivering breakfast at RV rally. "More blessed to give than to receive,"

has also given of her talents to many with hand-made ornaments and gifts she created over the years. Her talents are truly appreciated.

The rally schedule provided ample time for fun and fellowship, with several scheduled entertainment events. Hours were spent, often late into the night, playing games, watching sports and even political programs on TV, and working on crafts. Several people helped **Dan Hawkins** assemble a 2000 piece jigsaw puzzle. **Morris Tirpitz**, with his mandolin, provided entertainment on Wednesday evening, opening with his traditional song about "When the Old Wagon was New". On Thursday evening several people selected at random to play "Price is Right", with some winning really nice prizes, and all enjoying the fun.

Dan Manual and **Joe Hancock** spent some time "Picking and Grinning" on Friday evening, singing with some patriotic songs and several old favorites. On Saturday morning the group enjoyed themselves by singing gospel hymns together. Several attended the "Dogwood Jamboree" on Saturday Night. The jamboree was a "Branson Style" country music show featuring several talented singers, musicians, and comedians. The show was produced and directed by Dan Manual.

And then there was the food. On Monday the group enjoyed smoked brisket. On Tuesday evening there was boiled and fried shrimp and brisket. On Wednesday there was Shrimp Etouffee, boiled and



At left, Elaine Byrd presented award by Glenn Franks. Above, Garnett and Betty Harris given special award by Ray Franks

“Christian Camping” Is It For Everyone?

By Paul Franks

Glenda and I purchased our first RV 23 years ago. I can easily remember this because we purchased it just before our son, Vincent, was born. Vincent was two weeks old when we decided to go camping at a campground north of Meridian. My parents came over the next day and spent the night -- sleeping on the couch. We really enjoyed that experience and got hooked on camping.

By 1998, my dad and I each had a RV. We decided to invite readers of the Magnolia Messenger to join with us in a rally to encourage each other and two small congregations near the campground. Our first rally in Mississippi led to a rally in Louisiana that moved later to Texas. Every year since then, we have been having two rallies in two states. We have enjoyed them and believe that much good has been done.

Carl and Cathy Powell from Florence, AL came to one of our rallies in central Mississippi a few years ago. Last year, we met the Powells again at the Diana Singing and talked about having a rally near their home. We decided on J. P. Coleman State Park, near Iuka, Mississippi. Ronnie Livingston and his wife, Kathy, who live in northeast Mississippi where Ronnie preaches for the Marietta church near Booneville, agreed to serve as rally masters, along with Carl and Cathy Powell.

When the time came, this past November, for our first NE MS Rally, we didn't know what to expect. But we were pleased and thankful. Several Mississippi folks, who attend our central MS rally, were in attendance, along with several new people including some from Tennessee, Alabama and even Florida.

I am thankful to have been involved in Christian youth camping for 38 years. As a result, I have seen first hand the encouragement received and the growth that develops when people of like kindred spirit spend time together in such an

environment. I especially saw this at the North East Mississippi rally even though most of the people who attended were older Christians. I was reminded anew how much we all need encouragement and support. Spending quality time together in a spiritual atmosphere (with Bible teaching, worship and Christian fellowship) is a great way to receive that encouragement. I believe all of us who attended this most recent rally got closer to God by getting closer to other faithful Christians.

As Glenda and I travel in visiting churches across the south, we realize that many of those who read and really enjoy the Magnolia Messenger are from smaller churches. When they read about other churches and other Christians growing in “love and good works” it becomes clear that we are all part of a big family, striving to please God and encourage one another on our way to heaven.

Several who came to our recent rally didn't have an RV. That's was no problem. J. P. Coleman State Park has a great lodge (motel) and very nice cabins. We have already set the date for next year's rally. It is November 2-5, 2016, at J. P. Coleman State Park. Also, we plan to have a rally at Lake Tiak-O'Khata in Louisville, Mississippi on April 26-29, 2016. We would love for you to make your plans now to attend one or both of these rallies and enjoy great Christian fellowship and be encouraged to do more for Christ and His church.



Ronnie Livingston gives award to Verne Ragle “Camper of the Week”



RV rallies provide opportunity for Christians to grow spiritually through worship and Bible teaching. There is also the blessing of making friends for life.

fried shrimp, and brisket. To top all that off, we had home-made ice cream. Grilled burgers and hot dogs was the fare on Thursday, and the traditional fish fry was the dinner on Friday. And all week a dessert and snack table was covered with all manner of cakes, pies, cookies, nuts, fruits, chips and other goodies, available 24 hours a day. Breakfast was prepared Saturday morning by **Michael & Candy Hony** and team, and the feasts were topped off by a “pot luck” lunch provided after services Sunday morning by the Crockett Road Church.



Refreshing Bible Study under the trees

A highlight of the week was the auction, held on Friday morning. A large number of really nice items of all types, donated by rally folks were auctioned and sold to folks attending the rally, with all proceeds going to finance the food, facilities, other costs associated with

the rally, and to other good Christian works. There were several real monetary bargains. But most items were sold at a price much higher than their monetary value, bringing great satisfaction to those who donated items and those who bought, knowing that both had made a great contribution to the success of the rally.

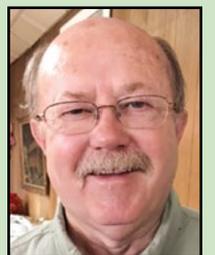
The entire group really appreciate **Ray and Donna Franks and Glen and Ena Franks** for their leadership, sacrifice, and work in planning, coordinating, and conducting the Louisiana-Texas Rally each year. Rally 2015 was great and folks are already looking forward to another great time in 2016. Our date for next year is October 12-15, 2016. As mentioned by Al Franks during the rally, participating in an RV Rally

with Christians you love and respect is like “a little taste of heaven on earth”.

Reported by **Dean Caldwell** of Vicksburg, Mississippi

Selby Serves DeQuincy Church

Gary Selby is the new preacher for the church in DeQuincy, Louisiana. He and his wife are natives of Texas and were baptized into Christ at 18 years of age. They have four grown children, all of whom have become Christians. In 1993, after working several years in the oil and gas industry, they set their purpose to give greater attention to the work of the Lord. Gary served as a teacher, deacon and elder before entering into the calling as a full time minister. His wife has served as a Bible teacher for all ages, from cradle roll to ladies' classes and as a Ladies' day speaker. He is a graduate of Sunset International Bible Institute in Lubbock and has a degree in ministry from Oklahoma Christian University. Before moving to DeQuincy he worked with congregations in Washington, Texas, North Carolina. It was a blessing to hear him speak and take his picture at the LA-TX RV Rally last October. (alf)



Preacher

Returns Home With Respect

(Don & Lynn Go Back to Ashland)



When the work and teaching of our Lord was not respected by his hometown of Nazareth, Jesus commented,

“A prophet is without honor only in his hometown, among his relatives, and in his own home”
(Mark 6:4).

Donald and Lynn Roberson grew up around Ashland, Mississippi. As an adult, Don got into the construction business; Lynn into the floral business. After a while, Don decided to change the direction of his life and enroll in Magnolia Bible College. After college, he and Lynn moved to Coffeeville where Don served several years as preacher for the church located NE of Grenada, MS. During their ministry at Coffeeville, more than 40 precious souls were baptized into Christ.

While enjoying a fruitful ministry at Coffeeville, Don learned that his home church in Ashland was going through some very



Don and Lynn Roberson

difficult times. Several calls were made to him, encouraging him to move back to his hometown and work with his home congregation. Finally, Don and Lynn accepted the challenge; although they realized the general principle of which Jesus spoke about a prophet (preacher) not being without honor except in his own country or among home-folks.

Thankfully, progress was soon clearly evident within the Ashland congregation. Attendance, which had gotten down into the 40's, bounced back up to more than 80 on a regular basis. During this year the church has been blessed with nine baptisms and 12 restorations.

One of the first things Don and the church did was to make sure they had a functioning baptistery. Also, during the first year, the members remodeled much of the church building and reworked the preacher's house.

Their weekly contribution has risen from eight or nine hundred dollars per week to more than \$1,500.00! This past April, during homecoming, 136 people were in attendance.

When Glenda and I arrived at the church building, on a recent Saturday afternoon, it didn't take long for us to be invited into Lynn and Don's home for the evening meal. We learned that almost every member of the Ashland church has been welcomed into the Roberson's home for a meal during the last year.

The next day, Lynn prepared Sunday lunch. They had invited a couple who were not members to come eat with them. We were invited as well. That Sunday over 100 people were in attendance for worship services.

Regarding church growth, Don quoted **Ray Paseur** and **Les Ferguson, Sr.** (MBC instructors) concerning some things he had learned from them. He mentioned ten suggestions that he continues to work on daily. They are:

1. Love the church.
2. Pray.
3. Be friends to everybody.
4. Work, work, work.
5. Be a peacemaker.
6. Preach the truth in love.
7. Remember: “Activity breeds activity.”
8. Have a friend, and be a friend.
9. Seek wise counsel.
10. Conduct two evangelism workshops each year.

Don Roberson realizes that, in his work as a preacher, he is fighting the devil and not some individual. He says that this thought helps him in his ministry. He also mentioned **John T. Smithson** (another MBC instructor) teaching him what it means to “lead from below” and that



“iron sharpens iron” in learning to deal with criticism and leading people.

Another person who has had an impact on Don is **Eddie Lawson**. Eddie encouraged Don to use the “Gospel Scroll” method in his Bible Studies with others. If you would like more information, you can contact Don Roberson at 662-229-6533. His mailing address is: Ashland Church of Christ, P. O. Box 25, Ashland, MS 38603.

It was obvious to Glenda and me just how important Don's wife, Lynn, is to him and his ministry. Don told about some advice he had gotten from **David Lipe**. David said, “Bake Apple Pie.” Everyone likes apple pie, so the idea is, “Take apple pies to people and study the Bible with them and/or invite folks to your house for apple pie and study the Bible with them.”

We enjoyed our visit with this growing congregation during the first weekend in November, 2015. We really enjoyed the singing led by **Sam Ford**. We were pleased to meet Sam's mother, **Collette Ford**, who is the oldest member of the congregation at the age of 94. One of the last quotes Don shared with me was learned from **Thurman Hodge** who was heard to say, “If you start looking for God, you will not find Him; He will find you.” We believe that Don and Lynn Roberson and the church at Ashland are doing a good job in encouraging people to look for God. We join with them in thanking the Good Lord. (Paul Franks)



Collette Ford (Active at 94)

Bible Questions & Answers

Continued from page 3

An Examination of Romans 9

An important text for this discussion is one concerning Jacob and Esau in Romans 9. "But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but 'Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.' This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. For this is what the promise said: 'About this time next year I will return and Sarah shall have a son.' And not only so, but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call—she was told, 'The older will serve the younger.' As it is written, 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.'" (Romans 9:10-13).

Then Paul discusses Esau and Jacob, a pivotal passage for Calvinists. "And not only so, but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call—she was told, 'The older will serve the younger.' As it is written, 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated'" (Romans 9:10-13).

Two things need to be observed about this passage.

1) Election is not for salvation or damnation but for where these twins will fit in God's scheme to bring Christ into the world through Abraham's seed. The Bible does not give us a definitive word, as far as I know, as to whether Esau was saved or lost eternally. For a certainty, that is not the issue in this context. "The older will serve the younger," said by God at the time of their birth (Genesis 25:23), means Jacob rather than Esau will be the patriarch of the family through whom God will bring His Son Jesus into the world.

2) This election does not concern Jacob and Esau individually but the nations that descended from them. The quotation, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" is from Malachi 1:2-3, following the return of the exiles to their land after the Babylonian captivity.

The structure of most of Malachi is: God makes a statement, the people of Israel question the statement and God justifies His statement. In this oracle God says, "I have loved you." The exiles complain. They realize they have been returned to their land, their walls and temple have rebuilt, but they do not have nearly the same richness and glory they once had. So they ask, "How have you loved us?" God responds by saying, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." "Jacob" is "Israel," the nation, the exiles following their return from

Babylonian captivity. "Esau" is Edom, the nation descended from Esau (Genesis 36:8). God reminds "Jacob" that "Esau" has not been returned to their land. "Esau I have hated. I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert." He goes on to say he will not allow it to be rebuilt and Israel will see and realize how God has blessed them far more than He has blessed Edom. (Malachi 1:2-5).

Humanity's Free Will

Calvinists maintain that God's sovereignty requires that nothing happens that God does not decree; therefore humans cannot be free to disobey God. It is reasonable, however, for it to be God's sovereign will to make humans free will beings so we could worship, love, obey and have fellowship with Him because we wanted to rather than because we were programmed to and had no other choice. Men and women are free to obey or disobey God, because God decided to make us that way. We are not free, however, to avoid the consequences of our disobedience, and even in our disobedience we cannot thwart the ultimate will of God.

Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Exodus 8:15,32) before God hardened his heart (Exodus 9:14 ff.). God needed a stubborn despot so He could bring all ten plagues on Egypt to show His glory and power over each of the gods worshipped by the Egyptians (Romans 9:17). He used Pharaoh, as Pharaoh was, to accomplish His own purpose.

Judas was "a devil" (John 6:70-71) and a thief (John 12:6), and he showed himself to be a betrayer. A betrayer was needed to deliver Jesus into the hands of those who would kill Him. The party of the chief priests delivered Him up because they envied Him (Matthew 27:18). The Romans participated in His crucifixion because they were motivated almost entirely by a desire to keep down riots and public protests. All had their sinful attitudes and motivations, but God used them all to carry out His plan for our redemp-

tion. "This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men." (Acts 2:23).

It is abundantly clear from Scripture that God's invitation to salvation is open to all and everyone has the ability to respond in obedient faith, whoever is willing to receive the salvation He offers by His grace. "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and

learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:28-29). "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (John 12:32). "The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price" (Revelation 22:17).

The invitation is yours, and everyone's.



Mayfield Church (Saltillo) Has New Preacher

Kevin Williams and his wife, Lyn, have recently moved to Saltillo, MS, just north of Tupelo to work with the Mayfield Church of Christ. Kevin joins Adam Miller where both serve as ministers of this congregation. Kevin has his Masters of Divinity with an emphasis in Marriage and Family Therapy from Amridge University. Kevin, who has been preaching for many years, spent the last 20 years working with the Lord's church in Benton, KY. Kevin's brother, Gary, preaches for the East Main church in Tupelo. We welcome Kevin and his family to Mississippi.

The Ladies of the Siwell Road Church of Christ
Invite you to our annual

LADIES'DAY

BACK →
For
The **FUTURE**

Modern Applications from the Old Testament

Our Speaker this year will be
Sister Sarah Fallis
of North Richland Hills, Texas

March 19, 2016

Registration begins at 9:00
We will begin our worship at 9:30
Lunch will be provided

We hope you will plan to attend!

Siwell Road Church of Christ

4075 Siwell Road • Jackson MS 39212

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



EDDIE LEWIS

Antioch church of Christ - July 5:

I was invited to preach at the Antioch church of Christ in Independence, MS where I have preached several times and always enjoyed my visits with the brethren there. They have around 35 in attendance and no elders. Three preachers rotate speaking for them.

Howard Scruggs led the singing. This Sunday I finished my study of Matthew 25 with the parable of the sheep and goats (verses 31-46). It is a very vivid picture of the Second Coming and gives us a basic standard for judgment. In the worship I preached on "Down, But Not Out" based on 1 Corinthians 1:1-11. Paul talks about the great comfort we have in Jesus to face the trials of life.

Liberty church of Christ - July 12:

I visited with the Liberty church of Christ in Dennis, MS. **David Conley** has been the minister there for two years. He was a part-time preacher for several years before the elders at Liberty asked him to come and preach for them. This is his first full-time ministry. He is a graduate of Heritage University.

Jimmy Moody is the youth minister. They are served by four elders and have around 200 in attendance. They help with several mission works and have an active *Lads to Leaders* program. One thing that really impressed me is their new program developed by Jimmy for the children in kindergarten to fifth grade. It is a rotation model Bible school called "Libertyland." All the children rotate each week between five learning centers. The children love it and the parents are excited to see their children learning so much. It's a great program.



Jimmy Moody and David Conley

David taught the adult Bible class. He began a new study of the Gospel of Mark. He had several handouts and gave a wonderful introduction to the book. In worship David preached on "Everyone Is On A Path" based on Matthew 7:12-14. He did a wonderful job of illustrating this important truth. He did say everyone always thinks of the destination, but the path we take will determine the destination. It was a good lesson. I enjoyed meeting the brethren there.

Potts Camp church of Christ - July 19:

I was invited to speak Sunday for the meeting at Potts Camp church of Christ. I appreciate so much the invitation to be a part of this special effort. **William Coats** is the preacher there. They have around 45 in attendance, but Sunday they had 111 because of *Friends and Family Day*. It's always a joy to visit with the brethren there. The meeting lasted until Wednesday night. The other speakers were **James Horton, Mike King,** and **Benny Braswell**.

In Bible class, **Eric Franks** from the Oak Ridge church in Baldwyn, MS was the teacher. His lesson centered on "Problems Facing The Church." He emphasized that there are some problems we must fix if the church is to grow in the future. It was a good lesson and challenged all of us.

In worship I presented a lesson on the "Freedom Of Forgiveness" based on Matthew

18:21-35. It's a wonderful lesson on the nature of divine forgiveness. In the afternoon service I spoke on "Seeking The Lost" based on Luke 15. It's a lesson that challenges all of us to reach out to others and bring them home. It was a good day.



Eric Franks, Eddie Lewis and Jerry Coats

Westside church of Christ - July 22:

I was invited to speak at the Westside church of Christ in Searcy, AR. **Steve Reeves** is the minister there. They have around 700 in attendance in the summer. I was invited to be part of their Summer Series. Each of the speakers considered different chapters in the book of Acts. My chapter was Act 12, "Waking Up To A Miracle." It's the story of Peter's imprisonment and his miraculous escape with the help of an angel. It's a great lesson on the power of prayer. I did have the pleasure of eating dinner with **Steve and Tami Reeves** and **Don and Doris Yates**. It was good to see old friends.

Tishomingo church of Christ - July 26:

I visited with the Tishomingo church of Christ. **David Lambert** is the bi-vocational preacher there. He works at one of the factories and with the church. Tishomingo is his home town. The church has around 35 in attendance and no elders. **David and Michelle** had just returned from Maywood camp. He talked about their fun week at camp. It was good to see them again. I have known David from my days in Cleveland. He was the minister at Indianola at the time.

In Bible class they are studying the Gospel of Mark. They were in chapter 4. David talked about the parable of the seed and the lessons it has for us today. It was a good lesson. In worship he presented the lesson, "Back To The Basics" based on Romans 15:1-13. He said, "When you are in a slump, you must go back to the basics." He had some good points about energizing our faith, fortifying our hope, activating our love, enhancing our joy and enjoying our peace. It was a good lesson.



Michelle and David Lambert

Second Street church of Christ - August 2:

I visited with the Second Street church of Christ in Belmont, MS. **Adam Cozort** has been the minister there for five years. He is a graduate of the Tri-Cities School of Preaching in Elizabethton, TN. He is married to **Shea Cozort** and they have five boys all under the age of 10. The church has no elders and their attendance is around 42. They have a good mix of ages. The Sunday I was there they announced opening a playroom for the children so they would have a place to go before and after services.

Adam taught the Bible Class. They are studying the book of 1 Corinthians. They were in chapter 12. Adam discussed the miraculous gifts and what their use was in the first century. It was a good lesson. In worship Adam's lesson was from Matthew 8-10. He discussed, "Five Stumbling Blocks that make Christianity appear unattractive to others." He mentioned that it appears unattractive because of the lack of worldly attachments, because it produces uncertainty and fear, because one must accept things that defy human reasoning, because of persecutions and ridicule, and because it can produce family problems. It was a good lesson warning all of us about the challenges we face from the world when we accept Christ.



Adam, Shea and Elijah Cozort

Germantown church of Christ - August 9:

I was invited to be one of the speakers for Mission Sunday at the Germantown church of Christ. I am sponsored by the church, so I was invited to speak Sunday night. It was great to see everyone and visit on this special day.

In the Bible class **Sasha Maluga** from the Ukraine gave a video report about his work in Ukraine. The country is involved in a civil war, so everyone was concerned about Sasha and his family. After the video **Leslie Williams** gave a report about his work in Canada. It was good to see him and hear about the many works being done in Canada. In the worship Leslie spoke on the "Wrath of God" from Romans 1:18. He did an excellent job of picturing the mind of the person that doesn't believe in God and what we must do to reach that person with the Gospel message.

Sunday night **David Escue** gave a report about several short term mission trips by members in the congregation. There are lots of wonderful works being done. I gave a report about my work in north Mississippi and then presented a lesson on the call of Peter, James and John to be fishers of men in Luke 5:1-11. In Matthew 9:37-38, Jesus calls all of us to open our eyes and see the fields white unto harvest. I enjoyed being home and seeing so many wonderful friends and family at Germantown.



Leslie Williams

Mantachie church of Christ - August 16:

I visited with the Mantachie church of Christ in Mantachie, MS. **Larry Lott** has been the preacher there for nine years. He has worked in several small churches throughout the state of Mississippi. Larry is a graduate of the former three year preaching program at FHU. Larry's wife, **Judy**, is a retired school teacher. The church there has no elders and around 30 in attendance. They are in the middle of making some improvements to their building. It will look good when they are finished.

Larry taught the Bible class. They have been studying the book of Job. He talked about Elihu's speech to Job about why he was being punished by God. Larry made some good points about our faith being tested today. In the worship service, Larry preached on "The Bible and Light." He considered several passages that contrast light and darkness. He said, in the spiritual sense, the light stands for truth. He talked about the consequences of not having the light, why some people prefer darkness, why light and darkness are incompatible, Jesus as the light of the world, and the Christian is to radiate the light of Christ. It was a good lesson. I enjoyed my visit with the church.



Larry and Judy Lott

Antioch church of Christ - August 23:

I was invited to preach at the Antioch church of Christ in Independence, MS. I have preached there many times and enjoy visiting with the wonderful Christian folks who attend. They have around 30 in attendance. **Bob Chambers** lead the singing.

In Bible classes we considered the "Parable of the Weeds" in Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43. It's an interesting study about the coexistence of good and evil in the world and the kingdom. Jesus will separate the good and the evil in the harvest or Judgment. In worship I preached on "The Abundance of the Heart" from Matthew 12: 33-37. Jesus tells us that a man's heart is revealed by the words he says. We will be condemned or justified by the words we say. If our heart is good we will speak words of encouragement and righteousness. So we must fill our hearts with good things.



Dot and Bob Chambers

Bean's Ferry church of Christ - August 30

Glenn Daily, one of my elders, and I visited the Bean's Ferry church of Christ near Fulton, MS. I appreciate so much Glenn going with me. I always enjoy his fellowship. **Steven Shappley** is the minister there. He is a graduate of MBC and FHU. He also works part-time with Global Missions. The church has two elders and about 55 in attendance. They are involved in several ministries and help with the Pine Vale Children's Home in Corinth.

In Bible class **John Wilson**, one of the members, taught the class. They are using a study book by **Wendell Winkler**, "Things That Accompany Salvation." The subject for the day was "The Power of the Gospel." They discussed some words in scripture that show the power of the Gospel. It was an interesting study. In the worship, Steven preached on "Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall receive Mercy" based on Matthew 5:7. He defined mercy as compassion. He asked the questions: What is mercy? Should we always show mercy? And, can we be saved without mercy? It was a great lesson.



Beth and Steven Shappley

Antioch church of Christ - September 6:

September 6: I was invited to preach for the Antioch church of Christ in Independence, MS. I have been there many times before and always enjoy seeing the brethren there. This week **Sundar Maddala** and his family went with me. Sundar wanted to see what I do when I visit with churches. He felt it might help him when he returns to India to take over his late father's ministry. I enjoyed getting to know him and his family better. We had a good discussion over our noon meal.

In Bible classes I considered the parable of the two men praying in the Temple from Luke 18: 9-17. It's a wonderful lesson on humbling ourselves before God when we pray. Jesus said he told this parable for those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt. In worship I presented a lesson on "The Fields are White unto Harvest" from Luke 5: 1-11 and Matthew 9:35-38. Jesus calls Matthew, James, and John to be fishers of men. We all are given the commission by Jesus to open our eyes and see the harvest of souls waiting for the reapers to come. What a great challenge.



Asha, Sundar and Sarayu Maddala

Tilden church of Christ - September 13:

I visited with the Tilden church of Christ outside of Fulton, MS. **Jeff Bates** has been the preacher there for four years and serves as one of the elders. He also teaches math at the Itawamba Community College. He is a graduate of Ole Miss and MSOP. His father, **Jimmy**, preaches in Nettleton, MS in Monroe County. His cousin is **Michael Bates** who preaches in Batesville, MS. The church has three elders and around 65 in attendance. I enjoyed my visit with Jeff and getting to meet the brethren.

Jeff taught the Bible Class. They are using material from **Wendell Winkler**. They are looking at 1 Corinthians, "Solving Problems God's Way." They were in chapter 6 which is a study of the problem of litigation and immorality in the church. They talked about problem solving between brethren and used Matthew 18. It was a good discussion. We do need to practice forgiveness. In worship, Jeff preached on the theme, "Does Jesus Really Care?" He said that God showed He cares by declaring His love for His children in the sacrifice of His Son for our sins. It was a good lesson.



Angelia and Jeff Bates

September 27: I had the honor of speaking at the Homecoming service at the Pine Bluff church of Christ in Toccopola, MS. It was wonderful to see everyone and they had twice their normal attendance. The church is served by two wonderful bi-vocational ministers, **Nathan Swanson** and **Luc Michaud**. It was a great time of fellowship.

In Bible class, I presented a lesson on the Parable of the Weeds, Matthew 13:24-30. It's a good lesson on the existence of evil in our world and the reality of a final separation of good and evil in our world. In worship I preached on, "It is Well with My Soul," based on Philippians 4:10-23. Paul mentions three resources for facing trials in our lives. They are the providence of God, the power of God, and the promises of God. It was a good day.

Who's Who Among Servant Leaders in Churches of Christ?

1st Year Has Been A Great Success!

We are starting our second year to honor and recognize leaders in churches of Christ. If you have someone you would like to nominate, please submit the name of the person and why you believe he/she should be honored in this way, giving your reasons why. We will need your name and contact information, if we have questions. *(If you wish, we will keep your name confidential.)*

Each person who is nominated will receive a certificate. We would like for you, or someone else in the congregation where you worship, to present the certificate and take a picture so we can put it in the next issue of the Magnolia Messenger.

In recent weeks, we've had several to catch up with photos of those have been nominated. Below are some of the ones that have sent in their photos. If you sent in a photo and it is not included in this report, please forgive us and send it again. We will make sure it gets in the next issue. We also have decided to occasionally give a very special plaque to one of the nominees, traveling to the location and personally awarding the plaque and writing a story about the service being rendered by the nominee. *(Paul Franks)*

Please send your nomination to:
MM Award Program
P. O. Box 1578
Kosciusko, MS 39090



Roy Johnson (left?) presented certificate by Marty Garrett from Sylacauga, AL



Calvin Barber from Zion Rest Church of Christ, Marietta, MS



J.B. Carter being presented certificate by Tim Wilson, preacher for the Hamilton Church of Christ, Hamilton, MS.

1. LeRoy and Evelyn Hudson from Blanchard Church of Christ, Blanchard, LA

2. Jean Lewis presented a certificate from Tom Allmond one of the elders of the Aberdeen Church of Christ, Aberdeen, MS

3. Louise Riley (Aberdeen, MS) presented a certificate by Tom Allmond, one of the elders of the Aberdeen Church of Christ in Aberdeen, MS

4. B. J. and Sharon Rachels presented certificate by Jeff Booker from the Savannah Church of Christ, Savannah, TN

5. Isaac Tenner in the middle, on left, Joseph Taylor, Sr. and on the right, Lela A Taylor, Fayette, MS

NE MS Ladies' Retreat Held At Tishomingo State Park in October, 2015

"A Beautiful Walk" was the theme of the annual Ladies' Retreat held at beautiful Tishomingo State Park in northeast Mississippi. Fifty-four ladies from seventeen congregations and three states were a part of the annual event. The program was planned by the Hillcrest church of Christ at Baldwyn, Mississippi and co-hosted by the Booneville and Snowdown congregations. Robin Whitley and Jessica Vickers did a wonderful job planning the retreat.

The attendees included eight-year-old Bryleigh Lane McCoy who is from the Booneville church of Christ where she has been active in "Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes." This year, she assisted in song leading, scripture reading and prayer. Her favorite song is "It is Well with

my Soul." Bryleigh reminded us of why it is so important to teach and encourage our children while they are young. Keep up the good work Bryleigh. Hope to see you next year at the retreat.

Our speaker was Celine Sparks who is a freelance humorist, contributing editor of humor for Christian Woman magazine. She is also the author of "Because I Said So", and "Whatever Happened to Fried Chicken?" She's married to Scotty and is mom to Abram, Mattianne, Miriam, and Enoch. They are all part of the Mastin Lake church in Huntsville, AL. Celine holds a Master's in Education from FHU. She is a coordinator in the children's program at Polishing the Pulpit, works with Horizons leadership camp at



Eight-year-old Bryleigh Lane McCoy.



Robin Whitley - Celine Sparks - Jessica Vickers

FHU and Fall Creek Falls Summer Bible Camp. Celine's message was very clear as she brought out the need to study God's word and to put God first in our lives.

We missed our singing around the campfire at the cabins because of the fire ban. Our meals

were very good and I was so happy to see coffee anytime. Make your plans to attend the next ladies' retreat on October 21-22, 2016. My thanks and love go out to the three congregations hosting the retreat. (Report given to MM by Betty Moss.)

Shining Lights

IN A WORLD OF DARKNESS

When we started our “Who’s Who Award Program,” we wanted to find some “bright lights” of encouragement. Our desire was to point to a few “lights on a hill” in order that others may be encouraged when they see faith at work in this dark world.

As is to be expected, those with bright lights are typically very humble and are not interested in, nor do they seek, recognition. This was true with Evelyn Sue Hamrick. Sue, however, reluctantly agreed to allow her name to be placed in nomination in hopes that others may be encouraged. Sue worships with the church of Christ in Pace, Florida, just north of Pensacola where she is very active.

Glenda and I had the opportunity to travel to Pace a few weeks ago and stay overnight on the church property in our RV. Early Saturday morning, before the Sunday I was given the opportunity to speak and present a plaque to Sue Hamrick, I



Sue Hamrick, one of the many lights shining in a world of darkness

looked out our RV window and saw a lady working very hard. I found out her name was Jessica Hendrix. She and her husband, Paul Hendrix, and others were busy getting ready that morning to feed over 100 families!

When I saw all the folks working, my conscience started to bother me. So, I walked over with my coffee cup in hand and immediately Jessica had some work for me to do. Several of the church members showed up to work that Saturday morning. And, of course, one of them was Sue Hamrick.

Sue starts and ends each day studying the Bible and praying. During the day she looks for opportunities to be of assistance to those in need. She volunteers at Convent Hospice and visits those who are sick in the hospitals. She continues to look for opportunities to give and help those in need.

Every church needs more Sue Hamrick’s. Don’t you agree? We appreciate her love for the body of Christ and



Sue Hamrick and others preparing to feed the needy

we really enjoyed getting to know her better.

The Pace church has several leaders including Paul Hendrix, Kenny Taylor, Doug Webster, Ron Putnal and Terry Beaver. This church appears to be very busy helping others in their community. They are presently looking for a full time preacher. Their website is www.pacechurchofchrist.org. (Paul Franks)

**Please send your nomination to:
MM Award Program
P. O. Box 1578
Kosciusko, MS 39090**

“A Trip of a Lifetime”



To Israel & Egypt with Paul and Al Franks

We plan to leave, God willing, on **Tuesday, November 29, 2016**. The cost is **\$2,799.00** from New York to Israel. Additional airfare from your city, tips and your lunches will be the only additional costs. To secure your spot, you can go to the website of Educational Opportunities and register. Their web site is: www.eo.travelwithus.com. The tour is HL 16 and your departure date is **11/29/2016**. It is important, when you register, to indicate that you are planning to go with my group.

My [Paul Franks] group number is 45403.

You will need to pay a **\$300.00** deposit per person for this ten day trip. Some of us are also planning to visit Egypt after going to Israel. This is an optional tour that cost \$828.00. This is a first class trip where everything will be done to make sure you have the finest trip possible. We will travel together in a private bus and have our own guide. Educational Opportunities has a great reputation in the travel business. They have been sending groups to the Bible Lands since 1974. Almost every week, during the year, they have different groups in the lands of the Bible. If you have questions, please call:

Paul Franks, 662-792-2700 or email, apaulfranks@gmail.com

Daniel, Islam and America!



By Ken Joines

Almost daily most of us are faced with some moment of truth where we must decide just how we will react, which road to take, or as we sometimes say, “a defining moment” Some of those decisions are of such magnitude that they determine the direction of our lives.

When we open the book of Daniel we will meet a man who was faced with a defining moment, just one of several he will face. The first two verses of the book explain that at this time Jehoiakim was the Jewish king and Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem and besieged this holy city. The Lord actually permitted this pagan to overtake Jerusalem, stealing the sacred items out of the temple and committing other atrocities. You may wonder why God didn’t stop this. Read on.

Look now at Daniel 1:3-7. Daniel is probably 16-18 years old at the time. His country is taken captive by the worst kind of people and it is important that you understand the reason for this; it will help you understand the entire book so much better. The Jews were taken captive for two reasons, (1) Jehoiakim, their king, was a ruthless man with almost no regard for the word of God. In fact, at one time he cut out portions of God’s law and tossed them. (2) On the other side was this evil, idol-worshipping Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar. You’ll best remember that his kingdom was the very nerve center of idol worship.

In the book of Jeremiah God had warned the Israelites that this was going to happen, but they continued to be enamored by idolatry and kept playing with it. God used His prophets to warn them

over and over and over, saying, “*Better watch out, better not do this... You’re going to regret this,*” or words to that effect. But those words fell on deaf ears and they drifted further and further from God. Oh, they still did their sacrificial offerings and observed the Sabbath. Ceremonially they still looked like Jews, but they had virtually shut God out of their lives. They offered the sacrifices, prayed their prayers, sang their chants, ate the feasts and did all the outward things but their spiritual lives were bankrupt. (Sounding familiar yet?????)

I personally believe God allowed Judah to be taken captive by a godless ruler so they could be taken to where the

They offered the sacrifices, prayed their prayers, sang their chants, ate the feasts and did all the outward things but their spiritual lives were bankrupt. (Sounding familiar yet?????)

center of idolatry was and see first hand just what was so bad about it. It was as if God is saying, “Alright, if you’re going to keep flirting with idolatry, here, let me take you by the hand and lead you to its source where you can see what idolatry is all about. Then you’ll be in better position to make an informed choice.” You know the rest of the story of how they threw Daniel to the lions and his three Hebrew friends were thrown into the furnace of fire. They soon found out how

ruthless men can be who build a society without God at its center.

So where does the American culture of today fit into this picture? It doesn’t require a lot of imagination to see that there are some frightening parallels. No informed American can deny that this nation was founded on Christian principles. In 1620 when a small band of believers in Christ sailed for America they were headed for the Virginia Colonies. They were planning to start a new church, separate from the Church of England that they might worship as they believed the Scriptures taught. But instead of landing in Virginia their battered ship first sighted land at Cape Cod, well north of their planned destination.

The occupants pondered what to do for this was an unoccupied, uncivilized no-man’s land. They decided to set up their own government and start a new civilization at Plymouth Rock. But before coming ashore they crafted and signed on November 11, 1620 the **Mayflower Compact** and this is what it said,

“In the name of God, we whose names are underwritten, having undertaken for the glory of God and advancement of the Christian faith, in honor of our King and country, a voyage to plant the first colony.”

Our original documents are replete with references to Almighty God.

Our constitution guaranteed freedom OF religion, not freedom FROM religion. The preambles of nearly every state in this Union make specific reference to Almighty God. Our courts recognized and respected the Bible. Prayer in Jesus’ name was freely offered at nearly every kind of public function. Our children were taught IN SCHOOL to respect

God the word of God. The Ten Commandments were posted everywhere. **AND NO ONE OBJECTED BECAUSE IT WAS CLEAR THAT THIS WAS A CHRIST HONORING NATION.**

The downward spiral may have started with spineless liberal theologians who started telling the people—little by little—that the Bible is not the literal word of God and its teachings are simply cultural expressions that no longer apply. It was just a short hop from there to outright denial of Holy Writ.

People were taught that it makes no difference at all what a person believes; that one religion was as good as another and really there’s no such thing as absolute truth. So we raised a generation who were “set free” from all those timeworn principles that kept people on the higher plane of morality and provided strong spiritual fiber as our firm foundation.

Then there was the problem of the divided state of Christendom itself. Just as Jesus predicted, people were losing their faith because His followers were not one. (John 17). This generation was becoming disgusted and started bailing out en masse. Eastern religions began to look more and more appealing and soon we were hearing things like, “You know, Mohammed taught some really good stuff...” and “Islam is essentially a peaceful religion.”

It appears that America’s leaders have, for the most part, given God his marching orders and in effect said,

“Thanks, but we no longer need you or your Bible telling us how to run this nation. So just shut up and we’ll call on you for weddings. And funerals. Maybe.”

Well, it seems that the God Daniel served has just about had it with an America that enjoys flirting with strange gods. This is no political statement, but Muslims are flooding our shores by the tens of thousands... How long before they overrun this country, behead Christians, tear down our houses of worship, destroy cathedrals, burn Bibles, remove every symbolic cross from our cemeteries and do their best to erase every semblance of Jesus Christ from the land our men and women have died for? And, if for one minute you think I am wrong, just watch the news unfold in other countries where Islam has its way. Believers in Christ, by the hundreds, are being beheaded in other lands.

If you believe it is not the Islamic mindset that is at the root of terrorism all across the world then consider the following:

- **The shoe bomber was a Muslim.**
- **The Fort Hood shooter was a Muslim.**
- **The underwear bomber was a Muslim.**
- **The USS Cole bomber was a Muslim.**
- **The Madrid train bombers were Muslims.**
- **The London subway bombers were Muslims.**
- **The Boston Marathon bombers were Muslims.**
- **The PanAm flight 93 hijackers were Muslims.**
- **The Air France Entebbe hijackers were Muslims.**
- **The Italian Embassy takeover was by Muslims.**
- **The Beirut US Embassy bombers were Muslims.**
- **The Libyan US Embassy attackers were Muslims.**
- **The Buenos Aires suicide bombers were Muslims.**
- **The Israeli Olympic team attackers were Muslims.**
- **The Kenyan US Embassy bombers were Muslims.**
- **The Achille Lauro cruise ship bombers were Muslims.**
- **The plane that hit the Pentagon was piloted by Muslims.**
- **The 9-11 suicide jetliners that struck the World Trade Center and killed 3,000 Americans were both piloted by — you guessed it—MUSLIMS!**

Now, look me in the eye and tell me that Islam is not a problem. Tell me again what a peaceful religion Islam is. I read somewhere that “by their fruits you

shall know them.”

I shudder to think that God **MAY BE telling us**, “Alright, if you think my way is not absolutely the right way... if you think my Son Jesus Christ was just whistling in the dark when he said he is the world’s only Savior... if you think my Word is not the last word, then well and good. You are free to believe that if you choose. But fasten your seat belts because I’m about to allow these people you seem so enamored with to overtake your nation and let you see first hand what I have tried to tell you.

“You have shown me that you place no value on the life of the unborn. Now I will allow you to experience first hand those who place no value on ANY life. You have made it clear that you want a government, an educational system and a whole society that does not even mention my Holy Name; let’s see how long before you are begging to hear my Name again and calling on me for help.”

There is no doubt we are living in dangerous and challenging times and it is probably later than we dare think. Please know that I have not written these lines just to be dramatic or unnecessarily alarm the reader. This is a real threat to all of us.

Now is the time for every Christian

to look deeply into his heart and ask, “If someone pointed a gun at my head and threatened to kill me if I said I was a Christian, how would

I respond?” Would we renounce Christ so we could continue to live or would we courageously state that we belonged to Christ and were willing to die for His name? Jesus warned that in the last days His followers would face severe persecution. “Brother will betray brother to death and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.” (Matthew 10:22)

For most our lives we have read in scripture of various incidents where people were beheaded or otherwise violently treated. Most of us probably thought we were secure in a free and open society and were shielded by our government from such atrocities. With good reason, we no

People were taught that it makes no difference at all what a person believes; that one religion was as good as another and really there’s no such thing as absolute truth.

longer feel this way. ISIS and kindred groups are moving closer and closer to becoming a real threat on American soil.

We sing the words, “I have decided to follow Jesus.....no turning back, no turning back”. Each of us must ask, “Am I prepared to stand by this

resolution; am I willing to stand with Jesus even when the enemy approaches wearing the black hood and with sword in hand, ready to behead all who will not deny Jesus Christ and vow allegiance to Allah and his prophet Mohammed?”

The decision must be made now. If you wait until the enemy rushes in and asks, “Are you a Christian?” you are likely to fail the test. Resolve today that your allegiance is with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He alone of all religious leaders walked out of his own tomb. This assures me He is able. As for me and my house we will serve the Lord. May God help us all.

Ken Joines

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2016 Faulkner Lectures February 28 - March 3

CHRIST ALONE

“Salvation in No One Else” (Acts 4:12)

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Sunday, February 28
Kelvin Teamer, *In Christ Alone*

Monday, February 29
Dan Chambers, *My Hope Is Found*
Mike Williams, *He’s My Light, My Strength, My Song*

Tuesday, March 1
Ralph Gilmore, *This Cornerstone Is Solid Ground & Who Took On Flesh*

Wednesday, March 2
Willie Franklin, *Then Bursting Forth to Glorious Day, Up from the Grave He Rose & My Comforter, My All in All*

Thursday, March 3
Melvin Otey, *This Gift of Love and Righteousness: Scorned by the Ones He Came to Save*

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from a Woman's Viewpoint

F.E.A.R.

By June Franks

A website I recently visited listed 100 fears or phobias. A few pho-

bias are (a) Not having enough money, (2) Flying, (3) Public speaking, (4) Losing a loved one, (5) Disease or pain and, of course (6) death. In today's world, we face an imminent threat from deranged individuals who, as terrorists, seek to kill innocent human beings. Then, there is that radical religious group known as "Isis" who is causing havoc throughout the world, creating great fear in the hearts of millions.

As a nation, we are facing some of the most critical times in our lives. The terrorists are indeed a great threat. Through mass media we learn almost immediately about the terrorists attacks and killings that are happening around the world. Such reports often produces great fear.

The Bible has a lot to say about fear and being fearful. Throughout the pages of God's word the admonition to "Fear not" is repeated over and over. According to some students, the phrase "*Do not be afraid*" or an equivalent idea, appears at least 365 times in the Bible. That is one "fear not verse" for each and every day of the year. God does not want us, as His children, to be fearful people. Scripture says,



JUNE FRANKS

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and love, and of a sound mind." (II Timothy 1: 7)

Please consider the following observations and related scriptures which will help each of us to rely more on God in our daily activities and will assist us in becoming less fearful. Giving attention to an acrostic of the word "FEAR", with each letter standing for action on our part, we can **fear less** and move closer to becoming **fearless**.

F FAITHFUL

"Faithful" describes someone who is reliable, consistent, loyal, constant and steadfast. It doesn't matter what may come our way, God expects us to be FAITHFUL to Him! Sometimes fear puts our faith to the test. Many who once truly believed fall by the wayside when persecution or trials enter their lives. Far too often, once faithful Christians allow fear to replace faith in their lives and, as a result, they become **unfaithful** to the Lord. Jesus spoke about workers who were faithful to their master, using the talents they were given and gaining additional talents. To them, the lord said [the Lord will say], "Well done, **good and faithful** servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter into the joy of my Lord." (Matthew 25:23)

Recall also the first century followers of Christ who suffered

great persecution, but in spite of much suffering remained faithful to God. John was beheaded, Stephen was stoned to death and James was killed with the government's sword. The Bible admonishes, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you in prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Revelation 2:10) God is faithful. Trust Him! He said, "I will give you a crown of life."

E ENDURE

Endure means to suffer patiently something that is painful or difficult. To undergo hardship without giving in or giving up is the idea. The Bible says, "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that *endureth* to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22). God never promised that we, as Christians, would be free of persecutions, trials or tribulations. Another scripture declares, "...But he that shall *endure* unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13). The Bible says in I Corinthians 13, the "love chapter" of the Bible, "Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, *endureth* all things." Again, Scripture says, "Thou therefore *endure* hardness (suffer hardship with me), as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (II Timothy 2:3). And finally, "Blessed is the man

that *endureth* temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him" (James 1: 12).

A ABIDE

Abide means to accept or act in accordance with a rule, decision or recommendations; to obey, observe, follow. The Bible says, "*Abide* in me, and I in you, As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it *abide* in the vine; no more can ye, except ye *abide* in me" (John 15: 4). "And now, little children, *abide* in him: that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. And if ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him (I John 2: 28,29). God has, in many scriptures, promised to be with us **if we *abide*** with him. "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." (Isaiah 41: 10)

R REJOICE

"Rejoice" involves happiness, pleasure and joy. The Bible says, "*Rejoice* in the Lord always: and again I say, *Rejoice*... Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with

thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:4-7). This verse should help us to be less fearful; especially, to **not be afraid of man**. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay in all things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8: 35-39)

As the song asks, "*Where Can We Go But To The Lord?*" During our times of being fearful, we should turn all our fears over to God and remember the words of this study -- FAITHFUL, ENDURE, ABIDE and REJOICE. The Bible says, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28) This verse clearly teaches that man can kill **only the body**. The one we should fear is God, for He is able to destroy both **soul and body** in hell. (Mrs. A. L. Franks; P. O. Box 1578; Kosciusko, MS; franksmm@aol.com)



To Church Visitors, Signs are Significant!

We are thankful that brethren still put up signs directing those who would visit their place of assembly. For example, we recently noticed a small sign at a street intersection in a north Mississippi town which gave direction to the location of the meeting place for a church of Christ. By following the direction of the arrow on the small sign, we easily found the church building. We are also thankful that the brethren had erected a much larger sign in front of the building stating the time of scheduled services. There on the sign was also a bonus; that is, a thought provoking message for the week. Thanks to the saints at Sherman for believing that signs are significant. (Editor)



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551. Mary Jacobs
552. Josephine Carter
553. Bettie Brown
554. Ollie Wooten
555. Mary L. Williams
556. James Hudley
557. Edwin Williams
558. Garfield Moss
559. Jimmy Coggins
560. Cynthia Doss
561. Frederick Wesson
562. Leora White
563. Mr. & Mrs. Greg Howard
564. Kelly Faggard
565. Wayne Phillips
566. Judy Pickard
567. Mark Williams
568. Judy Spencer
569. Bettye McCool

**YOUR NAME
Next time!
Okay?**

THE QUESTION BOX

A Golden Age

(Use KJV for Wording and Spelling)

The statistics tell us that more people are being lifted out of poverty faster than any other time in the history of the world. The Bible teaches us that wealth poses a great threat to our souls (I Tim. 6:10,17; Matt. 13:22). Years ago, I was told that we are going through a time where the "largest transference" of wealth is taking place in our world.

When I was working at Sunnybrook Children's Home a lady left a handwritten will. The last part of the will stated something like, "I leave one half of what is left of my estate to Sunnybrook Children's Home." It didn't take long to find out that what was "left" amounted to a very large sum. As I visit among brethren, I am convinced that the church is richer today than ever. We are indeed living in a "Golden Age."

During this season of giving, I think it appropriate to study what the Bible says about money. We are told that in the "average church" about 20% of the people give 80% of the money; 30% give the other 20% and 50% give nothing at all! Think about giving and take a few minutes and answer "The Question Box." Thank you. (Paul Franks)

True or False Statements -- Fill in the Blanks

Find the missing number in the Bible reference cited. Fill in the missing words in each verse. Indicate whether the statement preceding the Bible quotation is true or false. (Use KJV.)

_____ **1. God is the source of all our blessings!** "But my _____ shall supply all your _____ according to his _____ in glory by Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:_____)

_____ **2. The more you want to reap, the more you have to sow!** This is called the "Law of the Harvest." "He which soweth _____ shall _____ also sparingly; and he which soweth _____ shall reap also bountifully." (2 Cor. __:6)

_____ **3. We must believe that God is trustworthy in keeping his promises!**
(a) We trust God to bless. "_____ who _____ their parents in the Lord". (Eph. __:1-3)
(b) We trust God to make "all things work together for _____ to them that _____ God." (Romans __:28)
(c) We trust God to save us when we decide to "_____ him." (Heb. 5: __)

_____ **4. Giving to God is a guaranteed investment!** He promises to reward those that "_____ seek him." (Hebrews __:6)
(a) "Thy Father which seeth in _____ himself shall _____ thee openly." (Matt. 6: __)
(b) "But lay up for yourselves _____ in heaven"...For where your _____ is, there will your _____ be also." (Matt. 6: __)
(c) "Ye cannot serve _____ and _____" [money] (Matthew 6: __)
(d) "But seek ye _____ the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and _____ these things shall be _____ unto you. (Matt 6: __)

_____ **5. Many Christians can't afford to give to God!** "The things which are _____ with men are _____ with God." (Luke __:27)

_____ **6. The Old Testament teaching on tithing (giving 10% of your income) is a good place to start in our giving to God.** "Will a man _____ God? But ye say wherein have we robbed thee? In _____ and _____. Bring ye all the _____ into the storehouse... and I will _____ you out a blessing." (Malachi __:8-10)

_____ **7. We should give even if we do so grudgingly or because we feel we have to give.** "Every man according as he _____ in his heart, so let him _____; not _____, or of _____: for God loveth a _____ giver." (2 Cor. 9: __)

Please Send Your Answers To Us

(Print your name... Please. Thank you!)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____

NOTICE: Each person who sends in answers will be recognized in the next issue of the "MM" (see page 27). ALSO, by random drawing, the name of ONE student will be selected to receive a beautiful New Study Bible or a Bible Study CD Library. You may be the one! Send your answers to:

"The Question Box"

P. O. Box 1578
Kosciusko, MS 39090



Tommy Lawson (long time preacher) and Al Franks (long time MM editor) standing by church sign near Aberdeen, MS



Gerald Worthy, Recent Bible Winner
(Aberdeen, MS)

Leader and Bible teacher in the Wren congregation.

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(Bowling Green, MO)

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- 2. Answers to QB
- 3. Suggestions/Ideas
- 4. ? _____ ?

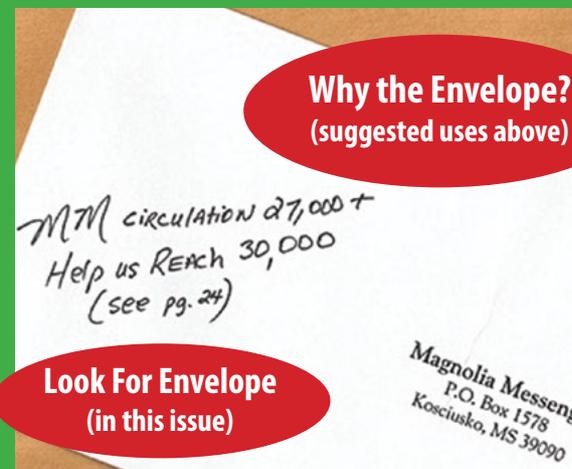
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