

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



THE MAGNOLIA

Messenger

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Blessed

ARE THE PEOPLE WHO KNOW THE JOYFUL SOUND!

"They walk, O Lord,
in the light of
Your countenance."

Psalm 89:15



"This Issue; A tribute to Cecil May Jr."

In this issue from *Dennis*



We are instructed to “Render to all what is due them... honor to whom honor” (Romans 13:7).

With this issue, we honor Cecil May, Jr., an honor that is rightfully due to him. Brother Cecil wrote for over forty years what became the paper's most popular section, his “Question and Answer” column.

I did not have the privilege of spending much time with Cecil. Truthfully, he knew my in-laws much better than he knew me.

During his time preaching in Fulton, Mississippi, he was often in the home of Rommie and Dorothy Wileman. When we saw one another, he would always ask me about them.

When it was announced that I would become the new editor of *The Messenger*, within a few days, I received a call from Cecil. He expressed his confidence in me and looked forward to us working together. Having his support meant a lot.



I was in Montgomery about two years ago, and he invited me to join him in the singing service that night at church. After a few songs, brother Cecil stood in his place and was granted the floor. He graciously introduced me to the crowd. That was a special moment for me. In the fellowship afterwards, we enjoyed a cup of soup together. Again, he asked me how Dot and Rommie were.

When it became evident that his health would not let him continue to write his column, I flew to Montgomery and met him in his office on campus. I wanted to thank him personally for his many years of sharing his wisdom and biblical knowledge with our readers. His book, *Bible Questions and Answers*, compiled of all those answers, should be in every preacher's library.

We pay tribute to the life and work of Cecil May in this issue. Our gratitude is not merely a sentiment—it is an act of recognition of a great Christian preacher and educator. **MM**



Church of Christ - Kosciusko, MS

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(Dennis Doughty, Editor)

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Mississippi's
GOOD NEWS
Magazine

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

June 24, 2025

TO OUR GREAT SUPPORTERS,

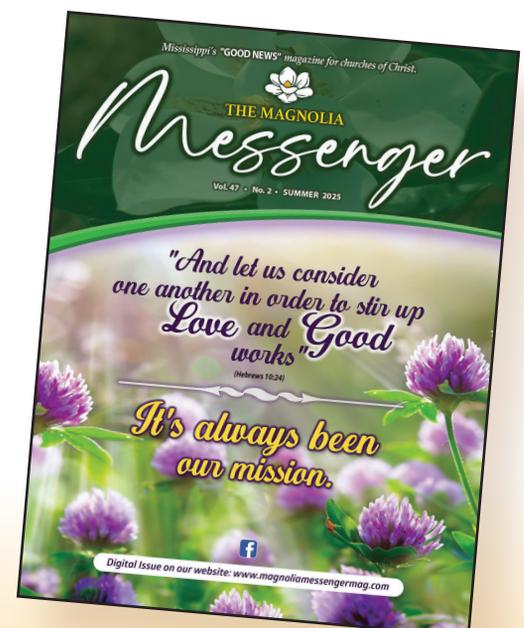
This year is halfway over. Time does go by swiftly these days. The Summer issue of *The Magnolia Messenger* went in the mail on June 1st, and work has already begun on the Fall issue. The Summer issue welcomed three new writers as we continue to put together the best pool of writers in our Brotherhood. Our regular features were excellent, and 423 individuals returned our back-page question box Bible study. The layout was attractive, and the news reports and ads were informative to our 50,000-plus readers.

If you and/or your congregation are supporting this work, we want to express our gratitude and we hope you feel proud to do so. As we mentioned six years ago, we will continue *The Magnolia Messenger* as long as funds keep coming in. They have.

However, our printing expenses, especially postage, continue to rise with almost every issue, which is concerning. We desperately need your support to maintain the growth and quality of this work. *The Magnolia Messenger* is your Christian publication. We are ready to share good news from your congregation, any help you have in finding a new preacher, or to report on a mission work your church is involved in. Support us, and we will be there to support you. If you are receiving this publication in your mailbox, please consider sending us your donation today. If your congregation receives a bundle of the paper to share with your members, please consider renewing or increasing your support.

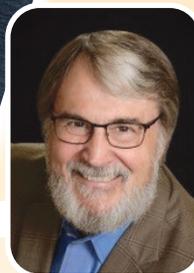
I know Summer is busy, but please take a few minutes to send in your support for *The Magnolia Messenger*.

Dennis Doughty, editor
The Magnolia Messenger.



Q&A

HOLY BIBLE
"What Does
the Bible Say?"



Send your
Questions
to Dan Winkler
danddwinkler@gmail.com

A QUESTION

I CAN'T ANSWER

The Bible is full of questions that were asked for different reasons. Just look at the Bible study recorded in Acts 8:26-40. You remember. That's when Phillip left a great revival in Samaria and studied with a government official from Ethiopia.

Take the time to read this short passage and see how many questions you come across. I found four.

- *The first was asked to stimulate conversation. Philip asked the Ethiopian, "Do you understand what you are reading?" (v. 30).*
- *The second was asked to express frustration. The Ethiopian said to Philip, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" (v. 31).*
- *The third, was asked to gain information. Reading from Isaiah 53, the Ethiopian asked, "About whom ... does the prophet say this ...?" (vv. 32-34).*
- *The fourth was asked to request action. The Ethiopian said to Philip, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" (vv. 35-36).*

There are questions in the Bible that are easy to answer: e.g. "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" (Matthew 22:42). God's (Matthew 16:16)! But, if you're like me, you come across questions in the Bible that are really hard to answer. And that is especially true when they're applied to our own expe-

riences. Try these on for size. (a) Romans 3:7 — "[W]hy am I ... being condemned?" Paraphrased in application: Why don't people like me? (b) Romans 9:20 — "Why have you made me like this?" Paraphrased in application: Why has God made it so hard for me to do what's right? (c) 1 Corinthians 10:20 — "Why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience?" Paraphrased in application: Why do I have to be so concerned about your opinions? (d) 1 Corinthians 10:30 — "Why am I denounced?" Paraphrased in application: Why do others criticize and say bad things about me?

I said all of that to say, "Thank you for all the questions you continue to share. Some have been easy, some hard, but this issue of *The Messenger* presents a question I just don't know how to answer. Maybe you can help.

YOUR WONDERFUL QUESTION:

Brother Dan, I just heard about the death of Cecil May, Jr., and I couldn't help but reflect on his life and ask, "How much good did that one man accomplish for the Kingdom of our Lord and how many lives did he touch with the message of Jesus?" Okay. Full transparency. I asked that question to myself because I wanted to pause from the regular use of this column and "give honor to whom honor is owed" (Romans 13:7).

MY THOUGHTS:

So much has already been said about this great servant but I'd like to briefly share my feelings about a man like few others. Let me capsule my thoughts under the heading of five words.

BALANCE

When I think of Cecil May Jr., the word balance comes to mind. I cannot tell you how many times I read one of his articles or excitedly made my way through a copy of his Preacher Talk unless I found protracted thoughts, a paragraph, or even a joke that echoed the plea of Proverbs: “Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil” (Proverbs 4:27, emphasis mine).

Brother May knew that beliefs and behavior to the left of center [“liberalism is the term frequently used] are evil. He also knew that beliefs and behavior to the right of center [“legalism” is the moniker sometimes offered] are evil. Accordingly, his emphasis was that of a preacher long ago: “Be not overly righteous, and do not make yourself too wise. Why should you destroy yourself? Be not overly wicked, neither be a fool. Why should you die before your time?” (Eccl. 7:16-17).

BIBLE

When I think of Cecil May, Jr., the word Bible comes to mind. He stood firmly for the truth with an attitude that was demanded by the truth. “[S]peaking the truth in love” was his modus operandi. Try to find one of his recorded sermons that is not saturated with scripture. Revisit articles he penned—especially his Q & A articles for *The Messenger*—that pushed opinions or personal agendas. They’re just not to be found.

Brother May knew that “all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy. 3:16-17). For that reason, when he spoke, when he wrote, he was driven by the inspired directed: “Preach the word” (2 Timothy 4:2).

BENEVOLENT

When I think of Cecil May, Jr., the word benevolent comes to mind. Look up that word and you’ll usually find another term of interest. It’s the word “kind”. To be benevolent is to be kind and being kind makes you a different kind of person. Today’s culture is plagued with so much vitriol, bitterness, partisan bifurcation, and hateful rhetoric designed to divide and destroy. There’s no room to think-out-loud with each other. No place for openminded discussion. Nothing of the sort was ever seen in or could have even been implied from the ways of brother May.

Brother May knew that “that which makes a man to be desired is his kindness” (Proverbs 19:22, ASV), and therein we find another reason why this good man was so appreciated. “Be kind to one another,” is the imperative we find in Ephesians 4:32 and it was definitely the way of brother May.

BUNDLE

When I think of Cecil May, Jr., the word bundle comes to mind. In my assessment of life, I have come to believe that there are times God endows certain people with not a single talent or skill set but with a grouping of gifts. It’s like those insurance companies that tell us we can save money if we bundle our home

and auto insurance.

I think of brother May as one of those unique and wonderful servants God gave a bundle of ability. Student of Scripture. Preacher of the Gospel. Author, editor, and columnist. college



president. university professor and dean. Elder in the Lord’s church. Even more importantly, a faithful husband and successful parent. The list goes on and on.

Brother May capitalized on each of his God-given opportunities and he did so in ways that helped him answer Paul’s

challenge to Timothy: “Neglect not the gifts you have ... practice these things and, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress” (1 Timothy 4:14-15). He lived his life so well and so humbly for our heavenly Father’s glory.

BELOVED

When I think of Cecil May, Jr., the word beloved comes to mind. Let me turn our attention to the words of Calvin Cockrell’s article in *The Christian Chronicle* (Vol. 82, No. 8, August, 2025, p. 13). They reflect on the words of brother May’s sons, Cecil May III and Richard.

Of his dad, Cecil May III said, “He was indeed who you thought he was – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control” ... referencing the fruit of the Spirit described in Galatians 5. Brother May’s other son, Richard added: “He was so full of the love of Jesus, his cup overflowed into all of our lives.”

What more could be added to that?!

CONCLUSION

So, back to our question. “How much good did that one man accomplish for the Kingdom of our Lord and how many lives did he touch with the message of Jesus?”

We’ll just have to wait on the Lord to answer that come the Day of Judgment but, until then, I’m going to revel in my memory of a great leader who humbly served his Lord to the glory of his Father. I’m going to remember and be encouraged to be a better person myself. How about you? **MM**

THE *Life & Loves* OF **CECIL MAY JR.**

by Cecil May III with Betty, Roslyn,
and Richard May

Cecil May, Jr. was a Mississippi preacher. He served as President of Magnolia Bible College from 1980-1997. In those almost two decades, and then for 20 more years he was the “Q&A” columnist for *The Magnolia Messenger*. Having passed into the afterlife on June 22, 2025, at the age of 93, it is appropriate that he be remembered in these pages. As his son and namesake, I, Cecil May III, am happy, with my siblings, to relate to you seven things Cecil May, Jr. loved and centered his life around.

1. Dad loved the scriptures of God. He absorbed the content of the scriptures daily. He was proficient in hermeneutics, understanding, applying, and possessing a unique ability to explain the word of God. Readers of the MM often turned immediately to page 4 in order to get Cecil’s take on the latest query. He loved the process and production of the “Bible Questions Answered” column. He had his own questions about the meaning of scripture. He loved to spend time in personal study, but also in conversation with others about the Bible. His favorite methods of preaching were textual and expository. His favorite Sunday School or college level classes to teach were studies straight through a book of the Bible.

2. Cecil loved the church of God. He had an unwavering commitment to the blood-bought church, caring for the flock as a shepherd for many of his years. If he rode a hobby horse on any subject it was the nature of the church. Frequent writings described that God does the saving and God does the adding to the church. Therefore, all the saved are in the church and the church is all the saved. His preaching called for a Bible-based restoration perspective and an attitude of unity. This eulogy is about Dad’s life and loves. It must be said, he loved the brotherhood.

3. He loved the providence of God. Dad wrote the book on providence. He had a deep appreciation for the way God worked “all things together for good” in his life. Though Cecil was careful

in his language to not go beyond the “perhaps” in ascribing to God action God Himself does not reveal as His own doing, through the eye of faith he confidently pointed to events in his own life that bore the marks of the finger of God more so than coincidence and happenstance.

4. Brother May loved preaching the Gospel of God. Dad was my preacher for the first eighteen years of my life.

I often hear people who are my age now say they did not hear about the good news of salvation by grace through faith in the 1960s; especially the grace part. I was blessed to hear Brother Cecil preach “the whole counsel of God.” Grace was a subject of his message as much as it was an element of his character. The word “balance” was a frequent descriptor of his preaching, writing, and teaching. Romans 5:20-6:2 declares that where sin increased grace abounded; yet, we are by no means to continue in sin. If you were tutored by him, no doubt you heard Cecil explain that passage by saying something like, “If you do not preach grace so strongly that someone might think you are lax on sin, you do not preach grace as strongly as Paul. If you do not condemn sin so strongly that someone thinks you are forgetful of grace, you do not condemn sin as strongly as Paul.” Dad preached the grace of Christ and him crucified as the redeemer of our sins.

5. Dr. May loved training messengers for God. The first third of dad’s career was exclusively as a local preacher. However, he always felt an urge to multiply the harvest of his own Gospel preaching by training others to effectively sow the seed of the Word. He spent two years teaching Bible at (then) Columbia Christian College in Portland, OR. It was in the late 1970s when he discovered the Bible College model of training preachers being done by (then) International Bible College of Florence, AL. He served there as Academic Dean for three years. Then a fledgling college built on the same model in his beloved state of Mississippi needed new leadership in 1980. He went there



as President of Magnolia Bible College. After retirement from that work, he enjoyed a final career stage at Faulkner University in Montgomery, AL, as dean of the V.P. Black College of Biblical Studies. 2



Timothy 2:2 was his motivating and guiding verse during all those years of preparing people to preach: “What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

6. Cecil loved time spent with the people of God. He developed deep relationships with his Christian education colleagues. He was not just approachable to students; he approached them for conversation and mentorship. He was deeply involved in the lives of his fellow church members. He served as a shepherd of souls in the last four churches in which he was a member. In his years with our mother, Winnie, and in his later marriage to Janice, life was a continual development and enhancement of friendships. Their social calendars were full and fun. More meals were shared with friends

*Living as a servant of God
in every capacity in which he was privileged
to serve was his chosen occupation,
his hobby, his enjoyment, his treasure,
his life, his love.*

than eaten in privacy. When our mother passed at about 7:30 A.M. on a Sunday morning, Dad gathered with the church for morning worship. He stated these were the people he wanted to be with and to be with him in that hour. He cultivated companionship with the people of God.

7. He loved God. His life’s treasures were the scriptures of God, the church of God, the providence of God, preaching the Gospel of God, the opportunity to train messengers for God, and time spent with the people (the church) of God. His life centered on and around God. Living as a servant of God in every capacity in which he was privileged to serve was his chosen occupation, his hobby, his enjoyment, his treasure, his life, his love. He was indeed and in every way a man of God. **MM**

IN MEMORY OF

Magnolia Bible College Years

by Danny Dodd, Class of 1981”

I first heard the name Cecil May, Jr., late in my junior year at Magnolia Bible College in 1980. MBC had been searching for a new president, and Cecil May, Jr. was the guy. It generated a lot of buzz, anticipation, and hype. I remember wondering if anyone could live up to it.

He did. Brother May immediately brought with him a new respect and direction for the college. His personal integrity and dedication to excellence in education changed the course for that fledgling school. Eventually, he would lead MBC to full accreditation with the prestigious Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Not a small feat for a small college. Years later, when I served as Director of Admissions at MBC, I attended a SACS conference in Atlanta, and was put at the same table with other admissions directors from such places as Ohio State University. It dawned on me then the significance of that accomplishment for MBC, its students, and graduates. And I silently thanked brother May.

Beyond the academics, brother May was a preacher’s president. He led MBC (and later Faulkner University) to produce well-grounded, balanced, and passionate ministers and preachers who do their best to honor and follow the Scripture and preach the Gospel. His life and work have and will continue to influence generations of ministers and churches.

I was blessed to have known him personally, to have spent time with him in various settings. He was always the same man—dedicated to the Lord, to the church, to his family, to encouraging preachers, and to offering the best, balanced Christian education possible for all.

I now have the honor to work with his son, Cecil May III, at my current church. The May ministry legacy continues through him and through all of us who were blessed by brother May’s lifetime of service in God’s Kingdom. **MM**



Cecil May Jr.

FAULKNER UNIVERSITY



by David W. Hester
Professor, New Testament
V. P. Black College of Biblical Studies
Faulkner University

Cecil May, Jr. was already well known before he came to Faulkner University in 1998, when he was named Dean of the V. P. Black College of Biblical Studies. Cecil remained in that position until 2015, when he was named Dean Emeritus. He served in that capacity as writer-in-residence until he retired in February 2025.

Cecil was friends with my grandfather, S. F. Hester, and was present to hear the last sermon he preached just three months before his passing in 1982. Cecil often reminded me of that after I arrived at Faulkner, and I always expressed my gratitude to him. By 2016, Cecil still kept office hours—which continued until late 2024. His beloved wife Winnie passed away in 2016, but Cecil didn't allow that to deter him from his work. He married Janice (Blevins) in 2017; the ceremony took place in Lester Chapel inside the Harris-Parker (Bible) building!

As Director of the Faulkner Bible Lectureship—and for a time, Leaders Connect—I knew I could count on Cecil. He didn't retreat from addressing controversial issues. Everyone knew where Cecil stood; yet he was always kind. People listened,

even if they disagreed. He made an impact on brethren in Montgomery, Alabama—and around the world.

Several Faulkner colleagues contributed their memories of Cecil:

■ **Mitch Henry, President, Faulkner University**—When I became President, Cecil met with me. He asked how I planned to lead spiritually. I shared our vocational ministry theme and asked for his advice. “Focus on the Gospel and encourage unity,” he said. As long as his health allowed, he worked on campus—speaking in chapel, encouraging students and staff, and writing. A few weeks before he passed, he shared a thought for my next Bible study

book connecting Old Testament stories to Jesus. “When you write your book have you thought, Moses turned water to blood (red) and Jesus turned water to wine (red)?” He was my most resilient encourager and advisor, and I'll miss him till we meet again in Heaven.

■ **Todd Brenneman, Dean of the V. P. Black College of Biblical Studies**—Shortly after I arrived at Faulkner, Cecil sent an email which went to the whole campus. He expressed his gratitude for the amount of respect he received both for his church work and his role as Dean. But he wanted everyone to just refer to him as Cecil. He wanted to avoid titles and the distance they often put between people. I'm not surprised that Cecil passed away on the first day of the week, a day he loved so much. Cecil now sees face to face what we see only dimly. His godly example should be emulated by everyone.

■ **Barry Buford, Senior Advisor, University Advancement; Elder, University church of Christ**—I was able on many occasions to seek knowledge from Cecil regarding spiritual questions. He was always willing to share his expertise in a loving and kind manner. I am certain he'll be missed by the Faulkner family, and I know he was greatly missed by the University church when he

stepped down as an elder for health reasons. Faulkner University, University Church of Christ, and the Brotherhood have lost a Spiritual Giant.

■ **Faires Austin, former Dean of Students**—I sat beside Cecil in our elders' meetings. He was a master at multitasking! Cecil spoke a lot of wisdom. I attended many of his Friday night and Saturday Bible classes on campus. We miss him greatly.

■ **Randall C. Bailey, Director of the Kerley Graduate School of Theology**—"My name is Cecil. It's not brother May, Dr. May, or Dean May. My mother named me Cecil and that's what you should call me." One day I went too far. He said, "Randy, if you keep calling me 'Brother May,' I'll start calling you 'Dr. Bailey.'"

■ **Sam Long, Director of Leaders Connect**—Once Winnie passed, I became Cecil's chauffeur. We went many miles together; loved every minute of it. One time I was to pick him up at Montgomery airport and went an hour or two ahead to wait for him. He called and said he was stuck in Atlanta airport. Rain was coming down like a monsoon; he'd have to get a flight in the morning. I asked, "Where are you spending the night?" He said, "Here in the airport." I asked, "Do you want to come home?" He said, "That sure would be nice but I wouldn't ask anybody to drive in this kind of rain." I said, "I'll be there in 2 1/2 hours." He never forgot that; anytime we talked about our time together he'd always mention the Atlanta trip. He was always so kind, so loving and so gracious.

■ **Steve Wages, Director of the Cloverdale Center for Youth & Family**—I always appreciated Cecil's motto: "biblical in doctrine, conservative in practice, and liberal in love."

Only eternity will tell all of the good Cecil accomplished in his life. It was an honor to serve with him. **MM**

[Note: Our thanks to David for putting together this tribute to Cecil's work at Faulkner, by those who were blessed to work with him every day. -dd]

Addition to the Faith

HALL of FAME

Cecil May's passing

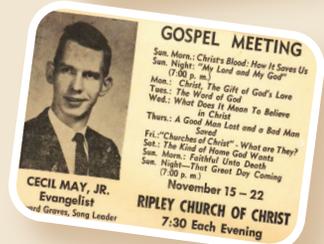
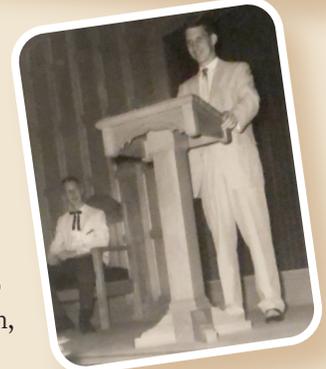
by James Pilgrim
Chapman Church of Christ, Ripley, Ms.
pilgrimbiblestudy.com

With the passing of Cecil May, Jr., Saturday, June 21, it is believed that the Faith Hall of Fame, a name given to Hebrews 11, grew larger. While only God really knows the hearts of all (1 Kings 8:39; Acts 1:24), Jesus taught, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:15-20). The fruits of Cecil May, Jr. are more numerous than the space herein to list them. So, a limited number is set forth by this writer.

The most important thing this writer can list is the baptism of his wife, Sammie Joyce (Tyler) at the Ripley Church of Christ, Ripley, Mississippi, on July 7, 1958, while Cecil was the local preacher there. He has been in our hearts for many years, and his name is held high both at the Ripley congregation and in the Pilgrim family. It is an honor to be asked to pay tribute to him. He was buried beside Winnie in Fulton, Mississippi, on Thursday, June 26.

Our brother will be remembered by many for years to come. Though dead, he will yet speak (Hebrews 11:4). He will speak through the lives of those he touched and influenced for good. Think of what all over whom he had an influence have accomplished. Consider the accomplishments of those who sat at his feet in the four (4) colleges where he taught and served, in Ggospel meetings and lectures in which he preached the Gospel, in the religious papers for whom he wrote, or in a number of other settings.

One great contribution brother May gave the church was his column in the *Magnolia Messenger*, "Questions & Answers," which he wrote for many years. How many people have benefited from this excellent paper, his, and articles by others? **MM**



FIRST THINGS

FIRST

*by Danny Dodd, minister
Levy Church of Christ
North Little Rock, Arkansas*

There are basic biblical principles that surely should be believed and practiced among all professing Christians today. Believed because they are explicitly taught within the New Testament. Practiced because of their essentiality in following Christ. Scripture calls them “elementary teachings” (Hebrews 6:1-3). They

are labeled as such due to their foundational nature.



Danny Dodd

These are the first steps of discipleship. All who come to Jesus should quickly become well acquainted with these core teachings and build upon them to continue to grow spiritually. While these are the building blocks for healthy faith, they are also designed to lead to further growth. If we do not grow beyond them, then our faith will become stagnant and ineffective (Hebrews 5:11-14). According to this text, these are “milk” principles that lead to “solid food” maturity. But they come first:

■ **Repentance.** A basic and vital change of heart, allegiances, and behavior that reflects our new relationship with Christ. Unless we repent, we will perish (Luke 13:3). The will to sin must be subdued by the power of God. Repentance changes lives forever.

■ **Faith.** This is where everything really begins. It is the catalyst that ultimately leads to complete obedience and discipleship. It is the solid foundation upon which all else is built. Without it, there is absolutely no way we can please God (Hebrews 11:6).

■ **Baptism.** This beloved act of faithful submission to God puts us into Christ and adds us to His Body, the church (Galatians 3:37; Acts 2:47). It brings us into God’s saving grace and washes away of our sins through the blood of Jesus

(Acts 22:16). It is beautifully reflective of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection, delivering to us a brand-new existence—free from the burden of sin and into new life in Jesus (Romans 6:4-10).

■ **Laying on of Hands.** This was about the empowerment of ministry. The apostles would lay hands upon new believers

to pass along to them gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Timothy 4:4) to enable them to serve others. Although there are no more apostles, we have their teachings, and we have all been called into ministry to use our gifts in His kingdom to serve one another (see Romans 12:4-8 and 2 Peter 4:8-11). Notice this inclusion on this list of “elementary teaching.” Ministry is something we are called to do immediately upon faith.

■ **The Resurrection.** This is the unequivocal fact upon which all Christian doctrine is based. The resurrection is the reason why we know about Jesus, why His promises are real, and why our faith matters. Without the resurrection, our faith is futile and we are to be pitied above all others (1 Corinthians 15:12-19). There can be no pertinent teaching about Jesus—elementary or otherwise—without the centrality of His resurrection.

■ **Eternal Judgment.** Interesting that this is included. Its certainty is clearly confirmed in Scripture (Hebrews 9:27; Matthew 25:31-46; 2 Corinthians 5:10). Knowing this first should always inform our faith journey as we live to be ever ready for that day.

These are Bible basics that we should learn, practice, and never abandon. They are essential in coming to Christ and in personal spiritual growth that moves us toward fuller maturity in Jesus. They are not the end of that journey, but they are first. First things first. Then the rest of the blessings of Jesus can follow. **MM**

The PREACHERS' Page

Giants in the Land

Genesis 6:4 tells us that “there were giants on the earth in those days...those were the mighty men...men of renown.” In our time, we have been blessed to know and see men of God who have been spiritual giants. They are indeed, men of renown. All of us who are endeavoring to proclaim the Good News can see further because we stand on the shoulders of these giants.

Among those numerous giants, brother Cecil May stood as tall as any. Through his years of deep study in the Word of God, he equipped himself well to preach and teach the Gospel. He did so in the pulpit, in the classroom, and through the printed page. He enriched the lives of thousands of his fellow preachers around the Word. We are all eternally grateful to brother Cecil for his encouragement and example to us as well as his influence for good in Kingdom work.

To our preaching brothers around the world who are faithfully preaching the Good News and ministering to God’s people, we thank you for being a giant on the earth in these days.



If you will prepare yourself well, preach the truth and love the people you preach to, the Lord will take care of you.”

Cecil May, JR, was a giant to many of us who preach: Scholar par excellence, gentle, humble, wise, faithful, balanced, fun, and easy to listen to and understand. We honor this good brother.



“...faithful preaching is never a casual or part-time commitment; rather, it demands spiritual diligence and hard work. This ethic of preparation is central...”

A frequently heard postmodern statement is:

“Truth is not propositional; it is relational.

...Jesus himself asked,

“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?”

(Luke 6:46).

Propositional truth becomes relational truth when we trust and obey.

On gentleness in ministry and correcting others, May wrote:

“Virtually every passage that requires responding to or correcting those in error emphasizes the gentle attitude in which it should be done. ...

Gentleness makes the correction more likely to be received and also keeps the corrector from lapsing into sinful strife.”

On the continual nature of devoting oneself to ministry:

Someone once commented to Brother May,
“I wish I had a job that I never had to clock into.”

Cecil replied,
“I wish I had a job I could clock out of.”

The Gorilla

IN THE ROOM!

When Truth Changes Everything

*by Brandon Baggett, Preaching Minister,
Luverne church of Christ
Luverne, AL*

For centuries, wild tales of large apes came from Africa. These legends grew as stories were spread by Arab traders and explorers alike. These frightening creatures were described as strong, hairy, wild, and even dangerous to people. For most people in the world,

these accounts sounded like nothing more than folklore, fantasy, or fiction—until an explorer actually brought back proof!



Brandon Baggett

During the 1840s and 1850s, many explorers traveled deep into the heart of Africa. One was named Paul du Chaillu, and he encountered many gorillas during his explorations. He actually shot several of them and brought back gorilla skulls and skins to Europe. This physical evidence finally convinced the scientific community that gorillas were real animals after all—not just a myth or a cryptid.

I think this story is really fascinating. It wasn't until about 170 years ago that gorillas were officially accepted as real animals, even though those who lived among them knew they were very real. Today, nobody would place gorillas among mythical or fantasy creatures. These beautiful animals have been filmed, photographed, and featured in zoos and wildlife parks all around the globe. They are even officially listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, with the mountain gorilla considered endangered. Gorillas are now universally understood as real creatures—just as obvious as the existence of elephants, lions, or bears. But that wasn't the case

until relatively recently. That's truly fascinating!

There's a lesson for us in this. We cannot allow biases to keep us from accepting what's true. Don't dismiss the truth just because you haven't seen it or heard it before. Be careful not to throw out the insights, knowledge, and experiences of others. We can't assume we know it all or have everything figured out. Our perspective might be terribly limited.

Don't let pride blind you to reality. Ultimately, truth is still truth—whether people choose to believe it or not. Our job is to seek the truth diligently and accept what is right, even when it clashes with what we have previously thought or understood. That can be incredibly uncomfortable, but God's word is the ultimate authority—not our opinions or traditions.

Interestingly, religious people have often been some of the most resistant to the truth. Those who were well-versed in Scripture often had the hardest time accepting truth when it clashed with what they had always believed. Jesus frequently wrestled with the scribes and Pharisees over matters such as truth versus tradition, and they placed their longstanding viewpoints over God's teachings (cf. Matthew 5:17–42; 15:8–9). Mark even records how Jesus once looked at these religious elites “with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart” (Mark 3:5, ESV). It hurt the heart of Jesus to witness people refusing to accept the truth right in front of their eyes.

Other examples stand out in the Bible, too. Apollos “was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures” (Acts 18:24, ESV), but he only knew the baptism of John. His level of understanding was lacking. Thankfully, Priscilla and Aquila gently corrected him, and he accepted their help to learn God's truth more completely. Unlike many of the prideful scribes and Pharisees, Apollos was willing to rethink what he had previously taught and believed, and he revised his understanding to align with Scripture. As the saying goes, “When a man who is honestly mistaken hears the truth, he will either quit being mistaken or he will quit being honest.”

In a world filled with lies and misinformation, our challenge is to be a people who always seek the truth, believe only the truth, and

Jesus frequently wrestled with the scribes and Pharisees over matters such as truth versus tradition, and they placed their longstanding viewpoints over God's teachings

(cf. Matthew 5:17–42; 15:8–9)

passionately share the truth with this lost and hurting world. God's word repeatedly challenges us to pursue and accept the truth, even when it confronts long-held views or cherished traditions. True disciples are not those who stubbornly cling to past understanding; they continually conform their thinking to the unchanging standard of God's word. As Jesus said, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31–32, ESV). **MM**

In the **SPOTLIGHT**

Cody Michael

One of the most interesting displays at this year's PTP was from Little Mountain Ministry. They had a 4-wheel ATV and a side-by-side ATV in their booth. As I spoke to Cody Michael, pictured here, I was impressed by what he and his team do. They go to disaster areas, using their ATV's, they get into places trucks cannot, and help victims they find. They help clear away debris, provide food and water, and at the end of the day have a Bible study with those they have helped.

They have a ministry camp once a year for young men who want to serve the Lord. I was immediately impressed with Cody's zeal and love of serving others. He and his ministry is well deserving of being put "in the spotlight."



You can contact Cody for more information at
littlemountain710@gmail.com

BIBLE STUDY - 1

Recognizing the **AUTHORITY**

“Hath in these last days
spoken unto us **BY HIS SON...**”

Hebrews 1:2

1. The Father gave the
AUTHORITY to His Son
(Matthew 28:18; John 17:8)

2. The Son taught the
AUTHORITY to His
Disciples (John 17:8; Matthew 28:20)

3. The Disciples proclaimed
the **AUTHORITY** to the
people (John 17:20)

4. The Holy Spirit brought the
AUTHORITY to the
remembrance of the apostles
(John 14:26; Acts 2:4,6)

5. Inspired men wrote down the
AUTHORITY (II Peter 1:20-21)

6. The church continued in the
AUTHORITY (Acts 2:42)

7. Man will be judged by this
AUTHORITY (John 12:48)

*“... This is my beloved Son,
in whom I am well pleased;
HEAR YE HIM”*

Matthew 17:5

**THE SON SPEAKS TO
US BY HIS LAW**

Matthew 26:28; II Thessalonians 2:14 !!

“Clearly Different”

by *Dennis Doughty, editor*

A prominent investment company is running commercials on national television, highlighting the advantages of their services. When asked, “What about commission-based products?”, the reply is, “We don’t sell those; we are clearly different.” Other comparisons are made in the commercial to other money management practices, and the conclusion of their client is, “I guess you are clearly different.”

Most businesses, from fast-food restaurants to retail stores, try to set themselves apart from their competition. They are eager to show that they offer better services and products, that they are “clearly different” from the companies around them. From “Have it your way,” to “Save money, Live better,” to “Next day delivery,” to “Better ingredients, better Pizza,” companies are not shy to set their business apart as different and unique.

When Jesus began His ministry, it became clear that He was not going to be your “run of the mill” prophet. The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5-7) is a definitive statement of how different Jesus’ teachings would be. He repeatedly stated, “You have heard it said,” then compared the teaching of the old law with His own unique words; not just murder, but anger brings judgment, not just the act of adultery, but also lust, no oath, but let your yes be yes, if sued for your shirt, give up your coat also, not hate for your enemies, but love them, if slapped on one cheek, turn to them the other as well, not prayer in the marketplace, but in your

closet, With many such teachings Jesus announced to the world that His teachings would be clearly different from the norm of the day.

The television series “The Chosen” has drawn a large audience by depicting the life of Jesus and His disciples. At one point, His disciples question Jesus as to why His teachings are so different from the Pharisees’. Jesus responded, “Get used to different.” While these exact words are not in scripture, the idea certainly is. If we are to follow Jesus, as compared to the religious world around us, we better get used to “different.”

Sadly, today, some elders, youth ministers, and pulpit preachers are not embracing the teachings that distinguish the New Testament church from its religious neighbors. Like Israel’s desire to have a king so that they might “be like all the nations” (1 Samuel 8:5), these church leaders want to be like the religions around them. They fail to see the attraction of the Restoration Movement, which drew followers by the tens of thousands throughout our nation. It grew because it pointed

out the truth of the scriptures and proclaimed a return to “the apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42).

Are Elders giving in to pressure to be popular rather than taking pride in being unique? Are Preachers ignoring the false teachings of the religious world around them, preferring to preach “itching ear” sermons? While our young people may be told that “churches of Christ” do not use instrumental music, are they ever taught why?

I have thoroughly enjoyed conversing

with friends lament some decisions of their hierarchy, proudly pointing out that churches of Christ are self-governed. I enjoy speaking from the scriptures to explain why we do not use instrumental music and discussing the division it has caused over the centuries. I like questioning my religious buddies as to why their church removed the Lord’s Supper from their worship services. They have no answer. I proudly ask not to be called “reverend,” and gladly discuss why baptism is necessary to salvation. I am proud to be different if doing so means going back to the truth of God’s word!

In the first century, the disciples of the New Testament church were persecuted, not because they worshiped the gods of the Romans and Greeks, not because they bowed before Caesar, or because they “went along to get along,” but because they faithfully stood up and stood out in resisting these false teachings.

If a congregation desires to be part of the body of Christ, it should embrace being “clearly different,” choosing to stand firm in the teachings of Scripture. Preachers need to reinforce from the pulpit the tremendous success of the Restoration plea. Like Jesus, let us embrace the idea of being “clearly different!” **MM**

If a congregation desires to be part of the body of Christ, it should embrace being
“CLEARLY DIFFERENT,”
choosing to stand firm in the teachings of Scripture.

It Takes Blood to Receive **Eternal Life**

by Gary C. Hampton

People wonder what it takes to receive Eternal Life. The answer to that question requires an understanding of God's wish to have an eternal relationship with man and what would keep that from happening.

Man and woman walked with God in the Garden of Eden. They lost that privilege when they were cast out of the Garden for violating God's command (Genesis 3:1-24). God formed a plan to restore that relationship before He made the world (Ephesians 1:7-11; 3:8-13). Man's sin had to be cleansed to achieve that end (Isaiah 59:1-2).



Gary Hampton

Physical life is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11, 14). Spiritual life is in the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 9:22; 1 Peter 1:18-19). Our Savior shed his blood in His death on Calvary's tree (John 19:31-35). Reaching His blood requires us to reach His death. There is only one way to reach His death. Paul explained, "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:11-13).

Jesus' blood can reconcile one to God (Romans 5:9-11). It causes the Father to no longer impute our sins. The Father then expects us to carry the message of reconciliation to the lost (2 Corinthians 5:18-21). Our friendship with God is restored when our sins are remitted by Jesus' blood (Matthew 26:28). Remission of sins is part of the message of reconciliation (Luke 24:46-47). It was proclaimed by Peter in answer to the cries of thousands wanting to know what they should do to be saved (Acts 2:36-38).

Paul also said redemption from sin comes through Christ's blood (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14). Redemption is release through the payment of a ransom price. John describes Jesus as the propitiation for our sins and the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). It was God who sent Him to play that role (4:10). God, being just, had to require an appeasing sacrifice to enable Him to look favorably upon man.

Christ's blood is the means of cleansing from sin's defilement (Revelation 7:14; 1:5). Saul learned that he must not wait but arise

and be baptized to wash away his sins (Acts 22:16). Baptism is clearly our means of calling on the Lord's name to be saved (Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13-15).

Sin stands as a barrier between us and God. We must have our sins cleansed to approach the Almighty's throne. Christ's blood gives us boldness to approach God's throne because it removes the terrible stain of sin (Hebrews 10:19-20). Through Christ, we even have the assurance that we are on the way to Heaven (John 14:1-6). We must do the will of the Father in Heaven to have the hope of entering into the eternal city (Matthew 7:21). That will requires us to believe and be baptized to be saved from sin (Mark 16:16).

Thank God for the blood of Christ and all the blessings it supplies! When we find it, we will receive Eternal Life. **MM**

Nothing but the Blood

*We can search this world over;
And find nothing to truly please us;
Until we sing that beloved hymn;
"Nothing But the Blood of Jesus."*

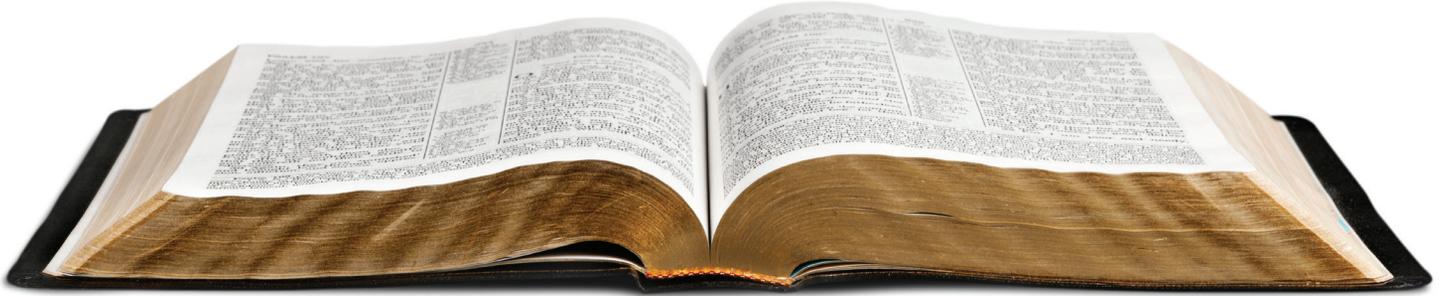
*For it was on that cross where he died,
When He defeated the sin that seized us.
What turned the soil of Golgotha red;
The redeeming blood of Jesus.*

*God turned a blind eye to His son,
Only then was He able to see us!
What made our soul clean again;
Being washed in the blood of Jesus.*

*His tomb was empty that Sunday morn,
So, from our tomb He now frees us.
What could redeem and save our soul;
"Nothing But the Blood of Jesus!"*

-Dennis Doughty

Gospel Sharing MINISTRIES



by Charles Shelton
GSM Board of Directors
Henderson, Texas

Gospel Sharing Ministries is a ministry designed to help churches learn to approach people with the Gospel. We are available to help congregations of any size.

Gospel Sharing Ministries was formed in October 2013. Seeing a need to minister to all sizes of congregations, five men met and formed a non-profit corporation to meet this need. They became members of the Board of Directors. The ministry is now overseen by the elders from the church of Christ of Palestine in Palestine, Texas.

Thus far, we have conducted over 50 one-week community outreach evangelistic campaigns (door-knocking) based on requests from congregations across the United States. Although many people believe that door knocking is an ineffective method for sharing the Gospel in today's society, the records of our campaigns tell a very different story. On average, we find someone at home at one of three doors we knock. Of those we find at home, one out of four allows us to share a Gospel presentation by reading the Bible with them and asking them basic questions. Of those to whom we present the Gospel, one out of six has resulted in a soul rescued or a soul saved.

Here's a fairly typical example:

In April 2025, we conducted a campaign at the North Tenna church of Christ in Tyler, Texas. We had a record number of our GSM Cadre members in attendance. This allowed from eleven to thirteen teams of three to go into the field each session of the campaign. As a result, a total of **676** doors were knocked and **257** people were found home. Prayers were said for **90** people, and the Gospel was presented to **56** of these. **8** of these people obeyed the Gospel. This resulted in finding someone home in **1** out of every **3** doors knocked. **1** out of every **4** people approached listened to a Gospel presentation and **1** out of every **7** people who heard the

Gospel presentation obeyed the Gospel.

We are available to help congregations of any size. To hold a campaign, Gospel Sharing Ministries would conduct a Training Seminar prior to the event. This seminar would first show ways to approach people in different situations and go through a simple, yet effective way to engage them in a presentation of the saving Gospel. Secondly, the seminar would focus on After Care, a vital part of keeping a new babe saved and in maturing that person to become a strong Christian.

During the week of the actual campaign, Monday thru Friday, the host congregation will provide breakfast for the out of town workers, the Cadre. "Cadre" by definition simply means "strategic personnel training other strategic personnel." We will then meet at the building at 8:30 am where we will sign up. We will have a devotional, singing, prayer, team assignments, and begin our door knocking. We will come back to the building for lunch, and after lunch we will meet again for reports of what we did that morning. After the reports, we will do team assignments and hit the streets again. We will meet back at the building at 5:00 pm and have our evening meal together. The rest of the evening will be open for follow-up with friends, family, and contacts made during the day, or spent in leisure.

We are always looking for more people who have a deep love for souls and are willing to give up a week or two out of their schedule in order to travel and help lead others to obey the Gospel of Christ. Come and go with us and we will train you to be an effective soul winner. Come see what we do and become a part of our Cadre. "...Come with us, and we will treat you well; for the LORD has promised good things..." Numbers 10:29. **MM**

For more information, go to our website
<https://www.gospelsharingministries.com>
or contact us at:

Gospel Sharing Ministries
3596 State Hwy 43 E. • Henderson, TX, 75652
or Call: 903-392-0534



AN

EPOCHAL EVENT

for

Biblical Christianity

*A Call for Commemorating the Quincentenary
of William Tyndale's English New Testament, 1526*

by Rod Atkinson
Hanford California

The year 2026 will mark the 500th anniversary of the first printed Bible in English -- William Tyndale's translation of the New Testament (1526). The event is widely regarded as a major historical and cultural landmark.

Are Christians a bit sluggish in anticipating it -- at least thus far in 2025? Tyndale and his accomplishments deserve to be remembered by Christians today. As preacher Mike Tune observed recently, this is an excellent time for preachers and congregations to revisit the story of the Bible in English.

Such a study enriches our historical understanding, of course, but it also aids us in developing humility and gratitude. One cannot remain self-satisfied when considering the studious discipline, the struggles, dangers, courage, sacrifices, betrayal, and martyrdom that comprise the story.

Today we have a dismaying plethora of translations and versions to choose from. Pondering that fact, we may compare our "easy access" to what William Tyndale (1494—1536) went

through 500 years ago. David Daniell provides an account:

"Tyndale took his intention to print the New Testament in English to the Bishop of London, who snubbed him. He moved to Germany, to an experienced printer in Cologne, and in 1525 began overseeing the setting up of his English New Testament. He had reached only Matthew Chapter 22 when the print-shop was raided by the local authorities (primed from England). He fled up the Rhine to the safer Lutheran city of Worms....At the unassuming press of Peter Schoeffer, Tyndale successfully printed in 1526 his English New Testament from the Greek.... Three thousand or six thousand copies were smuggled down the Rhine in bales of cloth, carried to English ports, and rapidly bought up and read, in spite of sweeping official confiscations. Only three copies survive...." (See Daniell's introduction to *The New Testament: A Facsimile of the 1526 Edition*, Translated by William Tyndale, Hendrickson Publishers, 2008).

Tyndale's 1526 New Testament was a direct challenge to the Roman Catholic Church and the prevailing political powers at

that time. Undaunted, he was yet able to translate the Pentateuch and Jonah, revise his translation of Genesis, and finalize new editions of his New Testament, all by 1534 – two years before his execution.

The Tyndale Society website attests to his greatness: “Tyndale’s influence has been as wide as Shakespeare’s. His phrases are so well-known that they are often thought to be proverbial - ‘let there be light’, ‘we live and move and have our being’, ‘fight the good fight’, ‘the signs of the times’, ‘the powers that be’, ‘a law unto themselves’, and hundreds more. The familiar words telling the great Bible stories are usually Tyndale’s.”

Clearly, Tyndale’s accomplishments and his martyrdom in the cause of Christ were formative events of overwhelming impact. The historical thunder still rolls and resonates today. In his *The English Bible from KJV to NIV: History and Evaluation*, Jack P. Lewis explains:

“When William Tyndale was discussing a theological point with a cleric who argued that men would be better off without God’s law than without the Pope’s law, Tyndale retorted that if God spared his life, before long he would make the boy that drives the plough know more Bible than the cleric did. Just as the driving force of Tyndale’s life was the effort to accomplish that goal, so the entire history of the translation of the Bible into English should be seen as a movement in that direction. Its goal is to make the Bible plain to the common man.”

Throughout 2025-26, let us remember Tyndale – his character, his world-altering English New Testament, and his sacrifice in the cause of Christ and His gospel. **MM**

(Note: I appreciate Rod bringing this important event to our attention. Almost a hundred years before the KJV was produced, Tyndale introduced the world to an English translation of the scriptures. Indeed, an important event. -dd)

Rod Atkinson holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in music and speech arts from the University of the Pacific. A former teacher and music supervisor, he has served as a song leader and occasional adult class teacher in churches of Christ for more than 30 years. Now retired, he resides in Hanford, CA. Though a lifelong Californian, he has not been unduly influenced by Nineveh-on-the-Pacific. Questions and comments regarding this essay may be e-mailed to him at rod2861@gmail.com.

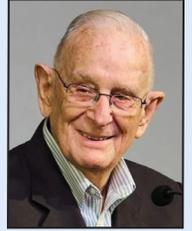
IN MEMORY OF

Gordon Hogan

March 7, 1928 - July 22, 2025

Gordon Hogan "sprinted into heaven" (a phrase borrowed from his granddaughter Jessica Collins) in the evening hours of July 22, 2025, surrounded by his children Beth, Dave, and Julie, and his son-in-law Ron. Gordon was 97 years old.

He was born on March 7, 1928, in East St. Louis, Illinois, the only child of William and Ethel Gibbs Hogan. Gordon is survived by his children: Beth James of Searcy, AR; Dave and Debbie Hogan of Singapore; and Julie and Ron Garner of Dexter, MO. He was preceded in death by one son-in-law, Mike James, and one great-grandson, Jesse James. He married the love of his life, Jane McAuley Hogan, on November 8, 1947, in Savannah, GA. They journeyed together for 68 glorious years until Jane passed away on January 17, 2016.



With the formalities aside, Gordon’s children and children-in-law want to share some of his own words from a letter he wrote to them in 2018:

"I have been accorded so many opportunities that have brought satisfaction and joy. Serving the Lord’s church in Pinellas Park and New Port Richey, Florida; College Church, Searcy; Clarendon and DeWitt, Arkansas; Pakistan (1960-1968); and Singapore (1968-1994) and many other places in God’s world, was wonderful.

You know that I loved adventure, and apart from the greatest one--driving with my family in a VW van from German to Pakistan, four months and 14,000 miles--there were a zillion other goofy things. All brought joy and satisfaction, but the most wonderful was preaching and teaching the Word of God, baptizing souls into Christ, and helping plant congregations."*

"I often sit in my home office and bask in the delight of remembering what a wonderful life God has given me, especially the blessing of my family."

He concluded his letter to his children with these words: “When the time came near for David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon, his son: ‘I am about to go the way of all the earth, he said, so be strong, show yourself a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires; Walk in his ways and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements.’”

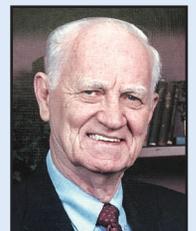
You are there now, Dad. You fought the good fight, finished the race, kept the faith, and now wear the crown of righteousness.

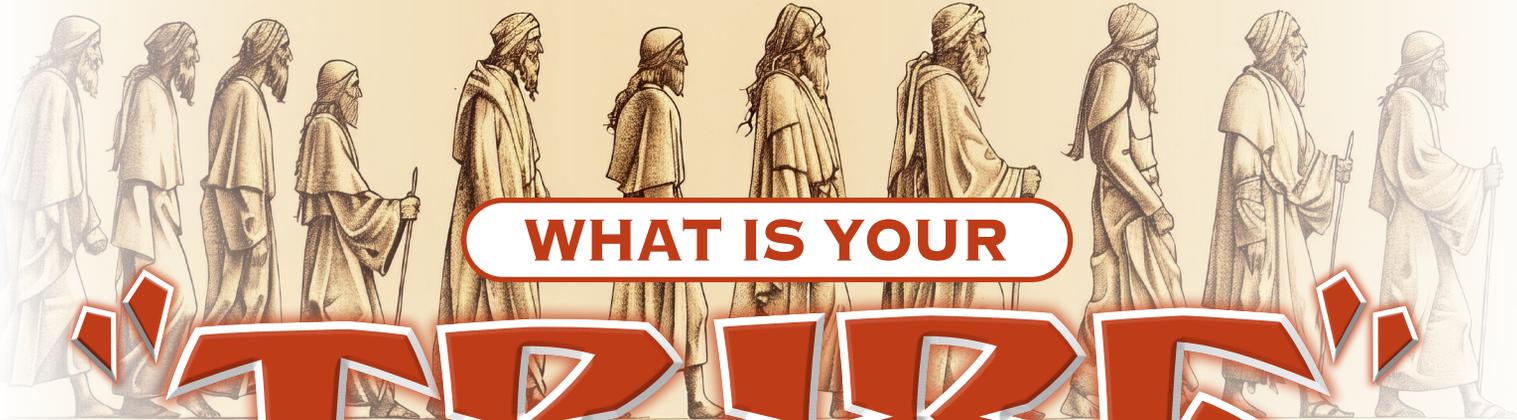
Editor’s note: The Hogan and Doughty families met back in the early 1950’s and remained the best of friends. Brother Hogan became a mentor to me as a young man. His family has been dear to me all my life. I mourn his loss, but I am grateful to have known him. -dennis

Fenter D. Northern 96

November 16, 1928 - June 25, 2025

Fenter was born in Holland, Missouri. He was a Professor of Bible at Faulkner University and a prior Dean at Magnolia Bible College in Kosciusko, MS. A member of University Church of Christ, he will be remembered as a delightful bible teacher, full of information and energy. Fenter was deeply loved and will be dearly missed. **MM**




 WHAT IS YOUR

TRIBE!



by *Tim McCarter, Minister*
Cleveland church of Christ

I am probably a bit behind the times, but I have noticed that it has become ever more common to refer to groups of people who have different views and opinions on various subjects as “tribes.” For example, in the political realm you have the Republican tribe, the Democrat tribe, the Liberal tribe, the Conservative tribe, etc. In the religious realm the various denominations, especially those claiming to follow Jesus Christ, are often designated as tribes. Even within those broader designations you have what might be called “sub-tribes,” reflecting the varying degrees of belief concerning commonly held beliefs.



Tim McCarter

Without a doubt the designation “tribe” is a Biblical designation. The word is used at least 363 times in the New King James translation of the Bible, 32 of those being in the New Testament. However, with a very few notable exceptions, the word is commonly used to refer to the twelve tribes of Israel or to one of those tribes individually. So, unless the reference to the “twelve tribes of Israel” in Revelation 7:4-5 is a reference to the those in the body of Christ who will inherit Heaven, the New Testament never refers to God’s people as a “tribe.”

The concept of tribalism seems to me to be a divisive concept. In ages past, human beings divided themselves into various tribes and anyone not a member of “your tribe” was considered to be an enemy, or at least a potential enemy and was to be regarded with suspicion. The various tribes often had distinctive modes of dress that differentiated them from other tribes. Some of the names by which the tribes called themselves literally translated to “the people,” “my people,” or, in some cases, “the enemy.” So it is apparent that the concept of tribalism is divisive rather than uniting.

Biblically speaking, those who belong to God’s “tribe” are referred to as “children of God” (John 1:12; Romans 8:16; Ephesians 5:1; Philippians 2:15; 1 John 3:1; et. al.), “sons of God” (Matthew 5:9; Romans 8:14; Galatians 3:26; et. al.), members of a “body”

(Romans 12:4; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Ephesians 4:4, 12; Colossians 1:18; et. al.), members of a “family/household” (1 Timothy 3:15), members of the “church (Gk – ekklesia, the “called out people”) of God/Christ” (Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 12:23; et. al.), as well as other similar designations. All of those terms are unifying rather than divisive terms.

But does that mean we all completely agree on everything? Not at all. We have disagreements with members of our physical families but that does not cause them to not be a member of the family. Neither does it give either party the license to mistreat or be rude to anyone. For example, the “Prodigal Son” (Luke 15:11-32) left the confines of his family, but he never ceased being the son of his father nor the brother of his brother. And, even though his elder brother exhibited jealousy and hostility at his return, he was still a member of that family. The prodigal left the family of his own volition. No one asked or forced him to leave. In fact, it seems that he left in spite of the entreaties of his father that he stay. The realization of the miserable condition into which he fell seems to be what prompted his return. That has been the case with more than one of God’s “prodigals.” Had he died while away, the rest of the family may never have know of his fate, but the father never stopped looking, hoping, and praying for his return, just as our heavenly Father never stops looking, hoping, and encouraging the return of those who stray from His family. Neither should we stop praying for their return and welcome them back when they come.

Those who belong to God are not part of a “tribe.” They are His children and He entreats them as such. The only way we can act as a true family is for us to follow the instructions of our brother, Paul the apostle, and endeavor “to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3). In order to do that we must recognize that there is only “one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Ephesians 4:4-6).

I’m not in a tribe. I’m in a family (Romans 8:14-17). I hope you are in the same family. **MM**

FIVE STEPS to CHURCH and SEVEN STEPS to HEAVEN

(A wonderful lesson from Fulford and Keeble. Both men great students of the word. I always appreciate the lifetime of study Hugh brings to our attention. -dd)

Hugh Fulford with Marshall Keeble

Some people belittle the idea of “steps” in the plan or way of salvation. They think it is too mechanical or legalistic or lacking in acknowledgment and appreciation of God’s grace.

Beyond all question, we are saved by the grace of God (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:3-7). God’s grace has been extended to all (Titus 2:11-12). Yet, not everyone will be saved. Jesus Himself said as much (Matthew 7:21). He is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9).

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). He has invited all to come to Him (Matthew 11:28-30). I do not know of any way to “come” to Christ other than by taking steps. In the book of Acts, the church is described as “the Way” (Acts 9:2; 22:4). We must take some steps to enter the Way, and we must continue to walk (take steps) to continue in the Way. It is somewhat inconsistent to make so much of the church as being the Way and then belittle the concept of taking steps.

The title of this essay is that of a sermon preached many years ago in many places by the great African-American evangelist Marshall Keeble. Brother Keeble’s sermons were simple, yet profound.

In the sermon referenced, brother Keeble set forth the five steps one must take to obey the Gospel, be saved from sin, and added to that number of people who constitute the church (see Acts 2:47). Those steps are: 1) Hear the Gospel of Christ. The Gospel is God’s power to save, and without hearing the Gospel salvation is not possible (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Romans 10:17). 2) Believe the Gospel (Mark 16:16; John 8:24; I Corinthians 15:1-2; Hebrews 11:6). 3) Repent of sin (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30-31; II Peter 3:9). 4) Confess faith in Christ (Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37 [KJV, NKJV]; et al). 5) Be baptized for the remission (taking away) of sin (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; I Peter 3:31). Baptism is the climactic act or step that one takes to enter the body of Christ, the church (Acts 2:41, 47; I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27).

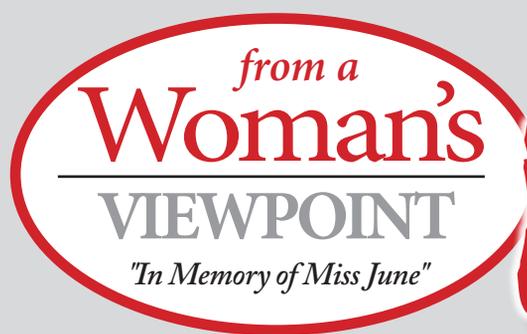
To be sure, brother Keeble was not talking about taking five literal steps to a physical church building; rather, he was talking about the scriptural conditions with which one must comply to be saved and added to the church, the body of Christ, composed

of all those who have taken the steps leading to membership in this one body!

Once one has obeyed the Gospel by taking the preceding five steps, he must then take the steps that will lead to Heaven, the eternal abode of all the redeemed. The apostle Peter, in a beautiful passage in his second letter, sets forth seven steps one must take to remain faithful to the Lord and be saved eternally. These steps are a summary of a faithful Christian life. They are: 1) Virtue; 2) Knowledge; 3) Self-control; 4) Perseverance; 5) Godliness; 6) Brotherly Kindness; 7) Love. By the development of these seven Christian graces, one can make his calling and election sure and have an abundant entrance “into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (II Peter 1:5-11).

As has been noted, the penitent believer enters the Way when he is buried with Christ in baptism and then raised to “walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). Once one has entered the Way, he is to “walk by faith, not by sight” (II Corinthians 5:17). We are “to walk worthy of the calling with which [we] were called” (Ephesians 4:1). In all of these passages, and many others, the reference is to the way Christians are to live. One of the richest studies one could engage in is to note the many texts that speak of how the Lord’s people are to walk. And walking involves taking steps.

I have not the slightest hesitancy in talking about the steps in the God’s gracious plan of salvation. Many years ago, I took brother Keeble’s sermon on “Five Steps to Church and Seven to Heaven” and developed my own sermon on “God’s Twelve-Step Program.” If the alcoholic needs to take steps to sobriety, how much more does the sinner need to take steps to salvation in Christ! How much more so when the sinner begins to take the steps that lead to Christ and to salvation in His church, followed by the steps that lead to Heaven! After all, “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that [we] should follow His steps” (I Peter 2:21). **MM**



Running with DISCRETION

by Teresa Hampton

Every waking moment we are running the Christian race. It is appropriate to address how we present ourselves when we run. Do we use discretion when choosing the clothes we wear? “Discretion” means, “unpretentious, modest; unobtrusive, unnoticeable; having discernment or good judgment in conduct and especially in speech; capable of preserving prudent silence.”

Paul described it when he wrote to Timothy, “in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness (propriety) and sobriety (moderation), not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works” (1 Timothy 2:9-10 KJV).



Teresa Hampton

“Modest” means “of good behavior, well arranged, modest, decent.” It was common for women of the first century to wear their hair in elaborate braids piled high on their heads. They flaunted their wealth with expensive clothing. God wants our clothing to be unpretentious, unobtrusive. He wants us to practice discretion with our appearance.

“Shamefastness,” according to Vine, is “modesty which is ‘fast’ or rooted in the character.” This godly heart understands the boundaries of propriety and shrinks from ever crossing the line, instead of seeing how close one can come to the line.

The word “sobriety” means “self-control and sound judgment.” This woman is not focused on buying certain name brands, expensive clothing, or wanting people to notice her. She behaves and dresses in a way that shows moderation, being defined by good works. Peter echoed this thought (1 Peter 3:3-4). The scriptures plainly address the relationship of our hearts to what we wear, how we speak, and how we act.

Clothing is important to most women because it is how we define ourselves. We’re influenced by everything around us, bombarded from every side about clothing. Magazines portray beauty as a certain ‘package.’ The entertainment industry casts unclothed women as fashionable and desirable to the opposite sex. This results in confusion or ambivalence about what we should wear. Setting that aside, let’s define right and proper dress, looking at three fundamental truths.

First, God intentionally made men and women differently.

Women love to talk, so the friendship or relationship we cherish most is one in which we can talk about anything and be understood. Women are emotion-driven. Emotions may guide us in many aspects of life, even decision-making. Women are born nurturers. Caring for others’ needs has been ingrained in us since our first baby doll. When our emotional needs are met, we’re agreeable, nurturing, and somewhat vulnerable.

Men are visual creatures, driven in life by what they see. They love engaging in activity, sports, hiking, driving cars, and such. Men often talk about the great game they watched last night. The only thing they enjoy more than watching activity, like a game, is actually participating in it as a player. Their greatest delight is to combine the seeing and the doing! And they love to watch beautiful cheerleaders on the sidelines. As mature women we may understand the reality of these biological differences. But I wonder if young women are aware of the effect their clothes, or lack of clothes, have on the opposite sex. They know it has an effect, but may not know the series of reactions that begin with immodesty, and continue in motion with devastating consequences.

Bathsheba is a perfect example of this (1 Samuel 11:1-17). She was on her rooftop bathing at a time when the king could look down and see her. She was in the wrong place, at the wrong time, wearing the wrong thing! The result was an adulterous affair, an unwanted pregnancy, the murder of her husband, and the death of her baby. This tragedy could have been avoided if she had been wearing modest, proper clothing.

Second, God intended that we wear clothes. In the garden of Eden man and woman were sinless, spiritually pure. They were naked, but not ashamed (Genesis 2:25). The devil tempted Eve, she was deceived, ate the forbidden fruit and gave it to her husband who was with her, and he ate. They immediately realized they were naked and sewed fig leaves together for coverings (1 Timothy 2:12-14; Genesis 3:7). So the very first consequence of sin was shame when they recognized they were naked. That should

tell us that this is a very important issue. Shame associated with nakedness is a direct result of the guilt of sin. Ever since, clothing has been considered to be necessary. In every civilized nation, lack of clothing brings shame and embarrassment. In the Old Testament, whenever nakedness is mentioned, except in the context of marriage, it is always associated with shame (1 Samuel

**VIEWER
DISCRETION
IS
ADVISED**

2:30; Exodus 20:26; Isaiah 47:3; Ezra 16:36-37; Nahum 3:5).

Third, God holds us responsible for how we dress. Women who are on the defensive say, "Aren't men responsible for their own souls?" Yes. Each person is responsible for the choices they make. Each one is accountable in the Day of Judgment according to their own deeds (Romans 2:6). Jesus warned men about looking at women to lust (Matthew 5:28). Men must control their eyes and their thoughts.

Do women have any responsibility for the souls of men? Yes. Romans 14:12-13 speaks clearly about our responsibility to our Christian family, "Each of us shall give an account to God...and we should resolve not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way."

Women have the ability, with their attire and actions, to cause men to sin. The business of pornography is based on this principle. Young men are especially at risk. For years their minds have been on cars and trucks, legos and video games. Suddenly, hormones wake them up to the beauty of females.

God will hold parents responsible for teaching their daughters about modesty. Mothers, start early talking to your daughters about the importance of modesty. You can't allow them to be immodest when they're young and then suddenly be modest when they're thirteen!

Please consider how your clothing affects men you meet outside the home, especially what you wear to worship. Christian men have difficulty focusing on spiritual matters when they see immodest women. When serving the Lord's supper, sometimes men have nowhere to look but up! Sisters, we should be about the business of protecting the souls of our brothers in Christ.

When we're at the closet trying to decide what to wear, let's consider these questions:

- *What do our clothes say about us?* • *Do they say, "Look, I'm rich!"*
- *"Look, I'm sexy!"* • *"Look, I'm scary!"*
- *"Look, I'm popular/fashionable!"*

These are good questions, but they're just the tip of the modesty iceberg. We should ask, "While wearing these clothes...

- *Can I help my Christian brothers as they try to live for Christ?*
- *Could I represent Jesus at school or work?*
- *Could I talk to a man or young man about Jesus?*
- *Could I have a conversation with Jesus?*
- *Would Jesus be embarrassed to walk and talk with me?*

Besides these questions, I recommend the mirror test:

- *Stand in front of a full length mirror wearing the shoes that match the outfit*
- *Sit in a chair and cross your legs*
- *Bend over slightly to see if your neckline is revealing*

Let us not compare ourselves to other women, thinking "this top shows a little cleavage, but it's not as low as the other ladies at the office," or "it's not as low as the other girls at school."

What do men say? Men define immodest clothing as:

- *low-waist pants or jeans* • *midriff showing*
- *strapless tops and dresses showing bare shoulders*

- *low necklines showing cleavage* • *thin or sheer tops*
- *tight, form-fitting clothes* • *short skirts* • *short shorts*
- *visible underwear*

If we want to please God as we run the Christian race, we need to study His Word. Paul helps us realize that a modest outward appearance begins in the mind or heart (Romans 12:1-2). If we're struggling with issues of modesty we must ask ourselves, "Are our minds and hearts totally devoted to God, willing to be transformed into the image He desires?" **MM**

Girls learning God's way

by Alyvia Brumfield,

Hello, my name is Alyvia Brumfield, I am 16 years old, and I attend the Kensington Woods Church of Christ in Hattiesburg, MS.



I want to tell you about just one of the ways we are reaching out to our community. This year, we have moved American Heritage Girls Troop MS2024 to the Kensington Woods church building.

The American Heritage Girls is a Christ-centered scouting program for girls ages 5-18. They enjoy serving in their community and country while keeping God as their main focus. Some opportunities that are open to the American Heritage Girls are earning badges that define the girls' characteristics, such as caring for creation, sewing, cake decorating, theater, and outdoor skills.

By having the troop supported primarily by members of the church, we are reaching people in our community that we may not reach before. By inviting new girls to join, we are also inviting them and their families to connect with the church, learn about God, and feel like they belong somewhere safe and welcoming. If your congregation is looking for a way to reach more families, you could think about starting an AHG troop, too.



If you would like to learn more, go to
<https://americanheritagegirls.org>
or come visit us at the

Kensington Woods Church of Christ
Hattiesburg, MS

Celebrating 20 Years

Dennis Doughty

“INSCRIPTIONS”

In 2006, Sydney Wagner, in our Bible Class at Highland Street church in Memphis, began a class newsletter. I volunteered to write a small article for it as there was space to fill. I decided to call the column “Inscriptions.”

A year later, I moved and began preaching in Tunica, continuing to write articles that I included in our weekly church bulletin. Sydney asked me to email them back to her as well, and she continued to use the article in her newsletter. The Highland Class newsletter continues to this day, and 20 years later, they still use my weekly article.



Soon, some churches that helped support my work in Tunica were getting the articles and using them in their church bulletins. Over the years, it has continued to grow, to the point where I “guesstimate” that somewhere around 1,000-1,200 people now read “Inscriptions,” either in their bulletin or email.

I have written around eight hundred of these short, three-paragraph articles. While I hope these articles have helped others, doing this has certainly blessed my life. It has kept me observant of the world around me, always looking for an event, a statement, or a verse of scripture to write about. It has made me a better writer, and my life has been blessed by all who have read my words over the years. Your comments, friendships, and support will be something for which I will be forever thankful.

Writing every week and sending them out every Wednesday has become a part of my life. I will continue to do so as long as health allows, or the Lord returns. Even so, “Come, Lord Jesus.” **MM**

NOTE: If you would like to receive Dennis’ weekly article, please drop him an email at dennis1848@bellsouth.net.

from April 2006:

Every man should have the following: a good pair of leather work gloves, a sharp pocket knife, a black suit, a quality watch, and a junk drawer in the kitchen.

But a man is more than the sum of his possessions. It is how he acts, reacts, and lives that really matters. Christ surrounded Himself with good, hard-working men. Paul told the men of Corinth to “stand firm in the faith, be men of courage” (1 Corinthians 16:13). This kind of man can still be found in the Lord’s church. They find what God wants them to do and use their talent, skills, and strength to do it.

Godly men take stands, tell the truth, live by their convictions, provide for their families, admit their mistakes, and worship their Creator. And, I guess we could occasionally clean out that junk drawer in the kitchen!

(I did not give them a title in the beginning)

from March of 2016:

“ET TU, JUDAS?”

This past Tuesday, March 15th, was historically known as “The Ides of March.” It was on this famous date in 44 BC that Julius Caesar was assassinated by the Roman Senate. Sixty senators took part in the traitorous act. In Shakespeare’s famous play about the event, Caesar saw his friend Brutus also wielding a dagger and says with his dying breath, “Et tu Brute?” (“You too, Brutus?”) Later defeated in a battle against Mark Antony, Brutus commits suicide, falling on his own sword.

However, the most famous friend turned traitor was one of Jesus’ own apostles, Judas Iscariot. Entrusted with funds used to care for the Lord’s daily needs, he began to help himself to the moneybag (John 12:6). This apostle turned thief, fearful of being caught, sells out his Lord for 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14-16).

Brutus came to the Senate, Judas to the Garden. One came with a sword, the other with a kiss. Each brought death to a friend. Both died by their own hand. Judas regretted his actions, but instead of seeking the Lord he sought a rope. Sadly, many betray the Lord today, having “fallen away, they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame” (He. 6:6).

from 2025:

THE TABLE OF THE LORD

In the last book of the Old Testament, the Prophet Malachi rebukes Israel for dishonoring the altar by presenting blind, lame, and sick animals for sacrifice. Malachi’s response is “You are profaning it, in that you say, ‘The table of the Lord is defiled’” (Malachi 1:7,12).

It is interesting that the altar, where sacrifices are made and blood is shed, is called the “Table of the Lord.” In Corinth, Christians continued to offer sacrifices to the Roman gods. Paul, in referring to the Lord’s Supper, rebuked them, saying, “You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons” (1 Corinthians 10:20-21).

It was God’s plan that we view the Lord’s table as an altar, where Jesus’ body was sacrificed and His blood shed. Additionally, as Paul pointed out, we should not mix elements of unauthorized worship with our participation in our spiritual communion. In our post-pandemic age, where many of the actual Lord’s tables have been removed, let us not forget the powerful symbolism of the term “The Lord’s table” as the altar where we come to break the bread and drink the cup.

"ON THE ROAD AGAIN" with the Editor

POLISHING THE PULPIT

Pigeon Forge: 2025

After a year's absence, I returned to PTP to enjoy one of the largest gatherings among our brotherhood. It is held each year in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, among the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains.

Over four thousand Christians registered to listen to great speakers, meet up with old friends, and see many of the great things going on in the country from all the many displays present. If you have never attended this event, either here or at the other event in Branson, I encourage you to do so. It will strengthen your Bible knowledge, bless you spiritually, and provide you with a week of wonderful Christian fellowship!



Adam Barr is from Scotland, kilt and all. He was converted as a young boy through a campaign of college kids from Harding University. He now is one of the preachers of the Cumbernauld congregation. He is in the states raising funds to help the congregation build a building on land they have purchased. His display was just across from mine and so we enjoyed three days of visiting and getting to know each other. A true joy and blessing to be around.



Dan Winkler, who does the Q and A column for *The Messenger*, is one of the most popular speakers at PTP. They keep him busy. Here he is doing his regular weekly podcast for *The Light Network* between speaking assignments.



Sherry Townsend made it a point to stop by our display. She does the bulletin for the congregation in Jesup, Georgia, and has used my "Inscriptions;" for the bulletin for several years. She is also a recent Question Box winner of the Bible we give away with each issue.



The ladies are not neglected at PTP. There are dozens of women speakers and programs designed for the ladies. PTP does ask that all the women dress appropriately, so the Pearly Peacock offered many excellent modest choices.



Steven Worley has spent forty years in Nigeria. He has a program that reaches over 1100 orphaned boys. He helps educate them and teaches them God's Word. Steven has converted many in the Muslim world. He has done an amazing work and is a tireless servant of God. It was my blessing to visit with him.



PTP is a family event. There is a day camp for all the children at no extra cost. Here Kirk Brothers is teaching a group of boys about frogs. The program is well organized with good class sessions as well as recreational activities. So mom and dad, bring your children and come on to PTP!

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

May through July 2025

by Eddie Lewis

We appreciate so much the opportunity to inform you about our mission work among the churches in North Mississippi and the ministry at the Christian Student Center at Mississippi Delta Community College in Moorhead, Mississippi. We appreciate the German-town church of Christ sponsoring us in our North Mississippi ministry. Several churches and individuals support the work at the CSC. This report covers the months of May through July 2025.

May 4: Madolyn and I were on vacation and visited with the Harbor Springs church of Christ in Harbor Springs, Michigan. The congregation consisted of six women. They are meeting at City



Hall in one of the conference rooms. One of the ladies was 95 years old. They are a dedicated group of Christians. Area preachers rotated in coming to speak for them. This Sunday, Matthew French, the minister, and one of the elders from Traverse City church, came and presented a wonderful lesson. His theme was "Why Do the Wicked Live and Become Old?" We enjoyed our visit with the folks there.

May 18: Madolyn and I visited with the Crockett church of Christ. They recently

hired Ed Casteel as their new minister. He came there from the Central Academy church near Batesville, Mississippi. We wanted to welcome Ed and hear him preach. I helped the congregation during the interim and was glad that they were able to secure someone. In the last two weeks Ed reported that he had baptized two men. They were excited to welcome these men into the congregation. We enjoyed our visit and were able to eat with Ed and Tom and Mary Osborn.



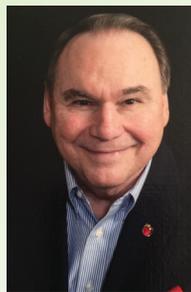
Ed Casteel

May 25: Madolyn and I visited with the Coffeeville church of Christ. They recently hired Anthony Myers as their new minister. Anthony's father worked with the Siwell Road church in Jackson as their deaf minister in the past. So, he is familiar with Mississippi. We welcomed him to his new home. Cortney was out of town visiting family. He comes to Mississippi from Alabama,



Anthony and Cortney Myers

graduate of Heritage University. We enjoyed meeting him and eating a meal



with him and his brother, Benjamin. Of course, it was good to see all the wonderful brethren at Coffeeville. I helped the congregation during the interim by preaching for them once a month

June 1: Madolyn and I visited with the Hwy. 15 church of Christ in Pontotoc, Mississippi. Mike Ray has been their minister for a little over a year. He is a MSOP



Mike and Jennifer Ray

graduate and comes to them from Florida. He lost his first wife a few years ago and two years ago married Jennifer. It was great meeting them and their family. We were able to visit with some old friends and enjoyed a fellowship meal after the service. The congregation has no elders and around 70 in attendance. They are a very welcoming congregation. We enjoyed our visit with them. Mike had some very good lessons. In the worship he preached about "How to Make the Church Strong" and "What Shall I Do With Jesus?" based on Matthew 27:22.

June 3-4: Madolyn and I went to Brookway church of Christ in Brookhaven, Mississippi. "Mission Mississippi," which is composed of three youth groups from Strickland, Booneville, and New Albany, were conducting a VBS and "Bible and Ball" campaign for the church there. They knocked on doors in the community, inviting children to the VBS, which ran Tuesday to Thursday. They had around 30 children from the community to come. One feature that was interesting was the "Bible and Ball."



Children at VBS

where he and Cortney served as house parents at one of the children's homes. He is a

At the same time the VBS was going on, they had invited teens from the community to come play basketball in their gym. After the games they would have a 15-20-minute devotional. They had over 15 teens to come. They made room for us to spend the night at Camp Smiley Acres. We helped knock on doors on Wednesday. It was fun seeing all the teens working for Christ and the great friendliness of the Brookway church family. We want to thank these churches for their desire to help a church grow in a mission field in Mississippi. Also, we thank Able Nichols and Terry Smith for their leadership.

June 8: Madolyn and I visited with the Sardis church of Christ. Hal Johnson has been the minister there for 27 years. It was good to see him and listen to him teach the Bible class and preach in the worship. We saw some old friends there and enjoyed a fellowship meal after the service. The church had around 30 in attendance. They have no elders. They had several young children in Bible class. One of the young boys was baptized at Sardis Lake Christian Camp the week before. During the worship a visitor came forward and was baptized. It was a wonderful time of rejoicing. We enjoyed our visit with the good folks at Sardis.

June 21-24: Madolyn and I conducted a campaign for the Central Academy church of Christ. On Saturday morning we knocked on doors in the community. Seventeen people from Germantown, Central Academy, and Batesville churches helped. Sunday morning, we had 16 for the morning worship and



Central-Door Knockers

Bible Study. Some folks from Germantown helped double their regular attendance. We appreciate Tim Vann, one of our elders at Germantown, leading the singing Sunday and David Fewell

leading the singing during the week. We enjoyed a great meal after the morning service. 17 people came for the 1:00 pm service, including five visitors from the community. I presented the lessons from Ephesians 1-5. Each night during the week we had 25 in attendance and four visitors from the community to come. It was a good meeting, and we were able to encourage the congregation.

June 29: Madolyn and I visited with the Holly Springs church of Christ. They have two bi-vocational ministers: Todd Sanderson and Kerry Reid. They have four elders and around 70 in attendance. They are involved in several mission works and help support the CSC at Mississippi Delta Community College. Corey Ramsey, the director of the CSC, gave a report about this year's ministry at the CSC. He did a wonderful job informing the congregation about all the activities this year. The CSC averaged 19 students attending the Wednesday Night Bible Study. I spoke in the worship service. I preached on "Seeking the Lost" based on Luke 15. We enjoyed our visit and were able to see some old friends.

July 6: Madolyn and I visited with the Greenbrier church of Christ in Greenbrier, Arkansas. Glen Elliott is the minister there and one of the elders. They have three elders



Colleen and Glen Elliott

and around 100 in attendance. They support several mission works around the world. We visited so that Corey Ramsey could give them a mission report about the work at the CSC at MDCC. They asked me to preach in the worship service. The church is a very friendly congregation. Corey did a great job of informing the congregation about the work this past year at the CSC. They asked questions and seemed

encouraged about the ministry. It was great to see some old friends and visit with the brethren there. My lesson was taken from Matthew 21, the parable of the "Test of the Two Sons." I entitled it "Actions Speak Louder."

July 13: Madolyn and I visited with the Oliver church of Christ in Rogersville, Alabama. David O'Connell has been the minister there for many years.



Daniel Rilinger, David O'Connell, Randy Pyle-Oliver

They have no elders and about 50 in attendance. They are a very friendly congregation. They have supported the CSC for over 30 years. Corey Ramsey presented a report about the work this year at the CSC. They asked questions and everyone was encouraged by what he said. They asked me to speak in the worship. I preached on "What it means to be a Disciple of Jesus" based on Luke 14:25-35. It was good to see some old friends that have a sincere interest in our work. We enjoyed eating with the Rilingers and Pyles after services and getting to know them better.

July 20: Madolyn and I made a trip to see her son and daughter-in-law, Rob and Shelia Gibson in Anchorage, Alaska. He is facing some surgery on his ankle. We wanted to see him before the surgery. We attended services at the Anchorage church of Christ. Tony Cloud is their pulpit minister. They have two elders and around 200 in attendance. They have an active youth ministry led by Jeff Smith and are very active in the community. Tony's lesson that morning was "Attacks of the Devil." We enjoyed our visit. **MM**

The Devil does NOT... Wear Red



by Greg Ledbetter, minister
North Brandon church of Christ



Despite what you might feel, life is not just about school, sports, or social media. It is a battleground for your soul. The battle is not physical; it is spiritual. Ephesians 6:12 says, “We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers... spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” And in that battle, God gives us armor: truth, righteousness, faith, salvation, and the Word of God. But armor is useless if you do not know your enemy.

Ask someone what the devil looks like, and you will likely hear something about red skin, horns, a pitchfork, and a tail. That cartoonish image is a lie, and Satan loves it. Because if you do not take him seriously, you will not prepare for his attacks. The truth is: The devil does not wear red. He wears whatever works.

1. Satan Is Real and Active

He is not a Halloween costume or a joke from a movie. He is a real spiritual being with one goal—to destroy. 1 Peter 5:8 says, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” That word devour is not about mild annoyance; it is about ruin. Satan wants to devour your faith, your purpose, your relationships, and your soul. But he does not usually come in swinging. He prefers stealth. He plants thoughts like:

- “You’re not good enough.”
- “Everyone else is doing it.”
- “God understands.”

He tailors temptation to your weakness: pride, lust, anger, insecurity. He does not need you to join a cult, just to drift far enough from Jesus that you forget who you are.

2. Satan Does Not Always Look Evil

2 Corinthians 11:14 says Satan “transforms himself into an angel of light.” That means he shows up looking helpful, kind, reasonable, even godly.

He makes sin look like freedom: “You’re just being true to yourself.”

He makes lust look like love: “If you love me, you’ll do this.”

He makes bitterness look like justice: “You deserve to feel this way.”

Remember the serpent in the Garden? He did not frighten Eve. He sounded brilliant, convincing, almost helpful. That is how Satan works. Even today, someone might quote Scripture to excuse sin. That is precisely what Satan did to Jesus while in Matthew 4, twisting Psalm 91 to tempt Him. Do not fall for TikTok theologians. Know the Word for yourself.

3. Satan Is Targeting You

Why target teens? Because you are shaping your identity, your values, and your future. If Satan can distort your foundation now, you will be easier to manipulate later. He uses:

- Music that glorifies sin.
- Shows that mock purity.
- Apps that breed comparison.
- Friends who normalize compromise.

How do we know if Satan has already compromised us?

If you care more about likes than godliness...

If you defend sin because it is popular...

If your armor is collecting dust, Satan is already working.

You do not need to fear the devil, but you do need to be aware of him. The devil does not wear red, because he does not want to be noticed. He is patient, subtle, and relentless, but he is also defeated. 1 John 4:4 reminds us, “He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” So suit up, stand firm, and stay alert. **MM**

Sardis Lake Christian camp, 2025

For 54 years, Sardis Lake Christian camp, or SLCC, has been a part of many kids' and adults' lives. You can ask anyone who has attended SLCC which session is the best, and they will tell you their session. I am not here to settle that debate, but I can tell you it was great to be on the campus of SLCC in 2025. I believe we can all agree that no matter what session you attend, SLCC is a special place. This year, I participated in the 4th session with Bobby Rawson, Todd Sanderson, and Brooks Rawson as the directors. Our theme for the week was “I have a question.” We discussed questions that the Bible asks that help lead us in our spiritual walk. It was a great time of renewal and encouragement. We witnessed seven baptisms during our week, and we know that many lives were changed for the good. It was beautiful to see kids excited about God. If your kids have never attended camp, mark it on your calendar for next year. This camp is needed in our state, and I am thankful we have it. If you would like to donate to the camp, go to www.sardislakechristiancamp.org.

The MAGNOLIA MESSENGERS / PREACHER SEARCH

■ THE RUSTON CHURCH OF CHRIST

Associate Minister & Youth/College Minister Search

(located 5 minutes from Louisiana Tech & 10 minutes from Grambling) is a vibrant congregation in North Central Louisiana with an average attendance of 130-160. Our mission is to preach the Word of God and help the Church grow throughout our area. We seek a passionate and energetic married individual to serve as our Associate Minister, with a primary focus on youth and college ministry. We offer a competitive salary and housing allowance, commensurate with experience. To apply, please submit your resume, cover letter, and references to Rustonchurchofchrist@gmail.com.

■ POOLE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Is Searching for a Full-time Pulpit Minister. We are in north-western Kentucky in a small town but near larger urban areas for entertainment, dining, medical... etc. We are a very friendly and active congregation that is doing evangelism in the community and want to find a preacher who is also evangelistic and wants to be out in the neighborhood ready to spread His Word. We consider ourselves to be patterned after the church in the 1st century, but also use newer technology to study and spread the Gospel. We utilize house-to-house publications, have a weekly radio program. • 2 Elders • 2 Deacons • 35 members • Very comfortable Parsonage • Salary very competitive
For more information Contact:

Tim Cottingham, Elder drtlc@bellsouth.net 812-431-2773
Greg Hobgood, Elder ghobgood63@gmail.com 270-213-0099

■ MT. ZION CHURCH OF CHRIST

Mt. Zion has been meeting in the Brookhaven, MS. area since 1894. We are seeking a full-time minister who is sound in the faith, equipped to teach, and eager to serve others. We are a congregation of about 80 members.

Contact: Ronnie Lofton 601-757-3632 rlofton1979@gmail.com

■ MUNFORD CHURCH OF CHRIST

We are looking for a well-grounded, full-time pulpit preacher. Ideal, but not necessary: middle-aged married, energetic man wanting to spread the gospel in a small growing town in west Tennessee. We have about 75 good active members with 2 elders and 3 deacons. Salary is open to experience. **Please send resume to Att. Elders, Munford Church of Christ, 435 S. Tipton Street, Munford, TN 38058, or e-mail to rahwoodshoe@gmail.com or call: Bob Holland 901-331-2346**

■ NEW HOPE ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST

in Hendersonville, TN (suburb of Nashville), is in search of a full-time Minister. Our current minister will move to an associate's role. Our church size is approximately 60 to 75 members and an eldership is in place. Dedicated office hours are not required. This is a salaried position in mid \$50K range. **Interested parties contact Brian at carricobc@hotmail.com**

■ New life Behavioral instructional materials

"New Life Behavior" English Language curriculum is available to a congregation considering using this evangelistic material. NLB courses consist of 13 lessons and we have all 13 lessons. The lessons approximately 144 letter-size pages in length. **If interested in this free material, contact the University Church of Christ in Montgomery, Alabama at 334-386-7320 and it will be shipped to you at no cost."**

■ CENTERVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST

a small church in the middle of Alabama needs a working preacher to help grow a congregation now consisting of mostly of older Christians. **Please send a short resume to the church at 824 Montevallo Road, Centreville, AL. 35042.**

■ THE CALLAHAN CHURCH OF CHRIST

in Callahan Florida is seeking a fulltime minister. The church has approximately 30 members. A degree in Biblical studies is preferred. The preacher could be retired, semi-retired, or have a secular job. Key

Responsibilities: Preach Sunday morning and Sunday night. Teach Bible class Sunday morning and Wednesday night. **To apply: Send resume to: opawill0115@gmail.com or text/call Woodrow Williams 904-333-8831.**

■ THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

In New Jersey is actively seeking a full-time minister. Approximately 125 diverse members led by elders and deacons. The primary responsibilities include preaching, teaching class, evangelizing in the community, and ministering to the family. The compensation includes housing. tcocpreachersearch@gmail.com.

■ THE CHRISTOPHER CHURCH OF CHRIST

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

■ CLARKE COUNTY CHURCH OF CHRIST

is seeking a minister in Athens, located 70 miles from Atlanta. **For more information, visit clarkecountycoc.org.**

■ NETTLETON CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Nettleton Church of Christ, located in Nettleton Ms, is seeking a new full time minister with a strong faith, who is doctrinally sound. We have around 30 members in attendance and a house is provided. **Please contact Billy Pender @ 662-963-3695, Stephen Lochridge @ 662-963-3217 or Wade Williams @ 662-315-3418 or email Rwwilli2@me.com**

■ THE EUPORA CHURCH OF CHRIST

Eupora, MS, is looking for a full-time preacher. We have approximately 42-51 that attend. We have a preacher's home. **huntpe@yahoo.com or text/call Paul Hunt 662-634-1651. However, I do prefer text messages.**

■ HOUSE OF COMPASSION

The Hands of Compassion ministry in Rochester MN, is seeking Hospitality House Parents to support our guests that are visiting Mayo Clinic for medical care. We are looking for compassionate Christians who feel called to serve our house guests during their visits. Our ministry is expanding and we need you! If interested, please visit our website, email us or call our chaplain Phillip Quelle. We would love to hear from you! www.hocrochester.com hocministry@gmail.com Chaplain # 507-216-8993

■ JOHNSON GROVE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Johnson Grove church of Christ in Bogue Chitto, Mississippi, is actively seeking to employ a full-time Associate/Youth minister but could be open to a bi-vocational person under the right circumstances. The primary focus will be ministering to our youth group of 20+ young people. **please email: Andrew Redd (Elder) aredd5268@gmail.com Douglas Kimble (Minister) dkpreach@bellsouth.net**

■ OXON HILL CHURCH OF CHRIST

is searching for a full-time minister. We have 50+ members. The position requires someone who is sound in biblical knowledge and has excellent communication and writing skills. **Contact: 1oxonhillcoc@gmail.com, or mail to Oxon Hill Church of Christ at 4201 Brinkley Road, Temple Hills, MD 20748.**

■ MEIGG STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST

a congregation of approximately 50 active members and located in Corinth, Ms, is seeking a full-time minister to fill the position of current minister. **Submit resume and a video/audio of a sermon to Meigg Street Church of Christ; P.O. Box 47, Corinth, MS 8834 by December 28, 2023.**

■ GEORGETOWN (SC) CHURCH OF CHRIST

seeking experienced minister. 100-member congregation with elders. Send resume with references, including training with recent video sermons, **by email or mail to Preacher Search Committee,**

Georgetown church of Christ, P.O. Box 250, Georgetown, SC 29442 Email: GeorgetownCofCSearch@gmail.com

■ ACADIANA CHURCH OF CHRIST

Looking for a part-time preacher in Lafayette, LA. We are a congregation of around 50 members. If you are interested, contact us at office@acadiana.church. **Roger G McCafferty Email: gmcacaf@cox.net**

■ MANKATO CHURCH OF CHRIST

is seeking mission-minded Christians in Minnesota. At this time, we are seeking part-time preachers, teachers, and general volunteers as we work to build a vocational ministry, starting with the focus in the city of Mankato, MN. **Mankato church of Christ <mankatochurchofchrist@gmail.com>**

■ ROCKY CREEK CHURCH OF CHRIST

Youth Minister Search. **Contact: Rocky creek church of Christ in George County. Stan James Email: Stanjames4him@gmail.com**

■ THE CORNERSTONE CHURCH OF CHRIST

in Baton Rouge, LA, is looking to grow its Youth Ministry. If you are humble, spiritual, and scriptural, we may be a good fit. **Please contact George Myer 225-229-5830**

■ MERIDIAN CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Meridian church of Christ, located in Meridian, MS, is in search of a full-time minister. **E-mail [AndyDuncan\(Elder\),hadunca62@gmail.com](mailto:AndyDuncan(Elder),hadunca62@gmail.com) Tom Fair(Elder),htfair1@gmail.com**

■ CHURCH OF CHRIST McKEESPORT, PA

We are searching for a minister. One who is willing to work with a congregation of mostly older brothers and sisters in Christ. We have on average about 35 to 40 attendance Sunday morning, about 10 to 15 Sunday evening and Wednesday evening. We have a 4 bedroom house right at the building that we pay for the main utilities. **If interested contact Arnold Winter 412-225-5441**

■ HAPPY HAVEN CHILDREN'S HOME

has immediate openings for: HOUSE PARENTS (wife is the salaried employee, with housing, utilities, van, & other benefits provided; the husband is free to find employment or to preach locally). Happy Haven exists to help young ladies in need of residential child care and is sponsored by churches of Christ & other interested individuals. **Please print off applications, fill out and return: <http://www.happyhaven.org/documents/EmploymentApplication.pdf>. Office: 931-526-2052 Fax: 931-372-8837 happyhaven@frontiernet.net. Houston Bynum, Administrator.**

■ WELSH CHURCH OF CHRIST

is seeking a full-time minister for a congregation of 15 plus members serving Welsh, La., SWLA along I-10. We are a congregation of mostly older Christians, we are also sending out HTH - HTH, to 3 communities. We need someone faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ to help us evangelize these communities. **Please contact us and we can visit. Jerry @ 337.496.8992 e-mail gljackkson@centurytel.net, Lewis @ 573.703.1243 e-mail lineberryc7@gmail.com, Orise @ 337.458.2603**

■ CENTER POINT ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST

in Marion, Iowa, is looking for a preacher. Our attendance is around 75. We have a recently refurbished parsonage and offer an annual salary of up to \$75,000, plus a health insurance stipend of \$500/mo. We are a mainstream congregation of the Lord's Church that strives to be doctrinally sound and strong in the faith. **See our website (www.cprcoc.org) for more information about us. Email us with any questions you may have. We'll try to respond promptly. Troy Wallis cprcoc@fastmail.com**



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Question Box - September 2025

Bible Origins of Popular Bible Phrases

There are numerous phrases we use in the English language that originated from the pages of the Bible. We have a few of them listed below that you can match with their Scriptures of origin.

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| _____ 1. The skin of my teeth | a. Isaiah 65:5 |
| _____ 2. Wolf in sheep's clothing | b. Proverbs 13:24 |
| _____ 3. Salt of the earth | c. Proverbs 16:18 |
| _____ 4. Holier than thou | d. Isaiah 53:7 |
| _____ 5. Woe is me! | e. Jeremiah 13:23 |
| _____ 6. Can a leopard change his spots? | f. Isaiah 40:15 |
| _____ 7. A drop in a bucket | g. Genesis 45:18 |
| _____ 8. Eat, drink, and be merry | h. Isaiah 6:5 |
| _____ 9. Pride goeth before a fall | i. Matthew 15:14 |
| _____ 10. Give up the ghost | j. Job 19:20 |
| _____ 11. Spare the rod and spoil the child | k. Luke 23:46 |
| _____ 12. My brother's keeper | l. Ecclesiastes 8:15 |
| _____ 13. Fat of the land | m. Matthew 7:15 |
| _____ 14. A lamb for the slaughter | n. Genesis 4:9 |
| _____ 15. The blind leading the blind | o. Matthew 5:13 |



Sunset Church of Christ

1222 W. Sunset St., Springfield, MO 65807

Attendance: 475 Elders: 7

Contact: Jeff Klein Phone: 417-496-5380

Email: kleinjx5@gmail.com

Website: sunsetchurchofchrist.org

Sunset Church of Christ seeks a full-time Youth Minister for a growing and active youth program. Currently, we have 15-20 young men and women who are active in our youth group. The youth group is made up of 7th graders through 12th graders. We would like to have a married couple where the youth minister's wife would work alongside him as much as her schedule would permit. Our minister team is strong and is made up of a full-time Pulpit Minister, Associate Minister, Community Outreach Minister, College Minister and Hispanic Minister for our Iglesia de Cristo.

Please Send Your Answers To Us

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____

NOTICE: Each person who sends in answers will be recognized in the next issue of the "MM" (see page 31). ALSO, by random drawing, the name of ONE student will be selected to receive a beautiful New Study Bible.



"The Question Box"

P. O. Box 1578 • Kosciusko, MS 39090