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THE MAGNOLIA

Messenger

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OUR
Worship
to
GOD!

IN
Spirit & Truth!

John 4:23



Digital Issue on our website: www.magnoliamessengermag.com

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

from Dennis

Imagine you are a recently converted gentile. You have left your temples and your various gods and were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. It is “the first day of the week,” and you are going to worship with the church established by Christ. You meet with other Christians in a home and begin to worship God.

As you join others singing from the Psalms, and then partaking of unleavened bread and drinking of the fruit of the vine, you realize how different, how meaningful, this worship is from the idolatrous temple worship you have left.

With this issue of *The Messenger*, we are highlighting our worship today with that same church of Christ. Our worship patterned after the worship of the first century. As we do so, we too should realize how different, how meaningful, this worship is from the denominational churches and world religions around us.

Our purpose of coming together is to partake of the Lord’s Supper, “to remember” the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. We come



to sing praises, to “offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name” (Hebrews 13:15). We proclaim the “inspired word of God” and use it as our only authority, as each congregation is ruled by its own Elders.

Our worship is greatly different from those around us. We should embrace our differences, not flee from them. Daniel was not afraid to stand out from other young men in Babylon (Daniel 1:8). John the Baptist was different as “The voice of one crying in the wilderness,” dressed in his camel’s hair and leather belt (Matthew 3:3-4). Jesus himself stood out from the religious leaders around him, even as far as eating with tax collectors and sinners (Matthew 9:11).

This issue highlights our unique worship, as we follow the words of Jesus to worship “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). -dd



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(Dennis Doughty, Editor)

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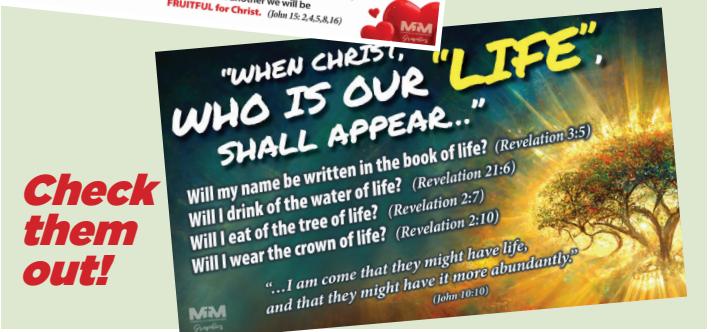


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Why the First Day of the Week?

Tim McCarter, Minister

Cleveland church of Christ, Cleveland, MS

Why do we set aside the first day of the week (Sunday) as our designated day of worship? Why not some other day? Or why not the seventh day (Saturday) as did the Israelites under the Law of Moses? There can be no doubt that the Law of Moses commanded the seventh day of the week (we call it Saturday) to be set aside as a day of worship and rest (Exodus 20:8-11). Notice that the Lord God created (made) everything that was made in six days (Exodus



Tim McCarter

20:11). This practice of a seventh day rest goes all the way back to the beginning. After God had finished His work of creation in six days, we are told that on the seventh day He “ended His work which He had done and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which God had created and made” (Genesis 2:2-3). But it

is important that we understand the words that are used in reference to God “resting.” The word “ended” (*Heb – kalah*) means to complete or finish a particular task.¹ The word “rested” (*Heb – shabath*) means to cease what one is doing.²

God does not “rest” in the sense that we often think of as resting. We rest because we become tired and need time for our physical bodies to recuperate. God is always “working” in the sense that He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. He is always “upholding all things by the word of His power” (Hebrews 2:3). It is in Him that we “live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). So when God “rested” (ceased from His work of creation), He did not become idle.

Furthermore, the Israelites were not completely idle on the sabbath day under the Law of Moses. Again, it is important to understand the meaning of the word. We trace the origins of both sabbatical and Sabbath to the Greek word *sabbaton*. *Sabbaton* itself traces to the Hebrew word *shabbāth*, meaning “rest.”³ It is a different form of the same word used in reference to God when He finished His work of creation (cf. Genesis 2:2-3). While it is true that the fourth commandment contained a prohibition for work (Exodus 20:8), it was not necessarily a day of idleness. It was also a day of worship and a day of offering sacrifices to the Lord. It was the day upon which faithful Jews attended the synagogue for the purpose of hearing the reading of the Scriptures and hearing the teachings of the rabbis (cf. Luke 4:16-30).

So if the Jews under the Law of Moses worshiped on Saturday, why do we, under the Law of Christ, worship on Sunday?

First, the Law of Moses has been fulfilled (Matthew 5:17). Once fulfilled, it was abolished/removed from power (Ephesians 2:14-15) and made to be a dead law by being nailed to the cross (Colossians 1:14). Thus, we are no longer under the command to “remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8).

But we realize that God is holy, our Creator, and worthy of our worship, so we must ask, “What does God desire and require?” After all, “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). To answer that question, we must look to the New Testament (the Law of Christ) to determine what was done that was approved by God.

We know the church began on the first day of the week, the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1). We know the Day of Pentecost was on the first day of the week (Leviticus 23:15-16). Thus, the first day the resurrection of Jesus was preached was on the first day of the week.

We also know Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week (Matthew 28:1-8; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-8; John 20:1-10). Is it not appropriate to worship the One whose resurrection gives us the hope of a resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20-28) on the day on which He was resurrected?

Finally, the first day of the week is when we find the early Christians assembling for the purpose of remembering the Lord’s sacrifice by partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine (Acts 20:7). If this had not been an approved practice, certainly Paul would have rebuked them for their presumption.

Thus, as Christians, our “sabbath” is the first day of the week rather than the last day. It is not a day we do nothing. It is the day we stop doing whatever we do the rest of the week and we come together for the purpose of learning more from God’s word, to sing praises to His glorious name, to send prayers, petitions, and thanksgiving up to His throne, giving to support the continued work of His church, and to remember His atoning sacrifice for us on that “old rugged cross” (cf. 1 Corinthians 11-16). **MM**

¹Strong, James. *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*. Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1995. ²Ibid.

³“Sabbath.” Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Sabbath>. Accessed 9 Jan. 2024.

We know the church began on the first day of the week, the Day of Pentecost

Acts 2:1

Q&A

HOLY BIBLE

*"What Does
the Bible Say?"*

I'm Right but you're Wrong! Right?

YOUR WONDERFUL QUESTION:

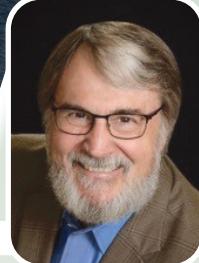
I recently started to listen to the podcast you do with Robert Hatfield and I have truly been enjoying it. Y'all did a couple of episodes on tradition and legalism that I especially appreciated. It is actually because of those episodes I decided to reach out. I have been wrestling with a couple of traditional teachings that we have within churches of Christ. The primary one is the frequency of the Lord's Supper. I understand that Christians in the first century partook of it every Sunday. History even bears this out. My question is about binding that. Do we go a step too far when we say that any variation from that could condemn someone? I wrestle with this not because I want to change what we practice but I want to make sure I only bind what God has bound.

MY THOUGHTS:

Thank you for listening to our podcast. "Today With Jesus" on www.thelightnetwork.tv is in its ninth season and it is now heard or seen in seventeen different countries. (I still can't wrap my mind around that.) Robert is such a joy to work with and each week thousands allow us to bring Jesus into their world. Please share the podcast with others and help us take Jesus over the wall of His Kingdom. A new episode drops every Tuesday.

I also want to thank you for the heart you show in not wanting to condemn, bind things on others, or make it harder to go to Heaven than it really is. "There is only one lawgiver and judge, He who is able to save and to destroy" (Jas. 4:12). We are not here to condemn but to teach God's word with "grace," "gentleness," and "respect" (Col. 4:6; 1 Pet. 3:15).

Now, let's get to your question. It's a TOUGH one, a question of authority that will stretch our souls. It reminds me of Jesus being asked, "By what authority are you doing these



*Send your
Questions*

to Dan Winkler

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things?" (Mt. 21:23). That's what we should say to ourselves all the time: "By what authority do we do what we do?" What determines right from wrong? How do we know what to bind or not? Who to fellowship or not? When to be more tolerant? More demanding? When do we know if someone—to employ those stale and misused descriptors—is a "Liberal" or a "Legalist"?

Acts 15:1-25 might prove helpful. Jewish Christians were telling Gentile Christians, "Unless you are circumcised ... you cannot be saved" (v. 1). They were making circumcision a "salvation issue" and, thankfully, their efforts were met with strong disapproval (vv. 2-3).

The way this whole matter was handled offers us three simple criteria for determining what we are authorized to do.

- Criterion #1: What does God want? — The folks in Acts 15 turned to God for their authority. "God" is found seven times in their discussions (vv. 4, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 19). His will should be uppermost in our minds as well (Mt. 7:21; cf. Eph. 5:27).
- Criterion #2: What has God done? — The folks in Acts 15 turned to God's actions for their authority (vv. 4-12). God always does what is right (Gen. 18:25). If we do what He does or what He approves, we will do what is right (e.g. Eph. 4:32-5:1).
- Criterion #3: What has God said? — The folks in Acts 15 also turned to God's word for their authority (vv. 13-21). The "precepts of the LORD are right" (Psa. 19:9). If we do what they say, again, we will do what is right (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17). By using these criteria, the folks in Acts 15 were able to determine what was "good" (v. 22) and how they could "come to one accord" (v. 25). It's just that simple!

We don't have to filter everything through some complex matrix and double-check our findings with the latest self-proclaimed expert. Just ask: (a) "What does God want?" (b) "What has God said?" and (c) "What has God done?" Applying these criteria to our question about the day we take the Lord's Supper, this is what we can learn.

CRITERIA #1: "WHAT DOES GOD WANT US TO DO WHEN WE TAKE THE LORD'S SUPPER?

He wants us to remember Jesus' body (1 Cor. 11:23-24; cf. 10:16). That takes our thoughts to His "incarnation" (Jn. 1:1-3, 14; Rom. 1:3; 1 Tim. 3:16) and the "sanctification" made

possible by His sacrificing that body (Heb. 10:5-8).

He wants us to remember Jesus' blood (1 Cor. 11:25; cf. 10:16). That reminds us of the "justification" (Rom. 5:1, 9), the "redemption" (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:12), the "reconciliation" (Eph. 2:12-13; Col. 1:20), the "purification" (Heb. 9:14; 1 Jn. 1:7), the "remission" of sins (Heb. 9:22), and the "sanctification" (Heb. 10:29) we enjoy because that blood was shed.

He wants us to remember Jesus' death (1 Cor. 11:26a). That moves us to paint word pictures of the "crucifixion" itself and the "propitiation" or atoning sacrifice made for each of us (Rom. 3:23-25; cf. Gal. 1:4; 2:20; Eph. 5:25; 1 Tim. 2:6; Tit. 2:14).

Whenever we take the Lord's Supper, that's what God wants. But when does He want us to engage in this reflection? Nowhere in any of these passages are we told. To learn that, we need to continue our study and proceed to the next criterion.

CRITERIA #2:

"WHAT HAS GOD SAID ABOUT THE DAY WE SHOULD TAKE THE LORD'S SUPPER?"

He's abysmally quiet about the matter and, for me, that's disturbing. My analytical mind likes to tie things together in neat packages of thought. But God has said absolutely nothing about the exact day we are to partake the Lord's Supper. By that I mean he never comes right out and says, "On such and such day, remember Jesus with this Supper."

In my frustration, I did find something of interest in 1 Corinthians 11. Jesus teaches us to remember him "as often as" we take the Supper (1 Cor. 11:25). And the Holy Spirit adds this caveat: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" (1 Cor. 11:26). Did you see the twice-repeated adverbial phrase, "as often as"? God expects us to take the Lord's Supper "often." Respectfully, it's not a "one and done" Supper that we take as a rite of passage into the Kingdom. It's not a "whenever-we-wish" Supper that we take to symbolize our commitment. It's a Supper to be taken "often." How often? When? Again, God didn't say. We need more direction ... and need to move to the final criterion.

CRITERIA #3:

"WHAT EXAMPLE DO WE HAVE OF PEOPLE WHO TOOK THE LORD'S SUPPER WITH GOD'S APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL?"

- To begin, we find a negative example in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. It's an example of God disapproving and correcting brethren for taking the Lord's Supper improperly when they were "come together." Note, the words "come together." They are all over the context (vv. 17, 18, 20, 33, 34). But when did they "come together"? Keep reading. The next three chapters, 1 Corinthians 12-14, deal with the miraculous gifts these early Chris-

tians employed and the way they were to use them when they would "come together" to receive a message from God (vv. 1-6, 17-18), to pray (vv. 13-15), to sing (v. 15), and to express their gratitude in worship (vv. 16-17). We also read of their making a collection on "the first day of every week"—every week—which implies some sort of gathering (1 Cor. 16:1-2). They were meeting often. They were coming together for preaching, for praying, for singing, and for giving. Common sense leads us to believe that that was the time they were coming together for the Lord's Supper as well. They were coming together to engage in other acts of worship, why not the Lord Supper? I know. We have to put one and one together to make that conclusion, but it makes much sense. Doesn't it? Doesn't it?!

- Then a positive example comes from Acts 20:7. That's when Luke, Paul, and others met to worship with the church in Troas. "On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked ... and prolonged his speech until midnight." Note, the infinitive of purpose. They came together "to break bread." They gathered together. They gathered together on the first day of the week. And they gathered together on the first day of the week for the expressed purpose of "breaking bread," that is, taking the Lord's Supper (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23-32). If we put the pieces of this puzzle together—and that's the only way we're going to be able to answer this question—we will see God's implied approval of Christians meeting every Sunday to worship. We also see a worship that involved preaching, singing, praying, giving, and remembering Jesus with the Lord's Supper.

Nothing is ever said about anyone taking the Lord's Supper on any other day. That's why we're so insistent about these matters. We're not trying to be overbearing or legalistic. We just want to do what we know meets with God's approval.

Now, before we close, watch the progression of thought flowing through Acts 15.

- First, a "teaching" was proposed (v. 1).
- Second, that teaching was turned into a "question" to study (v. 2).
- Third, a study of that question became a "matter" to consider (v. 6).
- Fourth, by deliberation, folks came to a "judgment" of what was "good" (v. 19).
- And, finally, that process helped these brethren "come to one accord" (v. 25).

Here is my question to all of us. "Watching the way our early brethren handled differences, shouldn't we be talking to each other more than talking about each other when we have concerns?!" I think we all know the answer.

Dan Winkler

Spiritual Worship

by David Stewart, Teacher

Downtown Church of Christ, Morriston, Arkansas

In Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman, He stated, "But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (Jn. 4:23-24). (All quotations are taken from the ESV.) Jesus looked forward to



David Stewart

a time when "true worshipers" would worship the Father "in spirit and truth." This time was coming soon, as the establishment of the church of Christ and the new covenant was on the horizon. Jesus' words teach us some important truths about spiritual worship.

First, spiritual worship is desired by God. Jesus stated that "God is spirit." God is figuratively described in the Bible as walking, smelling, and having eyes, ears, hands, and feet. Despite these anthropomorphisms, He is not a material being. According to His spiritual nature, He is not confined to any particular location, as pagans once thought (1 Kings 20:23, 28). As Lord over all the earth, God is seeking people who will worship Him intelligibly and acceptably with their minds and spirits (1 Cor. 14:15). God is searching for true worshipers; and He wants people to search for Him (Acts 17:27). His pursuit covers the entire globe—"every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev. 5:9).

Second, spiritual worship is a divine necessity. The word "must" (*dei*) does not refer to something that is simply desirable or optional, but rather indicates a divine requirement. If one does not worship "in spirit and truth," that person's worship will be rejected by God. The fact that God accepts some worship and rejects other worship is taught throughout the Bible, beginning with the first brothers, Cain and Abel. "In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering He had no regard" (Gen. 4:3-5; see Heb. 11:4).

In the post-exilic period, God rejected the Jews' worship because they were offering blemished sacrifices at the temple in Jerusalem. He exclaimed, "Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the LORD of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand" (Mal. 1:10). During Jesus' ministry, He quoted from the prophet Isaiah, who had spoken for God: "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Mt. 15:8-9). Worship that is acceptable must come from a pure heart and conform to God's revelation. If a worshiper possesses the wrong attitude or deviates from God's revelation, then his worship is "vain"—that is, "empty" or "futile." It is meaningless, a waste of time.

Third, spiritual worship is not tied to a particular mountain, temple, or shrine. The Samaritan woman raised the question of the proper place of worship—"this mountain" (Mt. Gerizim) or "Jerusalem" (Jn. 4:20). The Samaritans worshiped God on Mt. Gerizim. They had built a temple there during the time of Alexander the Great, but it was destroyed in the late second century B.C. Even so, the Samaritans continued to worship God on the mountain in the time of Christ, and they still celebrate the Passover and other feasts there today. The Jews worshiped at the temple in Jerusalem, which had been rebuilt by Zerubbabel and later reconstructed by Herod the Great. In order to celebrate the various feasts throughout the year, the Jews came from all over

the Mediterranean world to worship at the Jerusalem temple (see Acts 2:5-11). That temple was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70, just as Jesus had prophesied (Mt. 24:1-2; Mk. 13:1-2). Despite this fact, Jews still gather at the western wall of the temple mount to pray.

Nevertheless, spiritual worship does not require a pilgrimage to a religious shrine or a holy city. Instead, believers in Christ—both individually and collectively as local congregations—serve as the temple of the Holy Spirit wherever they live (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20; Eph. 2:18-22). The manner of worship is what matters, not the location.

Fourth, spiritual worship is based on the person of Jesus

***Jesus' words
teach us some
important truths
about spiritual
worship***

Christ. The sacrificial system under the law of Moses, which appealed to man's physical senses, was only a shadow of the reality found in Christ (Heb. 8–10). The new approach to God described by Jesus came after His death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and exaltation at the Father's right hand. It is the worship of the new covenant. Indeed, Jesus became the ultimate sacrifice, made once for all time. He is our Mediator in Heaven through whom acceptable worship is offered (1 Tim. 2:5). This spiritual worship is based on the truth found in Jesus, who is "the way, and the truth, and the life" (Jn. 14:6). Every Christian is a priest (1 Pet. 2:9-10), and Jesus is our Great High Priest who intercedes for us before

the Father (Heb. 4:14-16). Our prayers are offered to the Father in Jesus' name (Jn. 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-24). Similarly, our songs of praise are also offered to the Father through Christ (Eph. 5:19-20; Col. 3:16-17). The sacrifice of Jesus is commemorated every first day of the week in the Lord's Supper, which is the central event of our worship (Acts 20:7).

Let us strive to be true worshipers, who humbly offer spiritual worship to God according to His divine revelation in the New Testament. Whether in our private devotions or in the public assembly, let us approach the Father through Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest. **MM**

Our
WORSHIP to GOD

Singing: A Great Expression of Love

By Elizabeth Turner Beall
Copy Editor for MM

The best way to express something special or important is to set it to music, as can be validated by the number of musicals produced each year and the endless number of love songs heard every day on various devices. Not only do we express our love and joy, but our anger, protests, sorrow and grief, or depression. When emotions are felt, songs are written. Those songs get aired; we understand the feeling, and when the song is heard, we may even sing along. Singing gets the emotion out of us and serves as therapy on some level.



Beth Beall

Created by God, in His image (Gen. 1:26), He gave each of us emotions like His: Love (1 John 4:8), wrath/anger (Romans 2:5,8), jealousy (Nah.1:2), caring and weeping (John 11:35), and indignation (Psalm 7:11), among others, and are meant to be released in a positive manner.

When Paul was inspired to say, "Sing and make melody in your hearts to God" (Eph. 5:19), and "...teach and admonish one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16), God knew exactly what He was commanding us to do. He created each of us with voices to be raised to Him in love and praise upward, and encouragement to each other outward, all done in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). When God said "sing," He did not ask that we have perfect pitch and harmony, or beautiful voices. His concern is not so much the sound from our mouths as it is the attitude and understanding in

our minds and hearts. If our hearts are right, we can sing in mono-tone and be pleasing to God.

Also, when God said "sing," He knew we could do that anywhere. We can be in a building for worship, driving in our cars, sitting under a tree, in a tent, or just in our homes doing what we do there, wherever we happen to be, and still sing praises to Him for His glory, capable of expressing our love, thanks, and joy to Him.

In telling us to "sing," He also told us what to sing:

Psalms: obviously from the book of Psalms;

Hymns: songs made up of verses only, no chorus, as in "Rock of Ages," "Abide With Me," "Be With Me, Lord;

Spiritual songs: these have verses and choruses, such as "Victory In Jesus," "Old Rugged Cross," "How Great Thou Art," or they may be so written without verses or a chorus, but words set to music, making a complete song, as in "O Lord, Our Lord," "God Bless You, Go with God," or "Consider the Lillies."

There is nothing more uplifting, more moving, or more beautiful than singing with Christians, whether in worship or just singing praises to God because we love singing to God. If you have never experienced singing at PTP (or like events), you are missing a tiny foretaste of Heaven. I encourage you to plan to attend such events at least once in your life. **MM**

Is Worship a “Salvation Issue?”

by Bill Brandstatter, Preacher
Marion church of Christ, Marion, IL

Sometimes in a discussion with people about instrumental music in worship, the argument will come up that the instrument in worship is not really a salvation issue. If what we do in worship is not a salvation issue, is worship itself not important? Can a person worship any way he or she wants, and it be acceptable to God? The Bible teaches worship does matter. Let's look at worship through the eyes of some Bible characters.

Would Cain say that worship is not a salvation issue and that it doesn't matter? At one time he may have agreed with that statement. The Bible tells us that Cain and his brother, Abel, both offered sacrifices to God. In a picture of the first worship experience in the Bible, Cain brought an offering of fruit to the LORD. His younger brother, Abel, brought the firstborn of his flock and of their fat.(Gen. 4:1-4). The Bible says, “The LORD respected



Bill Brandstatter

Abel and his offering. But He did not respect Cain and his offering.”(Gen. 4:4-5 NKJV). The text goes on to tell us that Cain became angry. The LORD told Cain that the wrong offering could lead to sin. He said, “If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies

at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it”(Gen.4:7). Cain killed Abel and committed sin because of his anger for God not accepting his fruit offering.

God pronounced a curse on Cain and stated, “A fugitive and vagabond you shall be on the earth”(Gen. 4:12). Cain responded by stating “my punishment is greater than I can bear!” He was punished for the sin of killing his brother, but the reason was that God would not accept his offering. Later on the Hebrews writer states, “By faith, Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous. God testifying of his gifts, and through it, he being dead still speaks”(Heb. 11:4). If Cain could speak today, would he agree with those who advocate that worship doesn't matter?

Would Nadab and Abihu agree that worship doesn't matter? In Leviticus chapter 10, we read about these two who were sons of Aaron. The Bible says, “Each took his censer, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not com-

manded them”(Lev. 10:1).

The fire was not from the right source, and they were commanded not to offer strange incense (Ex. 30:9). As the result of their actions, fire from the LORD devoured them (Lev. 10:3). If they could speak today, would these two say that worship doesn't matter or that it is not a salvation issue?

Would the Samaritan woman at the well in Sychar agree that worship doesn't matter? She brought up the subject of worship to Jesus. She said, “Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship” (Jn. 4:20). She was speaking of Mt. Gerizim, which was close to where they were at that time. Jesus' response was to say to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews” (Jn. 4:21- 22). Notice, Jesus connected salvation with worship. Then He stated, “But the hour is coming, and now is when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is a Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (Jn. 4:23-24 NKJV).

Jesus said our worship must be right. The woman changed the subject stating that when the Messiah would come He would tell them all things. Jesus said, “I who speak to you am He”(Jn. 4:26). Nothing more is written about this woman nor her response, but Jesus told her to believe Him (Jn.4:21). He connected salvation with worship (Jn. 4:22). We don't know what she would say now, but I wonder if she would agree with those today who say worship doesn't matter and that instrumental music in worship is not a salvation issue.

Man must do three things to be pleasing to God and get to Heaven. Man must be saved as God instructs (Mark 16:16). Man must worship as Jesus instructed (John 4:24). Man must live “soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world”(Titus 2:12). All three of these are salvation issues. If anyone of the three is wrong and out of harmony with the Scriptures, man's eternal destiny is at stake. It does make a difference how we worship and what we do in worship. Worship is a salvation issue. The right worship pleases God and is acceptable to Him. **MM**

(Bill and I have been swapping bulletins for several years. I appreciate his writings and for his dedication to the church in Illinois. -dd)

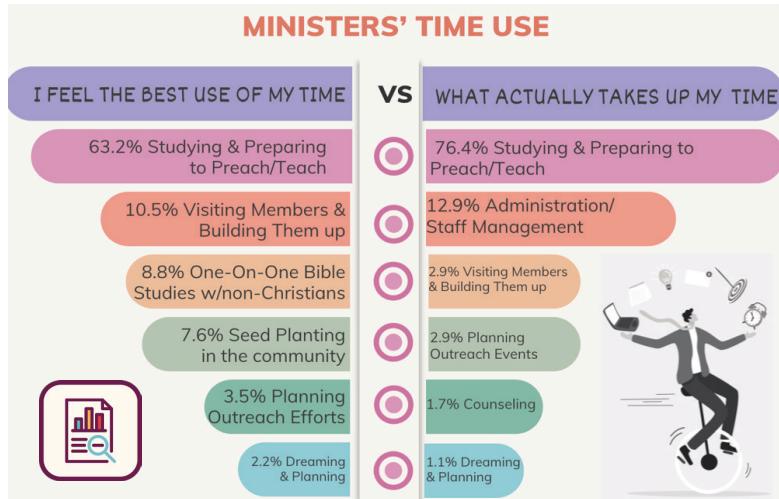
**Can a person
worship anyway
he or she wants,
and it be
acceptable to God?**

The Preacher's Page

/ PRESENTED BY THE JENKINS INSTITUTE



The Preacher and Time Management



Keeping Track of it All (A Top 5 List):

Most of us run better if we have a reminder.

Let's face it, in the effective minister's life there's a lot to keep up with. For years (and even today) many ministers used The Minister's Ready Record put together by Jim Bill McInteer and published by then 20th Century Christian. Others used Day Runner or Day-Timer.



Here are Top 5 favorite Reminder Apps:

- * **Reminders:** Apple based only
- * **Google Tasks**
- * **Any.DO**
- * **Google Keep**
- * **ToDoList**

NOTE: Find one that works best for you and works across platforms and use it!

A GREAT WAY TO KEEP UP WITH GUESTS

It is not always easy to remember all you have to remember and keep up with guests and information about them that would be helpful. This idea is from Chuck Morris, minister at the Spring Meadows congregation in Spring Hill, TN. When he meets a new person or family that is visiting locally he asks if they can get a picture. Then he saves the picture and on it writes any useful info, i.e. they moved here from Indiana, they are friends with the Smiths, she's a school teacher, the kids go to x school. Then when he sees them again he can remember or pull that up. He also uses it to connect them with other members in the church who might work with, go to school with, or help him find where they live so he might have neighbors in the church welcome them. Great idea.



...Ministry Verse of the Quarter, Redeeming the time...

 "So then, be careful how you walk, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil." (Ephesians 5:15-16) One of the certainties of life is the uncertainty of life. As a young person, I longed to be able to know the future. I wanted to know who I would marry, where I would preach, and how my life would progress. As we grow older and experience more of life, we understand why our Gracious God doesn't allow us to know the future. To borrow a line from that great philosopher, Jack Nicholson, "We can't handle knowledge about our future!!"

Jesus commanded us not to worry about the future. We really should live one day at a time. That doesn't mean we shouldn't dream, plan, or even set appropriate goals. But it does mean we should not become over anxious or over burdened thinking about the future.

It does mean that we should live one day at a time. It means we need to focus on this day. As preachers of the Gospel it can be easy for us to forget about this day. What we can do for our Lord today. What we can do to bless our wives and our children on this day. It means we should find ways everyday to bless the Kingdom.

We should spend some time every single day talking to our Father. Prayer really is our lifeline to God. We should spend time every day allowing God to speak to us. When was the last time you read through your Bible in a year. I am using as my Bible reading this year, listening to Alexander Scourby reading the King James Version of the New Testament. I listen to it in my car, when I am exercising and every spare moment possible.

We should say something good about God and the Church every day. We should do something kind for someone everyday without expecting any return kindness. Preacher friend, why not spend some time today considering how you can best "Redeem the Time?"



The Spirit-Controlled Church

by Clarence DeLoach, Minister
Church of Christ at Sycamore
Cookeville, Tn

In 1 Corinthians chapters 12-14, Paul gives the number, identification, regulation, and duration of the “spiritual gifts. These were miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the infant stage of the church of Christ. His Holy Spirit “guided into all truth,” the inspired apostles and prophets as His Church was being established and as His New Covenant was being produced.

These supernatural gifts were temporary, but the truth they produced was to be permanent. The Holy Spirit continues to work in the church through providence and by the Spirit-given Word to energize and rule in the body of Christ. The Spirit exalts and gives honor to Christ, the head in all things (John 16:13-14).

The Spirit-controlled church is characterized by fellowship. Such fellowship includes everyone truly “born again” as a mutual partner. It is wide and deep, honest, and intimate. It is a family of caring brothers and sisters who are one in Christ (Gal.3:26-29).

The Spirit-controlled church is worshipful. Its worship is meaningful, genuine, God-centered, and dynamic. It is done “in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). It honors the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Spirit-controlled church is evangelistic. Not only is there



Clarence DeLoach

the “inreach” of edification, but the “outreach” of evangelism. Bringing unbelievers to the new life in Christ is priority one. Such evangelism is not an appendage tacked on, but the natural outflow of its own spiritual life.

The Spirit-controlled church is loving. It is a “called out” assembly of people touched and changed by the sacrifice of Christ. It is a body of believers where selflessness and giving are normal.

The Spirit-controlled church is obedient. It walks the path that God prescribes. The Spirit-given truth it believes, honors, and follows. Such obedience is not done by rote, but is prompted from a submissive heart. It submits to the Lord because it loves the Lord and seeks to please Him.

The Spirit-controlled church serves. Its goal is not to be served, but to serve. Every member seeks to be a good steward of the gift he has received (1 Peter 4:10-11).

The ultimate mission of the Spirit-controlled church is to glorify God in all things, “For you were bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:20). **MM**

(It was my honor to meet brother DeLoach at the Southeastern School of Biblical Studies in Karnes, Tennessee. He is a well-known teacher, preacher, and author. Any words of his, written or spoken, will be a blessing to anyone who loves the Lord. He is a long-time subscriber to this publication, and we are thankful to have him share this article with us. -dd)



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“ON THE ROAD AGAIN”

with the Editor

Spring 2024

by Dennis Doughty, editor

It has been a busy three months since our December mailing. During the Holiday Season I spoke first at Coffeeville, as this great group of Christians continue to look for a regular preacher. Between Christmas and New Years, I was invited to preach in Houston, Mississippi. During the pandemic they had to drop the support of *The Messenger*, but now they are ready to support us again. I was impressed with the congregation and thankful for their good donation to our work.

After the New Year, I spent the weekend in North Little Rock. I enjoyed dinner with the two excellent ministers of the Levy congregation, Danny Dodd and Cecil May III. Brother Danny is well known to the readers of *The Messenger* as he is one of our most valued writers. I enjoyed meeting Cecil for the first time.

Sunday morning, I spoke at the Levy church during the Bible Class hour about *The Magnolia Messenger*. It is a wonderful congregation of 500, that has many great programs going on. It was a real joy to worship with them.

The first full week of February is always Freed-Hardeman Bible Lectureship week. We set up our new eye-catching display and enjoyed meeting many of you who get *The Messenger*. We also signed up several new subscribers from around the country.

The highlight of the week was our Second Annual Magnolia Messenger luncheon. A group of fourteen (up from eight last year) enjoyed lunch together on Wednesday. There were many comments about the growth of the *Messenger*, of some new writers on the horizon, and a look to future goals of the paper. It was gratifying and encouraging to me to see a gathering of such talented men and women who make this publication a great “contribution to our brotherhood.” **MM**



Enjoying dinner with Cecil May III and Danny Dodd at the Black Bear diner in North Little Rock.



Two Bible majors and future preachers, Shane Winkler and Clay Smith



The beautiful foyer of the Levy Church of Christ



The Second Annual Magnolia Messenger luncheon



Our eye-catching new display

“visiting with Dan Winkler.”



Youth & Family

Are you SCARED of the DARK?

by Winston Smith

Youth Minister of Beechhill Church of Christ.

Ripley Ms.

When I was a child, I would spend hours in my bed staring into the dark hallway outside my room. The longer I stared, the scarier things got. I felt like I could see things and I would become more and more afraid. According to WebMD, the single most common fear children have is nyctophobia, a fear of the dark. It is so common that almost $\frac{1}{2}$ of all children will have a deep, dreadful fear of the dark. I was one of those children. Thankfully, my parents let me keep a light on in my closet, which I gladly and somewhat embarrassingly did until I was a teenager. I kept that light on each night because I knew that where there was light, there was no darkness. The light gave me hope. When I had a light, I did not have the darkness, and the monsters in my head couldn't exist without the darkness to hide them.

As a person gets older, they begin to realize where this fear comes from. Children are not afraid of the dark, but they are afraid of what they cannot see hiding in the dark. Children are afraid of monsters, ghosts, or boogymen hiding beyond the light, and when a person begins to stare into that darkness, they make up all kinds of crazy things in their minds. Our imagination goes wild because until light shows us what is hiding from our sight, it could be "anything." As an adult, we understand that things like monsters, ghosts, and boogymen do not exist, but there is still darkness. Where there is darkness... bad things will always try to hide.

The Bible tells us that we have a light: Jesus Christ. John 1:4 tells us that Jesus is, "The light of men." John 1:9 tells us that the light of Christ is the "True light, which gives light, to everyone." To appreciate the promise of our light Jesus Christ, sometimes it



Winston Smith

is best to think about how sad our lives would be in the darkness. Imagine living your life without hope of that light, and imagine only being able to stare into the darkness. All you can imagine is all the scary things out there that want to come and get you and hurt you. That is what sin wants, and that is what the devil wants. Satan wants us to live and walk in the darkness. As long as we live and walk in the darkness, we can never have hope in the light. However, God never wants us to walk in the darkness, and to let us walk in the light, He gave us our Light in Jesus Christ. John 1:5 says, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

For years, astrologists claimed the single most powerful thing in the universe is a black hole. They also claimed that in a black hole, there could be no light. The darkness of a black hole is too great, and it would be too strong for light to shine in the middle of it. That is until 2016 when, as space.com reported, scientists spotted light. Even in the most powerful thing in the universe, a black hole, light will always overcome the darkness. While this fact might have surprised the astrologists, it should never surprise us. When we have our faith in God and the promise of Christ, Jesus Christ shines in the darkness, and we can walk in His light by following Him, obeying Him, and being made alive through Him as we become Christians.

When I think back to my childhood, I think about how thankful I am that my parents let me keep my light on so I would know what was in the dark could not hurt me. With the light, I could feel safe. May we take more joy in our one true Light, Jesus Christ. While the darkness of this world, of sin and death can be scary, it is nothing compared to our Light that shines in the darkness (John 1:5), our Light that "Delivers us from the domain of darkness" (Col. 1:13), and our Light that guides us where we go (Luke 1:29). Are you afraid of the dark? **MM**

"I WOULD GIVE ANYTHING TO DO THAT"

Maybe you have heard those words spoken by others or you may have said them yourself when you watched someone do something outstanding.

Often, we think first of remarkable talent as the reason others can do something so well. And indeed, talent is involved. But talent alone is not the complete answer. Behind the talented performance is a lot of disciplined, hard work. The accomplished football player practices long hours every day to win a National

Championship or Super Bowl. The golfer who wins major tournaments spends countless hours in practice rounds fine-tuning his driving, iron play, and putting skills. The published writer spends multiplied hours writing, re-writing, and proofing page after page of manuscripts.

Timothy had a gift given to him by the laying on of the Apostle Paul's hands (2 Timothy 1: 6). The gift was the gift of prophecy and was recognized by the elders of the local church where Timothy served, as evidenced by them laying their hands on him (1 Timothy 4:14). Timothy had what it took to succeed as an evangelist (2 Timothy 4: 5). But to accomplish great things for God, he had to "stir up the gift" he had (2 Tim. 1: 6) and was commanded to "be diligent to present [himself] approved to God" by correctly handling the Word of God (2 Timothy 2: 15). In other words, he had to work diligently at using even better what God had entrusted to him to succeed.

Young people, we think we would give it all to be able to have the talent of our favorite players or person. The real question is would you "give anything" to experience the full use of the abilities God has given you to use in His kingdom? If you and I answer "yes," then we must be prepared to "go all out" in praying for God's blessing and in developing the talents God has given us. Talent or ability is not enough. We can sometimes get by with just modest use of talent, but we can never succeed as God desires (and as we should desire) by coasting along in the use of God-given abilities. Our goal should be to abound more and more in the use of whatever God places in our hands to use in His kingdom. **MM**



Greg Ledbetter

It's a School!

by Dennis Doughty, editor

We put a lot of stock in this country on education. We encourage every child to graduate from High School. We recommend some form of "higher education" through various colleges. Parents spend great sums to get their kids educated. They know that a lack of education will greatly hinder their children's success in life.

But our families and our nation are neglecting a great area of education, neglecting a school that has been a foundation of this country since its founding. Its classrooms sit empty across this land as children skip class, the textbook gathers dust, and even adults no longer desire to further their education. What is the most neglected school in our land?

The Bible School

Daniel Webster said, "Education is useless without the Bible." Yet parents that would never think of letting their child miss English or Math class, give no thought to the fact that their child is missing Bible Class. It is staggering to think of how many children today never attend Bible school.

Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899) was a rowdy little boy when, while working at a shoe store, was first invited to attend a bible school in his home town. He grew to become a great evangelistic preacher. He held large evangelistic meetings across the country which were attended by presidents from Grant to Lincoln.

Bible school was a large influence in his life as a young boy, so much so that he began a Bible school in Chicago to encourage young people to study the holy scriptures. The Moody Bible Institute continues to this day.

Mr. Moody discovered what all us old preachers discovered after a lifetime of studying the scriptures. It's depth and wisdom, it's truths and knowledge are so great that we can never fully learn it all. The Bible remains a constant challenge, a constant source of knowledge, a well that never runs dry.

Sadly, many children are not getting even a fundamental education in this Book of books. When I was growing up, most children attended Bible School, usually before worship. Even parents who did not attend would drop off their children at the church building for Bible class. Today it is just the opposite, most children do not attend Bible School class. Even faithful members skip this important study of God's Word.

Let us not forget what David wrote, "Your hands made me and fashioned me; Give me understanding, that I may learn your commandments" (Ps. 119:72). Bible School; It is a school! Are you and your children attending? **MM**

from a
Woman's
 VIEWPOINT
"In Memory of Miss June"

Fleecy

One Woman's Story of Surviving and Thriving

by **Gail Champion Barber**

I have a great God-blessed life, and I'm thankful. I grew up at Childhaven Children's Home in Cullman, Alabama. The four years before going there were difficult. My mother died when I was five years old. Several foster homes, times when I was separated from my brothers and sister, and physical abuse from a relative, took a toll on me.

A few years after marrying and having two children, the nightmares and association of previous pain became difficult to deal with. James Jones, a counselor and marriage and family therapist, began to work in our building at the Central Church of Christ in Dalton, Georgia, in January 1982. I started seeing him, learning how to deal with my pain. He was tremendously helpful.

Gail Champion Barber
 James made me go to the nursing home alone to visit two old women from the church. I prayed for courage as I imagined what their hands might look like. I was tempted to tell him I wasn't ready, but I pressed on.

They are sick, old people, I told myself. They can't hurt me. They aren't Mammy.

Because I wouldn't see James until the next Monday, I waited until Friday. I thought, I'll just do it and get it over with—then process over the weekend.

I had visited nursing homes often with church groups, but never alone. Even parking out front was difficult. I clutched two small gifts in my hands. I wondered if the women would like them.

I found room 107 with little effort, and knocked on the open door with dread, but peered in to find an empty, unmade bed. The woman was away. It was the perfect test run. One down, one to go.

When I reached room 219, I found another resident chatting with the woman I'd come to see. The woman and I spoke for a little while, and the conversation transitioned from awkward stammers to full sentences. I was surprised—pleased even. I gave my two gifts to these women.

I walked out into the weekend having accomplished my goal. Then I slid into the warm leather seats of my car and cried. When I told James later, he cried too. I felt safe—almost safe enough to

tell him about several experiences that I'd never spoken about to anyone—experiences that were still so poignant, potent, and clear in my mind.

Another assignment was to tell my story to two women. Two people were a lot of people. But he said that once I shared my story, others would likely begin to open up to me as well.

The first woman I talked to cried the whole time I spoke, feeling immense empathy for me. The second woman didn't seem to be paying attention at all. I wasn't sure which response hurt worse. After I finished confiding in my silent friend, she surprised me by asking if she could share her lifetime secret with me.

She had seen a murder as a child. The murderer had seen her too and had threatened to kill her parents if she told. Not even her husband knew the secret she'd been holding onto for decades. We held each other and cried afterward. She felt relieved to have told her truth to at least one person, and I felt honored that she had confided in me.

What James had promised me was materializing: as I opened up to others, they opened up to me. I was grateful to relieve my friend of her burden. Now there were two people who knew her secret, and that was enough. I relayed this proudly in therapy. It was another mark of progress.

I've learned there are times when someone needs professional help to deal with trauma. That is nothing to be ashamed of.

Jerrie and I have now worked with thirteen congregations since my therapy with James. I tell my story to a ladies' Bible class or other groups soon after arriving. I've spoken to many ladies' days where I've shared my story. These events provided opportunities for others to share their stories and get help for the first time.

In the fall of 2021, I started working with a professional writer, Alice Sullivan, to share my story. I wrote much through the years in longhand. Alice helped me arrange this to make it interesting and helpful.

A difficult beginning didn't ruin the rest of my life. And it doesn't need to ruin yours, either.

Most of the trauma of my childhood began to be in the past, where it belonged, when I got professional help. There wasn't anyone else I trusted with all that information. My parents were a

Clouds: after Childhood Abuse

great encouragement to me. The staff and other children at Childhaven showed me love, encouragement, and value. But I didn't share with them my complete past. They were not prepared to help.

Secrets will display themselves in a lot of ways. They are the heaviest of burdens. Their weight gets heavier with time. Prayer, belief in God, good people—especially family, worship, and Bible study all helped.

I have found the more I tell my secrets, the more people tell me theirs. It is a wonderful gift to me when people choose to tell me their secrets. They will be held as a sacred trust.

If you would like to communicate with me in any way, contact me: **MM**

Phone: (615) 584-7130; email: gailchampionbarber@gmail.com; address:
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Gail Champion Barber

Gail's family was poor but rich with love. When her mother was in the hospital giving birth to the youngest child, their house burned. Before leaving the hospital, Gail's mother was diagnosed with cancer.

When her mother died, Gail and her siblings went to stay with their family, eventually living at her grandmother's house. Although

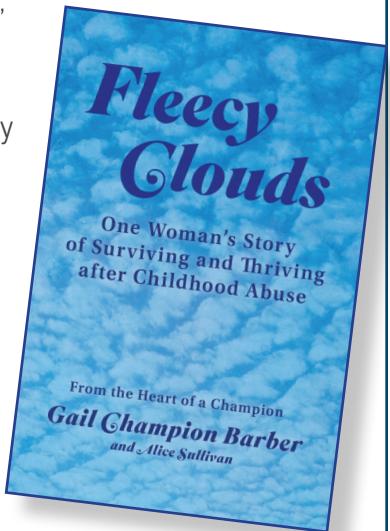
warned that this was not a good decision, Gail's father felt it was his only option. However, it was nearly fatal for little Gail. Her father—her hero—saved her in the nick of time.

The Welfare Department soon removed Gail and her two younger siblings and placed them in foster homes. They were ultimately placed at Childhaven, an orphanage for unfortunate children.

Despite great sadness and pain in their early years, Gail and her siblings grew up to be strong, loving, and faith-filled adults. But those early traumatic childhood events weighed on Gail's body, mind, and spirit

until she was in her forties. Finally agreeing to seek help, she started seeing a Christian counselor. That was the beginning of her healing journey.

No matter how much hurt you've endured, there's always a path to healing and wholeness. In *Fleecy Clouds: One Woman's Story of Surviving and Thriving after Childhood Abuse*, Gail's story is evidence of the resiliency of the human spirit, the power of love, and the never-ending mercies of a loving Father. **MM**



Worshipping God in Song

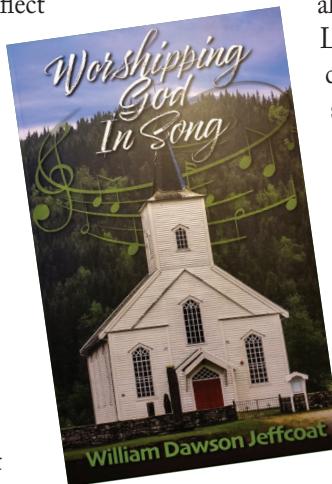
W. D. Jeffcoat, 1929-2014

Note: The following is from brother Jeffcoat's wonderful book, "Worshiping God in Song." In addition to his decades of preaching, he also dedicated his life to the study of music and hymnology. He taught singing at Freed-Hardeman University and the Harding Graduate School of Theology. His book should be read by song leaders and every Christian wanting to add meaning to their worship in song. If you read only one article in this issue, read this one! -dd

Worship in song is one of the most abused and neglected areas of service to God. Our Lord is worthy of our best, but more often than not, our singing leaves much to be desired. The technical aspects of music are multiple; therefore, the reasons for our failures are many. We should be concerned about the attitudes of many who do not sing, and many who do sing, because there is need for much improvement. Indifference toward improvement in any area of Christian service indicates that one's love for God is not as meaningful as it should be. We need to reflect on the attitude that was manifested by first century saints.

Much more than what we usually mention can be found in the story of Paul and Silas in the Philippian jail. Deep-rooted faith in God was demonstrated that night through the avenues of prayer and song. God's goodness, as expressed in his bestowal of heirship with Him, and joint-heirship with His Son, motivated them into thankful expression. If we will acquire the singleness of eye that was exemplified by them, we too will glorify our Master in worshipful song.

There are those who think they cannot sing. It is a shame that so many talents in every area of service are imprisoned and wasted by improper thinking. Every saint should strive to worship God in song to the best of his ability. Singing, as an act of worship, is commanded by Almighty God: we question God's wisdom by thinking that we cannot do that which He has commanded. In so doing, we indicate that our problem is spiritual rather than musical. We should not compare our efforts with the efforts of others in this respect. We have no more right to think that we cannot sing because we may not sing as well as others than we have to think that we cannot study because others may have a keener minds.



If we would refrain from using one another as standards, more of us would honor God with the fruit of our lips. A lack of knowledge of music or a lack of melodious voice do not justify a lack of participation. The Bible indicates that singing is both personal and obligatory. Therefore, God's children are instructed by divine decree to sing.

God, who does not blindly guide men, has a reason for every ordinance. Have you ever seriously thought about why God commanded His children to sing? The eternal verities reveal several reasons. Man's mind is made up of intellect, will, and emotions. Various emotions of the soul are expressed through singing. The emotional part of the mind, which is the part by which we feel or experience, can be hardened. Frequently we do not generate enough feeling in our singing. God intends for our heart strings to be touched when we come before him with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. The apostle Paul exhorted the Corinthians to be always abounding or bubbling over in the work of the Lord, thus, activating their emotions. Emotions may be cultivated through the sentiments expressed in Gospel songs. Children of God may be instructed and admonished, and alien sinners may be convinced of their need to obey the gospel. Some people think that it is not necessary for the singing to be audible. The last point illustrates why this is untrue. Words, which convey thoughts, must be sung with such volume and clarity that people will be instructed and motivated.

Now, let us notice several principles that are related to worship in song which are revealed in primitive Christianity. The first century system of Christianity is distinguished from every other

religion by its worship. Therefore, in order to preserve that system, we must strictly observe its form of worship. Since God has made known a system, we must comply without compromise or modification. During the era of the Mosaic Law, the Jews lived under the Levitical priesthood. Today, in the Christian age, one of the basic principles involved in Christian worship is that of the universal priesthood of Christians. Under the Mosaic system, priests offered sacrifices for the people. In the Christian age, each Christian, being a priest, must offer his own sacrifice.

With these thoughts in mind, notice Hebrews 13:13-15. "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continu-

ally, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name." Instead of going back to Judaism and its system of sacrifice under the law, we must praise God by offering sacrifice on a personal basis. Singing is enjoined in the admonition to praise to God by the fruit of our lips. Each Christian must offer up spiritual sacrifice for himself. No priest can sing in a manner that will please God who is indifferent to what he sings, how he sings, or whether he sings at all. Our worship must be characterized by the outpouring of a grateful heart, enlightened by the glorious Gospel of God's dear Son. This outpouring involves "singing and making melody in your hearts unto the Lord," (Ephesians 5:19) on an individual basis. **MM**

In the SPOTLIGHT

Tim and Cindy Woods

This outstanding Christian couple are members of the Oliver Creek congregation in Bartlett, Tennessee. Cindy is the daughter of W. D. Jeffcoat, whose article on singing is on this opening. I asked Cindy what it was like growing up with a preacher who loved music so much. She said, "Well, we learned our 'Do, Re, Mes,' before we learned our 'A,B,Cs'."

Tim has an online bookstore on Ebay called Bluff-citybooks2005. He has over 1400 books listed, with the large majority being by authors of churches of Christ. If you are looking for a book, or would like to order W.D. Jeffcoats' book, you can contact him at AgapeChristian-Books@aol.com.

This couple are long-time servants of the Lord and I am proud to put them "In the Spotlight." -dd



"Do you know some person, or a couple, who give exceptional service to the Lord and their congregation? Help us put them "In the Spotlight." Two requirements; no preachers, and it must be done without their knowledge. We want it to be a surprise, and a way of honoring their service.

Send us a picture and a few short comments about their faithful service to dennis1848@bellsouth.net.

This summer, a great opportunity is coming through your friends at Polishing the Pulpit. The last week in June, your family and friends can visit Restoration Movement sites. The places where revival began in the early 1800s still stand, including Cane Ridge Meetinghouse in Northern Kentucky and the Campbell mansion in Bethany, West Virginia.

This tour will be unique because it will be a hands-on project. In addition to seeing the sites, we will be working during the days on the upkeep and improvement of these sites. Historical devotional stories in the morning and lectures in the afternoon will be conducted by Scott Harp, who is the historian and webmaster of TheRestorationMovement.com.

Your whole family will not only see history but also touch it by assisting with the preservation of these buildings for generations to come. Stories you will learn on this trip can be passed down to your children and your children's children. These memories will impact you for a lifetime.

To register, go to expeditions.polishingthepulpit.com

18 EVANGELISM IDEAS FOR ANY CHURCH MEMBER



MATT WALLIN (AND FRIENDS)

Each morning as you leave home, pray for opportunities to talk about Jesus. Pray for boldness to teach the gospel (Acts 4:29; Ephesians 6:19-20).



Ask someone to read through a book of the Bible with you and talk about what you learn each week.

Invite one person to attend worship with you each Sunday. Always sit with guests in class and worship, even if you did not invite them. Never let a visitor or visiting family sit alone.



Make use of evangelism materials in the church lobby. (Many churches have racks and tables of good materials.) Take materials, study them, and share with friends.

Do an act of service (e.g., babysitting, lawn care, etc.) each week or month as an inroad to developing interest in a Bible study (serve just to serve, but do not stop just with service—let it be a means to an end).



Invite visitors out to eat. Pay for the meal. Get to know them.

Simply invite others to study the Bible with you. Many are interested and will agree. Live and speak the truth in love before them consistently (Ephesians 4:15). Be patient and wait for hearts to open. Be available when someone says, "I want to study."



Give repeat visitors areas in which they can serve before conversion. Make them feel a part before they are "a part." Involve them in such things as helping decorate for VBS and cooking for a men's breakfast. This helps them get to know members and feel comfortable.

Share a tract, House to House, or church bulletin with a friend. Ask the person to read it and tell you what he or she thinks about it (Matthew 22:42).



Follow up with every visitor before the following Sunday. Invite a non-Christian to your home for a game night or meal.

Build relationships and then use relationships to lead people to Christ. Humbly, genuinely love people. Identify burdens they bear and share their load (Galatians 6:2). Pray each day by name for those who are hurting.



Enroll in the House to House School of Evangelism at your congregation or in your area. You can also travel to an enrolled congregation and get a hotel. See <https://evangelism.housetohouse.com/>

Ask cashiers, waiters, and waitresses if you can pray for them about anything. If they say no, tell them, "Remember, God loves you." If they say yes, ask them to stay with you while you pray. Earnestly pray for their request. Then leave a card with a QR code to a video with contact information for follow-up.



Get some members together and go door knocking. Visit nextdoor.housetohouse.com for tips.

Share a new sermon on social media weekly. Use sermons from congregations in your area or the prospect's area so he or she can get to know a local church. You can also share resources from House to House, World Video Bible School, and Apologetics Press.



Use church invitation cards and business cards with QR codes. Aim to give away three every day.

Offer to give someone a ride to worship.



Share your evangelism opportunities with others for prayers and help. Share your experiences with others to get and give feedback on how to be better. "Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17).

VALUABLE ADDITIONAL
RESOURCES →



MM - MISSION REPORT 2024

Mission GTO Mexico On The Go

By John Pigg, Director

Mission Guanajuato Mexico is overseen by the elders of the Lake Harbour Drive church of Christ in Ridgeland, MS, and I have been the Director going on seven years. We now have over 30 churches and numerous individuals who partner with us to provide the financial support. Fourteen congregations are now self-supporting, and one has elders and deacons. Three churches have their own buildings, and the rest meet in rented houses. Six new missions were started in 2023. We presently have 11 Mexican missionaries on salary. Last year was one of our most successful spiritually and numerically since this mission program began 22 years ago.

A special event which we were most excited about was the conducting of Mission GTO's first Christian Youth Camp last July. One hundred sixteen teens and 39 workers came together for five days in a beautiful, rented camp site. There was swimming, games, campfires, singing, athletic competitions, and many more fun activities. Bible classes were conducted in the morning and evangelistic services in the evening. Christian women from many of our mission churches came with their cooking utensils and equipment and prepared all the meals. God increased His Kingdom with four young people putting Christ on in baptism. These kids had never experienced a Christian camp, and they are thoroughly excited about returning next July. We have set a goal of 120 in 2024.

One of the ways we have found profitable for spiritually strengthening and enriching Christian families and reaching out to non-Christian homes is by conducting 2 two-day Marriage Seminars. We conducted two last spring and fall, and each time there were 150 people to attend. We are planning for an Apologetic Seminar in the fall of 2024.

Another mission method we have begun in an effort to make

contacts and hopefully open doors for future Bible studies and conversions, is a benevolent ministry we call "Buckets of Blessings." In each new mission we buy 300 two-gallon buckets, fill them with beans, rice, salsa, cooking oil, and bread and chips, which are staple food items in most Mexican homes, place labels on the outside of

the buckets with information about the location where the church meets, and put in them several Bible tracts and an offer for a free correspondence course. Our missionaries deliver them to poor families in hopes that by showing we physically care about them, they will allow us to also help them spiritually by sharing the gospel of Christ and teaching them about the church of Christ.

A historic event took place on my last mission trip in January. I took two elders from the Lake Harbour Drive church of Christ, who had never been to Guanajuato before, and also Les Ferguson, Sr, who for many years directed this mission program and continues to make at least one trip a year. Also accompanying us was sister Nelma Ivey, who with her deceased husband, Marlin, started this mission. We

decided to rent a banquet facility in San Miguel de Allende, which is the city where we first started Mission GTO Mexico, and where we base-camp in each of our mission trips. We invited Christians from all over Guanajuato to come and participate in a joint Sunday worship service and fellowship meal. To our surprise, we had 464 first-generation Christians to attend. Les Ferguson taught the Bible class, and I was blessed to preach a Good News sermon to this great group of God's people! Following the worship service, a special tribute was given to honor sister Nelma, and a beautiful plaque was presented to her for the many years of financial support she and Marlin have provided. It was a very emotional experience for her as she looked across this great crowd of Christians that had been won for Christ through the preaching and teaching of the gospel. **MM**



A special tribute was given to honor sister Nelma Ivey

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Sunday is coming! Are you ready?

by Brandon Baggett, Minister
Luverne Church of Christ
Luverne, Alabama

It was the American poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who wrote, "Sunday is the golden clasp that binds together the volume of the week." There certainly is no other day of the week



Brandon Baggett

like Sunday! It's the Lord's Day, a special occasion when the family of God gathers to "worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness" (Psalm 96:6 ESV). Sunday grants us the privilege to draw near to God while we "stir up one another to love and good works" (Hebrews 10:24 ESV). Through the simple and Biblical mediums of spiritual singing, prayers, preaching, communion, and generous giving, we "ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name" (Psalm 29:2 ESV). Sunday gives us a foretaste of the glory of Heaven! It is only fitting, therefore, to prepare ourselves for this special day. As the wise king once taught, "Guard your steps when you go to the house of God" (Ecclesiastes 5:1 ESV).

Have you ever considered how much the Jews prepared for worship? According to Exodus 23:14-19 and Deuteronomy 16:16, Jewish men were required to make three annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem for worship. The Jews would travel to Jerusalem in the springtime to observe the Passover, also known as the Feast of Unleavened Bread (cf. Exodus 12:1-14, 39-42; Leviticus 23:4-8). They then returned to the city of God in the early summer for the Feast of Pentecost, also known as the Feast of Weeks (cf. Exodus 23:16; 34:22; Leviticus 23:15-21). Then for the final time that year, the Jews would make an autumn trek to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, also known as the Feast of Booths (cf. Leviticus 23:33-43; Numbers 29:12-39; Deuteronomy 16:13). These were special occasions when God's covenant people would "appear before the LORD" (Deuteronomy 16:16 ESV), giving him the worship, sacrifices, and heartfelt devotion He deserves. The Jews cherished these special occasions and they meticulously prepared for these instances of worship (see Luke 22:9-20).

There's much to learn from the example of the Old Covenant

Jews. Not only do they remind us God is worthy of our worship, but they inspire us to be more intentional in the worship we offer to God. It's way too easy to treat worship haphazardly, like it's a mere duty to hurry up and complete. Worship should be a discipline we enjoy, not just a chore we endure. Even though worship is about honoring God, it's an activity that also enriches our lives, as the worshipers God gets the glory from our worship, but we gain the benefits of worshiping Him! Yet we can only get out of our worship what we are willing to put into our worship. If we would better prepare ourselves beforehand to enter into God's presence, we would discover how much more fulfilling and rewarding Sundays can be. What are some practical things we can do to cultivate a heart that's ready to meet the Lord on Sunday?

• **Prepare your body!** Have you ever noticed how stressful and hectic Sunday mornings can be? Families, especially those with small children, often find themselves frantically rushing to make it to services on time. It's also no secret it's hard to get up and going on Sunday mornings, especially if you stayed up late on Saturday night. Such is why it would be wise to prepare your body beforehand. Even though worship comes from the heart, it's hard to engage your heart in worship when your body is worn to a

frazzle. So try arranging your Saturdays so you aren't up excessively late the night before worship. Set your alarm clock to give yourself and your family ample time to wake up, get ready, and arrive at the meetinghouse early enough to connect with others before worship. Use some time on Saturday to prepare your clothes for worship the next morning. Gather your Bibles, contribution, and other essential items together in an easy-to-access place. Taking these small measures will help

to prepare your body for worship. As simplistic as these things may sound, they will greatly reduce your stress on Sunday and calm your spirit as you come into God's holy presence.

• **Prepare your mind!** As Jesus reminds us, "true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:23-24 ESV). Acceptable worship is far deeper than performing right religious externals; it must also come from the right spirit. If we are to engage our spirit in worship, we would do well to prepare our minds

***It's no secret it's hard
to get up and going on
Sunday mornings,
especially if you stayed up
late Saturday night.***

beforehand. Devote time before worship to prime your heart for praise. Try reading a few passages on Sunday morning about God's greatness. The book of Psalms is an ideal selection. Read a couple of Scriptures, meditate on who God is and what God has done, and pray to God as you prepare to meet Him in worship. Spend some time pondering the beauty of the Gospel message and the impact Jesus has made in your life. Filling your mind with such meditations will deepen your hunger for God and heighten your desire to come adore Him.

• **Prepare your heart!** The Old Testament poet once said, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:14 ESV). The psalmist understood God was keenly aware of his sins and shortcomings, so he sought the Lord's mercy and forgiveness. He wanted to worship and serve God with clean hands and a pure heart. Such should be our aim as well! It would enrich our worship to open up our hearts, do an honest evaluation of self, and spend time confessing our sins to God. Ask God to open your eyes to those blind spots in your character. Plead with Him to forgive you of your secret sins. Seek His help in avoiding presumptuous sin. Thank God for the sweet assurance of forgiveness found in Jesus. Preparing your heart for worship is essential. A forgiven heart is a heart ready for praise!

Gathering with the church on Sunday is non-negotiable (see Hebrews 10:24-25). Worship is the duty of every Christian. But worshiping with others isn't just an obligation—it's a special blessing for children of God! So let's strive to be more intentional and be better prepared for this important day. Taking the time to prepare our body, mind, and heart for worship shows God just how serious we are about Him. Let's cultivate a heart that longs to adore the one who so richly deserves our praise. Sunday is coming! Are you ready? **MM**

(Note: Brandon is a bright young writer and I appreciate his good thoughts in this article. I enjoyed worshiping with him last year in the Mobile, Alabama, area and was impressed with his teaching talent.-dd)

My Worth

by JJ Davenport

My worth comes not from the gold on my hand,
not from my job and not from my man.

My worth was bought on a ragged old tree on a dark,
dark day that would end in victory.

My worth is not because of my works because of the people
I have saved or my little quirks.

My worth comes from my father, who saw it fit
to have a plan and never quit.

My worth requires obedient faith, an unwavering love
and enormous, enormous grace.

My worth can't be bought for the price has been paid
and through baptism, I am saved.

My worth, you see, can never come from earthly things
for my ransom was paid by a heavenly King.
So one day I'll be asked "are you worthy to pass?" and my
answer will be "Jesus died for me."

READERS' RESPONSE

Reasons Why We Continue Publishing the Magnolia Messenger



- The MM you just mailed is among the best I have seen. I believe the center chart is among the best I have seen. It should be used in Bible studies frequently. Keep up the great teaching. *(James Pilgrim, Ripley, Mississippi)*
- I would like to order 12 additional copies of your last edition titled "What Must I Do to Be Saved?" Most of my students at the Amarillo Bible Chair are not members of the Church; some are in World Religions. I would like to give a copy to several of these. Thank you for your work in publishing the MM. My childhood home was in Nettleton, MS, and I preached for the Christian Chapel Church in Amory, MS. *(Mural Worthey, Amarillo, Texas)*
- Dennis, you have done a fine job taking over for Al. Keep up the good work. I got to know Al through Elder Link at Faulkner years ago. *(Frank Quinn, Rome, Georgia)*
- Greetings from Southeast Georgia, I am 88 years old. I grew up in Columbus, Mississippi. Dr. George Benson, President of Harding, asked me to try Harding. I was a student there from 1953-57. I became a Christian my freshman year. I am an elder in the church here. I read *The Messenger*, have for over 10 years. *(Lewis "Sugar" Stewart)*
- May God continue to bless your work. *(Gary McIntyre, Pawley's Island, SC)*
- Thanks for sending me the *Magnolia Messenger*. I enjoy it very much. *(Doris Henderson, Ruston, LA)*
- I enjoy the *Messenger* and read it from cover to cover. *(Nellie Stobaugh, Cleveland, AR)*
- Thank you for the amazing work you do with the *Magnolia Messenger*. We really enjoy reading it. *(Jim & Robin Flowers, Hermanville, MS)*
- Thank you for a magazine that tells the word of God. We enjoy each issue and please continue your work. *(Paul Pounds, Columbia, MS)*
- Thank you for all the good news you send to all of us. The *Magnolia Messenger* has helped me to improve my knowledge of God's word..... *(Ruby Nell Parham, Amory, MS)*
- Thank you for your great publication. I look forward to receiving each issue. Keep up the good work! *(Don McAlpin, Middleton, TN)*
- Thank you for the great magazine you publish. *(Jerri Barber, Nashville, TN)*
- Please keep up the good work. We really enjoy reading the *Messenger*. *(Dan & Ann Harris, Columbus, MS)*
- Enjoy reading your magazine. It is one of the best. I read it cover to cover. *(Richard Ellis, Haysville, KS)*
- Pray this excellent paper can continue. We need sound gospel messages. *(Wanda Bell, Edmond, OK)*
- Many thanks for the Winter 2023 issue. All of the articles are well written and needed. The centerfold chart is unique and very useful. Again my thanks to all the staff. *(Elizabeth Todd, Clarksdale, MS)*
- Thanks for the good work! *(Betty Welshans, Cape Girardeau, MO)*
- Love the paper! *(Barbara Neely, Florence, MS)*
- I enjoy the *Messenger*, and I appreciate the work you are doing. We need it. *(Darlene Farrar, Yukon, OK)*
- Thank you for the *Magnolia Messenger*. It inspires me to study different subjects and I also learn a lot from reading the *Magnolia Messenger*. *(Mary Carr, Sevierville, TN)*
- I really appreciate and enjoy this magazine. It contains great lessons and is wonderfully laid out. *(Jerry Jacques, West Plain, MO)*
- Thank you for sending me your magazine. It's just wonderful... *(Helen Fleeman, Maryville, TN)*
- Thanks for what you do to help others see God. Enjoy the *Messenger*. *(Nancy Carswell, Morriston, FL)*
- Magnificent! Helps to keep the Word in my heart. *(Linda Workman, San Antonio, TX)*
- Happy New Year! Thank you for an uplifting publication. It is a blessing to receive it! *(Julia Neill, Marysville, CA)*
- Just want you to know how much I enjoy the *Messenger* and you all do an outstanding job on it... *(Danny Cornish, Antlers, OK)*
- Thank you for the Question Box. I enjoy answering questions while studying the Bible! God bless you! *(Angelique Newsom, Tifton, GA)*

Bring your “Gift” to Worship

by Paul W. Epler
Saucer Creek Church of Christ
Fulton, MS



Paul W. Epler

The earliest record we have of New Testament worship is found in the words of the Apostle Paul as he wrote to those Corinthians. I am making the application to singing in the worship service, yes, but I want to make a broader application relative to singing: 1 Corinthians 14:26: "What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up." Paul's teaching made in his words, even included their daily growing and coming into possession of new songs to prepare for participation of others as often as the Church assembled.

In his second letter, Paul wrote to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 9:8), "And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work". Every member of the body of Christ has that promise. We all have different gifts, he wrote, but all these gifts are for the benefit of the body and that is more than Sunday Assembly [pwe]. As Christians grew, they brought to the 'Table' their gifts: some a teaching, some a revelation, some a prayer, some encouragement, some a song. During the week they may have had a new perspective brought to themselves as they taught their neighbors. They may have had a deeper understanding of extending Grace when they extended grace of someone seeking to harm them. (see also chapter 14).

An early song in antebellum America expressed the thoughts: "When this glorious Lord's Day morning was announced by the rising sun, how my soul in faith looked heavenward as so glad worship I did come, and obey the words of Him Who died for me. When we meet and greet each other, when we meet and eat the Supper, when we meet and pray together, we obey the words of Him Who died for me."

So, today, as in the first century, we bring with each other some gift to share, to encourage, to exhort, to edify another, and in so doing we benefit the most in giving! Most prayers are beneficial when expressed spontaneously! Most great classes come from group discussion and 'democratic' expressions [as opposed to 'autocratic' preparation]. However, when it comes to singing, there is more 'work' involved. Some of the greatest songs written come

from sermons which spring out of hearts uninhibited by 'preparation and tweaking.'

My urge today is for Christians who have a song in their hearts to write it down or record it as early as possible, and then refine that song with the Scriptures with those who have skills in 'translating it' into four part harmony for congregations to sing together, thereby bringing our worship together more into the way it was intended by our Gracious God when He first ordained that it be done.

Hebrews 12:28: "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe"

Now, how can we justify using physical sounds created by physical science to worship the Almighty God? Especially when His Son taught us that God is to be worshiped in Spirit and in Truth? If we have reverence and awe for Him, we will absolutely do things His Way. The earliest record we have of worship to the Almighty in our New Testament record involved singing praise to God for His Work of bringing salvation and peace (Heavenly Hosts at Jesus' birth)!

It would have been a great joy to have sung the Psalms with Jesus and His Eleven at the Last Supper recorded in Matthew 26:29-30: "I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in My Father's Kingdom. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives." It is our joy to join in with all the saints beginning at Jerusalem recorded in Acts two, blending in with us today as - "we meet in sweet Communion, where the Feast Divine is spread, Hearts are brought in closer union while partaking of the bread."¹ We sing as they sang, in Spirit and in Truth. The Apostle Paul's words speak today as then in 1 Corinthians 14, Ephesians 5, and Colossians 3: "Speaking to yourselves - - -!" We do not go for entertainment! We do not go to hear professionalism! We do not go in self-pride! We do not go and say "look at how good we are!" We sing, pray, teach, give, and preach as the New Testament Church did: "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4:10). **MM**

1Tillett S. Teddlie 1940 eplerpaulw@aol.com

(I met Paul when I held a meeting at Saucer Creek last year. He has a love of music and a passion for writing, and is an excellent song leader. He even took a poem of mine and has set it to music (I am a song writer now!). If you have a song, feel free to contact him. -dd)

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Homecoming & Anniversary Celebration

(19 yrs.) of our Church Merger

Bypass Church of Christ, 787 Hwy. 61 N. Bypass, Vicksburg, MS

Dr. Willie Nettle, Pulpit Minister; Joel Dimmette, Sr., Associate Minister
Sat., April 6, 2024, 6:00 PM and Sun., April 7, 2024, 9:30 AM,
10:30 AM, and 2:00 PM

(Fellowship Meal served from 11:45 AM to 1:45 PM).

All former members, friends & guests, please RSVP to 601-638-6165
or wjnettle@yahoo.com by Sat., Mar. 30, 2024.

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after graduation.

Visiting among Churches in north Mississippi

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



November 2023 through January 2024

By Eddie Lewis

We appreciate so much the opportunity to inform you about our mission work among the churches in North Mississippi and our ministry at the Christian Student Center at Mississippi Delta Community College. We appreciate the Germantown church of Christ sponsoring us in our North Mississippi ministry and several other individuals and churches that support us at the CSC. This report covers twelve Sundays during the months of November 2023 through January 2024. I continue to preach one Sunday each month for the Coffeeeville church of Christ and Indianola church of Christ. Both churches continue to look for a full-time minister. Please pray for them.

November 5, 19, 26: Madolyn and I visited with family in the Nashville area. We only intended to be there two Sundays, but because of a busted water heater at our house in Olive Branch, it turned into three. Each Sunday we attended the Brentwood Hills church of Christ. Walt Leaver is the minister there. He is a part-time teacher at Lipscomb University and has preached for the church for 26 years. We enjoyed visiting with the church and being with Madolyn's children and my children during the Thanksgiving Holiday.

November 12: I was invited to preach for the Coffeeeville church of Christ. They continue to search for a full-time minister. They have no elders and around 40 in attendance. We always enjoy visiting with the folks there. They are a loving congregation and very support-

ive of all the ministers that come to speak for them. They have a good group of young people and support some mission works. In worship I presented the lesson "Learning to Live One Day at a Time" based on Matthew 6:34. It's a good lesson on learning to appreciate the blessings of today.

December 3: I was invited to preach for the Indianola church of Christ. Jason Zuehlke continues to serve as interim minister for the congregation. We always enjoy visiting with the folks there. In Bible class I finished up a series of lessons on Ephesians. In the worship I presented the lesson on "Learning to Live One Day at a Time."

December 10: Madolyn and I were on vacation celebrating our third anniversary in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. We visited with the Great Smoky Mountain

church of Christ in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. Dale Babinsky is the new minister there. They have two elders and around 50 in attendance. That Sunday

they had more visitors than members, which is not unusual for them. We enjoyed both his lessons. In Bible class he talked about "God's Covenant with Abraham" in Genesis. In the worship he looked at "The Day of Judgment" in a series about the "The Ten Most Important Days in the Bible." We enjoyed meeting Dale and the brethren there.

December 17: Madolyn and I visited with the Theo church of Christ outside

Corinth, Mississippi. Jay and Cindy Street moved there after Jay retired and they are now working with the church. Theo is Cindy's home congregation. The church has no elders and around 70 in attendance. Jay retired as an engineer and now is preaching full-time for the congregation. They are very happy to have Jay and Cindy there. In



Cindy and Jay Street

Bible class it was a treat to hear Bro. G.W. Childs teach. His lesson was from Acts 21, but he gave an interesting talk about

the World Council at Nicaea in 325 AD.

He gave us some insight into the reasons for the council and the result.

In the worship, Jay preached on "Where is Jesus?" based on Hebrews 10:19-24. It was a very good lesson and encouraged us to hear about Jesus' role in our lives today. After services we had the pleasure of eating lunch with the Streets and the Childs. We feel the church at Theo is blessed to have Jay and Cindy working with them.

December 21: I had total knee replacement surgery. I'm pleased with the progress I am making, and pray to be back in active service by the first of February. Madolyn has been a wonderful caregiver. I am truly blessed to have her as my sweetheart.

Before my surgery, we had the opportunity to have our Christmas gathering with Madolyn's daughter and her family in Nashville. It was a wonderful time to be together. We also were able to be with my children and celebrate Christmas. They all came to our house in Olive Branch. It was a night of eating and gift giving. It's always fun to be with family.

Also, over the holidays, Madolyn and I celebrated our third anniversary. We spent a week in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. We saw some shows and did some hiking and just had a wonderful time celebrating our three years of marriage.

January 7: Three weeks after my knee



Dale Babinsky

replacement surgery, Madolyn and I were able to attend worship for the first time in person at Germantown church. My recovery is going well and we hope to be out visiting with the churches next Sunday. We enjoyed seeing lots of old friends. They were all glad to see us and how far I had come in my recovery. Dave Phillips announced that he and Sundar Maddala were leaving Tuesday of that week to go to India to teach a class for preachers. They were visiting Sundar's hometown in India. Sundar's father had worked in India for many years and established 28 congregations. They were going to teach and encourage the leaders and members of those congregations. We are praying for their success and safe travels.

January 14: Madolyn and I visited with the Friendship church of Christ in Olive Branch, Mississippi. Kevin Jourdan is the bi-vocational minister there. He works as a teaching nurse for one of the medical facilities in Southaven and



Natalie and Kevin Jourdan

preaches for the church. He has preached for them for over four years.

The church has two elders and around 120 in attendance. They are involved in the John 3:16 and Philippians 3:13 ministries. Philippians 3:13 provides housing for men transitioning back into the community after drug rehabilitation. We enjoyed seeing some old friends and visiting the congregation.

Kevin presented a lesson on "The Covenant Maker" based on Genesis 12 & 15. It's the story about Abram and God's promise to him and how God fulfilled His promise. He talked about the faith of Abram, that made God make him righteous in God's sight. It was a good lesson.

January 28: Madolyn and I visited with the West Sandidge Road church of Christ in Olive Branch, Mississippi. Jackie Rogers Jr. is the minister there.



Anne and Jackie Rogers Jr.

He has served there for 21 years. He is a graduate of MSOP. They have no elders and about 90 in attendance. We received a warm welcome and really enjoyed visiting with the brethren there.

Bro. Rogers taught the Bible Class. They were in Philippians 3:1-3 "Pressing On." He talked about how the true believer is to rejoice in the Lord, and heed what is written in the Word of God. In the worship, he preached "There Will Be Joy After This" based on Luke 4:16-21. Jesus introduces His ministry to His hometown in Nazareth. Isaiah said His mission was to preach the gospel to the poor, proclaim release to the captives, give sight to the blind, and set free those who are downtrodden. It was a very powerful lesson. We enjoyed our visit.

Update on the CSC @ MDCC: In November, Madolyn had her Annual Lasagna Dinner to raise money to support an orphan boy in Haiti sponsored by the Christian Relief Fund. It's always a lot of work, but Madolyn enjoys this special event. It's a wonderful outreach to the faculty and community. This year

she served 100+ plates over two Wednesdays.

We continue



Jason, Becky, Anna and Madolyn

to have good attendance at our Wednesday Night Bible Study. Each week we have around 34 students to come and study the Bible with us. These students are interested in learning about God's Word. None of the students are members of the Lord's church. We have centered on "Great Bible Truths." We open each study by asking them "What is the Gospel?" and "How do you respond to it?" They are learning a lot. Our last study for the semester was November 29.

On November 14, Madolyn had her first study with the girls from the softball team. Seven girls attended and had a great time of study and fellowship. These girls love Ms. Madolyn. Before they left for the Christmas holidays, they brought Madolyn a gift of appreciation for her willingness to lead them in



Girls bible study

a Bible Study. Some of the girls will not be back for the spring semester, we will miss them.

We were away visiting family in Nashville during the Thanksgiving break. On Monday, November 27, the men's and women's basketball teams at MDCC played the NEMCC teams. The Booneville church of Christ has a CSC for the Community College there. The church hosted and fed our ball teams from MDCC. The coaches and teams were grateful for the love and care the CSC showed them. We plan to return the favor when the NEMCC teams come to Moorhead in February.

The spring semester began on January 8th. We had our first Wednesday night study on January 10th. Since Eddie was recovering from knee surgery, we had lined up a local guest speaker. It turned out that the men's basketball team had a game that night, so we had only one girl to come, and Madolyn taught her about prayer. We are thankful for that one student that showed an interest in studying God's Word. One person can be the spark that lights a fire that changes the world. The next week was the snow and sleet storm, so no classes at MDCC. The third week we had five girls come, so again Madolyn taught the class on another aspect of prayer. It's been a slow start, but we plan to keep reaching out and pray that God will help our numbers increase. Thank you for your prayers for our ministry. **MM**

Preacher Deaths 2023

Each Year Hugh Fulford lists those preachers, and other great servants of the Lord, who left us this past year. Here is his list, in memory of their service. -dd

Bill Flatt (also professor and former Dean of Harding Graduate School of Religion in Memphis)

Nick Boone (never a preacher *per se*, well-known song leader, social worker (child care), brother of Pat Boone)

Robert Taylor (longtime personal friend)

Hoyt Kirk (also longtime basketball coach (*and other sports*); *Athletics Director at Freed-Hardeman University*)

Keith Ellis

Gynnath Ford

Gerald Miles

Walter Buchanan (personal friend)

David Pharr (fellow student at Freed-Hardeman, personal friend for over sixty years)

Bill Sherrill

E. C. Meadows

Rick Whittle (knew him when he was a teenager in Mobile, AL)

Charles Clark

Bruce Ligon

John T. Willis (also longtime Bible professor at Lipscomb and Abilene Christian universities)

Dorris V. Rader

F. T. Patton (also missionary)

Ron Brewer (not a preacher *per se*, but highly respected Bible teacher)

Howard Norton (former missionary to Brazil; Bible professor at Oklahoma Christian and Harding universities; former editor of the *Christian Chronicle*)

David Lemmons

David Malone

Landon Saunders (fellow student at Freed-Hardeman)

Terry Broome

Jerry Cantrell

James Draper

Kelby Smith

On a personal note, I was blessed not to have lost any family members during the past year, but some old and/or special friends passed away. Among these were Charles Carlan, an early boyhood friend and schoolmate in DeFuniak Springs, FL (his mother was my sixth grade teacher); Jerry Smelser, a fellow student at Freed-Hardeman who rose to a high position with NASA in Huntsville, AL; Maxine Weaver, my longtime personal secretary at the Skillman church in Dallas, and a wonderful friend for her remaining years; Grady Powell, a member of the LaGuardo Church of Christ in Wilson County, TN; and Barry Oliver, a deacon and song leader at the Philippi church in Trousdale County, TN, where I am privileged to preach one Sunday each month. **MM**

As the late great Gospel preacher, John Banister, often said at funerals, "We are going down the valley one by one."

Hugh Fulford
January 9, 2024

In Memory Of

Mary Warren (1923-2023)

We received word of the death of a long-time supporter of the *Messenger*, Mrs. Mary Warren, of Memphis, Tennessee. Mary was blessed to see her 100th birthday, which was celebrated by many friends, family, and church loved ones. She was a long-time member of the Park Avenue Church of Christ in Memphis. She passed away this past December 28, 2023.

Her friend, Larry Pennington, informed us that Mary was "one of your biggest boosters. Mary is the reason I know about the *Magnolia Messenger*, and her support showed up in many ways. Before she passed away at 100, I had sent her a copy of a letter she had sent to MM in 2014, bragging on MM. She also sent you a letter—I can't remember the date—talking about herself, her husband, Roy Warren, and his role in Lads to Leaders. You published the letter, much to her surprise. She was proud."

Our sympathy to her family in deep appreciation of her support of this publication. -dd

Marjorie Irene Ferguson

Marjorie Irene Ferguson, 82, of Kosciusko, Mississippi, passed away Tuesday, January 2, at her residence. Marjorie was the wife of Les Ferguson, Sr. and was a great partner in his work for the Lord.

Marjorie was born September 13, 1941, in Baltimore, Maryland, to Vernon and Mary Stonesifer. She grew up as a little sister fiercely protected by two older brothers. Following her high school graduation, she went on a blind date with a soldier, who turned out to be the love of her life. Together, they raised two sons and two daughters. Their son,



Les Ferguson, Jr., is the minister of the church in Oxford, Mississippi.

Mrs. Ferguson was an administrative assistant at Magnolia Bible College and a long-time member of the South Huntington Street Church of Christ.

Marjorie was very involved in the activities of the church, especially planning, cooking, and serving meals. She was a true Proverbs 31 woman.

Memorials may be made to South Huntington Street Church of Christ, Mexico Missions, or Magnolia Bible Institute.

Kelby Smith

Kelby Smith, age 83, passed away Wednesday, December 27, 2023, at Saint Francis Hospital, Tulsa, OK. He was born January 29, 1940, in Fulton, MS, to Julian and Clytee Smith. He suffered with Parkinsons for over 20 years.

He received degrees from Itawamba Junior College in Fulton, Harding University in Searcy, and Harding Graduate School of Religion in Memphis.

Kelby served as minister in Dewitt, AR; Shiloh Church of Christ, Florence; Florence Blvd. Church of Christ (24 years); North Jackson Church of Christ, Jackson, TN; & Associate Minister at Jackson Heights, Florence.

He is survived by his wife of sixty years, Martha Smith. They were a great team, and he was grateful for her hard work that allowed them to stay so many years at five different congregations.

Together they conducted numerous workshops for Bible class teachers.

He is also survived by his two children: Doug Smith (Jodie) of Booneville, MS, and Kelly Parrott (David) of Broken Arrow, OK. He loved his grandchildren and great-grandchildren more than anything. He enjoyed attending various activities and sport events they were involved in. He was blessed with seven grandkids and four great-grandkids.

Kelby conducted gospel meetings in many states and hundreds responded to the Lord's invitation. He was well known for being bold but loving and a "book, chapter, and verse" preacher. It was not unusual for him to use 100 or more verses in each sermon. Over the course of his career there were 967 baptisms; 7,783 restorations.

He was kindhearted and compassionate to everyone and wanted everyone to go to Heaven. He built quality relationships and was a loyal friend. He was known for his genuine smile. His family will miss him dearly and will forever cherish the time they had with him. More than anything they will miss his love and thoughtful advice.

Carl E. Gaines

Brother Carl E. Gaines was born in Battle Creek, Tennessee, on September 18, 1936, to Fern Payne and Lawrence Rice. He was raised by his foster mother, Mrs. Laura Gaines. When he was a junior in high school, he obeyed the Gospel of Christ under the late Evangelist C.L. Caperton at East Third Street Church of Christ in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He preached his first sermon in 1953. He served four years in the United States Air Force(1956-1960).

He graduated from Howard High School in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in 1954. He went on to attend Southwestern Christian College (SWCC) in Terrell, Texas, and received an Associate of Arts degree (1956). He later received a Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona (1969). He then later received a Master of Social Work from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge,



Louisiana (1990). He received a recognition certificate from the Louisiana Geriatric Education Center in Gerontological Social Work (1991).

He preached the gospel for 70 plus years with many interesting and mind-boggling experiences. He served as president of the Southwestern Christian College National Alumni Association, Executive Director of the South Park Avenue Council while in Tucson, Arizona. He is responsible for the creation of the Gulf Coast Sing-a-rama, the Gulf Coast Lectureship, and the Louisiana State Youth Conference.

He served as minister of congregations in Crandall, Texas; St. Luke Church of Christ, Tyler, Texas; Muskogee, Oklahoma; Tucson, Arizona; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and Lake Charles, Louisiana. He spoke at several lectureships, including the Pan American Lectureship in Trinidad.

He was joined in compiling and co-editing Black Preachers of Today, Volume I, by his good friend and fellow laborer, Brother John C. Whitley. He has conducted gospel meetings and workshops in various cities and established congregations in Alabama and Louisiana. He preached on the radio each Sunday for many years.

In 1970, he became the minister of the Mill Street Church of Christ in Lake Charles, Louisiana, and he remained the minister until his retirement in 2013.

He leaves to cherish his memory: his beloved wife, Eva L. Gaines, his children, Beverly Gaines Cole (TX), Deborah Gaines (TX), Karla Gaines (TX), and David (Joyce) Gaines (TX), and eleven grandchildren. He also leaves a host of nieces, nephews, great and great-great grandchildren, and a host of other loving relatives and friends. **MM**

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The Place of Preaching in Worship

by Dennis Doughty, editor

What role does the preacher's sermon on Sunday play in our worship? Is it worship itself, or an appendix to our worship? Let us back up a little and think about this question.

Men and women are won to the Lord by one thing and one thing only, The Gospel message. Paul explained, "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved." How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed: How will they

believe in Him whom they have not heard: and how will they hear without a preacher" (Romans 10:13-14)? God reaches men (the lost) with the message (the Gospel), through men (preachers).

God put the saving message of His Son in the hands of men whom He called to preach. Without the proclamation of the Word, there is no Salvation. God's ingenious plan to spread the Gospel was preaching, For God was "well pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21).

Preachers have a big responsibility. From Moses, "I will send you to Pharaoh" (Exodus 3:10); to Jeremiah, "for His word was in my heart as a burning fire" (Jer. 20:9); to Peter, with the eleven on Pentecost who "raised his voice and declared to them" (Acts 2:14); to Paul, "I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the Gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:16). God has always reached the masses by the men He sent to deliver His message. This remains true to this day.

It was by the preaching of the Word that men were saved, and churches established around the world. Such as was in Jerusalem,



Dennis Doughty

"Many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of men came to be about five thousand" (Acts 4:4), as in Thessalonica, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ. And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas along with a large number of the God-fearing Greeks" (Acts 17:4); and in Corinth, as "many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized" (Acts 18:8).

When these churches met every first day of the week to partake of the Lord's Supper, they also were taught more of the word of God. As in Troas when, after they broke the bread of the Lord's Supper, Paul then spoke to them late into the night (Acts 20:7). To make sure the teachings of Jesus was shared in the congregations, the apostles gave the Holy Spirit's gift of teaching (prophesy) to men in each of the churches (1 Corinthians 12:7-8). So, from the beginning of church assemblies, the teaching/preaching of God's word was incorporated into the worship by the will of God. The early church was taught to sing in their assemblies, "speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" (Ephesians 5:19). The early songbook of the church was the book of Psalms, therefore "teaching and admonishing" each other by "singing" the inspired scriptures. Many of the songs we sing today incorporate scripture.

Paul gave Timothy a charge to "Preach the Word" (2 Timothy 4:2). Titus was instructed to "speak the things fitting for sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). It is clear that preaching is an important part of our worship. We worship and praise God by the teachings of His word, "Let my lips utter praise, for You teach me Your statutes. Let my tongue sing of Your word, for all Your commandments are righteousness" (Psalm 119:171-172). **MM**

In each issue this year we want to highlight one of our great schools of Preaching:



Director Brian Kenyon and his wife at F-HU lectureship

The Florida School of Preaching is in Lakeland Florida at the

South Florist Ave. Church of Christ.

Director: Brian R. Kenion

Office Manager: Kathy Sweeney

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Staff are full-time preachers in the area who share in the teaching.

Current Enrollment: Six full-time, Ten part-time

Total Number of Graduates: 224



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John Allen 662-473-8702

Jim Peters 662-675-8623

WEST MILTON CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Contact Roger Bell 850-232-8220,

Ken McCall 850-748-7103

THE CHRISTOPHER CHURCH OF CHRIST

Is seeking a minister for a congregation of about 33 members, located in southern Illinois. Salary is \$36,000 per year.

Please send resume, to jurbanmail@gmail.com or call George Marshall at (618) 218-1401.

INDIANOLA CHURCH OF CHRIST

We are searching for a new full-time minister. We have office space in the building and a 3-bedroom 2-bath house within city limits.

**IndianolaMScoC@gmail.com
662-887-4025 - church building
662-207-9843 - Jason Zuehlke**

DEFUNIAK SPRINGS COLLEGE AVE.

CHURCH OF CHRIST is looking for a replacement in the pulpit.

Contact: Mack Moore 850-892-5376 or email

NETTLETON CHURCH OF CHRIST

Looking for a man sound in faith and a strong community worker. 3-bedroom 2-bath house is provided in town. Salary to be discussed.

**Contact: minettletonpreacher2020@gmail.com
Billy Pender: (662) 401-8028**

BURNSVILLE, MISSISSIPPI

We are looking for a preacher. We are a small church, around 40 in attendance

Contact Gary Orick, 662-660-6333.

THE CLARKE COUNTY CHURCH OF CHRIST

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

THE EUPORA CHURCH OF CHRIST

Eupora, MS, is looking for a full-time preacher. We have approximately 42-51 that attend. We have a preacher's home.

huntp@yahoo.com or text/call Paul Hunt 662-634-1651. However, I do prefer text messages.

MERIDIAN CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Meridian church of Christ, located in Meridian, MS, is in search of a full-time minister.

E-mail Andy Duncan (Elder), hadunca62@gmail.com Tom Fair(Elder),htfair1@gmail.com

ROCKY CREEK CHURCH OF CHRIST

Youth Minister Search. Contact: Rocky Creek Church of Christ in George County.

Stan James Email: Stanjames4him@gmail.com

HIGHWAY 15 CHURCH OF CHRIST

in Pontotoc, MS, is seeking qualified candidates for a full-time pulpit minister. The congregation presently has about 50 members with two elders and four deacons.

**Please send resumes to: John Hay
jhay0831@gmail.com (901-786-4187).**

THE FARMERVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST

is searching for a full-time Gospel minister. The compensation package includes a 4-bedroom/2-bath, unfurnished home if desired.

**Chris at: fvcfc@outlook.com • (fvcfc.org)
Farmerville Church of Christ, 306 East Franklin Street, Farmerville, Louisiana 71241**

MANKATO CHURCH OF CHRIST

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

Mankato Church of Christ

<mankatochurchofchrist@gmail.com>

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS CHURCH OF CHRIST

We are looking for a full-time minister for our church here in Pigeon Forge, TN.

**Great Smoky Mountains Church of Christ
3078 Veterans Boulevard Pigeon Forge, TN 37863**

THE CORNERSTONE CHURCH OF CHRIST

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

ACADIANA CHURCH OF CHRIST

Looking for a part-time preacher in Lafayette, LA. We are a congregation of around 50 members. If you are interested contact us at office@acadiana.church.

Roger G McCafferty Email: grmccaf@cox.net

ANTOICH CHURCH OF CHRIST

Looking for a full-time minister for about 70-80 members. We have 2 Elders and are located in north Alabama. We also have a 4-bedroom house to be used.

**Contact- Charles Hutchens @ 256-458-2032
email: khutchens54@gmail.com**

MEIGG STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST,

a congregation of approximately 50 active members and located in Corinth, Ms, is seeking a full-time minister to fill the position of current minister. Interested individuals are requested to submit resume and a video/audio of a sermon to **Meigg Street Church of Christ; P.O. Box 47, Corinth, MS 38834 by December 28, 2023.**

Paul Waddle: (662) 523-5708

KINDER CHURCH OF CHRIST

We are looking for a sound, full-time preacher, married, energetic, willing to work with children of all ages, and be active in the community.

Preaching school or college grad is a plus. We are northeast of Lake Charles, about 50 miles from the Texas border. We are a congregation of just under 40 members. We have 2 Elders and 2 Deacons. Kinder, Louisiana, 413 2 second Street. Please email resume and references to **Sbm eaves@yahoo.com or call Seth Eaves 337-302-4070** to discuss salary and preacher and congregational expectations.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

New Jersey is actively seeking a full-time minister. We are a mission-focused, youth-minded, close-knit, loving, active congregation. The church has approximately 125 diverse members led by Elders and Deacons. The primary responsibilities include preaching, teaching class, evangelizing in the community, and ministering to the family. A Bible degree with preaching experience is preferred but not required. The Compensation includes housing and a salary based on experience and qualifications.

tcocpreachersearch@gmail.com.

RUSTON CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Ruston Church of Christ in Ruston, LA, is looking for an enthusiastic disciple maker that has a passion for teaching and evangelism. We have 140 members and 5 elders.

Contact: George Johnson (318)-255-0417

OXON HILL CHURCH OF CHRIST

is searching for a full-time minister. We have 50+ members. The position requires someone who is sound in Biblical knowledge and has excellent communication and writing skills.

Contact: 1oxonhillcoc@gmail.com, or mail to Oxon Hill Church of Christ at 4201 Brinkley Road, Temple Hills, MD 20748. Apply by April 30, 2024.

CHURCH OF CHRIST IN SAYRE

On the border of New York and Pennsylvania, the Church of Christ in Sayre, PA, is entering its tenth year. God has blessed us with a lovely building in a great neighborhood. We are looking for a sound, loving minister of the Gospel to take this church into the next phase of growth.

**Contact Arthur Barry - arbry21@gmail.com
Evangelist at Valley Cities church of Christ Sayre, PA 607 280 1732**

IUKA CHURCH OF CHRIST

We are looking for a full-time minister for about 90-100 members. We have 3 Elders and are located in northeast MS close to Pick Wick Lake. We have recently become involved in the House to House evangelism program and are looking for a preacher that is interested in local evangelism.

Contact-Dwight Pharr (662) 427-0076

Precious Memories

IN MEMORY OF

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Clarissa Watson
(Byram, MS)

DON & KAY ADAMS
Carolyn Stanford
(Byhalia, MS)

HAROLD PETTY
Elaine Ely
(Johnson City, TN)

BILLY SMITH
Lou Smith
(Arlington, TN)

IDE & MARY GLENN
RUTHERFORD
Shirley Spain
(Jasper, AL)

FRANK SMITH
Rita Smith
(Utica, MS)

IE LOVE
BILLY & PAUL LOVE
Mr. & Mrs.
Dale Pearson
(Winona, MS)

GARNETT HARRIS
Betty Harris
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MARK BISHOP
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EUNICE MABRY
Marcine Taylor
(Como, MS)

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Rita Vick
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JANICE GUIN
Robert & Elaine Evans
(Steens, MS)

DOROTHY WALTON
John Walton
(Madison, AL)

KENNY COLEMAN
Mary Coleman
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(Senatobia)

CAROLE MILNER
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(Morton, MS)

IN HONOR OF

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HAMMACK
DOT GRIFFIN
Rita Smith
(Utica, MS)

CECIL MAY
Tommy & Ellen
Williams
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GAIL WALDROP
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(Memphis, TN)

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COLEMAN & FAMILY
KENNY COLEMAN'S
FAMILY

Mary Coleman
Freeman
(Senatobia, MS)

MARK SIMONS
Eileen Pritchard
(Lexington, TN)

LEE ACRES CHURCH
OF CHRIST ELDERS

Jan Botts
(Tupelo, MS)

IN MEMORY & HONOR
OF ALL THOSE WHO
CONTRIBUTE & MAKE
THE MM POSSIBLE

Carolyn Williams
(Jacksonville, FL)

by Dennis Doughty

"INSCRIPTIONS"

An Open Door

What doors will open for you in 2024? A new job opportunity perhaps? Or maybe the door will open to make that long awaited trip. Perhaps the unexpected chance to scratch off another item on your bucket list. We all have improbable opportunities present themselves in life. Some of these open doors can change our lives, and even serve God.

When Paul was in Troas, he was preparing to go into Asia, but in a vision, he saw a man in Macedonia saying, "Come over and help us." So Paul traveled to Macedonia and came to Philippi. Paul later told the Corinthians that in Phillipi, "a door was opened for me in the Lord" (2 Cor. 2:12). What door? First, he met Lydia during a prayer meeting down by the river and baptized her and all her household. Next, doors were really opened in the prison, that led to the conversion of the roman jailer and his household (Acts 16).

God accomplishes His will by opening the doors of opportunity for us to walk through. We might call it providence, happenstance, or just dumb luck. In truth, it is God working in our lives, directing us through the opportunities He presents to us. "Chance," Anatole France said, "is the pseudonym of God when He did not want to sign." How will God direct your life this year? What doors will He open to for you? Are you ready to walk through those doors?

Willie's Wisdom?

The clear voiced country singer, Willie Nelson, was recently honored by his peers on his ninetieth birthday. Now I would not hold Willie up as a role model for anyone, but I will confess to liking many of his songs. In a recent interview this Nashville rebel said, "Live everyday like it is your last, and some day you will be right."

While I may like his voice and enjoy his songs, when the last day comes for the guitar strumming Texan, I would not want to be in his shoes. I know what Willie means in this statement, but it is not the right approach to life. It is as Isaiah said of Israel's lifestyle, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we may die" (Isa. 22:13). Both statements reflect the idea of enjoying the pleasures of the world to the max before you die, with no regard to what awaits you at death.

As Christians we say, "For to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phi. 1:21). We live our life "in the world, but not of the world." Our lifestyle is not to seek the pleasures of the world but to "seek first the Kingdom of God (Mt. 6:33). We do not follow the fatalistic view of Job that "Man, who is born of woman, is short-lived and full of turmoil (Job 14:1), but that "This is the day which the Lord has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Psm. 118:24). We live everyday ready, if it is our last, to go home to be with the Lord, "which is far better."

"If you would like to receive Dennis' weekly "Inscriptions;" column drop him a note at dennis1848@bellsouth.net.

These Sent In Answers to QB, Last Issue

1. Deborah Brannon
2. Edgar & Barbara Beard
3. Joan McBryar
4. Lizzie Gibbons
5. Jessie Allen
6. Clara Allen
7. Millie Goode
8. Don McAlpin
9. Ken Harris
10. Mary Jacobs
11. Daisy Rankin
12. Rosie Mae Felton
13. Kathi Easley
14. Anita Price
15. Jesse Brent
16. Betty Blair
17. Grace Childers
18. Jeanette Williamson
19. Steve Moore
20. Donna Gulley
21. Sarah Hill
22. Ken Harris
23. Charlotte Ritter
24. Veartis Reed
25. Glenda Jefcoat
26. Charlotte Vandiver
27. Sarah Dantzler
28. Tishia Williams
29. Linda Keirn
30. Billy Willingham
31. Julius Lee Wales
32. Elizabeth Todd
33. Carolyn Spears
34. Cheri Moore
35. Evelyn Winstead
36. Linda Cook
37. Amy Hutson
38. Pattiella Maddox
39. Joyce Talbert
40. Ed Yancey
41. Martha Freeman
42. Gloria Wilborn
43. Sherian Martin
44. Ray Parham
45. Nell Millsaps
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47. Trina Maddox
48. Wilda Pounds
49. Scotty Balentine
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51. Bonnie Howell
52. Alice Humphries
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54. Danny & Glenda Wooldridge
55. Lillie Williams
56. Sharon Dantzler
57. Sue Fisher
58. Heather Freeman
59. Lanell Kipatrick
60. Ann Cockroft
61. Joyce King
62. Teresa Gordon
63. Bonnie Skates
64. Nancy Floyd
65. Vera Spencer
66. William Pyron
67. Laura Brannon
68. Paul & Elsie Bryson
69. Ann Kimble
70. Wm. & Atlean Snow
71. Shelvie McGuire
72. Becky Holley
73. Rick Bishop
74. Delaine Harris
75. Dorothy Brunson
76. Shelia Hall
77. Lisa McIntyre
78. Mary Adams
79. Hilda Laster
80. Paul Rogers
81. Roy Gambrell
82. Mary Whitehead
83. James Burden
84. Katisha Colvin
85. Jane Kuykendall
86. Ann Hulsey
87. Betty Bryant
88. Liz Hill
89. Carleen Hyatt
90. Linda Miller
91. Sharon Huckaba
92. Maxine Beckley
93. Dee Kepler
94. Mary Lois Moore
95. Peggy Wrotten
96. Kimberly Easterling
97. Evelyn Netterville
98. Carrie McGrone
99. Stacey Mac Hawkins
100. Melinda Ann Hawkins
101. Gregory Mac Hawkins
102. Marie Lively
103. Brenda Deaton
104. Barbara Baker
105. Kathy Perry
106. Carolyn Perry
107. Garry Gooch
108. Paul & Darlene McElroy
109. Jerry Fleming
110. Lola Tittle
112. Sidney & Jean Clemmer
113. Brenda Green
114. Dille Horton
115. Bernice Jacobs
116. Robert & Vivian Reed
117. Yogie & Betty Spears
118. Frederick Jones
119. Trudy Sampson
120. Kathey James
121. Ray Brown
122. Peggy Jackson
123. Mark Chatterton
124. Sarah Smith
125. Carla McKinney
126. Janice Griffin
127. Florine Riley
128. Joyce Hildenbrandt
129. Carolyn Harvill
130. Carolyn Garrett
131. Rachel Pruitt
132. Carolyn Ware
133. JC Brown
134. Christopher Davis
135. Jimmie Brown
136. Peggy Engel
137. Josephine Edwards
138. Ruby Nell Parham
139. Greg Ward
140. Jean Lewis
141. Billye Wiyugul
142. Michelle Simpson
143. Wanda Cochran
144. Perkins Cochran
145. Charles Rutherford
146. Paul Pounds
147. Faye Stamps
148. Maggie Edmonds
149. Admiral & Ruth Tidwell
150. Mary Turner
151. Imogene Grayson
152. Maggie Terry
153. Tommy Simpson
154. Connie Vaughan
155. Stan Neuenschwander
156. Sylvester & Linda Burton
157. Claranett Hathorn
158. Sherry Jordan
159. Joanne Trotter
160. Bobbie Clayborn
161. Bobbie Loggins
162. Cameron McCarver
163. Camille McCarver
164. Don Lee
165. Velva Dykes
166. Rodney & Grana Williams
167. Connie Talley
168. Brenda Redd
169. Patsy Moore
170. Joyce Morgan
171. Judy Carol Willis
172. Judith Franks
173. Patricia Glover
174. Faye Stanford
175. Wanda Orman
176. Dan Daniels
177. Bet Tucker
178. Nellie Lester
179. Madonna Cook
180. Carolyn Miuer
181. Danny Stacks
182. Barbara Loden
183. James Nunnally
184. Ella McElroy
185. Eugene Brooks
186. Ora Gladney
187. Caroly Jackson
188. Everlean Myles
189. Ruth Whitlock
190. Dorothy Banks
191. Betty Skinner
192. Evelyn McArthur
193. Rhenda Miltner
194. Terry Miltner
195. Bertha King
196. Billy Alford
197. Mary Carr
198. Mable Hodges
199. Pat Shadie
200. Nadine Patton
201. Doyle Britt
202. Michael Hughes
203. Vickie Comer
204. Geraldine Wilbanks
205. Sawyer Mann
206. Mary Mann
207. Barbara Skrobak
208. Charlotte Langley
209. Barbara Cavalier
210. Doris Darnell
211. Gail Saxon
212. Gayla Lang
213. Clara Allen
214. Jessie Allen
215. Christene Holliday
216. Alberta Fuller
217. Claudia Pullman
218. George Lowrey
219. Velma Isom
220. Kelly Key
221. Betty & Lyman York
222. Diane Dunaway
223. Beverly Miles
224. Peggy Crouch
225. Darryl Sterling
226. Blaise Fernandez
227. Carolyn Oglesby
228. Damien Cochran
229. Essie Stallworth
230. Natelle Waugh
231. Ann Cumberland
232. Brenda Collums
233. Charlene Jent
234. Bonnie Dixon
235. James Bricker
236. Wilma Lakey
237. Betty VanBuren
238. Bethany Stephens
239. Scott Floyd
240. Steven Tutor
241. Kristy Pipes
242. Ronald Wilson
243. Ruby Cameron
244. Jerry Neighbors
245. Doris Fletcher
246. Peggy Hartman
247. Thelma Tucker
248. Dr. Rhea Forum
249. Ruby King
250. Fran Williford
251. Jennifer Seal
252. Ambrose Young
253. Evelyn Young
254. Marvis Lee
255. Annie Mae Pipkins
256. Robert & Barbara Burton
257. Ann Parkhurst
258. Karen Williams
259. Roxann Stewart
260. Dax Hyatt
261. Ima Jean Fogus
262. Emile & Peggy Rollins
263. Fannie & Douglas Johnson
264. Linda McKinney
265. Laura Nanney
266. Lynn Grisham
267. Sandra Grisham
268. Reagan Hall
269. Bernita Booker
270. Glenda Kees
271. Phyllis Spiers
272. Averi McKinney
273. Ainsley McKinney
274. Jon McKinney
275. Brandi McKinney
276. Carson Chandler
277. Gabe Prater
278. Sherry Townsend
279. Betty Standford
280. Jerry Redd
281. Scott McKinney
282. Bill Moore
283. Priscilla Wolfe
284. Rosie Lee Odoms
285. Jane Barnett
286. Barbara White
287. Shirley Grayson
288. Georgia Taylor
289. Dorothy Booker
290. Christopher Carroll
291. Jim Vermillion
292. Eddie Vermillion
293. Shirley McCollum
294. Mary Prosser
295. Janie Green
296. Claude Williams
297. Wanda Yancey
298. James Thornton
299. Cheri Grissom
300. Gayle Carlock
301. Suzette Endris
302. Charlane Stanfield
303. Catherine Weidner
304. Marvin Gentry
305. Mack Moore
306. Anita Butler
307. Gertha Small
308. Glenda Blair
309. Lee Ehret
310. Artis Hinton
311. Barbara Perry
312. Barbara Rushing
313. Jason, Maverick & Shane French
314. Deborah Brannon
315. Mattie Owens
316. Channing Ashbaugh
317. Mandy Clark
318. Carol Pipes
319. Belinda Escoubas
320. Lanona Mosley
321. Gary & Judy Wolfe
322. Lee Wolfe
323. Mary Jacobs
324. Vickie Hunter
325. Natalie Stewart
326. M/M Arthur Burnett
327. Barry Cole
328. Silas Nygard
329. Brooke Murphy
330. Braden Daniel Cole
331. Kaiden Hollingshed
332. Dasia Myles
333. Millie Moseley
334. Blake Jones
335. Rashan Jones
336. Shelia Williams
337. Laura Brannon
338. Francie Jones

BIBLE WINNER

Eva Almon
Madison, Ms



Question Box - March 2024

Our Worship

- 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, Giving is to take place the first day of _____ week. **compare NASB, NKJV, ESV**
- Ephesians 5:19, Our singing is to consist of _____,
- Ephesians 5:19, _____, and
- Ephesians 5:19, _____.
- John 4:24, Followers of God should _____ Him in spirit and in truth.
- Colossians 3:16, Christians use psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs for _____

Read the scriptures, find the missing word, then find that word in the puzzle below, along with other words from related scriptures

and admonishing one another.

- Colossians 3:17, Christians are to give thanks to God in the _____ of the Lord Jesus.
- Revelation 22:18-19, In worship and work for God, we should not _____ nor take away from God's Word.
- Revelation 1, verse 3, The person who communicates the Word to the congregation is blessed as he _____, as the people who hear are also blessed.
- 2 Corinthians 8:5, They (Christians in Corinth) first gave _____ to the Lord.

FIND THE WORDS

ADD	SING(2)
GIVE	TRUTH
PSALMS	COMMUNION
THANKS	PRAY
ADMONISHING	WORD(2)
HYMNS	EVERY
READS	PREACH
THEMSELVES	TEACHING
BLESSED	WORSHIP
NAME	
SPIRITUAL SONGS	

S	P	I	R	I	T	U	A	L	S	O	N	G	S
I	I	R	A	B	H	C	D	R	O	W	O	N	M
N	H	T	A	G	E	I	M	E	E	D	I	I	L
G	S	I	S	Y	M	J	O	A	H	K	N	H	A
N	R	H	K	L	S	M	N	D	C	N	U	C	S
I	O	Y	N	P	E	Q	I	S	A	K	M	A	P
H	W	M	A	B	L	E	S	S	E	D	M	E	E
C	O	N	H	S	V	T	H	U	R	V	O	T	M
A	R	S	T	E	E	V	I	G	P	W	C	O	A
E	D	Z	R	B	S	I	N	G	Y	C	A	X	N
T	Z	Y	Y	A	D	D	G	X	H	T	U	R	T

Answers to QB MM

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NEVER SATISFIED:	3. Hateful, married
1. Grave	4. Maidservant, mistress
2. Barren	5. Earth, water
3. Fire	6. Ants, food
NOT UNDERSTAND:	7. Rock badgers
1. Eagle, air	8. Locusts
2. Serpent, rock	9. Spider, hands
3. Ship	10. Man, virgin
4. Lion	11. Greyhound
STATELY IN WALK:	12. Male goat
1. Servant	13. King
2. Fool, food	

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

Please Send Your Answers To Us

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____

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

"The Question Box"
P. O. Box 1578 • Kosciusko, MS 39090

