

MAGNOLIA Messenger

Volume 41; Number 4; WINTER, 2019

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

(Hebrews 10:24)

IN LOVING
MEMORY OF

Al Franks

**'Well done,
good and faithful
servant!'**

"Mississippi's GOOD NEWS" Magazine

Serving Mississippi, Louisiana and Adjoining States

January 3, 1939 • October 16, 2019



From Dennis...

I was finishing my first cup of coffee, checking out the news and weather, when my phone rang. I saw that it was Stephen Franks. This was a little unusual at it was only 6:30 in the morning. My first thought was that he and his dad had decided to take me up on my invitation to fly up and have lunch with me.



But it was not. Stephen said, "Dad had a fall." I thought, "Well, he broke an arm or something" and needed my help with some work on the Magnolia Messenger. But as Stephen began to relate the tragic details to me, the shock of what had happened hit hard. "Oh no! No, no!"

Within a few minutes I was driving toward Jackson and the University hospital. I was accompanied by a pouring rain, which seem to add to the sadness of the morning. Forty years of friendship raced through my head.

In his room, praying over him amid the machines and tubes, I was at a loss for words, other than to ask God's comfort. Early the next morning it was over. My friend was gone.

Al Franks was a true friend, a talented preacher and writer, a dedicated church leader, a tireless worker, and a beloved husband, father and grandfather. He was God's humble warrior, who accomplished great things with his gentle spirit.

We dedicate this issue to his memory, as we should, and will strive to keep The Magnolia Messenger the vibrant force for good in our brotherhood as he would have wanted. **MIM**

Dennis Doughty

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INSIDE THIS MESSENGER

ENVELOPE INSERTED INSIDE

Please Remove and Return to us

1. Include your answers to "The Question Box"
2. Names and addresses to receive the MM
3. Suggestions, ideas and comments
4. **Enclose a contribution, if at all possible.**

(Help us to continue and expand our mission)

**THANK YOU
 for your
 SUPPORT!**

A Special Note of Thanks.

Our hearts are very touched by the tremendous outpouring of love and compassion shown to our family during Al's passing and Paul's serious illness.

We want to express our deepest appreciation for all the prayers, cards, texts, phone calls, emails and memorial donations. One of our greatest comforts during our time of sorrow has been the expression of sympathy shown to us by many of you. Your care and concern have really meant so much to our family during this very sad and difficult time in our lives.

We ask that you please continue to pray for our family as we grieve the loss and feel the void left by Al's passing. We also ask for continued prayers for Paul and our family as we prepare for the very difficult journey ahead. Our hearts are heavily burdened with Paul's ongoing illness.



Thank you again from the bottom of our hearts for all the love, support and encouragement.

With love from the family of Al Franks



Church of Christ - Kosciusko, MS

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

(A. L. Franks, Editor)



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Flying with Al

By Dennis Doughty

Soon after I graduated from school, and while preaching for a small congregation outside of Dallas, I decided I wanted to learn to fly. I found a little grass airstrip near me and started taking lessons. Soon after I soloed, I moved to Mississippi in 1970, and began preaching at the Pine Grove church in Fulton.

While at the airport in Tupelo, where I was continuing my training, a man walked over to me as I was getting ready to take off. He was Al Franks. Al was a well-known pilot and preacher. He preached in Yazoo City but had friends and family in Tupelo, so he flew into the area often. After landing one day, my instructor pointed me out to Al and told him I was a preacher, too. While I was checking out the plane, he came over and introduced himself. God laid a great big blessing on me that day, the day I met Al Franks.

Al flew a Cessna 172 and was also an instructor. He invited me to come to Yazoo City from time to time and he would help me finish my flight training. I did so and continued to fly with Al every chance I could get. Completing my 40 hours of training, Al flew with me down to Jackson, Mississippi, where I took my flight test and passed. With his help I had earned my Pilot's License.

Al and I became instant friends. He was married, had three boys, and had preached since he was a young man. Soon after I got my pilot license two things happened: I married Kathy (one of the deacon's daughters at Pine Grove), and Al and June moved to work with



Al and I on our last flight together

the church in Kosciusko, Mississippi.

During an overnight visit in their home, Al asked us if we would like to move to Kosciusko to work with him in publishing a little paper called "Truth in Love," which was mailed out throughout the county.

So, in January of 1972 Kathy and I moved to Kosciusko into a trailer furnished us by Marlin Ivy, one of the elders of the church.

For the next year Al and I worked at the church writing and publishing "Truth in Love." On Sunday mornings I preached for a small county church in the Oak Ridge community. Al and I went flying every chance we got, often combining our love of flying with our love for the Lord's church. A few times we would fly down to Jackson with our wives, take a taxi to a nearby mall, and shop and eat, and then fly back home.

After leaving Kosciusko, and now with our first child, I gave up flying. A few years later Al traded his plane for an RV. Yet the bond we formed in the air, and in writing and publishing, kept us close friends for over 40 years.

During the past couple of years Al and I got to fly again. His son had bought a Cessna 172 and Al and I made a couple

of flights together. On what would be our last flight, we flew down to Jackson for lunch. It felt good to be in the air again, and to revive some good memories.

In the hereafter I don't know for sure if we will have wings, but if we do, while others are walking through those Pearly gates, I am going to be flying in; flying in with my friend Al. **MIM**



Checking it out before takeoff. Al was a skilled and safe pilot.

BIBLE

Questions & Answers

MM Readers' ASK: Cecil May RESPONDS

Question: What does the Bible teach about the death of a faithful Christian? (Cecil May Jr.)

Response: Paul came to Thessalonica on his second missionary journey. He had preached there just three Sabbath days in the Synagogue when the Jewish mob that had run him out of Philippi arrived to stir up opposition. Judging from the epistle he soon wrote, he had assured the Thessalonian Christians that Jesus was coming for them to bring them great blessings. Due perhaps to the short time he was able to be there (only 3 weeks), he had not told them of the resurrection that awaited those who died before Jesus came. When Paul got word in Athens of their concern, he wrote to assure them that those who died would not miss out on anything.

But, we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who are fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

Note that the Bible here says “we grieve,” but not “as others do who have no hope.” God’s perspective, however is different even from that. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints” (Psalm 116:15).

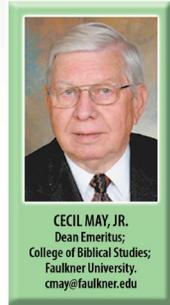
When the beloved apostle John was

QUESTION:

This Question is asked and responded to In Loving Memory of Al Franks, Faithful christian, gospel preacher, good husband and father, and Founder and editor of the Magnolia Messenger.

receiving “The revelation of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 1:1), he said, “And I heard a voice from heaven saying, ‘Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Blessed indeed,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!’” (Revelation 14:13).

The works of faithful Christians follow them into eternity, especially the souls they have helped reach by their words or their lives, so also do their other good deeds. Jesus promised, “Whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward” (Mark 9:41). If they have encouraged others in their good works, if they have helped feed orphans or the aged, if they have visited and encouraged the sick, the lonely and the bereaved, they “will by no means lose (their) reward.”



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STAY OR GO?

The Apostle Paul said he was “hard pressed between the two,” whether to continue to live and perform needed services to the churches or to “depart and be with Christ.” Like Paul, for most faithful Christians “to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me.” Continued preaching, continuing publishing and writing good scriptural articles would be “fruitful labor” indeed! However, Paul does say, “to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better” (see Philippians 1:21-26).

Most of the time, the choice is not left to us, as it, presumably, was not left to Paul. For him, the choice was to remain and serve

the churches, though to “depart and be with Christ ... is far better.” We would wish, for particularly talented and effective workers, that the choice would have been

the same as Paul’s. However, the choice is not left to us. We might be prejudiced by a desire to keep a precious loved one with us longer.

THE HOPE OF RESURRECTION

The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. They presented Jesus with a conundrum they thought was impossible to solve:

Teacher, Moses said, “If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.” Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother. So too the second and third, down to the seventh. After them all, the woman died. In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her.” (Matthew 22:23-28)

The first century culture had a double standard for men and women, just as ours, to a lesser degree, still does. One man with seven wives would not have offended social mores, but one woman with seven husbands certainly did! Jesus bypassed that part of the problem. The Sadducees, he said, had two problems: 1) They did not know the Scriptures, 2) nor the power of God.

1). As to Scripture, when God spoke to Moses out of the burning bush, he said, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Since Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at that time had been in the grave around 400 years, and since “God is not the God of the dead but of the living,” Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are somewhere in some sense living. And further, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Matthew 22:31-33). Conse-

quently, Jesus can say, "I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 8:11). All of that would be meaningless unless we were still the same people and could recognize one another.

2). As to the power of God, he is well able to handle such problems. Marriage is not an issue in Heaven (Matthew 22:29-30).

In the resurrection, our bodies, which are now physical, mortal, corruptible, dishonorable, and weak, will be spiritual, immortal, incorruptible, glorious, and powerful (1 Corinthians 15:42-44). While there is much about that I cannot understand, I take it to say that whatever weaknesses our physical bodies now have, our spiritual bodies will have no such limitations. We will need no

glasses or hearing aids, no crutches or walkers; there will be no downs syndrome; there will be no retardation or "special needs."

FELLOWSHIP WITH DEITY

The best thing about Heaven is not the golden street or the pearly gates; not even no pain, sickness, or dying. It is the presence of the Father and the Lamb; indeed, their presence is responsible for all the other blessings.

Jesus promised, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am, you may be also" (John 14:2b-3). Paul says, "to be absent from the body" is to be present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8). The Revelation also says, and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they

will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." (21:3-4.) **MM**

Conclusion

All faithful Christians are missed when they leave this earth, all "leave a hole." Some, however, are missed more by more people because of their special talents and their wide influence. For those we especially grieve.

However, God's work will continue; His church will prevail. Even death cannot stop it. Other workers will stand in the gaps. Let each of us, to the extent of our respective abilities, continue the good work.

MISSION GTO MEXICO REPORT

By Les Ferguson, Sr.

My wife, Margie, and I traveled to Mexico on Monday, October 7. This was the once-a-year trip I promised the elders of the Lake Harbour Drive Church in Ridgeland MS, that I would make. Don and Lynn Roberson usually make this trip with us as co-laborers. Due to some health issues Lynn was dealing with, they needed to remain at home this time. At this writing Lynn has had surgery and is at home recuperating and doing well with that.

The Lake Harbour elders are the overseeing elders of Mission GTO. John Pigg is the overall Director, working under their oversight. He is well assisted by Fernando Arroyo, the in-country Director. I, at the elders and John's request, agreed to go once a year to assist John and Fernando in this ongoing work of saving souls and planting churches in the State of Guanajuato.

On this particular trip my focus was one of teaching/preaching and encouraging brethren, and especially the preachers. These visits were arranged by Fernando and we followed his schedule. He knew who needed to be visited and encouraged. He also arranged a Saturday meeting at the San Miguel church building. My assigned subject was Sexual Integrity. Brothers and sisters in the churches are people who have some of the same kind of problems we have in the United States.

I did get to visit the city of Valle de Santiago. There is not a church of Christ in this city of over 68,000 people. When you include the larger area around the city, the population jumps to 150,000. It is located in the southern portion of the state in the Bajío region of central Mexico. The Crater Rincon de Parangueo is one of seven craters in the area which attracts visitors from all over Mexico. Into this city we have sent Erick

and Angeles Morales and their three children. Erick is our newest preacher and this will be his very first work. He was well trained in the Biblical Institute located in the church at San Miguel. Fernando has taught and mentored Erick and Angeles and well prepared them for this great opportunity of planting and growing the church in an area where one has never existed. Margie and I were blessed to be present on the Sunday when this family was formally appointed as missionaries to the city of Valle de Santiago.

We were so very happy to learn of the planned appointment of several qualified men as Shepherds of the San Miguel de Allende church of Christ this December 2019. This will be the very first church in the work of Mission GTO to reach a point where they have men qualified to serve as elders. And it is very fitting that it is happening in the San Miguel church, the first of our church plants in the State of Guanajuato. Your prayers for this very important step for this church family will also be much appreciated.

My work on this trip was cut short by the untimely death of Brother Al Franks. We returned home several days earlier than had been planned. As you know, Brother Franks was the founder and editor of the Magnolia Messenger and one of my co-elders of the S. Huntington church of Christ. He was my friend and a beloved brother in our work together. Your continued prayers for the Franks Family is needed and appreciated.

The work of Mission GTO continues to grow. I am so very thankful for the Lake Harbour elders and for John Pigg. The work in the State of Guanajuato is strong. I am convinced the best is yet to come. It is worthy of our support and prayers. Sixteen churches planted since 2002! To God the Glory! **MM**

Alfred Lavern Franks

Posted on October 17, 2019 by John Dobbs

My life changed dramatically when I was 17 years old. It was January of 1981. Ever since I was a child I wanted to be a preacher. My preacher in Luling, Louisiana, at the Barton Avenue Church of Christ at the time was Dallas Lockhart. He told me that he received a paper in the mail from a place called Magnolia Bible College. He didn't know much about it but thought I might be interested since it was a good bit closer to home than the other college I was considering. My dad and I visited the college which was located in Kosciusko, Mississippi (right in the center of the Magnolia State).

The first person I remember meeting was Bobby Anderson, who warmly welcomed us. The second person I remember meeting was Paul Franks, who worked for the college. His dad, Alfred Lavern "A.L." Franks, was the editor of the Magnolia Messenger.

So in the DNA of my young adulthood development is the Franks family. Brother Al forever had a smile on his face, a warm word of encouragement, an inquisitive spirit, and a passion for spreading the gospel in the state of Mississippi. Though a Louisiana by birth (Deridder, LA), his home in Mississippi was firmly placed in his heart. In those four

years there weren't many days that I didn't encounter a

Franks. Paul took me to his home for lunch on occasion, and I was blessed by the hospitality of his sweet wife Glenda. One could often bump into Al and his precious wife June around town or as they came to the office to edit the next issue of the Magnolia Messenger.

Al Franks edited The Magnolia Messenger for 41 years. It is an iconic publication that uniquely reflects Al's vision of the church of Christ in Mississippi. He and June traveled extensively throughout the state interviewing ministers and elders and leaders of all kinds. They reported on the minister changes, singings, gospel meetings, mission works, significant deaths, the building of new church buildings, and anything else that was of interest to the church of Christ family. The Magnolia Messenger has a Bible quiz on the back page and hundreds of people fill it out and send it in. Each month Al would give a Dickson Bible to one of those people. Of course he would post their picture – he was so interested in everyone's life. Interspersed between news items and ads were regular features and articles on Bible subjects. In every issue Al wrote about something that was on his heart. If you disagreed with him, you could never say it was because he was unkind or mean spirited. June always wrote a column directed at Christian women, but I've received many blessings out of that column over the years. Paul always had some interesting report as well. Pictures of the Franks' grandchildren were sprinkled throughout the issues. There is a lot of love in that family. So, the Magnolia Messenger is like a time capsule, a piece of Americana, a Christian Saturday Evening Post or like

a Christmas letter with news from all over. It used to look like a newspaper ("Mississippi's Good News Newspaper") but these days it looks like a magazine. Beautifully done.

Al took on itinerant positions with church-

es who were struggling to find preachers and often would be located in a small city with a small church for many months helping them grow. Mississippi churches of Christ in Yazoo City and Forest and Crystal Springs (and probably other places too) have Al and June to thank for helping them get through lean months to catch their breath and renew their efforts.

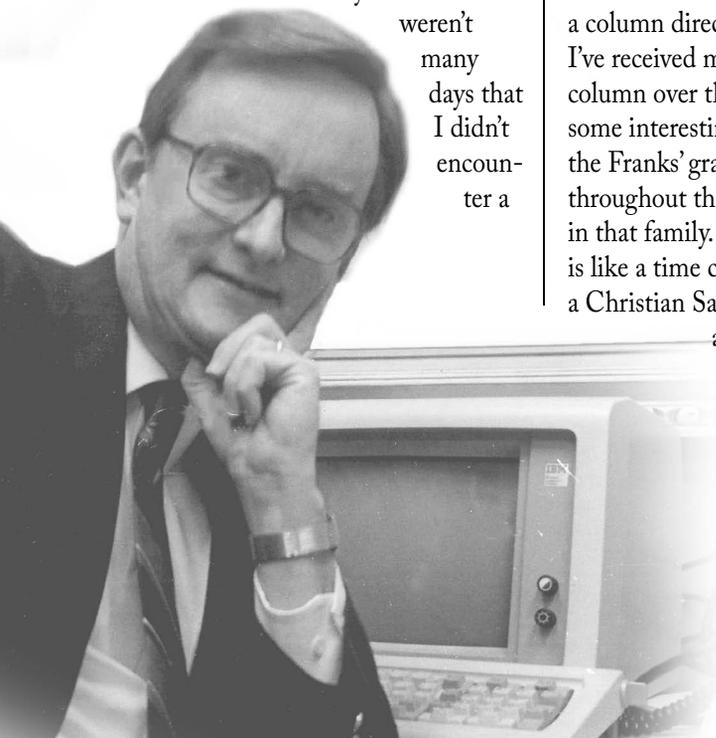
The Magnolia Messenger, then, is the portal through which I found my way to Kosciusko. From the college I ended up preaching in Ruleville, Mississippi. In Ruleville I met this beautiful woman named Margaret Willingham. We both ended up in Cleveland, Mississippi, where we became husband and wife. If the Magnolia Messenger didn't exist, many of the key events of my life would have been quite different. I don't know if I ever expressed my gratitude to Al.

And now I've waited too late.

Al passed away this week unexpectedly. A friend told me that he preached at the South Huntington Church of Christ in Kosciusko last Sunday (where he served in the past as their preacher, and many years as an elder). He talked about looking forward to going to Heaven. How appropriate. Al was a great preacher who spoke with conviction and determination to convict the heart. I wonder if that sermon was recorded?

In saying goodbye to Brother Al, our tears are for us. I do not question that he has found a place with Jesus and knows the kind of joy we can only imagine. We pray for his wife of 63 years, June. They were inseparable partners in life and ministry and publishing. We pray for his children and grandchildren and all of their families. It's a big family. They will support and love one another through this loss.

Thank you, God, for the way you worked through Al Franks. His influence will live on throughout Mississippi and beyond. We look forward to a great reunion day. Until then, give us hope and determination to continue to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. Amen. **MIM**



Two Little Papers

Four Meaningful Messages

A few weeks ago, I checked our home mailbox and found that two little papers had arrived the very same day. Each was printed on letter size paper and contained 4 pages. Little papers? Yes; but, both were filled with meaningful messages that need to be heard and heeded.

As the picture shows, one little paper was “Ken’s Newsletter” by Ken Joines. The other small paper was “Preacher Talk” by Cecil May, Jr. Both brethren are long-time gospel preachers, excellent students, and writers. Both are regularly featured in the Magnolia Messenger.

Brother Cecil’s paper was jam packed with 17 different items (little paper; short articles!). Each was meaningful. We are pleased to share a couple of them with readers of the MM. (ALF)



Still Living with Guilt? • (May)

More Christians than I would have imagined still suffer guilt over deeds done years ago, repented of and prayed about many times. One told his preacher, who asked if he had repented, he replied, “Yes, I have, 1000 times.” His preacher (wish I knew who) responded, “You should have repented and confessed once and then thanked God 1000 times for His forgiveness.”

Andrew • (May)

I wish I had known Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. We first meet him in Scripture. John the Baptizer is pointing his disciples to Jesus, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” Andrew heard, found his brother Peter and told him, “We have found the Messiah.” Then he brought him to Jesus (John 1:36-42).

Later, some Greeks came to Philip with the request, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Philip did not immediately introduce them to Jesus, but got Andrew. Philip and Andrew took them to Jesus.

When Jesus fed the 5000, it was Andrew who knew and brought to Jesus the boy who had five barley loaves and two fish (John 6:8-9).

Someone has said, “Every time we see Andrew, he is bringing someone to Jesus.” These three instances of that came to mind.

*Ken’s paper contained 7 short articles -- all very meaningful.
We are pleased to share a couple of them with you, our MM readers.*

God Is... • (Joines)

God is... My peacemaker, fear-taker, soul-smoother, light-shiner, lost-finder, cloud-lifter, and deliverer. He is my mind-clearer, sigh-hearer, hand-holder, and consoler. He is my wound-binder, tear-drier, and provider. He is my heart-healer and kind heavenly Father who loves me.

Who Am I? • (Joines)

I am a deeply flawed individual who, in spite of that fact, is deeply loved by the God of this universe. I have a living hope to take me over life’s roughest roads. This is not based just on wishful thinking, but on the established fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who said, “I am the resurrection, and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.” (John 11:25)

This is why I’m not afraid to die. Or to live! **MM**

May and/or Joinescmay@faulker.edu; kjoines35@hotmail.com

AL FRANKS

By Ken Joines

If you never met Al Franks, then I’m sorry, because if there was ever a man who, by his life and his speech, exemplified the Lord Jesus Christ, it was Al. He was kindness personified. But—also like Jesus—he was tenacious and strong.

Born 80 years ago in Louisiana, Al was a faithful preacher of the gospel. But for the past 41 years his passion was to get the Good News message out primarily to all of Mississippi via a magazine, The Magnolia Messenger. This good paper went out all across the world to more than 31,000 homes—free of charge! The paper avoided brotherhood “fusses” and yet did not shy away from tackling sticky issues of right versus wrong.

I never realized the widespread influence of this paper until Al asked me to begin writing for it several years ago. In response to my articles I’ve received letters from inmates in four different prisons where he sent the paper. I’ve received countless emails, phone calls, and letters from people all across America.

On the night of October 14, Al stumbled and fell, striking his head on a concrete outcropping. He died the following morning. He was an accomplished pilot—he even flew his son’s plane the very afternoon of his accident. He and June owned a nice motor home and used it extensively to travel Mississippi and Louisiana visiting the churches and gathering encouraging news of interest to share with all.

I will personally miss this man. He was a real cheerleader for those of us who preach. He encouraged my writing. He truly cared. His brainchild, The Magnolia Messenger, will remain in publication with a team of several good people. I have no doubt that Al would be pleased to know that others are picking up the baton.

The Magnolia Messenger, like all publications, is a costly undertaking, but has thrived because readers cared enough to underwrite it. I’d like to encourage all who can to send a donation in his memory to: The Magnolia Messenger, P.O. Box 1578, Kosciusko, MS 39090 **MM**

Sardis Lake

CHRISTIAN CAMP *Forty Years of History*

By Robert Rawson

When the Robert Rawson family moved to Batesville, MS on July 1, 1978, Sardis Lake Christian Camp's season was over. The next week, brother J. H. "Hank" Hogan drove me out to the campground where ladies from Batesville, Oxford, and Holly Springs were going through leftover groceries and items, boxing them to send to Sunnybrook Children's Home.

An empty campground, without children everywhere, is a quiet and lonely place; however, each summer this changes into a rewarding and boisterous place. A camp director will soon lose his voice as he seeks to get the campers assembled for various events. I soon learned the benefit of having a whistle with which to summons the children, which helped save my voice.

Thirty-five years of my camp work has been with Session 4 (the 4th of July week). Phil Sanders, the new preacher at Senatobia, and I began working together in 1979, as counselors for Session 2. Phil was a native of Oklahoma; I grew up in Kosciusko, Mississippi. We arrived on our appointed Sunday afternoon to counsel Cabin 4 boys. We soon learned that putting together a whole week of camp activities would be in our hands. So we went up to Cabin 4, sat down on the floor and wrote the first three days of activities. I still 'count' that year as a director, making the 40 years total for me.

The planned activities included meals, devo-

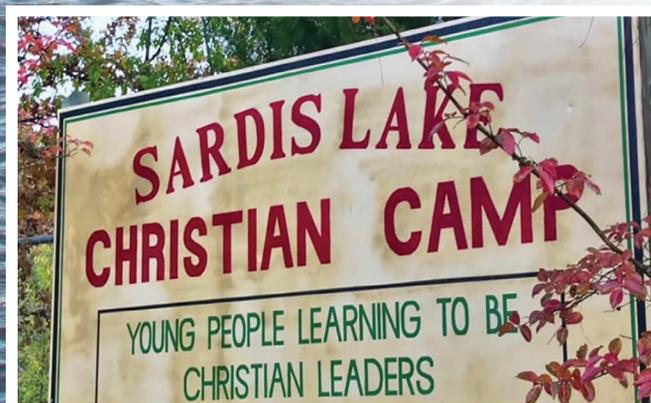
tionals, new songs, hiking, and fun games. Phil and I thought so much alike we promised to stay together the following year, which we did. He and I still remember the importance of a staff of counselors for camper boys and girls, cooks for the meals, and lifeguards for the swimming pool. These details need to be in place when camp starts. Then, adjustments are needed.

In 1980, David Chadwell announced to the Board of SLCC that he planned, the following year, to retire from directing Session 1. So after conferring with Phil, I prepared to direct Session 1 by working with David, as he closed out the year. What a wonderful blessing to walk in Director David's shoes. With the background he enjoyed, former campers still remember the great days of those early years. I still enjoy the lessons he shared as we spent nights in the Director's Cabin which is now The Store.

It often rained a lot of the time during early June, so we needed to have ready some "Rainy Day Games" to plug in during such times. Still remembered are Clu and her friend from Arkansas, who introduced us to the Bear Hunt on one of those rain swept nights. Some of the greatest memories of camp come to mind from those times.

Then, in 1983, Hal Johnson was a staff counselor in Session 4, which only had 14 campers present. They had a ball and could easily enjoy camp, but the Board thought the July 4th and vacation time for families caused the short number of campers and, as a result, a short amount of funds needed for the development of camp.

Preachers were invited to advise the Board in those days without being on the Board. I was present as the decision was being made about Session 4's future. I offered to direct Session 4 for a few years, maybe two, and see if we could attract more campers. If it didn't work out, I'd come back and work with another session in place. Danny Dodd could and did take Session 1 to direct the following year.



In 1984, I began working with Session 4 and am thankful for the many campers who have come, making the session and camp overall blessed to do more. As you know,



the annual sessions are now more than four; in fact, 6 sessions this year. In addition, a very young camp of 6 year olds opens up camp, followed by a Kick Off Session of teens which brings the total to 8 sessions of camp.

Fifteen years ago, Terry Smith of Corinth, MS, came to work with us in Session 4. He also serves in the night-time events, helping with

the devotionals and “going-to-bed time.” He works with other campers to have a “Last Thought of the Day” which highlights our spiritual thoughts we can all sleep on.

Over the past few years, I have sought the leadership of our sons, Bobby and Brooks Rawson, of Alamo, TN, as well as Todd Sanderson of Holly Springs to get the staff, program of activities, and fun times arranged for Session 4. They have allowed me to see their work in motion as the week progresses. My 72 years have not yet stopped me from being at camp, but the schedule is still in good hands.

A few years ago, after beginning Ladies’ Retreats on campus, we were motivated to air condition the Roy Sawyer Dining Hall. John Pigg led the way, encouraging brethren to help have this done. This is the second year that every cabin (all 16) are air conditioned. This has made a positive impact in that as the week progresses, we have more rested campers and counselors.

Improvements on the camp grounds are seen from year to year as needs have developed. I can not overestimate the value of camp administrators such as Danny Jones and his wife, Judy, formerly of Clarksdale, who came to work with the camp. After her passing, the Judy Jones Gazebo became a scene for late night singings. Singing in view of the stars and clouds adds meaning to the words sung and helps singers enjoy a closer walk with God.

Since Danny’s retirement we have the great help of Sean O’Neal and wife, Jennifer, as well as son, John Holden O’Neal. **MM**

History/Information: Prepared by Robert D Rawson, preacher for the Crockett church of Christ, Senatobia, MS

Al Franks

Article by Lisa Newell

There are men that you meet once in a lifetime.

Mr. Al Franks was one of those men.

His character was filled with Godliness, his always joyful countenance shined with hope, the hope of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Mr. Al Franks made you feel that life was a beautiful gift, his soft gentle voice brought reassurance and calmed your fears.

He spoke of God with love, with surety, with tenderness, he spoke of God as our father.

I am honored to have known this vessel of God, this giant among men, this sweet gracious human who lived his life based upon God’s holy word. And not only did he live his life based upon God’s word, he shared God’s word with thousands of people in his lifetime; he shared the good news of Christ wherever he could, whenever he could, and he shared it with humility and with reverence.

May we keep the Franks’ family in our thoughts and in our prayers. And may we strive to live a life based upon God’s holy word.

May we strive to be an Al Franks in this world, a world that needs the gospel, that needs the hope of Christ, that needs more ambassadors of Christ, those like Mr. Al Franks.

I love you Mr. Al. Thank you for enriching my life and for showing me that Godly men are precious in this world and they exist as wonderful, living beacons of God’s faithfulness and of His promises.

I love you Mrs. June Franks

THE STATE OF

The Church

In my more than six decades of preaching there were times when I felt I was doing a fair job; also times when I felt my listeners were not hearing what I said, but worse still was the feeling I had at times that the real heart of God's gospel was not even reaching into the depths of my own heart. Let's try this rather strong statement: With a few exceptions, I think I've never seen the church across America in a more challenging condition than at present.

I begin with this disclaimer: These feelings were deep within me, but I had been unable to verbalize them until I saw the writings of a man in Wisconsin, Rob Pue, who publishes the Wisconsin Christian News. The title of his lengthy article is: "300,000 Pulpits Across America Remain Politically Correct and Silent." I phoned him and with his permission I will lean heavily on his thoughts with some of it being his exact wording. I aim to speak plainly to the church, and this will include Ken Joines; I share this guilt right along with you.

Pue writes: "Christianity **AS AN INSTITUTION**, is dead in America; it has been deemed good for nothing, and has been thrown out and trampled in the streets. For at least two generations now, children who have grown up attending American churches with their parents every week, **LEAVE** their faith behind when they grow up and leave home, never to return. And can you blame them? What they have experienced growing up in their American churches was nothing more than vain, powerless religion. They were given "flannelgraph Bible stories", bribed with candy and prizes simply for attending Sunday School or 'Children's Church', and entertained in every possible way.... **BUT THEY WERE NOT GIVEN GOD!**"

We have for the most part sat quietly with our mouths shut and allowed Satan to steal the church! Our devotion has faltered, teaching programs have withered, and preaching has lacked real depth. We have not challenged our people to be true followers of Jesus Christ.

Here, we'll consider some of what is happening on the national scene, then look at trends among the denominations. Finally, we must take a long, hard, look at our own brotherhood. I'm not at all convinced you will want to hear what I have to say.

But I cannot claim to be God's man unless I am willing to speak truth as I see it. And what I'm seeing that has happened on the American Christian frontier compels me to speak without any forethought as to what the fallout may be. I am far too old to be concerned with what people think or how they react when they hear uncomfortable truth.

First, **NATIONALLY**. It was once the case that many, if not most, of the Bible seminaries associated with various denominations where the majority of protestant preachers were trained—these schools were fairly conservative; at least they believed in the virgin birth, the miracles, and inspired scriptures. But in recent years these schools have been infiltrated by ultraliberal professors whose main thrust has been to force their social agendas, socialism, rebellion against authority, and rejection of the Bible as anything more than a collection of myths and stories. The result is that the goal of men who now occupy 300,000 pulpits around this nation is no longer the salvation of souls, but to be **LIKED**. They want Sunday services to be fun, hip, and cool. Their weekly assemblies offer a feel-good message, and a happy, uplifting, singalong time they call worship, resulting in "churches" that more resemble a social club than a place where God is supreme and Jesus reigns.

Such men seem to be happiest if they can just maintain the status quo, never making anyone uncomfortable. And heaven forbid that they should ever preach in such a way as to condemn anyone's lifestyle. This is far removed from the models we're given in God's word, where those who were called into service were the "nobodies" in the eyes of the world....just every day, ordinary people. But they were faithful to God's word—all of it. They called out sin and called sinners to repentance. They knew that apart from God we are God's enemies, and until we turn to Him, we are of our father, the devil! Today, we are in desperate need of more disciple-makers and fewer people-pleasers!

Look at the major Television preachers today; They want to make their listeners feel good, offer them a self-help book and other items for sale at enough to pay for an opulent lifestyle that would make a pro athlete blush. See if you ever hear them preach

the need to Repent!, or come clean about your sinful life, or any other subject that might possibly make anyone uncomfortable.

Look around you. The mainline denominational churches are—every last one of them—in a state of flux. They're losing members by the score. Most of us travel quite a lot. You'll notice a lot of new church structures going up. And I venture to say that fewer than 10% of them are built by the Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, or churches of Christ. NO! It's more like Living Water, Life Fellowship, Friendship, Freedom Seekers and other such names. (My favorite is a church in Cordova, TN, with the logo, "The Flock That Rocks!").

What's going on here? Well, I don't know about all of them, but a large number of these people are abandoning their mainline churches in search of a more tolerant atmosphere. Meaning what? Meaning they want to have their way about things—not wanting to be bound by troublesome rules in their former churches, not wanting anyone telling them how to live, worship, saying what is right or wrong, but more freedom to pursue their own goals. Freedom! Not the freedom of choice that God gave us but freedom to "do church" as we please. "Oh, and if we can do some churchy stuff such as praying, teaching shallow, surface lessons, good for us—and, oh yes, we do offer communion down here for those who feel the need for it!" Most of them are big on entertainment. Judging from what people tell me who have visited, when you leave the assembly, it feels more like you've been to a concert than to worship. A close friend of mine recently changed churches after what he termed "the last straw"—when his church added smoke machines and spotlights on the stage!

In this "non-denominational" movement, we're seeing a pattern emerge. It is a move toward SELF, "what I want", "meeting my needs", and of not judging anything: a self-serving mindset that is part of 21st century Americana. Membership is simple and open, meaning if you've been a member of some other church, that's good enough for us. If you've been immersed, well and good, but if you were sprinkled as a baby, that's okay, too. Whatever!

It's all about US. And worst of all, we're **NEVER** taught to leave the four walls of those church houses and represent God to the world around us. In one survey I saw, 47% of the millen-

nials said they believe it is actually **WRONG** to try to convince another person that one thing is wrong and another right!

Is it any wonder that "Christianity" in America today is so powerless and irrelevant? In our former Christian nation with strong, vibrant churches, today the ideologies of Islam, Socialism, and perverted sex are quickly overtaking this culture. Actually, they are filling the void we have left by our failure to teach God's word!

These problems are not new. Hear God's prophet from centuries ago: (Isaiah 5:20) "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter...." And even back then the people were pressuring those prophets to lighten up, saying: (Isaiah 30:10) "Do not prophesy to us what is right. Speak to us smooth things....leave the way, turn aside from the path, let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel." And sadly, American church-goers just sit on our hands and keep our mouths shut. We haven't bothered to push back against this depraved society. American preachers have largely been trained to be just "dumb dogs" who will not speak, often because they've themselves not been taught what to say!

Since the death of Billy Graham, there has not been a nationally-known preacher with courage enough to call this nation to repentance. I had doctrinal differences with Billy, but he did have the courage to call us to repentance. And so today in this country we have perverted sexuality of all kinds being accepted, promoted, and celebrated as normal—in our schools, media, entertainment, libraries, government, workplaces, and even our churches. And the 300,000 pulpits might as well be tongue-tied! **MIM**

*"Woe to those who
call evil good and good
evil, who put darkness for
light and light for darkness,
who put bitter for sweet and
sweet for bitter...."*



[Note: Look for part two of Ken's thoughts in the next issue, when he asks "What about us?"]

Ken Joines,
Olive Branch, MS

Venezuela Support

A chance meeting in Home Depot leads to a great ministry!

By Jane Watson

How could anyone imagine that a chance encounter between two men at Home Depot would develop into a plan to feed hungry people in Venezuela? But that's just the kind of event our God arranges for his people who are seeking opportunities to do good.

My husband, Steve Watson, retired from preaching after 54 years and we moved to a community near our sons' families in Nashville. He has continued to practice Spanish which he began to learn after several medical mission trips to Guatemala. Often, at Home Depot and other businesses, to keep up, he will "profile" men who looked like possible practice "victims." This is how he met Cristian who was also shopping at Home Depot. He usually just walks up to someone and says, "Necesito practicar mi español contigo?" Cristian's response was, "Yes, if you can help me with my English." The friendship began.

What followed was an invitation to their apartment for a typical Venezuelan meal. Armed for protection from Americans with other Venezuelan friends, Cristian and his wife, Anjelica, welcomed us to a delightful evening. Promises of help with English followed the meal. After many Bible studies, and a baptism, we made a heartfelt commitment to these people and the desperate plight of their family and friends in Venezuela.

This ministry started slowly. Being current with news events in Venezuela and interested in their story, we asked if we could help. Anjelica and Cristian had already been sending a box of food and other needed items to their families every other month. We began by helping them send a box every month. Cristian and Anjelica never asked us for help, we just began to consider what we would need most if we had nothing to eat. As you probably know, hyperinflation (1500%) is one of the reasons they cannot buy food. Their currency is of little value. A week's salary will not buy enough food for a family for even a day. Anjelica said God gave Venezuela the mango tree which is how people are surviving. Hardest hit, of course, are children,



Children in Venezuela receiving a box of needed items from Tennessee.

who cannot get milk or protein.

Steve and I organized a team that met with Cristian and Anjelica. After a slide presentation to our congregation, the Pegram church of Christ provided us a room dedicated to storage and packing. We send boxes monthly through a shipping company that guarantees door to door delivery. We receive the most heartwarming pictures of our deliveries, and our people there are generous in sharing with others. More names of friends who need help keep coming, and we keep adding boxes. Since June, we have sent 115 Lowes heavy duty medium moving boxes to Venezuela, packed with food, medical supplies, clothing, school supplies, and personal care items. We now are consistently sending 20+ boxes each month to various sites!

Nearby in Charlotte, TN, is Country View Market where bulk food is sold. Their generous help supplies oats, flour, sugar, and powdered milk, which are staples of our shipments. The

LOVE The Brotherhood

“They began to report all things that God had done with them....”

Acts 14:27

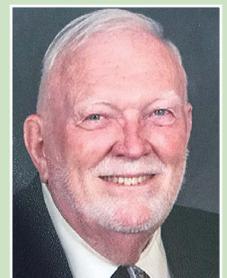
Note: We want to hear from your congregation; Do you have some news about a special Sunday event, a baptism, or a good work your congregation is involved in? Let us know so we can share it here with our brotherhood. (dennis1848@bellsouth.net)

■ **Tunica Mississippi:** Our congregation has been changing the past few years. We are growing, and the growth has been with young couples, and lots of children. If you are in the area stop by and visit with us, our Sunday Morning Worship is at 10:45. -Dennis Doughty

■ **The Crockett Church of Christ,** 7458 Hwy 4 West, Senatobia, MS 38668 enjoyed once again offering candy and good gospel booklet choices by Louis Rushmore and the late, Perry Cotham for those who drove into the parking lot on Halloween night. Brethren Tom and Mary Jean Osborn, Tony Kopf, Mae Spencer, J L Beard, Bill and Nell Kopf as well as Robert and Jane Rawson parked in a semi-circle on the east side of the church building. This is the 5th year this Family Night of Trunk or Treat has been offered.

Through the years 34, 78, 108 and 18 have visited. This year was extra cold and last year was a rain-out of the event due to weather conditions, but the community is aware of the effort done with sincerity and friendliness. We hope some will return at a class of VBS in July of each year during the Gospel Meeting week, or worship service which each week are: Sundays 9:30 and 10:30 am and Evening 6:00 pm and Wednesday Classes 7:00 pm as 2020 comes to pass. -Robert D Rawson

■ **Glenn Beall** has begun preaching for the church in Carthage, Mississippi. He and his wife Beth have moved to Kosciusko, in part, to help with the Magnolia Messenger, and to work with the church. **MIM**



Steve and Jane Watson

Pegram church secretary orders many items from different places, working to get the best prices. A volunteer organizes everything, which makes our packing easier. We have many people who donate food and any items we request. A ladies group makes receiving blankets for babies.

We usually send 36 cartons of baby formula to 4 hospitals for mothers who are not getting enough food. At present we are sending four hospital boxes, which include wound care supplies and medical needs. We've just added another one to a doctor who serves 150+ children in the mountain areas. Pedialyte is a critical need.

We also send clothes. Parents in Venezuela must decide if their meager funds can buy food or clothes, and the need is so great. School supplies are in short supply.

How is all this possible? An average box costs at least \$250 to fill and ship. Steve is constantly raising money. So many friends, family, and churches where we have served are generous. Many individuals and businesses in the area also donate. If you would like to support this ministry financially, make your check to the Pegram Church of Christ, with tabbed Venezuela Support, and send to PO Box 439, Pegram, TN, 37143. If you need more information, please call Steve (706-207-9513). **MIM**

Praise God for his goodness.

Jane Watson

[Note: Steve and I met at college and have remained close friends for the past 53 years. He and his wife Jane have always had a love for souls, as this ministry they have started well demonstrates. -dennis]

Fifty Year Friendship

By John Pigg

There was only one man in all the Bible that was described as “the friend of God,” and it is said of him three times. Once God himself said Abraham is “my friend” (Isaiah 41:8). James wrote, “And the Scripture was fulfilled that says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness’—and he was called the friend of God” (James 2:23). Surely many others in the Old Testament and New Testament times were friends of God, but only one is specifically mentioned. Among all the millions in the world today who claim to be friends of God, there is no doubt it was absolutely true of our beloved, departed Al Franks.

I’m happy to say that God’s friend, Al Franks, was also my friend. Al and I first formed our friendship in the fall of 1969 when we were both young preachers. Al was my senior at 30 years of age and had been preaching for several years. At the time he was the minister for the Yazoo City church of Christ.

I was only 23 and starting a missionary work for a new church planting in Lexington. Since I was “wet behind the ears and didn’t know better,” I often traveled below the Holmes county line into Yazoo county to “pick Al’s brain.” I was amazed at his calmness as he listened carefully my problems. His wise counsel always proved to be correct. Little did Al and I know that from that early association as young preachers with a passion for sharing the gospel, saving souls, and building the church that we were beginning a mutual friendship that would span 50 years.

Our friendship grew closer in 1978 when

I moved to the South
Huntington St
church in



John Pigg

Kosciusko to become the local preacher. Al, who was also serving as an elder, was making a lateral move with the congregation to become the editor the Magnolia Messenger. Magnolia Bible College was in its infancy, and we both had a like-minded commitment to “Mission Mississippi.”

Al’s office in the church building was just down the hall from mine. We met daily to pray together, to discuss Bible topics, and to share our vision for spiritual & numerical church growth of the congregation. I was blessed by his spiritual maturity, gentle & patient spirit, godly lifestyle, extensive knowledge of the Bible, tremendous wisdom, and broad experiences in dealing with people and their problems. In our working relationship as preacher/elder, we never once had a single cross word. We supported each other’s ministry and our friendship grew stronger. Sometime later, I was asked to serve with Al and the other elders on the Board of Trustees of Magnolia Bible College. Al was a great mentor and model to the students.

In 2001, when I became the preacher for the church in Ridgeland, the church in Kosciusko was beginning a great Missionary work in Guanajuato Mexico, and after a few years, both elderships began to cooperate in close connection in planning & expanding this great missionary work. Once more, Al and I joined hearts, minds, and hands as friends as I began to make mission trips with Les Ferguson, Sr, who was also serving as the Director of Development. Little did I know that eventually God in his providence would open the door for the Lake Harbour Drive congregation to assume the oversight of Mission GTO Mexico, and I would be replacing Les as Director, giving me the opportunity to continue my friendship with Al in a missionary work we both loved.

Al and June and Beth and I have shared for years a deep love for RV’ing, and when Al and his son, Paul, started the Magnolia Messenger RV rallies, that provided one more avenue for us to build on our long-lasting friendship. I will never forget the fellowship and fun times we had together with a host of other Christians throughout Mississippi and Louisiana & beyond.

I could not believe my ears when Al’s son, Stephen, called me on the Tuesday morning before Al died to tell me of his accidental fall that put him on life-support in the Critical Care Unit of the University Hospital in Jackson. Immediately I went to the hospital, and as I stood by the bedside of my dear friend, I was emotionally overcome. But through my tears, in my heart, I thanked God that I was blessed to share a lifelong friendship with brother Al Franks, who was an unwavering, faithful friend of God, our Father, and of our Lord Jesus Christ. BFF is an acronym for “Best Friends Forever,” and that sort of sums up our fifty years of friendship. **MM**

(These are the words which I shared at Al Frank’s funeral)



HILLCREST CHURCH OF CHRIST

“Back to the Bible Campaign”

Something remarkable happened recently in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama. A congregation of our Lord stopped “doing church” and started “being the church!”

From June 7th through the 14th, the Hillcrest church of Christ with the help of brethren from Cox Blvd in Sheffield, East Pointe, Cottondale, Mercedes Drive, Northport Central in Tuscaloosa, and from congregations as far away as Oklahoma and Texas conducted a “Back to the Bible” campaign in the Hillcrest area of south Tuscaloosa county.

During the campaign we knocked on over 5500 doors giving out brochures and inviting people to come to worship with us and to study the bible with us.

We set up 127 bible studies. Not surprisingly many of the individuals who agreed to a bible study did not follow through when the appointed time came but more than 30 did. I cannot give you an exact number because we are still following up on these.

After planting the seed, our Lord gave the increase as six precious souls were baptized into Christ during the campaign, and five more have been added to the church since the campaign came to its official end. In addition to that, we found three souls who believe their baptism was valid, but are continuing to worship with us as we work to “teach them the way of the Lord more perfectly.” To God be the glory!

The story of the campaign hasn’t ended, however. The brethren here are committed to carrying out the great commission in our community. We continue to follow up on our contacts from the campaign and have plans to knock doors monthly, not only in the Hillcrest area but in other areas of the county as well. Our goal is to eventually knock on every available door in Tuscaloosa County.

This renewed commitment has had a profound impact on the brethren at Hillcrest. Individuals who had never knocked on a door to invite people to church, much less set up or conduct a bible study, have become “zealous of good works.” There is a genuine change in the spiritual strength of our congregation. We are more closely connected and there is a palpable increase in the sense of family. One sister said the campaign “increased my faith and encouraged me to do more. It increased my productivity in the church.” Another sister talked about how encouraging it was that so many people stepped up to do what they could. One brother who couldn’t knock doors because of health problems was here every day doing what he could. It was important to him because he had been converted as a young man as the result of someone knocking on his door.

One sister who couldn’t attend said even she was encouraged by the joy that everyone seemed to have in working together for

the Lord. One brother talked about how encouraged he was by the local congregations working together with us in this effort. Cottondale and Northport brought vans and workers to help with the campaign. Cottondale even offered to allow us to use their van as we needed it for follow up and future efforts.

In Luke 19:10 Jesus said he had come to “seek and save the lost.” In Isaiah 55:11 the scriptures say, “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” Our commission from the Lord in Matthew 28:19-20 is to “go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in

the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” The congregation at Hillcrest is trying to live up to these principles. We covet your prayers that an “open door of opportunity” will be provided for us and that we may continue to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.” **MIM**

*Doug Milligan, Evangelist,
Hillcrest church of Christ, Tuscaloosa, AL*



THE 1ST ANNUAL BROTHERHOOD-WIDE DOOR KNOCKING DAY WAS A SUCCESS!



**550 congregations
in 42 states
and 26 countries
4,208 Christians
knocked 61,772 doors*
Sharing the 1 Gospel**

*Reports still coming in. Only 70% of congregations have shared numbers.

We knocked. They opened. Now what?

Follow-up is key. Warmly greet guests. Be sure to deliver requested materials. Teach studies. Give rides to services. Let’s stay in contact with our neighbors.

The next Brotherhood-Wide Door Knocking Day will be October 3, 2020. But don’t wait until then! What if we knocked on doors each month? What if we taught people we normally see as we go (Matthew 10:7), wherever we go? (Acts 8:4). Door Knocking Day is great, but it can be more powerful if it becomes everyday evangelism. Let’s go meet our neighbors!



Youth & Family

Note from Greg Ledbetter

Welcome to a new section of the Magnolia Messenger called the "Youth and Family," section. It is our goal to provide articles that help encourage our youth as well as our youth ministers and youth workers. Brother Al Franks, before his passing, brought me on to write and help develop this new concept for the Messenger. I am thankful and will forever be indebted to Al and June Franks for trusting and believing in me enough to want to see this project through. It is our hope, together, that through the ongoing articles you will find something that will help you in your daily walk with the Lord and in your ministry. I am sad that our brother will not be able to see the final product, but as Brother Al would *say in his meek voice, "the work must go on." That is what we will do. We will work till Jesus comes.*



Greg Ledbetter

What exactly is **Family Ministry**?

What exactly is Family Ministry? In the last ten years, there has been a significant movement in the ministry mindset from just Youth Ministry to Youth and Family Ministry. This change is a good thing for the church. I know that I have done a great injustice to ministry, making religion about individuals. It's about what I get out of the sermon, worship, and life. Now, my preaching and teaching come from a new perspective. It comes from the idea of keeping the family together. It's now my goal to teach the parents how to teach their children so that, together, we can be successful in teaching them a genuinely Biblical faith that is theirs. Research shows that teens, who had at least one adult in a church relationship, who make a significant time investment in their lives, were more likely to keep attending church.

What is interesting to me is the concept of family in the Bible. Family is extremely important in the Bible. In the King James

Version of the text, the word family appears 123 times and the word families appears 174 times. The family was so important to God that the concept of family was introduced at the very beginning of time, as we see in Genesis 1:28, "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'" Again we see God's plan for creation was for men and women to marry and have children (Genesis 2:24). If the family and family dynamic are so important to God, then as ministers and workers of the Kingdom, it needs to be our priority as well. One fear I have as a minister who works with teens, young couples, and families, is raising a generation that does not know God.

How do we make sure as a church that we do not end up with a generation that knows not God, as we see in Judges 2:10? I think Moses gives us some great insight in

If the family and family dynamic are so important to God, then as ministers and workers of the Kingdom, it needs to be our priority as well. One fear I have as a minister who works with teens, young couples, and families, is raising a generation that does not know God.



Discover Youth Rally Recap 2019

Deuteronomy 6:4-7. Here, Moses is instructing us on how to pass faith to the next generation. I like how Moses starts it off by saying, "Hear, O Israel," Moses was calling all of Israel together for instruction, not just Mom and Dad. All means uncles, aunts, grandparents, brothers, sisters, cousins, close friends, and, of course, moms and dads. Moses was telling the community (church) of people that to pass this faith to the next generation, all must be active participants in impressing these truths on the children. We, as the parents and leaders, must be living examples. We can never stop teaching and growing with our children and families.

I understand that we didn't define "Family Ministry". I am still working on it myself. I do believe we're heading in the right direction when viewing Family Ministry as a way of coming alongside families to train up the children to love God with all of their heart, soul, and strength. **MIM**

On September 13-15th, our youth group enjoyed attending the 18th year of Discover Youth Rally in Starkville, Ms. This year's theme was Discover the Waters. Austin Johnson of the Florence Boulevard Church of Christ in Florence, AL spoke on Discovering the Flood - God Will Punish Sin, Discovering the Red Sea- God Can Deliver, and Discovering The Sea of Galilee- The Messiah Has Come. In Sunday morning Bible class, Shane Meredith shared with us that Jesus is the living water and that he gives us life. Perry Jinkerson gave us the final charge by sharing with us that Jesus offers salvation through baptism. It was indeed an honor to sit at the feet of these men as they proclaimed the word of God.

Wesley Thompson is one of the ministers for the Starkville Church of Christ with a focus on the youth. He has been with the church for 18 years and is still as dedicated to them as the day

he started. I asked Wesley after 18 years of hosting this youth rally, is there anything that surprises you or gets you excited? He said, "After 18 years of Discover, I still find myself greatly encouraged by the passion of the youth in our state to praise God together." To that statement, I say, "Amen!". It was terrific to see 250-275 youth and adults praising God together on a weekend when they could have been doing anything else. We had classes together, enjoyed a Mississippi State football game together, and worshiped together. If you have never attended Discover Youth Rally, I encourage you to make plans for the fall of 2020. You will not be disappointed! **MIM**



Al's last Sermon

From My Heart to Yours

October 13, 2019, Al Franks preached his last sermon. On the 14th he was taken by helicopter to the hospital in Jackson, Mississippi, where he never regained consciousness and passed from this earthly life to the life beyond on October 16th. The recording equipment was not working; therefore, the following record is from the notes and memory of members of the congregation that meet on South Huntington Street in Kosciusko, Mississippi. The message was, according to all, memorable, inspiring, and most appropriate. The following is according to those who heard it.

I want to read a text this morning from 2 Corinthians 12:1-10.

We will notice some very important words and thoughts that pertain to Paul in the passage, and in fact, will impact the lives of every Christian.

First, Paul emphasizes the word, "Paradise." Paradise is the term that immediately comes to the front. Most commentaries will tell you that Paul himself was the one caught up into Paradise. This experience seems to be more than a vision because Paul does not know whether he was in the body or out of the body. It was a wonderful and inexpressible experience.

From where we as humans are located, it is obvious that Paradise, or the Third Heaven, is directionally up from us here on earth. Christ is said to have come down from Heaven; angels who announced Jesus' birth came down from Heaven; Christ went up to Heaven after His resurrection and ascension. Christ will come down from Heaven at the end of time when he returns for the righteous. Since the Third Heaven is above the earth, we believe that the prepared place with an abundance of mansions or rooms is also above us and will serve as an entrance or pathway to the home that is prepared for the righteous. It is there that we prepare to be for eternity.

Paradise is not found on earth. There are some beautiful places we have seen, but we will never experience the kind of paradise mentioned in this passage outside of Heaven itself. Enjoyable places do abound everywhere around us. In parallel with the idea of Paradise, we read: Paul was "caught up into the Third Heaven" (v. 2). We associate the Third Heaven with Paradise and Paradise with the Third Heaven.

Heaven represents infinity. John, quoting the words of Jesus, said: "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And where I go you know, and the way you know" (John 14:1-4, NKJV).

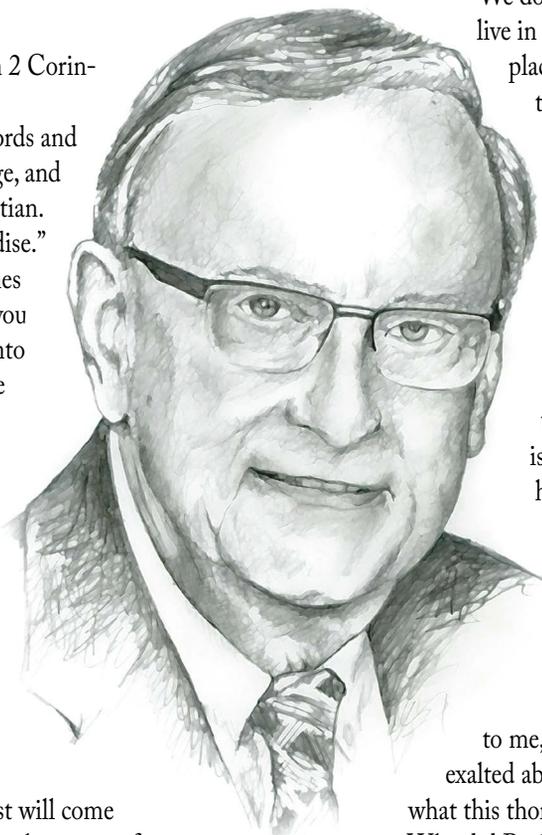
We do not want to live forever on earth; we want to live in heaven. As Christians we're looking for a better place, and we will be taken there. Jesus is preparing that place for each one of us. [Quietly walking to the microphone and speaking softly]. "From my heart to yours: The older I get, the more I long for this place. I'm not ready just yet, but I long for Paradise." [The conviction and longing in Al's voice was so strong, so passion-filled, it could be felt in our hearts.]

What is it like in Heaven – look at the last two chapters in Revelation: there is no pain, no tears, no death, and no evil in Heaven. This world is not my home; I'm just a passin' through. Heaven holds all to me; brighter its glory will be. This passage, 2 Corinthians 12, is intriguing because of the word Paradise.

In this passage we notice that Paul had a very serious problem; "And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure" (verse 7). We do not know precisely what this thorn was.

Why did Paul have this problem? We are told it was a messenger of Satan to buffet him. Paul's situation was never perfect due to this problem. Of course, this can be true regarding all of us. Some problems live with us and they do not go away. This evil condition was in Paul's experience. When you put a "D" in front of "evil" you have Devil. It was Satan who caused this evil and he is the cause of evil.

Paul chose prayer as the answer for his problem, but God answered, "No!" three times. "I pleaded with God to remove the thorn." The thorn in the flesh remained with Paul. This reminds us of the prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Paul was in good company when he received "No," as an answer to his prayer. This also makes us think of Job.



An Idea...

“Al’s First Article”

[Note: This was Al’s first article on the front page, in the very first issue of “The Magnolia Messenger.” It appeared October 1, 1978. In it you will see the passion and vision of this great man to provide a publication that would help spread God’s word and “provoke us to love and good works.” -d]

It has been several months. We have thought; we have planned, we have prayed, and we have worked. But now the time has come. In your hands is the result of our prayers, plans, and work. You are reading the first issue of a brand-new publication which is to be circulated throughout the state of Mississippi, in a sincere effort to fulfill the request of the inspired writer as found in Hebrews 10:24. Our purpose in publishing the Magnolia Messenger each month is to “consider one another to provoke unto love and good works” (Hebrews 10:24).



It is great to be in the family of God. No greater blessing for man exists on this earth! God is our Father, Jesus Christ is our elder brother, and thousands of brothers and sisters throughout the state. Oh, what wonderful blessings! We as children of God have responsibilities to our father and to each other. We are taught to consider one another. God’s people must not be selfish or self-centered. God’s people think about others. We consider what is in the best interest of our brothers and our sisters.

God further commands that we provoke one another. To provoke may sound somewhat harsh, but the idea is to move, to stir up, to promote to action. The objective is to manifest love... the love which seeks the good of the person loved. We are to be like God who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. We are to be like Christ, who loved us to the extent that he died for us. This is true love, an effort to become like God, for God is love. The scripture commands that we provoke not only to love but also unto good works; not just work, but good work. Work is important. It is required. God requests that we who are his children, we who are brothers and sisters in Christ, stir up one another so that we manifest love and actively engage in doing that which is good. This is exactly why the Magnolia Messenger is now a monthly publication. I trust you are pleased with this effort and will find time to read the paper carefully. Your prayers on behalf of this undertaking are sorely needed and earnestly requested. (ALF) **MM**

Paul’s answer from God was, “No, my grace is sufficient for you.” I will take care of you. God was saying, “I am answering that prayer in the negative, but I will help you. My grace is sufficient for you.” God knows best and He will take care of us. We want God to take care of us in the manner He thinks is best – we do not really want things to happen the way we want, but the way God wants.

From my heart to yours: If Paul prayed and got this answer, then, we should not have any complaints. God answers our prayers as well. Sometimes we miss the answers, but Paul didn’t. Sometimes we might not like the answers, but we can know God has heard and answered us.

God’s power is made perfect in righteousness, and His power is made perfect in weakness according to the last part of verse 9. He did not get the answer he wanted, but he got the answer that he needed and that was helpful. God wants what is best, not necessarily what we want, and gives us the power (strength) to get through it and grow! You remember someone else who prayed three times and the answer was “No!” That would be Jesus on the cross. Because God gave that answer, I am here and I am saved by God. If that prayer had been answered, we would NOT be saved. We thank God for His power to bring about the answer that we do not expect, but the one that is more needful. In the long run, God knows best. And in the long run God’s power brings about what is best.

God has a plan that is beyond the power and insight of men. Paul did not use the word providence in this passage, but it is understood in every line. Somehow God carried Paul through to live a productive and victorious life. We know from Romans 8:28 that “... all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” With God in control, our problems may not be solved in the way we want. Our prayers may not be answered in the manner we asked. With God’s power and providential care everything will be better. Remember, God watches over us. He is able, capable, and in control if we allow Him to be.

From my heart to yours, certainly from Paul’s heart to us all, and even from the heart of God come five important ideas relating to your life: Paradise, Problems, Prayer, Power, and Providence. For the solutions found in this passage to work out in your life, cooperation with God is essential. We have the ability to choose. God in no way coerces us to cooperate with Him. It is all within our choice.

If you are not a child of God, you may come to the front during the invitation song. Upon your belief and repentance you may be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins. Now is the time to get your life right with God. You may never have another opportunity. If you have not been baptized into Christ or if you need the prayers of our group please come. **MM**

After this sermon there were responses, one asking for prayers and two more identifying with the congregation. Later, partly due to the life of brother Franks and this sermon, one was baptized. Many of us responded in that the sermon lifted us to greater spiritual heights.

Submitted by members of the South Huntington church of Christ in Kosciusko, Mississippi.



Magnolia Messenger's News

Peru Mission Trip

Landon Willis, Youth Director

*Cox Blvd Church of Christ
Sheffield, Alabama*

This past July 18, Christians from North Alabama went to work with the Santo Domingo church of Christ in Lima, Peru. Over the ten-day trip there were 91 Bible studies conducted, four Vacation Bible schools at three churches, one baptism, two school visits, and three nights of an area wide youth conference.

Upon arriving in Lima, the group of 18 Americans joined with a group of seven members from the Santo Domingo church and traveled on an all-night ten-hour bus ride about 400 miles north to the Viru area of Peru. The next three days were truly a joint effort and a mission trip within a mission trip. The twenty-five Christians worked together to encourage and help three local congregations in the area. One morning the group went to an area where there is no church of any kind to teach Christ. They were "almost persuaded" and a group from the Santo Domingo church will be going back soon for more study.

Please continue to pray for the church to grow and spread in Peru and the world over. If you would like more information on the church in Peru and how you can help, please contact Cox Blvd. church of Christ at (256-383-1618). Located at 303 Cox Blvd. Sheffield, AL.



Members at: Santo Domingo church of Christ congregation in Sheffield, AL.



16 members from the Cox Blvd. church of Christ



Siwell Road Church of Christ

October 27, 2019 was a big day for the family of God that meets on Siwell Road in Jackson, MS. Ron Clemons and Jeff Morris were appointed to serve as elders. Chris Carr, Jason Christian, Joey Jamison and Scott Morris were appointed to serve as deacons. Eight shepherds now watch over the flock at Siwell. On the bottom row from left to right are Darrell Cockcroft, Ron Clemons, Andy Dulaney and Bob Allen. The top row includes Jeff Morris, James Leggett, Paul Leggett and Chris Bates.



Al made this picture on October 6th with intentions of putting it in the next Messenger. It is some of the members from North Brandon church of Christ that we went out to eat with after church services. Al made the comment to me that night that it was a joy to eat together and to have fellowship with other Christians. Pictured are Bob and Patricia Perry, Tommy Knight, Toby Cook, Billy and Merita Mitchell, Barbara Bailey, Garnett and Betty Harris and June Franks. It was an enjoyable evening and a happy night!

Coffeeville Church of Christ

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

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

Boxwood Church of Christ

Full time preacher needed for rural congregation in Southwest Louisiana. Boxwood Church of Christ is located 10 miles south of Merryville, Louisiana in the Bivens community. We are a longtime established country church with loving members. 20-25 in attendance each week. Must be willing to work in the community and help teach classes. 3 bedroom/2 bath house provided. Salary negotiable.

Send resume to Boxwood Church of Christ c/o Wesley Jeans
339 Ruel Franks Road Merryville, LA 70653 337-825-6575

Notes & Information



5th Annual Preachers Retreat

March 8-11, 2020/ Kosciusko Mississippi

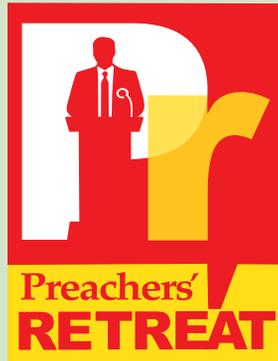
Sunday evening- Wednesday morning

Come Re-charge during three days of intensive Bible Study and important Fellowship among fellow preachers!

TOPIC: A Study of 1 Corinthians; one of the most important books of the New Testament!

Study under these great men of the Word; Malcom May, Will Anderson, Gary C. Hampton, Willie Nettle and Kirk Brothers.

- Lodging provided in the MBI dorm.
- ALL meals provided by the Kosciusko church.
- Each preacher is asked to donate \$100 to help cover expenses.
- For More information Contact Dennis Doughty /dennis1848@bellsouth.net.



Eva Jane Doughty

June 9, 1927- October 12, 2019

I was a dear friend of Al Franks but I did not attend his funeral. For on the same day, at the same time, I was speaking at my Mom's funeral. She was 92 years young!

She was one of the greatest women I've ever known. I am blessed that she was also my mother. She was born Eva Jane Lowery in 1927, in a house on the golf course at the Country Club in Greenville Tennessee. Her dad was the greens keeper of the golf course at the time. It's little wonder that her son would grow up to love golf.

She lived her childhood during the depression and her teenage years during World War 2. When she was just six her baby sister died, at nine her mother died, and at 19 she lost her sweet dad. She grew up without a mom yet became a wonderful mother to her children. She always sent me off to school with a good breakfast, made sure I studied my Sunday School lesson, and would pinch a hunk out of me if I misbehaved in church. She was always home when I got home from school, and her love was the bond that kept our family together. She also made the best lemon pies in the world.

Mom loved the church with a passion. She and dad spent a year working with the church in Singapore, and after they retired, they spent three summers doing mission work in Russia. She is now at home in the Lord, and young again! "And now write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them" (Revelation 14:13). dd



With mom on Mother's day in 2013

Donald "Ray-Bo" Ray Franks

DECEMBER 13, 1953 – OCTOBER 25, 2019

In addition to Al Franks passing, the Franks family suffered another great loss with the death of Ray Franks a couple of weeks later.

Ray and Al were first cousins, their fathers were brothers. While there were many cousins in the family, Ray and Al were especially close growing up, and in their adult years both were very involved in the Lord's church. Ray was actively involved in the DeQuincy Church of Christ and served for over two decades as either deacon or elder. For many years, he volunteered his time and talent as a fill-in preacher for churches in need.



Ray Franks

Ray was also a successful businessman and contractor. Through his ability to dream, willingness to work hard, and his determination, at a young age he started in construction. His career included ventures in many different areas such as bridge building, highways, commercial buildings, subdivisions and even tourism properties.

After attending the R.V. Rally held each year by the Magnolia Messenger, he and his wife Donna, became the founding hosts of the annual LA-Texas R.V. rally. For over twenty years this rally gave Christians the opportunity to enjoy a yearly week of fun and fellowship.

Ray's kind heart led him to reach out even further to work with a team of other Christian men to build over 40 churches between Mexico and Africa. Two of the many projects throughout his lifetime he was most passionate about included, along with the other volunteers, building a Medical Clinic and assisting with the needs of an orphanage, both in Ghana, Africa.

Ray battled cancer for four long years. His passing is another sad loss to the Franks family and will leave a great void in the Lord's kingdom. Our prayers go out to his wife Donna, his twin sister Donna Manuel, and all his family.

Dear Friends,

We really enjoy the Magnolia Messenger. Please include the following note in a later issue. Thanks.

On July 12 at 2:00 I plan to preach the same sermon I used 70 yrs ago at the Liberty Church. I plan to reach the 90 mark on July 10. Sermon: "Lost in Sight of Home" Deut 34 Liberty near Acton TN

Malcom George
Associate Minister
Lomax Church of Christ

Memories of Al

By Megan Franks Shepherd

My sweet Pawpaw went to meet his Savior early this morning. A moment he's planned for his whole life and even preached about 3 days ago. He wasn't supposed to die now. He was the healthiest 80 year old I know.

Pawpaw loved God more than anything and spent his whole life trying to be like Christ. He started preaching at the ripe age of 9 years old and was a full time minister for a church at the age of 16. He devoted 41 years to his Christian newspaper, the Magnolia Messenger.

He loved his "Molly" second. I've never seen a marriage like they had. A love like I can't describe. She needs so many prayers to carry her through this.

He loved his family. They have 3 sons, 3 daughter-in-laws, 8 grandchildren, and 13 great grandchildren. He made everyone feel like they were the most special family member. He was always making us laugh with his dry sense of humor.

He loved others and truly wanted everyone he met to love God as much as he did. I'm sorry if you never got to meet this precious man.

We miss him so much.

We thankfully got to spend this past weekend with him. We sat and talked about memories and we even talked about planning for his death. He kept saying how much he loved being with us. Never thought it would happen the night we got back from being with them. **MM**

By Linda Battles

I'm deeply saddened and in shock at the moment. One of the greatest men I ever had the pleasure of knowing, Al Franks, has passed on and it's very unreal and just so sad. He had such a loving and compassionate manner towards everyone he met and, to me, he was much like an adopted grandfather. I loved him very much and I will truly truly miss him. My heart goes to his family during this time. Mrs. June I love you so much and am so sorry. **MM**

Kosciusko, MS

South Huntington St. Ladies Day

By Erika Anderson

By November 16, 2019, the ladies at the S. Huntington St. Church of Christ had worked diligently to pull off yet another outstanding Ladies' Day program. Around eighty ladies attended, some as far away as the Mississippi Gulf Coast and Humboldt, Tennessee. This year's theme was "I Am the Sacrifice," with Jesus as the example (John 13:3-15).

Teresa Hampton, from Clinton, MS, was the first speaker for the day with the topic of "It Is Impossible To Love Without Sacrifice." Mrs. Teresa started her lesson with the same illustration used in her book, *God's Girls: Secrets of Leadership for Young Women*, from the chapter on humility. The illustration showed two goats, each on a narrow ledge just wide enough for one of the animals to pass. She asked, "How do they solve their dilemma?" She answered, "One of them lies down on the trail and lets the other goat go over him." She compared these two goats to Jesus and sinful man. Jesus met sin and sinful man on a mountain path with a sheer cliff on the left and a steep wall on the right. How could He save man? By laying down His own life to save all mankind.

Mrs. Teresa continued. "There are two Christians who meet each other on a narrow path just wide enough for one of them to pass. On the left is a sheer cliff, and on the right a steep wall. How do they solve their dilemma?" She then asked the burning question: "What will you and I give up, what will we sacrifice to express love and maintain unity in the family of God?"

During our second lesson Mrs. June Woods, from Selmer, TN, spoke about "The Blessings On The Other Side of Sacrifice." She began with Romans 12:1-5 and mentioned how Paul encouraged Christians to sacrifice themselves to the glory of God. She challenged us to "Die to self all the days of our lives." She quoted Wesley Hazel in saying "What you need is more important than what I want," and followed that with the example of the two mothers who were called before King Solomon to have him determine who the true mother was of the small baby. She added that the true mother cared more about what the child needed than what she wanted.

She spoke of three blessings that are on the other side of sacrifice. First, joy is there. Look to Jesus, the greatest example of sacrifice. Love like Jesus. Live like Jesus. She mentioned that we all have abilities, talked about how being a blessing of sacrifice may not be comfortable or easy, but being the sacrifice brings joy, and asked "Do I give of myself to teach God's word?"

Second, sacrifice brings peace (Philippians 4:7). The peace of God guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. We are the body of Christ, the ultimate blessing of Christ's Sacrifice.

The purpose of the kingdom, the body, is to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). She explained how self-reflection will show us over and over that we are not doing enough.

Third, Sacrifice brings Heaven (2 Corinthians 5:10, 15). We live for Jesus, and Heaven is on the other side. (Hebrews 1:3)

Mrs. June then gave us the charge to put on the armor of Christ and to keep it on. (Ephesians 6:6-11). She reminded us that Satan is out to stop us (Ephesians 4:31- 5), and how important it is that we lay aside all things that stand between us, Heaven, and Christ (Hebrews 10:34). She ended with the challenge to get up and run the race set before us, looking to Christ.

All in attendance enjoyed a delicious meal prepared and served by the ladies of the church. The tables were decorated beautifully by Margie Ferguson, Janie Wallace, June Franks, Erika Anderson, Glenda Franks, and Beth Beall. Songs were led by Laura Adcock and Beth Beall.

It was an encouraging and uplifting day. **MM**

READERS' RESPONSE

*Reasons Why We Continue Publishing
the Magnolia Messenger*

■ "Thank you for the Spring edition of the MAGNOLIA MESSENGER. There were so many timely articles, providing information on many topics of interest to me. The MESSENGER is always edifying, but the Spring issue happened to be especially full of topics I've wondered over many times. . . ." (*Shari Tipton, Jackson, TN*)

■ "I used to be in prison and you helped me to turn my life around. Thank you very much. I am praying for you daily." (*JHH*)

At the passing of Al Franks, many expressions of sympathy have been received. Those that follow are but a few of the thoughts expressed. Many expressed similar thoughts.

■ "Through the Magnolia Messenger, brother Al Franks greatly impacted the Kingdom of Christ throughout the U.S. It is a fine publication. . . ." (*Betty Shackelford, Trinidad, TX*)

■ "Human words are often inadequate. Let me assure you that my love for all of you is very strong. I have admired Al's gentle manner, and his love for God's truth. The MESSENGER has given me so much guidance. . . ." (*Stacy Carter, Starkville, MS*)

■ ". . . I think of the voice of Al Franks and the talent he had for preaching the word of God. I know countless numbers will be with their Lord because of Al. The good he did will live on and many more will gain their reward by being taught by those he taught. . . ." (*Shelah Jorgensen, Jacksonville, TX*)

■ "Our earthly hearts are sad, but our souls are alive with joy and peace. He will be missed. . . ." (*Church of Christ, DeRidder, LA*)

■ "We loved Al and appreciated the influence he had on all of us. We will always remember his soft, sweet manner in dealing with us and others. He will be greatly missed, but we know he is in a better place where we hope to see him again. . . ." (*Ricky & Sue Fisher, Sr.*)

■ ". . . Al was such a gentle and kind man who loved his family and God with all his heart. He was a great preacher and many souls were saved because he preached God's word and showed them God's love. . . ." (*Glen & Ena Franks, Lake Charles, LA*)

■ ". . . The brotherhood will certainly miss his presence here, but his influence will not be forgotten." (*Miriam Holcomb, Byram, MS*)

■ ". . . Al was a good Christian Soldier for Christ. He loved the word and loved to tell people about Christ. . . ." (*Danny Dodd*)

■ ". . . I considered him a humble, God-fearing man and I always enjoyed being in attendance for his Bible classes and sermons. . . ." (*Natalie Stewart, Gary, IN*)

■ ". . . He was such a fine Christian man. He helped so many people. . . ." (*Bob & Glenda Singleton, Water Valley, MS*)

■ ". . . Brother Al's love for the Lord and the Lord's church and his faithfulness to Christ stand out as a very best example of encouragement to all of us. . . ." (*Bobby & Sandra Anderson, Williamsport, TN*)

■ ". . . I can remember Lavern (Al) in the high school hall reading his Bible before the bell rang to go to class. . . ." (*Tommy & May Lilley, Merryville, LA*)

Magnolia Bible INSTITUTE

Magnolia Bible Institute is a **School of Preaching** under the oversight of the **elders of the S. Huntington Church of Christ** in Kosciusko, Mississippi. As this issue of the **Magnolia Messenger** goes to the publisher, we will have finished the fall 2019 schedule of classes. Our format is a two hour class each Thursday night from 6:00 – 8:00, and four hours on Saturday mornings. The Saturday class is divided into two hour segments, from 9:00 – 11:00 and 11:15-1:15. When we finish the Spring 2020 session, we will have completed two full years of offering classes as the **Magnolia Bible Institute. And what a blessing it has been!**

Our first class offering was a **Survey of Biblical Studies** taught by **Dr. Ray Paseur** and **Will Anderson**. That class was followed by **Hermeneutics, Systematic Theology, General Epistles, NT Survey, Minor Prophets, History of Israel 1, Pauline Epistles 1 and 2, Romans, and Church Leadership**. Additional teachers include Dr. Roger Hines, Dr. Willie Nettle and Les Ferguson, Sr. We had a summer school session and a short course. The short course was taught by **Dr. Willie Nettle** on **Church Leadership** over the first two weekends in August.

Our scheduled classes for **Spring 2020** are **History of Israel 2**, taught by **Dr. Ray Paseur**, **Hebrews**, taught by **Will Anderson**, and **Acts**, taught by **Les Ferguson, Sr.** As classes begin in January, we plan a small change in our format. We will move from **Thursday night to Friday night from 6:00 – 8:00**. This change will give students who drive in from other cities the opportunity to spend that Friday night in the dorm and be ready for the Saturday morning classes beginning at 9:00 A.M. The first **Friday night class** will be January 10 followed by the Saturday classes **January 11**.

There is no tuition. Students are expected to fund their travel expenses and to purchase any text book the instructors might require. Currently we have 14-17 students taking the classes for credit and a number of people who are auditing. All students are welcome.

We appreciate all who have had fellowship with us in helping financially. You are a blessing and we are so very thankful. Of course we continue to seek additional support. We also humbly request church leaders to encourage any students interested in ministry to come take some classes. Church leaders looking for good works to support are encouraged to come visit us, sit in on a couple of classes and see firsthand what we are doing. We will do our best to answer any questions.

Last, but certainly not least, your prayers would be so very much appreciated as we seek to make a difference in our community and our state. **MIM**

*Blessings, Les Ferguson, Sr.
Director, MBI*

Visiting among Churches in north Mississippi



EDDIE LEWIS

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

July through September 2019

By Eddie Lewis

I appreciate so much the opportunity to inform you about my mission work among the churches in North Mississippi. This report covers the months of July through September. During this time I got to visit with five churches, helped in two Gospel meetings, and served as an interim at the Coffeerville church.

■ **July 7:** I preached three Sundays during this quarter at the **Coffeerville church of Christ**. They are looking for a new preacher and invited me to help them during the interim. They have around 60 in attendance and no elders. They support Mexico Missions and are active in L2L.

Brother John Wayne Purdy teaches the Adult Bible class. They have been studying the book "If You Are A Christian." They have had some great lessons on what it means to be a Christian. In the worship I presented the lesson, "The Spirit Of A Servant" based on Matthew 20:26-28. Jesus challenges us to be slaves of righteousness. I tried to encourage the congregation to be servants of each other in love.

In September I preached on "Our Passion For God" based on John. 21 and "The Second Chance" which is a lesson on forgiveness.

■ **July 14:** I was invited by my co-worker at the **Germantown church of Christ**, Ron Roberson, to teach his Bible class. I was happy to help Ron out. He and his family went on vacation to the coast. Saturday night Dave Phillips, the minister at Germantown, called and said he was sick and asked if I would teach

Bible class. It was a full day. I always enjoy being with my church family. It was a great time of fellowship and worship.

In Bible class I taught a lesson on involvement, "Everybody Did Something," based on Nehemiah 3. It is a great lesson on how to divide up the work so everyone does something.

In the worship I preached on humility, "Take The Lowly Place," based on Luke 14:7-11. I considered three Bible examples of humility and what Jesus is telling us about the importance of a humble heart.

■ **July 21:** I was invited to be one of the speakers at **Potts Camp church of Christ's** annual meeting. I always appreciate so much their invitation to be part of this special event. Jerry Coats is the minister there. They have around 45 in attendance and no elders. They always have a special fellowship meal and lots of visitors.

The late Al Franks taught the Bible class. This was the last time I got to hear Brother Al teach a class. He presented a lesson from Romans 8:1-11, "The Great Blessings Of Being A Christian." He mentioned several blessings we have in Christ. There is no condemnation, God helps us in our prayers, and God helps us in trials. He asked three questions seen in the chapter. He ended by emphasizing this is one of the most beautiful and blessed chapters in the Bible. It was a very encouraging lesson.

Tony Farese, a lawyer from Ashland and attends the Beach Hill church of Christ, spoke in the worship. Tony always does a good job. His lesson was "Choose Life" based on Deuteronomy 30:15-20. He

emphasized that we all have choices in life and we must choose Christ. In the afternoon service I preached on the theme of Faith. My lesson was, "Creeping On The Promises of God" based on the example of the Centurion in Luke 7. It was wonderful to see all the folks there.

■ **July 24:** Wednesday night: I was invited to speak at the **Marietta church of Christ** as part of their Gospel Meeting. They had different speakers each service. I was honored to be part of the meeting. Ronnie Livingston is the long-time minister there. They have around 70 in attendance and no elders. Before service, several of the members met at a local restaurant and ate. It was a joy for me to get to visit with these folks. They had a large group of visitors for the meeting from area churches and the community. It was a good meeting. My lesson was entitled "Creeping On the Promises Of God." It is a lesson on the power of faith. I defined faith as trust in God and gave some examples of faith. I emphasized that faith works by love and is seen in actions in our lives. It is a good lesson and I hope everyone was encouraged to a greater faith.

■ **July 28:** I visited with the **Red Hill church of Christ** near Duck Hill, MS. Cole Surrell has been the bi-vocational minister there for six years. He is a graduate of DSU and is a principle in the Grenada school system. They have around 60 in attendance and no elders. I was pleased to see a good mix of ages in the congregation. I enjoyed my visit with the good folks there.

Mike Sykes, one of the members, lead the adult Bible class in a discussion of "The Glory To Come" based on Romans 8:18-30. They are using the GA Foundation Study Series. Several members of the class read different sections of the lesson. It was a good lesson on God's help for his saints.

Cole preached in the worship service. His lesson was on "Amazing Grace." He got us thinking about the words in the song Amazing Grace and what they tell us about our relationship with God. He made the point that everyone is given an opportunity for a second chance in God.

No matter what your sin might be, God loves you and wants you to be with him. It was an excellent lesson.

■ **August 4:** I visited with the **Drew church of Christ**. Tommy Mahan has been the bi-vocational minister there for over 30 years. He and his wife, Judy, have a farm outside of Drew. The church, like the town of Drew, has dwindled in size. They have just over 10 in attendance. I have known Tommy since my days at Cleveland. He is a good friend and wonderful Christian man. It was a joy to see him and Judy and the brethren at Drew. The first Sunday of each month, some former members try to come and encourage the brethren there. We enjoyed a fellowship meal after service and visiting with everyone.



Tommy and Judy Mahan

Tommy asked me to preach, which I was happy to do. I presented a lesson on faith. I based the lesson on the example of faith seen in the centurion (Luke 7:1-10) and the nobleman (John 4:46-54). It was a good lesson on faith and how it works. I emphasized that faith works by Love, shows itself in action, and is tested by the trials we face in life.

■ **August 11:** I was invited to preach and give a report on my mission work for Mission Sunday at the **Germantown church of Christ**. Germantown is my sponsoring congregation. I appreciate so much their love and support of my ministry. In Bible class, Leslie Williams, Joshua Adams, Sasha Maluga and I gave reports about our respective mission works. It's always encouraging to hear about the wonderful works going on around the world. In the worship Leslie presented a lesson on the "Power Of Waiting." He used several verses to illustrate how God does something in the wait. It was a good lesson on how God helps us in our ministries. In the evening worship, I presented a lesson on the parable "Rebellion In The Vineyard" based on Matthew 21:33-46. It

is an interesting parable about the goodness and severity of God. Jesus gave the parable to illustrate the history of the relationship between God and Israel. There are some lessons in the parable for us today. God provides for us and with those privileges comes responsibilities. God expects us to tell the world his message of salvation. It was a good day of study and fellowship.

■ **August 18:** I visited with the **Terry Street church of Christ** in Ripley, MS. Nokomis Baird is the bi-vocational minister for this predominantly black congregation. He is a State Trooper and attended MBC. It was great to meet him and his family. I received a warm welcome from the brethren there. They have around 100 in attendance. The worship service included a lot of singing and an encouraging lesson from Brother Baird.



Nokomis and Tina Baird

His lesson was on "Taking One For The Team" based on 1 Corinthians 9:18-22. Paul talks about our freedom in Christ. We are to become all things to all men. Brother Baird emphasized that we must not think of ourselves but think of others and the influence we have on them. It was an excellent lesson.

In the Bible class time, Brother Baird presented a talk about what the congregation is to do in an active shooter situation. The week before there had been a shooting at the West Ripley church and the congregation was concerned about that type of incident happening at Terry Street. I think it is good for churches to prepare for situations like that.

■ **August 25:** I visited with the **Hillcrest church of Christ** in Baldwyn, MS. Russ Vickers has been the minister there for six years. He is doing a wonderful work with the congregation and community. They have four elders and around 100 in attendance. I last visited with the congregation in January 2015. Their attendance is about the same. They have a good mix of ages. I enjoyed visiting

and eating lunch with Russ and his wife Jessica.

One of the members taught the Bible class. They are using the GA Foundation Series. It is interesting that the week before, they had Chad Ramsey, from the Gloster



Russ and Jessica Vickers

Street church in Tupelo, conducting their meeting. Chad is the writer for the GA Foundation Series. The study was from Romans chapters 10-11. The theme is Israel is not cast away, a remnant of Israel will accept Christ. It was a good study.

In worship, Russ preached a lesson on "God—The Good Gift Giver," based on James 1:17. He asked "What Has God Done For You Lately?" He mentioned some of the wonderful gifts we have from God. We have the gift of a Savior, the gift of the Bible, and the gift of the Church. It was a good lesson and everyone was encouraged to love God for the blessings He has given to us.

■ **September 8:** I visited with the **Mayfield church of Christ** in Saltillo, MS. Mark Shiers moved there recently to join Adam Miller as co-ministers for the church. Adam has worked with the church for several years. They have a wonderful working relationship and are doing a wonderful job of reaching out to the community. Recently, they had a door-knocking campaign and had great success in touching lives in the community. The church supports many works both foreign and local. They have six elders and around 170 in attendance. I got to visit with Mark and Adam over lunch.

This Sunday was Mark's Sunday to teach and preach. In Bible class he presented the lesson, "Upside Down Thinking" based on Philippians 3:1-4. Joy is found in Christ.



Mark Shiers and Adam Miller

He mentioned that a true spiritual Christian is described in verse 3. He worships in spirit, glories in Christ, and has no confidence in the flesh.

In Worship, he presented the lesson, "Individual Responsibilities Of The Lord's Church" based on Romans 12:3-8. It was a wonderful lesson on the church as the Body of Christ and how we are to use our gifts in service to the Lord. He said that all Christians have gifts whether we realize it or not. The key is to discover that talent and use it to the glory of God. Both were good lessons.

■ **September 22:** I was invited to preach for the **Fulton church of Christ**. Matthew Thigpen is the minister. He and

his family were away visiting with her parents. I appreciate so much the invitation to come and speak at the congregation. They have two elders and around 130 in attendance. They are involved in many mission works and the community.

One of the deacons, Joe Williams, taught the Adult Bible class. He presented a lesson on "The Abomination Of Desolation" based on Matthew 24. Joe said this was a lesson that we (church) do not talk about much. He did a good job of pointing out that Jesus, in His answer to the apostles, was answering two questions. First, when would the Temple be destroyed and second, when would Jesus return or when would be the end

of the age. It was a good study. In my sermon I talked about "The Second



*Joe Williams and
Eddie Lewis*

Chance" based on John 8:1-12. Jesus forgives the woman caught in adultery and teaches us some lessons about what it means to forgive. I talked about what is not forgiveness and what is. I pray it was a blessing to the congregation. **MIM**

WHERE THE CHURCH MEETS

By Therman Hodge

The Lost Gap Church of Christ meets in the East Mississippi Correctional Facility (EMCF) located in the old community of Lost Gap on Hwy. 80 about three miles west of Meridian, Ms. EMCF is a contract facility of the Mississippi Dept. Of Corrections with a capacity of housing about 1350 inmates. The attached picture was taken just outside the perimeter fence with Mark Hudson, Andy Duncan, Chris Shipley and Therman Hodge holding the sign.

In 2005 Alan Judd, then minister of the Meridian church of Christ, and Therman Hodge, one of the members, attended an orientation meeting with the Chaplain and other staff of the East Mississippi Correctional Facility (EMCF) for the purpose of becoming volunteers in the religious program. After the orientation and subsequent background checks they began providing a worship service every other Sunday afternoon in the prison. In the passing of time the name "Lost Gap Church of Christ" was applied to the work. Thus began the establishment of the congregation of the Lord's church in the facility.

Over the years Bro. Judd moved away and other faithful Christians became involved in the work. Bro. Mark Hudson from Quitman has been a mainstay in

the effort. Others involved were Rick Benson from Union, Steven Highley from Quitman, Aaron Hibler from Union, and Chris Shipley from the Duffie church of Christ.

In order for the inmates to attend, they had to make a written request to the Chaplain requesting permission to attend the service. The inmates could only designate one religious service to attend. In the beginning there were very few in attendance but most of them formerly affiliated with the church of Christ.



Bro. Hodge and Bro. Judd both attended all the services originally, sharing the duties of leading the singing, praying, serving the Lord's Supper, and speaking. Often one of the inmates would lead a prayer and lead singing.

Over the period of fifteen years over

200 souls have been baptized into Christ at this facility. The Seventh Day Adventists donated an eight-foot galvanized watering tub to the facility. Facility employees placed the tub outside the gymnasium and filled it with water. This works well in the warmer months, but not so good in the cooler times. Those who respond to the gospel show great love and stamina by being baptized in the cold water. Many have come confessing wrong and stating that this was the first time they had an opportunity to come before the church repenting.

At the present Bro. Mark Hudson, Bro. Andy Duncan, and Bro. Therman Hodge provide services on a rotating basis, each participating each third Sunday. We now are having 40-50 in attendance each week. We are the only religious group meeting regularly on Sunday. If you live in the area and are interested in being a part of this work, contact Mark, Andy or Therman. We will fit you right in. If you know someone who is in East Mississippi Correctional Facility, encourage them to make arrangements with the Chaplain to meet with us every Sunday afternoon at 2:45 in the gym.

Please pray for this work. We often lose track of the people that we baptize when they are freed or moved to another facility. **MIM**

Precious Memories

IN MEMORY OF

DR. GERALD WALDEN
DAPHNE STEPHENS
NORMA HARRELL
PAULA WANNER
ROGER WANNER
EUNICE MABRY

By: Regina Gandy Coats
 (Ripley, MS)

MARTIN RAY

Dwayne and Sharon Archibald
 (Antioch, TN)

RUTH B. MANNING

Earl Manning
 (Memphis, TN)

PHILLIP SELLEY

Don and Alice Nix
 (Kingston Springs, TN)

RAY FRANKS

Dean and Nellie Caldwell
 (Vicksburg, MS)

Church of Christ
 (Yazoo City, MS)

Jimmy and Dotsy Downs
 (DeRidder, LA)

Wilburn DeLancy
 (Delhi, LA)

Ron and Mary Clemons
 (Pearl, MS)

VERNON CROTWELL

Ray and Sharon Paseur
 (Kosciusko, MS)

SAMANTHA GENTRY GLENN NETTERVILLE

Glenda Morris
 (Crosby, MS)

HART CHAMBLEE

Joyce M. Stephens
 (Grenada, MS)

JACK ZAUN

Rebecca Zaun
 (Baytown, TX)

RENA FRANKS

Brenda Williams Littleton
 (Ragley, LA)

EVIE G. SMITH

Rhenda Miltner
 (Coldwater, MS)

BARBARA CAVIN

Tommy and Lynn Baragona
 (Booneville, MS)

SHERRY MURRAY REGINA GRANT

John and Wanda Eaves
 (Merryville, LA)

VELMA DELANCEY JOHN STRICKLAND

Wilburn DeLancey
 (Delhi, LA)

DWIGHT HAZLIP

Alice Humphries
 (Natchez, MS)

ALFRED L. "AI" FRANKS

Tommy and Pat Gray
 (Kosciusko, MS)

Veva June Calhoun-Collins
 (Rose Pine, LA)

Vera Cole, John
 and Debbie Sweeney
 (Henderson, TN)

Bert and Judy Tingle
 (Philadelphia, MS)

G. C. and Gloria Rayborn
 (Brookhaven, MS)

Church of Christ
 (Rolling Fork, MS)

Bob and Charlotte White
 (Harrison, TN)

John and Rita Stumph
 (Mount Olive, MS)

Ron and Linda Cole
 (Nolensville, TN)

Larry and Brenda Summers
 (Yazoo City, MS)

Jean Paseur
 (Kosciusko, MS)

Evelyn Sigmund
 (Lake Charles, LA)

Don and Virginia Taylor
 (Bon Aqua, TN)

W. E. and Judy Walker
 (Clinton, MS)

Aron and Gloria Nielson
 (Lincoln, AL)

Dan and Wendy Burks
 (Allen, TX)

Glen and Maurine Rhodes
 (Sulphur, LA)

Bob and Debbie Jordan
 (Kosciusko, MS)

William and Karen Clower
 (Crystal Springs, MS)

Dean and Nellie Caldwell
 (Vicksburg, MS)

Yvonne Carter
 (Vicksburg, MS)

Leroy and Suzanne McGaughy
 (Mobile, AL)

Ms Susie McConnell
 (Hot Springs, AR)

Ronnie and Cathy Livingston
 (Marietta, MS)

Bobby and Geneva Baird
 (Batesville, MS)

Mary Ellen Albritton
 (Crystal Springs, MS)

Myrion Underwood
 (Brandon, MS)

Talley and Barbara Neely
 (Florence, MS)

Glen and Ena Franks
 (Lake Charles, LA)

Jenny Sanders
 (Carthage, MS)

Louisiana RV Rally Club
 (Lake Charles, LA)

Morton church of Christ
 (Morton, MS)

Prentiss church of Christ
 (Prentiss, MS)

Ray and Sharon Paseur
 (Kosciusko, MS)

Old Aberdeen church of Christ
 (West Point, MS)

Church of Christ
 (Yazoo City, MS)

Greg Smith
 (Meridian, MS)

Bob and Mary McCafferty
 (Kosciusko, MS)

Sandra Oliver
 (Flowood, MS)

John and Debra Sigmund
 (Lake Charles, LA)

Jimmy and Dotsy Downs
 (DeRidder, LA)

Mr. and Mrs. Howard Jennings
 (Stewart, MS)

David and Linda Lipe
 (Baxter, TN)

Otha "Aunt Doc" Hewitt
 (Lake Charles, LA)

John and Wanda Eaves
 (Merryville, LA)

Jimmy and Robin Flowers
 (Carlisle, MS)

Boxwood church of Christ
 (Merryville, LA)

Glenn and Elizabeth Beall
 (Kosciusko, MS)

Wilburn DeLancey
 (Delhi, LA)

Ron and Mary Clemons
 (Pearl, MS)

Madolyn Gibson
 (Moorhead, MS)

Brenda Littleton
 (Ragley, LA)

Brittany Daniel Ward
 (Soddy Daisy, TN)

Shelah Jorgensen
 (Jacksonville, TX)

Betty Furman
 (Neches, TX)

Mackie Cox
 (Palestine, TX)

Cindy Moseley
 (Tyler, TX)

Thomas Crowson
 (Meridian, MS)

Randle and Joyce Gray
 (Amory, MS)

Lori Ivey
 (Madison, MS)

Gary and Vicki Woodham
 (Newton, AL)

Jerry and Gwen Jackson
 (Welch, LA)

Charles and Donna Conley
 (Paragould, AR)

Charles Moore
 (Belleville, IL)

Tony and Barbara Coleman
 (Oxford, MS)

Carthage church of Christ
 (Carthage, MS)

Danny M. Brooks
 (Columbia, MS)

Amy May
 (Ripley, MS)

Lois Nielson
 (Stockton, CA)

Allen & Betty Welford
 (Tupelo, MS)

Charles Andrew Campbell
 (Montgomery, AL)

Judy & Dwight Lollar
 (Winona, MS)

Marty, Reicy & Suzanne Sanders
 (Brandon, MS)

Stacy Carter
 (Starkville, MS)

GENE GIBSON

Madolyn Gibson
 (Moorhead, MS)

Ides & Mary Glenn Rutherford

Shirley Spain
 (Jasper, AL)

IN HONOR OF

DAN BEARDAIN (90th Birthday)

Joyce Stephens
 (Grenada, MS)

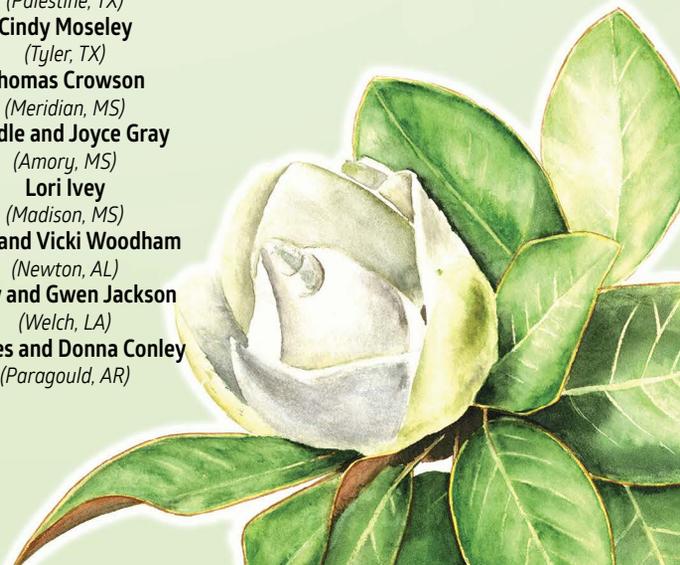
PAUL FRANKS (RV Rallies)

Tony and Barbara Coleman
 (Oxford, MS)

Jimmy Moffett
 (Memphis, TN)

Charles Andrew Campbell
 (Montgomery, AL)

Elaine Byrd
 (Centerville, MS)



from a Woman's Viewpoint

Our Story: Louisiana Boy meets Mississippi Girl

Everyone has a story to tell and to them their story is important. This is our story – the story of Al and June Franks. It is the story of a Louisiana boy who meets a Mississippi girl. It is also the story of two people who, through the providence of God, met and married even though their homes were five hundred miles apart.



JUNE FRANKS

Our story begins in 1955. Two of my first cousins, Homer and Leonard Smith, along with their families, moved from Tupelo, Mississippi, to DeRidder, Louisiana, to find more work and better pay as brick layers. After my relatives moved to DeRidder, they started attending the Bilbo and Roberts Street church of Christ. It was here they heard a teenage boy preach for their first time. They were very impressed with the teenage preacher-boy, especially with his preaching abilities.

He purchased a car from Willis Brothers Motor Company, and was to drive his newly purchased car back to his home in Louisiana.

In the spring of the same year, Homer and his wife Dorothy invited the teenage preacher-boy to make a trip to their home in Tupelo for the purpose of preaching at the Skyline church of Christ on the weekend. This special teenage preacher-boy was Alfred L. "Al" Franks.

All went as planned and Al preached for the Skyline church on Sunday morning. My parents and I were visiting relatives in Memphis and were not present for that morning service, but we returned to our home in Tupelo that afternoon and attended the Sunday night services there. My oldest brother, Hoyle and his wife Joyce, worshipped with the Skyline church and heard Al preach. They invited Al to their home for the noon meal.

After the meal my brother said to Al, "I want you to go with me up to my daddy's house and meet my little sister." Al agreed and my brother brought Al to my house. I walked out onto our front porch and it was at that moment I met my future husband. In addition to Al's special preaching abilities, he was a very nice acting young man. I was impressed with him.

The Skyline church invited Al to return to preach in a gospel meeting during the summer of 1955. Al's dad accompanied him on the trip back to Tupelo where they rode the night train to Memphis and then to Tupelo. After the weekend, Al's dad returned to his home in Louisiana. Al remained in Tupelo, to continue the gospel meeting.

Dotsy, my cousin, had invited me to spend the week with her at her home in DeRidder. She and I, along with a blind preacher, Charles Williams, were able to ride to DeRidder with Al. Charles Williams was going there to preach in a gospel meeting at Al's home congregation near Merryville, Louisiana.

Since I had never been to Texas, Dotsy and I decided to drive from DeRidder over the state line into Texas. We decided to make the forty mile trip, and on our way we went by Al's house and invited him to go with us. He was kind enough to accept our invitation. We drove from Al's home across the Louisiana border into Texas. We ate a hamburger at a fast food restaurant, then headed back to Louisiana. Our trip was short but a fun trip. I admit I was guilty of pursuing Al. He always told me that he was so thankful that I did pursue him. After that visit with Dotsy, I returned to my home in

Tupelo and continued my studies at Tupelo High School in the fall of 1955.

The trip to Texas began a relationship that would eventually result in our marriage. We corresponded often by mail. Al came to Tupelo one weekend for a visit in the fall of 1955 where we attended the fair at the Tupelo fairgrounds.

Time passed quickly. In 1956 my relatives convinced my dad, who was a carpenter, to move to DeRidder to work. The pay was better for carpenters in DeRidder. On Sunday, May 27, 1956, we closed up our house in Tupelo and made the five-hundred-mile trip to DeRidder. My Parents had rented an apartment in DeRidder for the summer.

On Sunday night, we attended church services at the Bilbo and Roberts Street church where Al was

preaching. The Mississippi girl meets the Louisiana boy again. But this time it was different. He was attracted to me and I was attracted to him. He told me that it was my long curly hair that really got his attention.



The next six weeks were like a whirl-wind. We saw each other every day. Our dates and most of our time together was spent attending gospel meetings in the area and studying the Bible at my cousin's kitchen table. Al was an unusual person. Even as a young person he was a dedicated student of God's word.

On the way home from a gospel meeting one night we held hands. To be with him and to hold his hand was special to me. Al was a Christian young man and he respected me. He was certainly different from the boys I had dated back home in Tupelo.

In June, 1956 Al was invited to preach in a gospel meeting at the East Main church of Christ in Tupelo. I returned with him to Tupelo and stayed with my brother and his wife. It was during this meeting that Al purposed to me. He wrote in the palm of my hand, "Will you marry me?" My answer was "yes, but in two years." Al Franks was not willing to wait two years!

After the gospel meeting we returned to DeRidder. Much discussion was given to us getting married. The church leaders where Al preached thought we were too young. Our parents definitely thought we were too young. Al even went and talked to a judge about our marrying. All odds were against our marriage, but Al Franks was a persistent guy. He was looking for a Christian companion, a helpmeet, and he saw that in me.

Our wedding date was set for Sunday, July 15, 1956. We were to be married at Al's parent's home in the Bevins community in Southwest Louisiana. That Sunday Al preached at the Bilbo and Roberts Street congregation. After services we traveled together to his parent's home, about thirty miles away, to be married. It was Al's request that Brother Sam Berryman perform our wedding ceremony. Brother Berryman came from Texas every Sunday and preached at Al's home congregation. He was a very humble man and Al highly respected him.

When we arrived at Al's parents' house, a large crowd had gathered for our wedding. Al's Aunt Doc, gave us a very nice reception after the wedding. Thank you Aunt Doc.

At three o'clock on Sunday afternoon, July 15, we stood before Brother Sam Berryman



as he read the marriage vows. At the appropriate time we both said, "I do," and Brother Berryman pronounced us husband and wife. The Mississippi girl married the Louisiana boy. We were young but so excited and happy. Al was mine and I was his for as long as we both would live.

Our married life started out with us being involved in the Lord's work. The day we married Al preached on the radio at 3:30 that Sunday afternoon.

It was a recorded sermon. Al preached that Sunday night in DeRidder. He also preached the following week at 8:30 on the radio every morning. It had always been my dream to marry a preacher. Through the years of our marriage, I never regretted being a preacher's wife. We were both dedicated to living our life serving the Lord and dedicated to building up the Lord's church.

After we married, Al continued to preach full-time for the church in DeRidder. We moved into a small house on 304 Rouse Street. We both attended DeRidder High School in the fall of 1956.

In January 1957, through my

The Future of the Magnolia Messenger?

A personal note from June Franks

Dear MM Supporters:

I am June Franks and I am the wife of Alfred L. "Al" Franks. A very difficult task has been placed upon my shoulders to give you some very tragic news. It is with great sadness that this letter is being written to inform you of the tragic death of Al Franks. Al passed from this life on October 16, 2019 after suffering a fall on Monday night October 14, 2019. Al seemed to be in good health and it was a freak accident that took his precious life.

Al's greatest passion for forty-one years was serving as the editor of the Magnolia Messenger. He loved his role as editor, and he thanked God that he was able to serve in this capacity. The plan was, once Al was no longer able to be editor of the MM that our son, Paul, would take on those responsibilities. But due to Paul's serious health issues he is unable to work. Paul was just recently diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) and Frontotemporal Dementia. A special thank you for your prayers for Paul and the many acts of kindness shown to us during his illness.

Al's death has consequences that will affect people far and near. The future of the Messenger is foremost on our minds. It was in October 1978 that the first Magnolia Messenger rolled off the press. The Messenger continued to serve our brotherhood faithfully through these 41 years. The purpose of the Messenger from the very beginning has been, "Consider one another to provoke to love and good works." (Hebrews 10:24) The Messenger's goal was to teach the truth in love. Al was a firm believer in promoting all good works.

A FINAL WORD (HELP!) Al's final words taken from his July, 2019 letter to MM Supporters: "Every good work faces difficulties. Magnolia Messenger is not exempt. Satan is working against us. He doesn't want God's word to be clearly taught and Christ's church to spiritually prosper. But our Lord God is greater. He is able. With God's help we can do more than survive. We can thrive!"

MY URGENT PLEA! I close with a plea to let the legacy of such a godly man continue. We have the workers, but we desperately need the finances. May God bless you as you consider this good work. May it all be done to the Glory of God.

November 8, 2019
Kosciusko, Mississippi

influence, we moved from DeRidder, Louisiana, to Saltillo, Mississippi. The Mayfield church of Christ invited Al to be their first full-time preacher. This began our long history of working with churches in Mississippi.

Other churches where we worked full-time are Skyline church of Christ, Tupelo, Mississippi (twice), Yazoo City church of Christ, Yazoo City, Mississippi (twice), Rolling Fork church of Christ, Rolling Fork, Mississippi, Popular Springs church of Christ, Clarksburg, Tennessee, and South Huntington St. church of Christ, Kosciusko, Mississippi. Al and I also helped start churches in Forest, Mississippi, Crystal Springs, and Meridian, Mississippi. We have maintained a close relationship through the years with the congregations where Al preached.

We moved in July 1971 to work with the South Huntington Street church of Christ in Kosciusko. Al served as their preacher for seven years. During this time, Al, Marlin Ivey, and J B Hayes were instrumental in the beginning of Magnolia Bible College in 1976. We are thankful the buildings left by the Bible College are being used to the glory of God. Magnolia Bible Institute has begun and we are thankful to report it is doing well. At the time of his death, Al was serving as an elder at the South Huntington Street congregation.

Al's first paper to publish was the "Sword." His second paper was "Truth in Love." His third paper, and his greatest love, was the "Magnolia Messenger." The first issue of the "Magnolia Messenger" rolled off the press in Kosciusko, Mississippi, in October 1978. Al served as editor from October 1978, until he tragically passed away in October 2019. He was very passionate about the Messenger and he thanked God every day that he was blessed to serve as editor. He believed the Messenger was a great tool in teaching the lost and encouraging one another unto love and good works.

God blessed our home with three precious sons. Our son, Alfred Paul, was born in Tupelo, Mississippi, on March 24, 1958. Our second son, Philip Dale, was also born in Tupelo on December 12, 1960. Stephen Lee was born in Yazoo City on September 6, 1966. I was blessed that I could be a stay-at-home mom. I enjoyed my role as a mom and especially enjoyed the time spent in raising our children.

We are so thankful for our sons and their families. They have blessed us with eight grandchildren and thirteen great grandchildren, with another on the way in May 2020. Al certainly enjoyed being a pawpaw. He showered each one with love and special attention.

Al and I were richly blessed to have been mar-

ried for 63 years when he passed away. We had a wonderful life together. Like every family, we had our share of problems and tribulations, but with God's help we always pulled through. I was so blessed to have a godly man such as Al Franks for my husband.

Al devoted his life to God at an early age and he never departed or wavered during his life upon this earth. He would be the first to say that he wasn't perfect, but as our daughter-in-law, Glenda, said, "Bro. Al was close to it." As his wife for 63 years, I totally agree.

Al didn't hunt, fish, or play golf. His only hobby was flying. Even as a young boy, he always had a strong desire to learn to fly. He was a licensed pilot with a commercial rating, multi-engine rating, an instrument rating, and an instructor's license for many years. He piloted our son's airplane the day of his death.

Al had a great sense of humor. He was always making me laugh. He made our marriage fun. He was a very loving person and was complimentary of me on a daily basis. On many days he would leave sweet notes on the table beside my chair. The note he left me the morning that he passed away reads: "Good Morning – Slept pretty good. Slept with a pretty woman! Feel pretty good! Thankful! Love you." (4:38 A.M. Monday)

I also loved the way he referred to me in the "Magnolia Messenger" as "My June!" There are so many words that accurately describe Al Franks. He was humble, kind, soft spoken, and sweet, but most of all he was very spiritual minded. He was not very big in stature but he was a spiritual giant! Because of his spiritual guidance, he helped me in living a Christian life, and for this I will forever be grateful.

Al's sudden death has been a terrible tragedy. He was the "rock" of our family. Al's death has been a great loss for our church family and our whole brotherhood.

We mourn Al's death with an overwhelming grief, but with thanksgiving in our hearts, knowing that Al Franks is at peace in Paradise in the arms of Jesus. Our deep abiding love will continue for Al as long as we live, and we will miss his presence each and every day. We feel very blessed and thankful knowing that a life of such a humble man touched so many people. There will be without a doubt many people in heaven because of the life and influence of Alfred L. "Al" Franks. Our prayer and goal is to be united with him one day in Heaven.

This is not the end of our story. The legacy of Al Franks still lives on. "Though he is dead he still speaks." (Hebrews 11:4) **MIM**



These Sent In Answers to QB, Last Issue

- | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Sylvia White | 78. Velma Isom | 155. Emile & Peggy Rollins | 232. Gary Paul Winfree | 308. Sarah Dantzler |
| 2. Dez Green | 79. Elnora Mack | 156. Claude Edwards | 233. Ginny Luther | 309. Courtney Franklin |
| 3. Riley Chandler | 80. Nell Millsaps | 157. Jim & Judy Hill | 234. Maria Boyle | 310. Doyce Britt |
| 4. Kara Chandler | 81. C.W. O'Kelley | 158. Linda Keirn | 235. Emily Overton | 311. Leora White |
| 5. Alice Green | 82. Doris Darnell | 159. Sherron Dixon | 236. Bonnie Dixon | 312. Kavan Young |
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THE QUESTION BOX

RECONCILIATION

“Through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . we have . . . received the atonement,” says the King James Version of Romans 5:11. “Through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . we have . . . received the reconciliation,” we are told by the New KJV. Most other modern, standard versions also use reconciliation in this verse. There are several accounts of the word origin of “atonement” that say William Tyndale invented the word when he could not find a good English term for the word in the Greek language of this passage. Tyndale coined the word from his phrase at-one-ment. He played an important part in the development of Modern English, including the coining of new words. Modern Bible translations, however, choose to use the synonym, “reconciliation.”

Romans 5:5-11 uses the words reconciled and reconciliation, important terms when we are thinking of Jesus’ sacrificial offering on the cross. Because of his sinless life, He was an adequate payment for our sin. This means the end of estrangement caused by sins between God and the sinner upon one’s acceptance of the gospel.

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Congratulations!



Sandra and Lynn Grisham, from Ripley, MS. Sandra is the Bible winner for this quarter.

Answers for the questions below will be found in Romans 5:5-11

1. Jesus died for the ungodly while we were still _____ .
2. One would scarcely die for a _____ man.
3. For a _____ man one would perhaps die.
4. When Jesus died for us we were still _____ .
5. We are justified by the _____ of Jesus.
6. We will be saved from _____ through Jesus’ death on the cross.
7. We were enemies when we were _____ to God.
8. Much more, having been reconciled we shall be saved by his _____ .
9. We rejoice in God through Jesus, through whom we received the _____ .
10. Colossians 1:19-21 says Jesus will reconcile all things to Himself by the _____ of the cross.
11. God has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ and gave us the ministry of _____ according to 2 Corinthians 5:18-19.
12. All people potentially can be one in Christ who reconciled us in one body through the _____ .

(Question Box, this issue, by Glenn Beall)

Please Send Your Answers To Us

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

Name: _____

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City: _____ State: _____

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

“The Question Box”
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