

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



THE MAGNOLIA

Messenger

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Spiritual GROWTH

*"But also for this very reason,
giving all diligence, add to your
faith virtue, to virtue
knowledge..."*

2 Peter 1:5

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

I always think that every issue of *The Magnolia Messenger* is a great issue. That said, there are some issues I feel are just a little bit better than others. This is one of those issues. Turn its pages, read the words of some of the best writers in our fellowship, grow spiritually from the knowledge you find, and learn of some of the great things going on in our brotherhood. This is an outstanding issue.

It is the product of a lot of hard work by our staff. It is blessed by faithful brethren who send us articles and news, without which we would have nothing to share. But the main people who make it all possible are the individuals and churches who support us financially.

I have come to believe that there is a special bond between this publication and its readers. It is a bond that was formed during the many years Al and June Franks traveled throughout Mississippi promoting "love and good works" among the brethren. Much of the support we receive each month comes from the brethren who have a love of *The Messenger* and have been getting it for decades.

In recent years we have seen this magazine grow beyond the state line of Mississippi. There are several reasons for it. The



appearance changed dramatically with an upgrade of paper and graphic layout. The new look attracted new readers. A rise in paper and postage costs was too much for some publications to endure. This created a vacuum for

writers, who have turned to *The Messenger* to share their thoughts and knowledge. The desire for good Christian literature, and for knowledge of brotherhood events, saw *The Messenger* grow in popularity across our nation, "From sea to shining sea."

Through your support, God has continued to bless this work.

Special "World Missions" issue. *In our Fall issue we want to highlight the great mission work being done around the world. Whatever foreign missions you, or your congregation, are involved with, send us a report (Please keep it under 700 words and two photos. Email it to us before July 22nd). Help us share and rejoice in our effort to keep Christ's great commission. -dd*



Church of Christ - Kosciusko, MS

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Supported By Contributions

Dennis Doughty, Editor
dennis1848@bellsouth.net

Dan Winkler,
Bible Questions Answered

Glenda Franks, Special Assistant
glendafranks@yahoo.com

Beth Beall, Copy Editor
Glenn Beall, Question Box Editor
Greg Ledbetter, Youth Page Editor
Eddie Lewis, North MS, Editor
Mark Bridges, Layout, Production
and Website mabridges1757@gmail.com

Share the Website: www.magnoliamessengermag.com

Magnolia Messenger • P. O. Box 1578 • Kosciusko, MS 39090

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(Dennis Doughty, Editor)

MESSANGER Addresses: Changes and / or Additions:
glendafranks@yahoo.com

P. O. Box 1578 • Kosciusko, Mississippi 39090

Great Topic for the Fall Issue

He said to them,
"Go into all the world
and preach the gospel to all creation.
Whoever believes and is baptized will be
saved, but whoever does not believe
will be condemned.

Mark 16: 15,16

WORLD MISSIONS

**Send us reports of mission work
your church supports!**

Limit to 700 words and two photos

dennis1848@bellsouth.net

Letting God Speak to Me

by Gary C. Hampton

The Bible gives a glimpse of God's mind and heart. Paul told the church of God at Corinth, "But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10-11). It has "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). Wise men will listen to what the Almighty says and grow wiser (Proverbs 1:5; 9:9).



Gary C. Hampton

We learn the importance of knowing and obeying God's will from Abraham. The rich man in Jesus' story asked that Lazarus be sent back to earth to warn his five brothers lest they join him in torment. Abraham told him, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them". The rich man evidently did not think they would pay attention to the written word but did think they would heed the words of one returned from the dead. Abraham said, "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead" (Luke 16:19-31, esp. 27-31). Clearly, the word of God is vital to those who would live in Heaven!

The Bible can teach me to fear God. Moses reported, "the LORD said to me, 'Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children'" (Deuteronomy 4:10). God instructed future kings of Israel to make a copy of the law, read it and learn to fear (Deuteronomy 17:18-20). The people were, likewise, to participate in a reading of the law every 7 years so they and their children could learn to fear the LORD and keep His commandments (14:22-23; 17:14-20; 31:9-13).

The word of God contains counsel that will stand forever (Psalm 33:11-12). "Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed; Let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause. Show me Your ways, O LORD; Teach me Your path" (Psalm 25:3-4). David saw learning the Lord's will as being closely tied to protection from his enemies (27:11).

The longest psalm is dedicated to meditations on the excellencies of the word of God. Eight verses were written for each of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet! Repeatedly, Israel's

singer referred to his need and desire to learn the will of God (Psalm 119:7, 12, 26, 33, 64, 71, 108). The LORD commanded Moses to teach Israel "statutes and judgments, that you might observe them in the land which you cross over to possess" (Deuteronomy 4:14). When Israel returned from captivity, one of her most powerful leaders was Ezra. "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel" (Ezra 7:10).

Letting God speak to me through His word is essential for me to learn what is pleasing to Him. Paul's greatest desire for the Christians he taught was that they could grow in knowledge of the will of the Father (Colossians 1:9-11).

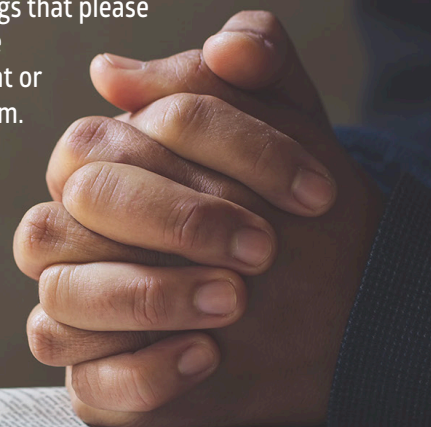
Knowing God's will is essential to those who would abide with Him eternally since, "those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:8). In his own ministry, Paul asked, "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still

pleased men, I would not be a servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10). To please God, I must have faith, which only comes through hearing the word of God and walking in His commandments (Hebrews 11:6; Romans 10:17; 1 Thessalonians 4:1).

Each child of God should make pleasing Him their primary purpose in life. We must focus on the will of God, not the world's distractions (2 Timothy 2:4). We should be like Jesus who always sought to please the Father. Our Lord said, "And He who

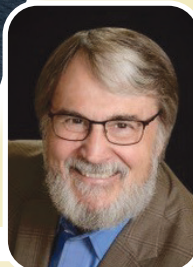
sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him" (John 8:29). "Therefore, we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:9). **MM**

**"Gather the people to Me,
and I will let them hear My words,
that they may learn
to fear Me all the days they live
on the earth, and that they
may teach their children"**
(Deuteronomy 4:10)



Q&A

HOLY BIBLE
*"What Does
 the Bible Say?"*



*Send your
 Questions*
 to Dan Winkler
 danddwinkler@gmail.com

Praying a Private Prayer in Public

YOUR WONDERFUL QUESTION:

There is a question I have had on my mind for some time about our public prayers in worship and those who are leading them. I have noticed that many who are leading public prayers use the first person as they begin their sentences ("I pray...I pray...I pray..."). It just seems to me that if one is leading a public prayer, he should use the phrase "we pray...we pray...we pray." Every time I hear someone leading a public prayer and they say "I pray... I pray..." it just seems to throw off my train of thought.

This is not a big deal for me, personally, and I would never even think of making any issue out of it as it is happening everywhere I have preached. Is it true that when one leads a public prayer and says "I pray...I pray..." that in essence he is praying a private prayer in public? I really want your input in this matter. From my observation this is a fairly new trend.

Thank you.

MY THOUGHTS:

Thank you for being so observant. I've noticed that same trend and, I have to admit, it's not what I experienced in my growing-up years nor what I've been used to as an adult. I guess you could say it hasn't been my tradition. Most of those public prayers have employed the more inclusive plural pronoun, "We." So, I'm grateful for your question and the study it fostered.

Let me start off by reminding us that the truth of scripture is that by which we live if we want to please God (2 Tim. 2:15, KJV). It is also the truth of scripture that governs our worship if we want to be "true worshipers" of

God (Jn. 4:23-24; cf. 17:17). The truth of scripture determines: (a) what we believe, (b) how we behave, and (c) what we are to be (2 Tim. 3:16-17). We don't follow the latest trends of today or the most cherished traditions of yesterday.

That said, as we take our question to the New Testament, we find Jesus praying a public prayer just before he raised Lazarus from the dead. According to John, Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me" (Jn. 11:41-42).

Let's break down that passage and see what we might find to help us.

- **FIRST**, Jesus said, "Father, I thank you" (emphasis mine). This was definitely a prayer. He "lifted up his eyes and said, 'Father,'" the same way he began that beautiful, public prayer with the apostles in an upper room (Jn. 17:1).
- **SECOND**, Jesus said, "Father, I thank you" (emphasis mine). "I thank you," translates a first-person singular verb. That means Jesus was expressing his personal feelings when He prayed this prayer to His heavenly Father.
- **THIRD**, Jesus said, "Father ... you have heard me. ... you always hear me" (emphasis mine). Did you see the singular pronoun, "me"? Jesus used it twice. That means Jesus was talking directly to God about Himself when He prayed this prayer.
- **FOURTH**, Jesus said, "Father ... you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around that they may believe that you sent me" (emphasis mine). Jesus specifically designed this prayer to be heard by others. It was a public prayer.

Now, let's put together the pieces of our study. Jesus prayed a prayer. He prayed a prayer that expressed His personal feelings. He prayed a prayer that included thoughts about Himself. And He prayed this prayer to engage the mind of other people. His prayer was a public prayer and

it expressed His personal feelings. That helps me with our question. I have actually heard this kind of praying quite a bit and, with the example of Jesus, I can more deeply appreciate it.

Here's a few closing points I think most of us would appreciate. We cannot elevate and equate our traditions with "the truth" of God. Read Romans 14 again! A-N-D, we must never use our personal "comfort zones" to filter the ways of another (1 Cor. 8). Properly using the oracles of God is the only way—let me repeat that, it is the only way—to accurately "distinguish good from evil" (Heb. 5:11-14).

In my studied opinion, when someone leads us in public prayer, we should be grateful he feels close enough to God and comfortably enough in his prayer life that he can express

his personal thoughts. That can help us do the same as we follow his lead. Prayer, after all, is the expression of our hearts flowing into God's heart (Rom. 10:1). **MM**

*"In everything by prayer
and supplication with thanksgiving
let your requests be made known to God.
And the peace of God, which surpasses
all understanding, will guard your hearts
and minds in Christ Jesus"*
(Phil. 4:6-7).

Dan Winkler



What Must I Do to Be
Saved?



House to House Heart to Heart
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CHECK OUT OUR FACEBOOK GRAPHICS POST
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There's "No" place like
HOME
Revelation 21

NO SIN (vs 8,27)
NO DEATH (vs 4)
NO SORROW (vs 4)
NO CRYING (vs 4)
NO PAIN (vs 4)
NO TEARS (vs 4)
NO DARKNESS (vs 23,25)

"...we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens"
II Corinthians 5:1

"Is Thine Heart Right with God?"

...for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but
THE LORD LOOKETH ON THE HEART
(I Samuel 16:7)

DOES OUR HEART POSSESS...

His SON (Ephesians 3:17)?
His LAW (Hebrews 8:10)?
His LOVE (I John 4:12)?
His HOLINESS (I Peter 1:16)?
His FAITHFULNESS (Hebrews 10:23)?

God knows our hearts because He searches...
(Psalm 139)

WHICH WORD Best Describes Our Faith?

LITTLE Matthew 14:31
TESTED James 1:2-4,12
WORKING Galatians 5:8
SHIPWRECKED I Timothy 1:19,20
WEAK Romans 14:1
DEAD James 2:17,20,26
SINCERE I Timothy 1:5
STRONG Romans 4:20

WHAT I'VE LEARNED FROM BAREFOOT RUNNING

by Jerrie Barber

When I returned from a gospel meeting and a week's vacation in the summer of 1969, my suit trousers wouldn't button. I had two choices: buy new clothes or lose weight. I decided to lose weight. I thought running might help.

I've been running since then. In the fall of 2009, I read a blog about running barefoot. I read and thought about that during the winter and started running without shoes in March 2010. I still do that when the temperature is 50° and above.

People ask, "Why do you run without shoes?"

TWO REASONS FOR RUNNING BAREFOOT

1. It brings back good childhood memories. I looked forward each year to getting my feet tough and playing barefoot through the summer. I thought, if it was fun when I was five, why wouldn't it be fun when I'm sixty-five?" I learned it is.

2. Running without shoes is a good parable for life. This brings me to my first lesson.

Life is Painful

People ask, "Doesn't running without shoes on sidewalks and pavement hurt?" The answer is, "Absolutely." After a half marathon (13.1 miles), the pavement scrapes much of the skin from the bottom of the front of my feet and usually brings a blister on the heels. My feet burn Saturday and some on Sunday. But by Tuesday,

if I felt better when I was twenty, I can't remember it.

There is a principle in Job 14:1: if your mother was a woman, you're going to have pain. Paul said our hope is in our pain (Romans 5:1-5). Planned, chosen, and managed pain brings growth and progress toward a goal (Philippians 3:7-15).

I Can Accomplish Big Things by Doing Little Things Consistently

I didn't start running without shoes by finishing a 10K (6.2 miles) the first week. I started gradually. By slowly increasing my distance without shoes during the spring and summer of 2010, I was able to run the Franklin, Tennessee, Classic 10K on Labor Day.

Bible study is better when done daily than once a week (Psalm 1:1; Acts 17:11).

Saving money or becoming excellent in any field of study or vocation happens when we cultivate a habit to add to our investment consistently.

Good Books Help Me to Run Better

The New Aerobics, by Kenneth H. Cooper, *The Complete Book of Running*, by James F. Fixx, *Born to Run*, by Christopher McDougall, and *Barefoot Running*, by Michael Sandler and Jessica Lee, have contributed to my health and happiness for the past fifty-five years.

One's life, now and in eternity, will be improved when we follow God's Instruction Manual for Man — the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Psalm 119:105, 130).

Important Things in Life Require a Commitment — Not a Trial

During a 10K run, a lady asked me questions about running without shoes. After talking for a while, she said, "I've thought about trying barefoot running." I didn't reply but I know to reap the benefits, you must commit to it, not try it.

The same is true of work, marriage, and living for Jesus. He said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and

take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Luke 9:23, NKJV).

Many People Will Think You Are Weird

In nine towns and cities where I’ve worked since 2010, police have stopped and asked two questions:

1. Sir, do you realize you don’t have on any shoes?
2. Are you alright?

Many of these stops have been prompted by kind people calling the police who are concerned about my mental and physical health.

Many people think Christians are weird. Peter wrote, “In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you” (1 Peter 4:4).

A good question to ask often: “Am I doing what I’m doing or not doing what I’m not doing because it’s the best for me now or to please other people and escape criticism?” (Galatians 1:10).

It’s Worth It

I’ve recently celebrated my 79th birthday. I feel great. In an ideal week, I like to run six miles Monday, five miles Wednesday, and ride my cruiser bike twenty-eight miles Friday. I sleep eight hours each night and enjoy my family and opportunities to serve. My weight is under control. I can still wear my wedding suit.

The Christian race is worth it. At the end of his life, the apostle Paul wrote, “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

Be sure to run the Christian race — with or without shoes. Make sure you begin at the starting line. Regardless of how fast you run, if you don’t start properly, you won’t get a medal for crossing the finish line. **MM**

jerrie@barberclippings.com
www.newshepherdsorientation.com
www.betweenpreachers.com

(I’ve known Jerrie Barber for forty-five years, when he was preaching in Dalton, Georgia. He is a capable preacher and has entertained many over the years with his ventriloquist skills. He has been involved for many years in a ministry helping congregations find a preacher. Spending some time with him and his wife at the F-HU lectureship in February, I learned of his barefoot running habit. He is an interesting preacher and I am honored to run this unique article. -dd)

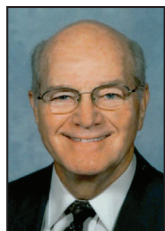


Jerry running the Tom King half marathon.

the Power of CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOR

by C. Philip Slate, Minister
Memphis, Tennessee

For those of us who have been “delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom” of Christ (Colossians 1:13), there are two basic reasons for living as godly and righteously as possible. First, as a product of God’s love and grace in saving us (Ephesians. 2:8-9), we should strive to say with our lives that “God is wonderful” (Ephesians. 1:6, 12, 14) and that we thank Him (2 Corinthians 4:15); we are to show forth the excellence of Him who



Philip Slate

called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter. 2:9-10). The other reason for godly behavior is to be used by God to attract unbelievers at least to listen, to become seekers (Matthew 5:13-16). This last point is the subject of this article.

Historically, many people have been attracted to the Christian faith by observing a faithful Christian’s behavior. Of course, the actions of God and the teachings that make up the Christian way, the Gospel, are absolutely foundational, but some people must be drawn by various means within hearing distance of the Gospel. Godly models of the Christian way, though always imperfect, often serve that purpose. God uses His people.

On the other hand, many people have been “turned off” to the Christian way by the bad behavior of those who call themselves Christians. “Hypocrisy” is a big culprit, even though some use it as a shield or excuse to avoid the Gospel. Paul referred to bad behavior as a “stumbling block” (Romans 14:14; 1 Corinthians 1:23; 8:9). Misbehaving Roman Catholic priests (and others) and mega-church pastors who live in multi-million-dollar houses and travel in their private jet planes are cases in point. Both Paul (Colossians 4:5; Titus 2:10) and Peter (1 Peter 3:13-17) urged right behavior among outsiders because of its pull toward God.

Even among the Jews of the time of Jesus and Paul, we see the principle at work. Compared to the pagan world, Judaism was very attractive because of Jewish morals and the doctrine of the one true God. Pagans who were attracted to Judaism were first called “God-fearers”, such as Cornelius (Acts 10:2, 22; cf. Acts 13:16)), and the second stage was “proselytes” (Acts 2:11; 6:5; cf. Matthew

23:15). The Jews seem largely to have failed in demonstrating God’s glory and justice (cf. Isaiah. 61:3c, 9; Jeremiah 13:11; Romans 2:24). An exception is what the Queen of Sheba witnessed in Solomon’s reign (1 Kings 10:1-10).

Attractive Christian behavior can be varied. Think of Dorcas and the apostle Paul as two poles. Paul was an intellectual who both used his exemplary life as a model for new believers (1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Philippians 3:17; 4:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:7) and fought intellectual battles (Acts 17: 21-31; 2 Corinthians 10:4-6). At the opposite pole, Dorcas was not known as a teacher, a benefactor such as Phoebe (Romans 15:1-2), or a businesswoman such as Lydia (Acts 16:14), but as a sister who used her needle. God uses His people in many conditions. I do not know the author of the following poem I first heard in the 1950s, but it makes the point:

***Shamgar had an ox GOAD, David had a SLING
Dorcas had a NEEDLE, Rahab had some STRING,
Samson had a JAWBONE, Aaron had a ROD,
Mary had some OINTMENT,
and they all were used of God.***

We do not need to calculate or plan our influence for good. What we need to do is to busy ourselves with loving service to our Lord. He will use us in His own way. I had a man to tell me a few years ago, “You might not know this, but you had something to do with my becoming a Christian.” I didn’t. The event to which he referred was sixty years previous! People have influenced me in a good way without ever knowing it. Is that not true of you? If true for you and me, why is it not true for every child of God who helps a widow, takes the part of a mistreated person, lives joyously pure in the midst of impurity, and extends Christian love to unkind and unpleasant people. God will use you in a good way. You might never know the effect of your godly life and deeds, but He will. **MM**

Dr. Phil Slate is a retired teacher at Harding Graduate School of Religion. Many of his students are now some of our best preachers. He now can be found teaching Bible classes at the Germantown Church of Christ. We are grateful to have such a well-respected teacher to write for this publication. -dd)

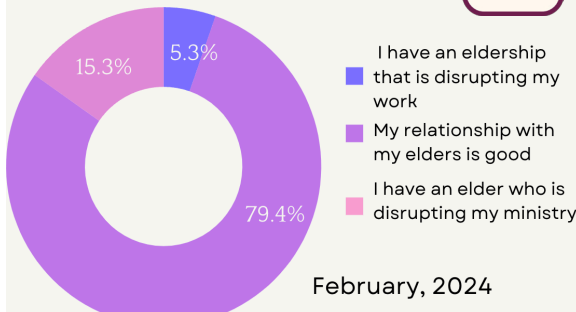
The Preacher's Page

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The Preacher and Working With Elders

ELDER/MINISTER RELATIONSHIPS



- I have an eldership that is disrupting my work
- My relationship with my elders is good
- I have an elder who is disrupting my ministry

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE



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**a
Shepherd's
Heart**



Jeff & Dale Jenkins

TOP 10 Tips for Working Well With Elders

1. Don't surprise your elders
2. Respect the office
3. Show appreciation for their service
4. Check on their family
5. Listen to them
6. Get to know them away from the work/meetings
7. Remember they will be around even after you move on
8. Let the elders be the elders (stay in your lane, bro)
9. Do not pit one elder against another or the others
10. Pray for them and their family by name



Ministry Verse of the Quarter, Acts 20:21-32, A Wise Preacher



From the inauguration of the Church on the day of Pentecost, few men, if any have risen to the height of a preacher as our brother Paul. Paul loved the Word of God, he loved the Kingdom, and he loved preaching. He understood fully the balance that is needed to be an effective preacher.

His admonition to his young protege, Timothy, clearly describes that balance. "Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and exhort, with great patience and instruction" (2

Timothy 4:2). This wonderful statement precisely, and concisely reminds us of the need for balance in our preaching. Our brother further clarifies the balance needed in our ministry when he says, "But as for you, use self-restraint in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (v. 5).

In addition to loving the Word, the Kingdom, and preaching, Paul also loved elders. You can hear his love for elders in his communication to the shepherds of the Ephesian church when he met them on the island of Miletus. Listen to his heart. "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was beneficial, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20:21) You can hear it again in his parting words to them. "Therefore, be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. And now I entrust you to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified." (Acts 20:31-32)

No doubt, when preachers and elders work together, there will be seasons of conflict and disagreement. But the wise preacher will work overtime to love and respect his elders with all his heart, understanding that they are men who will give an account for his soul. A wise preacher will strive for unity and he will publicly commend as well as publicly show that love and respect for his elders. May God bless you, dear preaching brother, with wisdom as you do your part to present a united team with your elders in a way that will strengthen the Church of our Lord.

Pleasing GOD

by Ralph Gilmore

Part-time Ministry Staff—Woodbury church of Christ
Retired Distinguished Professor at Freed-Hardeman University

Before our brief discussion about the importance of pleasing God, please allow me to indulge in my special memories of my father-in-law, the late Jean A. Thornton. He always loved the *Magnolia Messenger* as well as the Magnolia Bible College. His love for this magazine has deepened my appreciation for all the good work Magnolia Messenger has done through the years.



Ralph Gilmore

I wrote my book, *Pleasing God: A Relational Approach to Contemporary Concerns*, after retirement from my tenure at Freed-Hardeman University. I have a passion for teaching young people. This cannot succeed without a way to

improve communication between generations. So, I plan in this article to abbreviate the more complete explanation about the motivation of pleasing God that I discuss in my book.

I believe that the pursuit of pleasing God is a motive that resonates with every generation of true believers. In the churches of Christ, we certainly could use some help in communicating intergenerationally. There is ample evidence to support this claim, although I am so grateful for the thousands of our young people who are dedicated in their support of the Kingdom of God's dear Son. I have confidence in our members who are Generation Z and Millennials.

When I began to research in Scripture, the motivation of pleasing God, I was amazed at the emphasis the Bible places on the subject. The basic words for "pleasing" in Hebrew are *nichocho* or *nichoach*. The basic words in Greek are *arestos* ("pleasing") or *euarestos* ("well-pleasing"). The Psalmist of Psalm 19:14 says, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be accept-

able in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer." Again, Psalm 69:30-31 reads, "I will praise the name of God with song and magnify Him with thanksgiving. And it will please the LORD better than an ox or a young bull with horns and hoofs." Other than Jesus, the wisest man on earth was Solomon because of God's gift to him. He informs in Proverbs 16:7, "When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him."

God confirms and confesses Jesus as His Son at the baptism of Jesus when the voice from Heaven resonates with, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased" (Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Lk 3:22). Jesus pleased God and such should be our life-long aspiration. It was God's good pleasure that gave us the Kingdom initially, according to Luke (Luke 12:32).

Jesus explains in John 8:29 that "He who sent me is with me; He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." Paul, in defense of his apostleship, identifies himself as a bondservant of Christ. Paul did this in order to please

God (Gal 1:10). As pleasers of God, we abhor the darkness of the world of sin (Ephesians 5:8-10).

Paul knew that his support provided by the Philippians was "a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God (Philippians 4:18). Paul urged the Colossians (1:10) to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, bearing fruit in Christ so that God would be pleased in all respects. Paul commands children to be obedient to their parents because this is well-pleasing to the Lord (Colossians 3:20). From the Pauline letters, he admonished the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 2:4 that they should speak in a way pleasing to God because the Gospel had been entrusted to them.

The Hebrews writer in 11:5 reminds us that Enoch was taken up to Heaven because he was pleasing to God. Then the writer gives us one of the most famous references to pleasing God in Hebrews 11:6 when he affirms the utter impossibility of pleasing God without faith. In his summary remarks, he tells the audience

*The Hebrews
writer in 11:5
reminds us that Enoch
was taken up to Heaven
because he was
"Pleasing to
God."*

This is My beloved Son, in whom "I am well-pleased"

(Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Lk 3:22).

"Do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."

The benediction he offers in Heb 13:20-21 is worth noting in its entirety, "Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen."

In this article, I have abbreviated the case that Scripture makes for the motivation of pleasing God is endorsed by God. The approach is indeed Scriptural. However, what are the implications of this study for God's people today? First, this approach could help in our desire to reach young adults, young professionals, and those uninitiated in a background of Bible study. Rather than trying to teach them using the approach of trying to restore New Testament Christianity to those who do not know the difference between something that is taught in the Bible from something that is not, why not use a different approach? You might say, "Do you want to please God? So, let's do it." More doors for serious Bible study might be opened than closed. What does the new generation know about pattern theology or the argument from silence? What do they know about leaders in the American Restoration Movement? Toward the end of my teaching career at Freed-Hardeman University, I was known to challenge some of my classes occupied by Bible majors to name ten leaders in the American Restoration movement. Okay, can you even mention five of them? Most classes could not do so, even as a group.

Second, the "pleasing God" approach has ramifications in marital lives. In my years of ministry, I don't recall counseling any couple considering divorce while they were both trying to please each other. This principle works in marital intimate settings and in the everyday life of a married couple. It certainly works in relationships between parents and children, sibling relationships, and relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ (Hebrews 10:24; Titus 2:11-14). It certainly works in evangelism and missions with new

con-

gregations as well as those well-established. In many divorces, it seems that at least one, if not both, of the people involved no longer values their spiritual relationship, and pleasing God has become a distant, forgotten goal as to why the marriage occurred to begin with.

Third, the pleasing God approach can affect the life of the community. Focusing on pleasing God cannot help but develop a servant's heart in the places where we live. The Gospel of Mark is particularly noted as communicating to us Jesus as a servant to all (Mark 1:32-35). He retired late in the day, and He arose before light to facilitate His ministry to as many villages as possible. Pleasing our God can stimulate us to seek more effective ways of spreading Christ's love to as many as possible. Whatever we can choose to do, it is all for the glory of God. May we do something today, maybe just one new thing, that we know will present itself to God as a pleasing aroma. As a late elder and dear friend used to say to his children, "Make God smile." **MM**

Ralph Gilmore <rgilmore@fhu.edu>

I am proud to have Ralph Gilmore write for the Messenger and appreciate his comments in the first paragraph. Ralph was a distinguished professor of Bible and Interdisciplinary Studies at Freed-Hardeman University where he served for 39 years. He was moderator of the Open Forum for 20 years at the FHU Bible Lectureship. He is now retired from FHU but continues to work parttime with the Woodbury Church of Christ in Woodbury, TN. He has traveled the world and spoken in more lectureships than can be listed here. The book he mentioned can be ordered on his website at drralphgilmore.com. Ralph has been married to the former Joyce Thornton since June 11, 1971. They have 4 daughters and many grandchildren. -dd

Missing Piece



Thad Williams

by Thad Williams

Youth Minister, Atlas Church of Christ Killen, AL

When I was young I loved to read short stories by Shel Silverstein, an author who is famous for writing children's books such as *The Giving Tree*, *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, *A Light in the Attic*, and *Falling Up*. I would read every story in his books, but would always avoid looking at the back of the book. For some reason, Shel Silverstein printed huge pictures of himself on the back of his books, and if you have never seen him, do yourself a favor and DO NOT Google him. Long story short, he doesn't exactly look like someone who would write books for children. Anyway, one of my favorite stories by Shel was called "*The Missing Piece*". The story is about a circle that is, you guessed it, missing a piece!

Throughout most of the story, the circle searches for another piece that is the perfect fit. He tries all sorts of different pieces, but none of them really end up working out. Some of the pieces the circle tries are too long, too short, too pointy, too round, or just oddly shaped. At one point in the story, the circle decides he will never find his missing piece, gives up, quits looking, and accepts that he might just spend the rest of his life missing a piece. However, right when the circle calls it quits, right when the circle thinks that all hope is lost, he meets another piece. Hesitantly the circle strikes up a conversation with the other piece and the two learn they both have similar stories, both of them had been abandoned and were left missing pieces. Nervously the two pieces decide to give each other a try and wouldn't you know it, they are a perfect fit, and the two shapes live happily ever after! What a great ending! (it is if you are 5 years old).

So why am I telling you about some random story that I

enjoyed when I was a kid? Well, sometimes in our lives we can feel a lot like the circle in the story, like we are missing pieces. Sometimes we feel like something just isn't quite right, like we aren't complete. We search and search for that one thing that will make us feel complete, we reach for all sorts of different things in hopes that it will be our missing piece, but sometimes the things we use to fill the gaps end up causing more harm than good. We reach for places, substances, social status, and even sometimes people to fill the holes that we feel in our hearts. Yet, no matter how hard we try, we still feel incomplete. I remember when I was a teenager and thinking every girl I dated was THE ONE, they completed me, they were going to be the one that made my heart, my life, and my soul complete (they didn't). I used to think that one day I would meet someone, accomplish something, or go somewhere that would complete me, and then everything in my life would make sense. I hate to say it but that never happened.

It wasn't until later in life I realized there is only one thing that can truly make us complete, one thing that can actually fill in the holes we feel in our hearts, and that's God. Consider the woman at the well in John chapter 4. She had tried 6 different times with 6 different men to find happiness, yet she was still incomplete. It wasn't until she met Jesus that she realized that completeness cannot be found in people, places, or things; it can only be found in God. Once she realized that Jesus was the answer to the emptiness she was feeling, she left the well rejoicing, excited to tell everyone back home what she had realized. To put it simply, we will never be whole if we use what the world has to offer to fill the holes we feel in our hearts. God is and has always been the answer. He is what makes us whole. He is what makes us complete. He is our missing piece, and He always will be. We have to remember that what this world has to offer is temporary, not eternal. What our world has to offer may fill in the gaps, numb the pain, or help us feel better for a little while, but to be truly complete we must seek God. **MM**



2024

Building Godly Leaders

Youth & Family

Booneville Report

The Booneville church attended Lads to Leaders for the 19th year in March. The group took approximately 150 people to the convention in Little Rock where a little over 1,500



Christians gathered for the event. The Booneville youth participated in almost every event the convention offers. One of the most notable accomplishments was a young man named JoJo, who participated in the Bartimaeus event last year and decided to compete again this year. This impressive young man was selected to lead a song in the worship service on Sunday morning. Another member of the church, Tristan Pharr, finished up his Deca Centurion of Scripture. The Deca is given out to a person that has memorized 1000 scriptures in ten years or less. Fittingly, Dwight Pharr, an elder at the luka church created this award about 28 years ago and Tristan is his grandson.

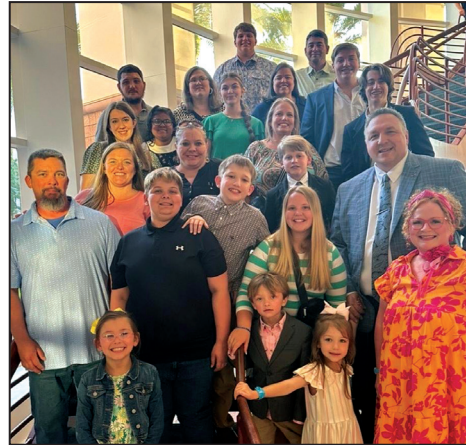
Next year, the church will celebrate 20 years of participating in Lads to Leaders. The program has been instrumental in creating leaders in the local congregation. Participants routinely lead songs, create bulletin boards, teach classes, etc. The youth group is incredibly close and spiritually strong.

Jonathan Pharr

Summerdale Report

Our youth group recently attended the Lads to Leaders convention in Orlando, FL. The Summerdale church of Christ focuses primarily on year-round events. Our kids rarely place in competitive art, singing, speeches, debate, scrapbook, etc. That is fine with us. We don't go to L2L to win. We go to L2L because we can't imagine wasting (or burying) our talents.

Roy Johnson (Director of Lads to Leaders) once said, "What gets rewarded, gets repeated." This program has propelled thousands of young people to a life of Christian service. If you do not know about the program, or how you



can get involved in L2L, please contact the home office in Montgomery, AL. Tell them Ray Reynolds sent you.

*Summerdale
Church of Christ
Summerdale,
Alabama*

Siwell Road Report

Just a few short weeks ago our congregation here at Siwell Road took a group of young people to the Lads to Leaders convention in Nashville, TN. This year was so different for us because all of our students that went were in the 5th grade or younger, though we did have one teenager that participated in several events but was not able to go to convention this year. All of these students worked so very hard, and you could see continual growth in them every day. These students participated in Speech, Oral Bible Reading, Song Leading, Bible Bowl, Puppet Skit, and several different



categories of art. Many of them also participated in pre-convention events like Good Samaritan, Know the Books, Keepers, and Year-round Song Leading. It is an amazing thing to see so many children on fire for God. I look forward watching them all continue to grow year by year. Praise be to God!

*Derek Broome
Associate Minister
Siwell Road church of Christ*

from a Woman's

VIEWPOINT

"In Memory of Miss June"

Beatitudes

by Teresa Hampton

Jesus' sermon on the mount starts "with a series of statements, each of which begins with the word blessed. These are called 'the Beatitudes.' This designation comes from the Latin version of the Bible, where the first word in each sentence is *beati*, the Latin word for 'blessed' or 'happy'" (Roper, *The Life of Christ*, 1: A Supplement 221)

The Beatitudes contain encouraging words about blessings in Christ, blessings of being in the Kingdom. That blessedness is essentially spiritual—it depends not so much on a man's physical condition, as on his heart; not so much on what he has, as on what he is inwardly. The Beatitudes are built on paradoxes. A paradox is a statement that is seemingly contradictory or opposed to common sense and yet is perhaps true (Webster's Dictionary). Hence, the world says those who are materially wealthy are blessed, but Jesus says the opposite.



Teresa Hampton

Jesus preached, **Blessed are the poor in spirit**, For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 5:3). [Quotes are from the NKJV unless otherwise noted]. Those are blessed who feel a deep sense of spiritual poverty, in contrast to those who are self-sufficient spiritually. The proud never attain the Kingdom of God, or fall from it, while the humble enter it. Poor is a strong word meaning utterly destitute. The heart emptied of self has room to be filled with Christ. Jesus said, "Whoever shall humble himself like this little child shall be exalted" (Mt. 18:4). The broken and contrite spirit of the publican beating his breast and crying for mercy demonstrates humility (Luke 18:9-14). Paul encouraged Christians, "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." The apostle went on to use Jesus as the ultimate example of such humility, urging us to imitate Him (Philippians 2:3-8).

Jesus declared, **Blessed are those who mourn**, For they shall be comforted (5:4). Mourning for our spiritual condition and accompanying tears lead to obedience which, in turn, brings true comfort. Individually, the recognition of sin is a cause for mourning which can bring comfort when I repent and seek God. Godly sorrow works repentance unto salvation. (2 Cor. 7:10). When I am brought to mourn in such a way, God's promise is comfort in salvation and hope of eternal life in Christ. He promised when we reach Heaven, to wipe away all tears from their eyes (Rev. 7:17, 21:4). See the example of the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears (Luke 7:38) See also Acts 20:19, Luke 19:41-44).

Jesus continued, **Blessed are the meek**, For they shall inherit the earth (5:5). The meek are those of lowly and gentle disposition. A meek person will not think overmuch of himself. He will not allow his temper to be ruffled by slights and provocation, not expecting to be always treated with respect - he will do his duty in the station where God has set him, and he does so without seeking honor, but only to be pleasing to Christ. Meekness must not be confused with weakness. True meekness is strong! True meekness leads to self improvement, studying one's own character; endeavoring to grow spiritually. James wrote, "Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of " (3:13).

Jesus said, **Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness**, For they shall be filled (5:6). Hunger and thirst are two of the strongest bodily cravings - not a faint hesitating wish, but a strong, longing desire that cannot be satisfied till it has been filled, appetites that return frequently and call for fresh satisfaction. Filled means satisfied. Jesus said, "He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). Righteousness includes both rightness of character and that righteousness which is by faith. All of God's commandments are righteousness (Ps. 119:172).

Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy (5:7). This is a conditional promise. The king in the parable of the unmerciful servant took pity on the servant who could not repay his debt and forgave him; but when the servant did not show mercy to one who owed him a small debt, the king called him a "wicked servant" (Matt. 18:32). The Lord had pity for the spiritual state of man and He gave the ultimate human sacrifice, though we have done nothing to merit such a gift. Like the Lord, we should have mercy toward all. Mercy can be expressed in patience, prayer, tending to one who is in need, and other acts of mercy. Forgiveness and mercy are akin - Jesus included in the model prayer "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" Mt. 6:12.

Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God (5:8). God cannot look upon sin (Isa. 59:2). How does one become pure? A pure heart is a clean heart, clean from everything that defiles. It is sincere, therefore, does not seek to deceive. It does not seek to serve self, but is wholly devoted to pleasing God. Purity of heart allows one to see the goodness of God, which is hidden from the contaminated workers of evil. Thus, Jesus' disciples understood his parables, but the understanding was hidden from those seeking to entrap him. John wrote to believers, "When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:2-3).

Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons

of God (5:9). A son displays the nature of his father. Our Father in Heaven has been the ultimate peacemaker, reconciling man to Himself through the sacrifice of His own Son. If we are peacemakers we will seek to reconcile men to God, trying to maintain peace in everyday affairs, especially between brothers and sisters in Him. Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is the Prince of Peace. He made peace by giving His own lifeblood to ransom men and women from sin and death. Peace is born of obedience— strife is born of sin. Peacemakers shall be called the children of God, because they imitate the Father and His Son. Paul said the fruit of the Spirit is “love, joy, and peace” (Gal. 5:22).

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when

they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you (5:10-11). “Persecute” means ill treatment, “reproach” or “revile” means abusive in speech. Persecuted Christians are companions of the prophets in their sufferings and share in the blessedness of such. Persecutions include those great and small.

The Messiah revealed the mind of God in the sermon on the mount. The Gospel, His good news, began with blessings, each of which was intended to show where true happiness really exists and to reveal God's promises to us as His faithful followers. The road we travel will not be easy, but it will surely impart great blessing!

MM

✦ "WORDS OF PEACE" ✦

By *Betty Belk Steward*

“Great peace have they who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble.” Psalms 119: 165

Reminders to finding Peace when things in life go awry.

■ Words of peace are words I need tonight .

Maybe you need them as well.

Today my Dad would be 110 if he were still alive.

And today was the funeral service for my cousin.

Words of peace allow us to reduce the stress and frustration we feel over the trials life brings.

Various things, like when Covid kept us frustrated and closed in for so long, make us feel the need for words of peace. Maybe God wants us to appreciate time to relax and appreciate and remember the “normal” time before the loss, before covid or before whatever is that makes us weary. Maybe we should remember that a few encouraging words from God's Word will renew our peace each night. His plan for us is simple. “Be ye therefore content in whatever state you are in” (Phil 4:11).

■ **Be aware, we are not alone.** (1 Cor 2:5-9) God is with us. (Joshua 1:9)

It might be good for us to realize that we are not the only ones feeling sad, not well, and feeling overwhelmed and with problems.

It might be good also to remember that nothing is forever, except eternity.

So this too shall pass. God is in control.

“Come unto me all ye who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.” (Matt 11:28-30)

■ **There is a time for everything.** (Ecclesiastes 3)

There is a time to cry, a time to laugh, and a time for peace, etc. Maybe it is good to realize that sometimes we can decide how



Betty Belk Steward

long we will allow ourselves to be in a trial burdened. We do have control over how we view everything in our life. Chapter 3 In Ecclesiastes gives us the awareness to “compartmentalize” events and situations, and to expect changes that occur so that we might not allow anything to rob our peace, even for a time. Knowing that God is in Control should give us courage to endure and make it through the hard times.

■ Be gentle with yourself during down-times time. (Psalm 18:35)

I have decided to be gentle with myself in times of trial, and use this time to communicate with my husband on small things that are important to both of us as we grow older and adjust to our aging and our health issues. We deserve to take the time to get on the same page with what our new rest of our life will be like. The Lord has truly blessed us and we are grateful, but realize communication is such an important component to finding peace. Not just with each other, but with God's Word and in prayer.

■ Be grateful even through our busy-ness and difficulties. (Psalm 145:18)

It is good to just be alone with our family and with God and renew our hopes and our strengths and our promises for a greater and brighter tomorrow in Him.

Sometimes our own challenge or illness can become our answer and give us the time and place to have compassion for others who are hurting. Maybe it is a good time to think of someone who is hurting we may have overlooked, and send a note, make a phone call, or encourage in some way.

After all, when we think of others, we put ourselves in a better place outside our own self. That in itself *may* being peace.

■ “Be still and know that I am God.” (Psalm 46:10)

✦ *Our prayer tonight...* ✦

“Our Father we need your peace tonight. Please grant us a quiet time to renew and review Your promises and scriptures that bring healing and comfort. Please Keep watch over us and hold us in Your loving care. IN the name of Christ, Amen.” **MM**

Best Sleep and May God bless you and your family.

"ON THE ROAD AGAIN"

with the Editor

GREAT Celebration at BYPASS

I enjoyed an inspirational weekend with the Bypass church in Vicksburg, Mississippi, as they celebrated their Homecoming and the nineteenth year of their church merger. This took place on April 6th and 7th and demonstrated wonderfully how we who are many are one body in Christ.

In 1987, a small group of Christians begin to meet in a storefront on the court square in Vicksburg. With their talented young preacher, Dr. Willie Nettle, the black congregation soon outgrew the storefront. They went out on Highway 61 and built a new building and became known as the Bypass church of Christ.

In 2005, the white brethren of the Magnolia church of Christ begin to look for a new building in the area, and after much prayer and discussion, the two congregations agreed to merge, with the white congregation joining the black congregation in their building. That same year the church bought a large building next door which became their beautiful fellowship hall.

For the last nineteen years these brethren have set an outstanding example of Christians living and worshipping together in unity. The weekend celebration had the theme of "We've come too far to turn around." Brother Curtis Pittman, long time minister of the Hanging Moss congregation in Jackson, gave a stirring keynote speech Saturday evening.

Les Ferguson presented the message Sunday morning to a packed auditorium. He is a long-time minister, and past teacher at Magnolia Bible College. Brother Les was well known to the area and played a big role in the history of the Bypass church. While serving as a young minister, he went to deliver a certificate to a thirteen-year-old black girl who had completed a Bible correspondence course. Her name was Lavett Eastman. To his amazement, many others in the neighborhood had been studying the lessons with Lavett. Over time, about forty black men and women and teens obeyed the Gospel.

Sometime later Willie Nettle's sister, who was a part of this



Sunday Morning: A packed auditorium for the Sunday morning service.



Elders: Dean Caldwell, Bill Muirhead, Willie Nettle (also preacher), Therington Nunnally & Willie Powers. Deacons: Joel Dimmette (also associate minister) and Leo Foster.



Les Ferguson spoke Sunday morning



Lunch was served in the Scott Center fellowship hall.



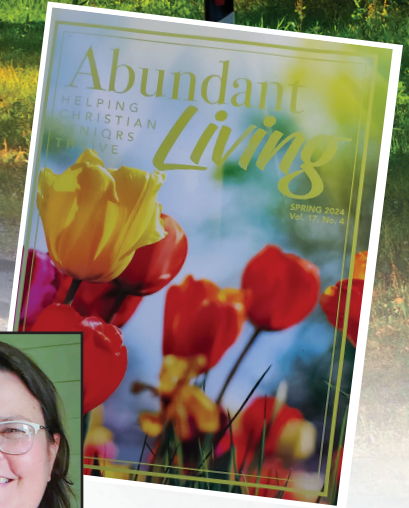
Dr. Curtis Pittman and Dr. Willie Nettle

new group of Christians, introduced Willie to Les. At the time Willie was in Jr. High school. After studying together, he too was baptized. So it is easy to see the strong connection Les has with the Bypass congregation.

I enjoyed spending a couple of hours touring the large battleground at Vicksburg, which was one of the greatest battles of the Civil War. It is of note that the disciples of Christ (as we were known at the time), did not split over the conflict, and blacks continued to be allowed to worship with white congregations before, during, and after the war. That was not true in the denominational world, and they remain mainly segregated to this day.

The Bypass congregation is a shining example of what true Christianity is all about, and such mergers of black and white brethren are growing in our brotherhood. Having spent the weekend on Highway 61, I can affirm the words of the Psalmist, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity" (Psalms 133:1)! **MM**

the Searcy Trip



It was good to be with Teresa Castleman, the Editor of Abundant Living.

The *Abundant Living* magazine is published by Harding University. Its stated purpose is "A magazine to encourage, inspire, and equip older Christians to grow in faith and service to God throughout their retirement years." The editor is Teresa Castleman.

The Messenger has advertised their events, and Teresa has used several of my articles in this excellent publication. They offer many good activities and trips for senior Christians. I decided to spend a day at the retreat they were having on campus at Harding on April 9-12.

I was impressed with the program, the attention to detail, and the excellent lunch that was provided. The morning began with a "stay in your seat" exercise program conducted by Dr. Anita Killins, a physical therapy professor at Harding, and her volunteer Mike Caldwell.

The morning speaker was Mike O'Neal, a retired NASA engineer. He gave an insight into the spiritual lives of many of our astronauts. There is a lot of Bible reading and praying by the men we shoot up into space. The large number of seniors who attended the event were truly enjoying themselves.

It was good meeting Teresa and doing a little "shop talk" about publishing a brotherhood magazine. She is an excellent editor. If you would like to start getting this publication and/or attending some of their excellent events, you can contact Teresa



Leon Sanderson and Jim Chester represent a hundred years of leading singing for their congregations.



I enjoyed visiting in the home of Bill and Helen Lambert



It was good to see old friends like Bob and Joy Straw



Mike O'Neal from NASA was morning speaker



Morning Exercise

at tcastleman@harding.edu.

While in Searcy I was able to visit Bill and Helen Lambert. Bill was a Teacher/Preacher and one-time President of Magnolia Bible College, before his long tenure as professor of Bible at Harding University. He has written for *The Messenger* since its beginning. It was good to sit and glean wisdom and knowledge from this great man of God.

I also had dinner with my dear friend, Gordon Hogan and his daughter, Beth. He and his family are long-time missionaries to Pakistan and Singapore. Please check out his story on page 19. **MM**

ON THE ROAD... continued on the next page

"ON THE ROAD AGAIN" with the Editor

Crystal Springs & Clinton Visits

I spent the first week of May first visiting with and preaching for the Crystal Springs congregation, just a little south of Jackson, Mississippi. They are a friendly group, and is where Mark Bridges worships and serves as one of their elders. Mark is a part of our staff and does a great job of laying out *the Messenger*, as well as designing all our covers.

I then attended the preachers' meeting held every first Monday of the month at the Clinton, MS church building. Preachers' wives attend as well and have a separate Bible study. **MM**



The preacher's wives also meet and enjoy a Bible study together at Clinton, MS

After services at Crystal Springs, they had a singing before enjoying an excellent meal together. The elders: John Mark Meadows, Keith Wilson (also the preacher), and Mark Bridges

The men gathered for the Preachers' Meeting at Clinton, MS



In the SPOTLIGHT

Dean Miller

Dean Miller, is a graduate of Freed-Hardeman University and has done many years of full-time work in the Hartville, Ohio, area. After caring for his sweet wife, Dean became a widower on Christmas morning, 2013.

Dean soon saw the need for helping Widows and Widowers deal with the loss they were coping with. In 2020 he began full-time work developing Widow Workshops. He travels all over the country helping people learn what it is like to be a widow or widower. He also has helped establish Widowhood ministries in many congregations across our brotherhood! These workshops and local ministries are helping many of us cope with the losing of our mates!

Please consider making him an... "In the spotlight" person! He is very deserving.

*Mr. Sherrel Wayne Lawhon
Carthage, MO.*



Jeff Jenkins writes:

"There is no one in our brotherhood who is doing more to bless, encourage, and inspire those of us who have lost our spouses than my friend, Dean Miller. His Widowhood Workshop Retreat, Facebook Group, Living with Loss Workshop, and other events are blessing thousands of God's people around the world. In addition to his workshops, he encourages countless people individually. On behalf of a grateful brotherhood, please allow me to say 'thank you,' for showing us how we can make sure we 'Don't Waste Our Pain.' **MM**

Dean, The Magnolia Messenger is proud to put you and your ministry "In the Spotlight." -dd

MM - MISSION REPORT 2024

Gordon Hogan's life in Missions Celebrated

by Dennis Doughty, editor

When my family moved to Pinellas Park, Florida, in the early 1950's, there developed a close friendship with the Hogan family. Gordon Hogan was working at Dun and Bradstreet as an accountant and was a deacon in the church.

The rapidly growing Pinellas Park congregation hosted a World Mission Workshop where men like James Judd and Ira Rice spoke of the need to take the Gospel to the world. Gordon took this message to heart and decided to commit his life to mission work. After some planning, it was agreed that the church would support the Hogan's in going to New Delhi, India.

In 1960, his wife, Jane, and three young children flew into Germany. It was decided that to adjust to overseas life, that they travel through several different countries. In one of the most unusual ways of dealing with culture shock, they bought a VW van and began an unbelievable 14,000-mile road trip from Germany to India. Traveling through Turkey, Israel, Jordan, Iraq, Iran, and into Pakistan, they arrived at the border of India. However, India refused them Visas.

Taking up residence in Lahore, Pakistan, and communicating with the church back in Pinellas Park, they were able to get visas for Pakistan, and it was agreed that they would stay and begin a church in that large city. From 1960-1968 they converted many to the Lord, bought property, and built a place of worship in this mostly Muslim city.

In 1969, Gordon received an invitation to move his family to Singapore and to oversee the Four Seas college in its training native men to preach the Gospel. For the next twenty-five years Gordon would serve as the minister of the Moulmein Road

Church of Christ and as President of Four Seas College. The college would have a large influence as men throughout Asia would attend and leave to serve churches throughout the region.

I would first visit the Hogans in Singapore on a mission trip in 1969 and again in 1985, when I was invited to teach a summer

course at the college. In 1972, my parents accepted the challenge to come to Singapore and spend a year helping to print and distribute a million tracts throughout the city/nation of Singapore.

With their three children now grown and married, Gordon and Jane left Singapore to become a Missionary in Residence at Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas. Over the years the Hogan family has traveled together back to Pakistan and Singapore to visit and strengthen the churches there. Their son Dave has remained in Singapore, carrying on his father's work at the Moulmein Road congregation. Gordon's beloved wife Jane, passed away five years ago.

This year, at 96 years of age, Gordon recently visited Singapore with his three children as the church honored Gordon for his many years of work in Singapore. The Lord's church remains strong throughout the city and the Moulmein Road congregation now worships in its beautiful new building.

The Hogan family has had a great influence in my life. Recently, I had dinner with Gordon and his daughter, Beth, in Searcy. He remains in good health. It was good to visit and to recall the many good memories our families have had together over the past seventy years.

When histories are written of some of our great post-WW2 missionaries, the life work of Gordon Hogan will be found near the top of the list. **MM**



Gordon Speaking, at age 96, in the new church building in Singapore.



The original church building in Lahore, Pakistan



The Gordon Hogan family during the early days in Lahore, Pakistan.



The outdoor baptism on the church property in Lahore, where many were baptized into Christ.

Why the thief on the cross is so popular!

by Mark Lindley

The most popular thief in the history of the world surely must be the thief on the cross who repented. Jesus was crucified between two thieves; one of them repented. Jesus said to him, "Today thou shalt be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). There have been countless thieves since the time Christ saved that thief. Yet, the



Mark Lindley

thief on the cross is still the world's best known robber. Why? Why is that particular thief so popular, even today?

The thief on the cross is a favorite Bible character of many because they imagine that the case of the thief proves that sinners can be saved today without obedience to the Gospel. Many who speak of the thief argue that he was saved without baptism or any other act of obedience.

Having drawn that conclusion, they then reason that sinners today, also, can be saved without baptism or any other acts of obedience.

However, the truth is that the thief was saved "before" Jesus gave the following command: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16). The thief did not have to be baptized to be saved because he was saved "before" Jesus gave the command.

Consider this: drivers in America were not required to wear seat belts prior to 1984. Therefore, drivers in the 1950's, 60's, or 70's were not penalized for failing to wear a seat belt. One is not expected to abide by a law that does not yet exist. However, we all know that now we must "click it, or ticket." If, during a traffic stop, an officer asks why a driver doesn't have on a seat belt, it will do no good for the driver to argue that in days past, drivers were not expected to wear safety belts. The officer would, no doubt, explain that today it is the law.

The same principle holds true regarding the thief. The thief on the cross was not required to obey the Gospel, including the command to be baptized, because that gospel system was not yet in place! It was after Jesus died, was buried, arose from the grave, and

appeared to his disciples for 40 days that He then gave the charge, often called the "Great Commission," to "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19-20). Several days later, on the day of Pentecost, the Gospel was preached, including these words: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). About 3,000 received the word, were baptized and they were added by God to the church (Acts 2:41, 47). From that day of Pentecost down to this present moment, no sinner has been saved without obedience to the Gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16; 6:16-18; II Thessalonians 1:6-9).

The thief was saved directly and personally by Christ, "before" Jesus gave the command to be baptized under the terms of the Great Commission. Read through the book of Acts and consider all those who were baptized to be saved. Not one of them argued that Jesus saved a thief without baptism! They knew that regardless of what had happened in the past, they were required to obey the Gospel for salvation. The same is true for all today.

God, by His love, mercy and grace, has made salvation possible. But He saves those today who obey His will (Hebrews 5:8-9). We are happy the thief was saved. Yet, no one today can be saved in that same manner. **MM**

Mark was born and raised in Tupelo, MS. He has preached the Gospel for over 30 years. He graduated from Memphis School of Preaching in 1995 and from Freed Hardeman University in 1999. Mark has worked with Oak Ridge Church of Christ in Baldwin, MS, the 10th and Rockford Church of Christ in Tulsa, OK, and the Chapman Church of Christ in Ripley, MS, where he currently serves.

Mark has been married to the former Kim Britt for 32 years. Mark and Kim have been blessed with three sons and one daughter: Britt, Brock, Brice, and Bree.

Easter Past

by Dennis Doughty, editor

Easter can fall between March 21st and April 18th. This year it fell on March 31st. This date received a lot of attention as the White House chose to celebrate a different holiday on that date, to the exclusion of Easter. While that is disappointing, it is not surprising, as Christianity is repudiated by many of our nation's leaders.

What goes un-noticed and un-reported is that the church of the New Testament, which is our example, celebrated the resurrection of Christ every Sunday in the partaking of the bread and the cup of the Lord's Supper. So, while this event



Dennis Doughty

was ignored by our government, it is continuing to be celebrated in churches of Christ around the world, "Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body" (1 Cor. 10:17). As one body, one church, we celebrate weekly the resurrection from the dead by Jesus, who was "the first fruits" of the dead (1 Cor. 15:20).

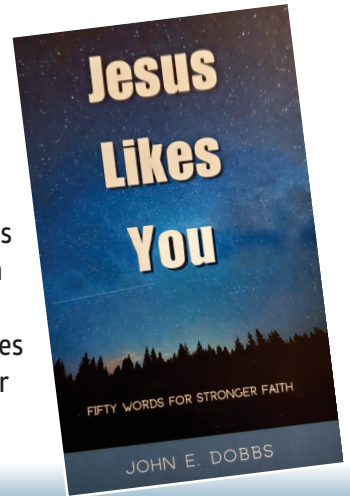
It is true that the Easter date is close to the actual date of Jesus' resurrection from the dead; He arose the third day after the Passover which was held on the 15th of Nisan by the Jewish calendar. The Jewish calendar was based upon the moon, which averaged 29 days a month, 11 days shorter each year than our modern solar calendar. Our "Easter" corresponds to that 15th of Nisan date, which is why it is sometimes early in the spring, sometimes late.

But there is no question about the day of the week that Jesus rose from the dead. All four Gospel accounts identify it as Sunday morning, "On the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb...and they found the stone rolled away from the tomb" (Lu. 24:1, 2). The previous Sunday Jesus rode triumphantly into Jerusalem. On the Sunday of, and the Sunday after His resurrection, He appeared to all His apostles (Acts 20:19, 26). The church was established on Pentecost, which always fell on a Sunday (Acts 2). The Sundays to follow, the disciples met to worship (Acts. 20:7).

There are no "special" Sundays, except the ones that come "every week" (1 Co. 16:2). This past March 31st was special, not because it was Easter, but because it was Sunday, the Lord's Day, the weekly celebration of His death, burial, and resurrection. While the White House chose to ignore the greatest event in the history of mankind, the church Christ established never has and never will. **MM**

NEW BOOK by JOHN DOBBS

Jesus Likes You is a new book of fifty devotionals by John Dobbs. Each devotional is based on a well-known and loved passage of Scripture. Most are brief and work well as a devotional thought. John is a graduate of Magnolia Bible College and has served churches in Louisiana and Mississippi for over forty years. The book is available on amazon.



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by Frank Parker, Minister
Sebring, FL

One brother announces, “We will sing number... in preparation for the Lord’s Supper.” Another will announce it this way, “We will sing number ... in final preparation for the Lord’s Supper.” The slight difference is important to note. Proper preparation begins daily, not just the moment before partaking in the communion! Proof text? First Corinthians 11:17-34 (NKJV). The warning, “unworthy manner” is stated in verses 27 & 29. First, the phrase refers to the manner of partaking, not the worthiness of the individual! The disciple will never be worthy of amazing grace, i.e., the sacrifice of Jesus. The “unworthy manner” is clearly stated in verses 17-22, beginning with “Now in giving you these instructions I do not praise you, since you come



Frank Parker

together not for the better but for the worse. For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.” Study carefully the conditions that prompted such a statement and warnings.

We will note the warnings of “unworthy manner”: Verse 27 “...will be guilty of the body and (‘the’ NASV) blood of the Lord.” Rather than make dogmatic statements, let’s pursue with some questions: Is this dealing with the same mindset as the Jews who consented to Jesus’ death and said, “Let Him be crucified” and “We have no king but Caesar”? Is this the mindset of Hebrews 10:29, “Of how much worse punishment do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which He was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?” For it is a most fearful and solemn act to trifle with sacred things!

Verse 29 “...judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s (‘Lord’s not in NASV) body.” The question seems to center around the ‘body’...the body/sacrifice of Jesus or the spiritual body, church of Christ, or both. If you go back to verses 17-22, they were corrupting the Lord’s supper with a common meal and division. Therefore, they were not respecting the sacrifice of Jesus nor the unity of their brethren! We must keep in mind the background of some of these disciples. Their history was idols, feasts, and gluttony!

And note carefully the much-needed instructions of verse 28, “But let a man examine himself and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup” and verse 31, “For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.” We must never let this high and holy privilege turn into a curse!

Note Acts 20:7 and context carefully. “We stayed seven days” for what? A common meal on the first day of the week? They “came together to break bread” (i.e., Lord’s supper) and while together Paul happened to be in this assembly and preached. Maybe we need to review our priorities of time in the assembly. **MM**

frankparker27@gmail.com

HARDING SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY WEEKEND

The HST Reunion and DMin Weekend on April 11-13 was a celebration of HST’s presence in Memphis for 66 years as the school prepares to transition to Searcy. Special thanks to our alumni speakers and our special guest speaker, Dr. Christopher J. H. Wright.

A book has been published to honor the many years in Memphis. ***Near the Banks of the River***: Celebrating Harding School of Theology in Memphis, edited by Mark Powell and Steve Cloer, is now available. The book includes contributions by HST alumni on the influence of HST in Memphis and the future of theological education and missional leadership.



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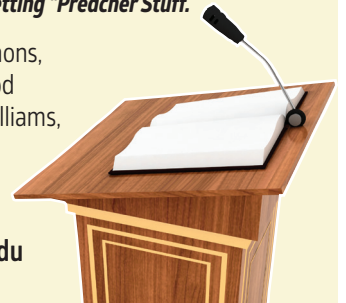
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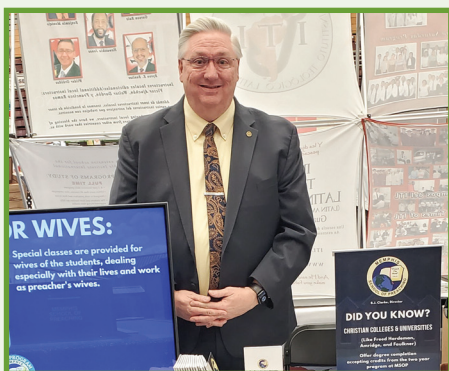
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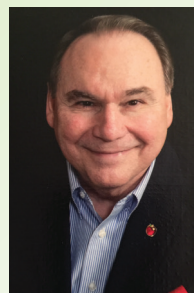
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Visiting among Churches in north Mississippi

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



February through April 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. Several other individuals and churches support us in our work at the CSC. This report covers twelve Sundays during the months of February through April 2024. I continue to preach one Sunday each month for the Coffeeville, Indianola, and Crockett churches of Christ. All these congregations continue to look for a full-time minister. Please pray for them.

February 4: It has been six weeks since my knee surgery. Madolyn and I have been visiting congregations close to Olive Branch since the doctors asked me not to travel far because of possible



Chris and Cassidy Keeton

blood clots in my leg. So, this week we visited with the Hernando church of Christ. Chris Keeton is now the pulpit minister. He

has worked with the church for over twelve years as youth minister, but one year ago he stepped into the role of pulpit minister when Andy Scott retired and moved to Oklahoma to be with

his children. Chris is doing a wonderful work. The church has elders and around 90 in attendance. They support several mission works and have a good youth group. We enjoyed visiting with our friends in Hernando.

Chris preached on "Are You The Messiah?" based on Luke 7:18-23. John sent some of his disciples to ask Jesus this question. Jesus showed them what He was doing and let John decide. Chris said, "we have a test to see where we see the fruit of the Spirit is displayed in our lives." We know we have the Spirit in us when the fruit of the Spirit is seen. It was a good lesson.

February 11: I was invited to preach for the Crockett church of Christ. Robert Rawson has worked with the church there for ten years. He has been ill lately, and the leaders asked if I could come and sub for him. I was happy to do so. The church has no elders and around 30



Robert and Jane Rawson

in attendance. They do support several mission works, and are a very loving group of Christians. We enjoyed seeing Robert and Jane and visiting with the good folks there.

In Bible class I presented the lesson "What Every Church Should Be," based on 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3. Paul is praising them for their work of faith, labor of love, and their patience of hope. In the

worship I preached on "Our Spiritual Blessings," based on Ephesians 1:3-14. Paul tells us all the spiritual blessings we have are from God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

February 18: Madolyn and I visited with the Sherman church of Christ. Clay Foster is the bi-vocational minister there and has worked with the congregation for the last 11 years. They have two elders and around 60 in attendance. They have a good mix of ages with lots of young couples. We were able to eat with our old friend, Joe Connell, and some members from Glosser Street church. It was good to see Joe and to visit with him. Clay presented some good lessons. They are using the Gospel Advocate Quarterly.



Clay and Lana Foster

The spring issue is about Esther. The class was on "Jewish Assertion" based on Esther 8:11-9:4. It was a good study about God's provision for us. In the worship Clay preached on "Salvation to the Ends of the Earth," based on Romans 10:5-21. It was a good lesson on deep faith coming through the word of God, and the importance of us helping the world hear the good news of the Gospel.

February 25: Madolyn and I visited with the Oxford church of Christ. Les Ferguson, Jr, is the minister there. We have known Les for many years and enjoyed our lunch with him and Becki and their small group. They have elders and



Bill Hopkins and Les Ferguson Jr.

around 180 in attendance. We were able to be in Bill Hopkins' class where they were studying Luke 5 and had a very good discussion.

In the worship Ben Brinkerhoff, their campus minister, delivered the sermon.

He had a very challenging lesson on "Counterculture for the Common Good!" taken from Daniel 6. We must be people that seek to do God's will and live that life, so we can have an influence for good on our culture.

March 3: I was invited to preach for the Indianola church of Christ. Jason Zuehlke is the interim minister there. They have no elders and around 30 in attendance. We always enjoy visiting that congregation. They continue to look for a full-time minister. Please remember them in your prayers.

In Bible class I began a study of 1 Thessalonians. We looked at chapter 1:1-3: "What Every Church Needs." In worship I preached on "Learning to Break the Alabaster Jar." It's a good lesson on learning to express your love and support of others.

March 17: I was invited to preach for the Yazoo City church of Christ. John Staten comes from the Jackson area to preach for them each Sunday. They have no elders and around 25 in attendance. Madolyn and I visited with that congregation, and I gave a mission report about our work at the CSC and preached during the worship. The congregation has been a longtime supporter of our ministry.



Ken and Shelia Laney

Ken Laney taught the Bible Class. It was good to see Ken. I had not seen him since our days in Greenville. They were studying the Seven Churches of Asia and looked at the church in Smyrna. It was a very good lesson and good to visit with the brethren.

March 24: I was invited to preach for the Coffeeville church of Christ. They continue to look for a full-time minister. Please pray for them. Bro. John Wayne Purdy is the Bible class teacher. He always has a good lesson. That Sunday he talked about the use of the tongue based on James 3:1-12. In the worship

I preached on "Breaking the Alabaster Jar" from Matthew 26:6-13. It's a great lesson on the importance of Christians expressing their love for others.

April 7: Sunday night Madolyn and I visited with the Gloster Street church of Christ in Tupelo, Mississippi. Chad Ramsey has been the preacher there for 21 years. They have 7 elders and around 275 in attendance. They support two television programs, Day Spring and Search the Scriptures. They are involved in several mission works around the world. They have a strong youth program and a good mix of ages. We enjoyed our visit with the good folks there. Chad had been



Chad and Beverly Ramsey

preaching about "Growing in Wisdom" by looking at Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and James. He began a series on "Growing in Our Outreach" by looking at Acts 1 and 2. It was a very interesting lesson.

April 9: Madolyn and I attended a Gospel Meeting at the West President church of Christ in Greenwood, Mississippi. David Lipe was the guest speaker. He said the summation of his lesson was Romans 1:14-17. It deals with the



David Lipe and Luke Quinn

"Power of God to Salvation." His topics were: "What is the Gospel of Christ?" and "The Gospel is God's Power to Save." It was a wonderful lesson. Luke Quinn is the minister there. They are served by four elders and are involved with several ministries.

April 14: Madolyn and I visited with the Holly Springs church of Christ. Kerry Reid and Todd Sanderson are the bi-vocational ministers there. They

have four elders and around 80 in attendance. They support many mission works. They have a warehouse where they collect goods to send to World/Ukraine Missions.



The reason

Kerry and Kristi Reid

Madolyn and I visited there was to talk to them about helping in the support of the Christian Student Center at MDCC in Moorhead, Mississippi. They allowed me to talk to them in Bible Class about our ministry there. We appreciate the opportunity to do that. They were very interested in our work. In worship Kerry presented a lesson on "The Prayer of Jabez" from 1 Chronicles 4:9-10. He mentioned the first request that Jabez made, "Oh, that you would bless me." He asked the question, "What does it mean to be blessed?" It was a very good lesson. We enjoyed our visit.

Update for the CSC: The spring semester began on January 8. We had our first Wednesday night study on January 10. Since I was recovering from knee surgery, we lined up local guest speakers. It turned out that the men's basketball team had a game that night, so we had only one girl to come; Madolyn presented a lesson on 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 great snow and sleet storm, so no class. The third week we had five girls come, so again, Madolyn taught the class. It was a slow start to the semester, but we kept reaching out and praying that

God would help our numbers increase, and they did. February to March we averaged around 25 each Wednesday. Again, we are thankful for each student that comes. We thank JC Owens, Jason Zuehlke, and Jerry Pate for teaching the class in my absence. They all did a great job, and we appreciate

Continued on the next page



NEMCC Men Basketball team, NEMCC Women Basketball; (top right) WNBS with Bradley Pettis; (center right) WNBS Daryl Steiner; (far right) WNBS with Eddie

their willingness to help.

We hosted the basketball teams from Northeast Mississippi Community College on February 29. The CSC at the Booneville church of Christ hosted our teams in November. We wanted to return the favor and were happy to have both teams eat with us. Madolyn fixed her famous Lasagna for the meal. It was a fun night. That night at the basketball games the college honored all the area preachers. Jason, Madolyn, and I enjoyed a BBQ dinner and received gifts of ap-

preciation for helping our students at MDCC. We appreciate the school honoring us in this fashion.

Wednesday night, March 6, Bradley Pettis from Byhalia, MS, came and taught the class. We appreciate Bradley and Stacey coming all that way to teach. He is a teacher and associate minister at the Cornerstone church of Christ in Byhalia. We had 27 students.

Our theme this semester is "Bible Questions that Young People Ask."

We have considered "What happens when you die?" "What happens at the Judgment?" and "Did Christ really accomplish what He intended to?" Please pray that we can answer these and other questions in a biblical manner.

Madolyn's girls' class went well. It helped her develop some close relationships with the girls. Six of the girls from the softball team attend on a regular basis. Madolyn met in the dorm and at the CSC. I appreciate her determination to help these girls grow in Christ. The class ended when the girls' softball season began.

The month of April has seen our numbers go down. We are averaging about 10 students in our Wednesday night Bible study. On April 10,

Daryl Steiner and his family came to visit the CSC. Daryl taught the class and did a wonderful job of leading the class in a discussion of the message the disciples of Christ gave as they went throughout the world.

Our last class was April 24. We will attend three Freshman Orientations this summer. We thank you for your love and support of our ministry. Please keep us in your prayers. **MM**

Blessings, Eddie and Madolyn Lewis



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Who is your Pastor?

by Tim Hall, Minister
Central Church of Christ
Johnson City, TN

I can't tell you how many times I've been addressed as "Pastor". Usually, it's by people outside of my congregation, and I understand that it's used respectfully. I'm not upset when addressed in this way, but it's important that you understand – I'm not a pastor.

The religious title "pastor" comes to us from Latin, a word which means "shepherd". ("Pasture", an important concept for sheep, also comes from the same root.) Over time the word in the religious world has morphed to point to the preacher of a congregation. In several such groups, the preacher ("pastor") is the leading figure of that group.

The label "pastor" is used in the New Testament, not of preachers but of elders. A clear example is found in Acts 20 where Paul calls the "elders" of the church in Ephesus to come meet with him (v. 17). He pointed out to them that they were "overseers" of the church, and their responsibility was to "care for the church of God" (v. 28). "Care for" is from *poimeino*, a word which means "to shepherd".

It's important that the church has caring and watchful shepherds. Paul went on to note that "fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock" (Acts 20:29). But he was also clear that the role of shepherd was the elders' role, not the preacher's.

Peter agreed with this view, as evidenced by 1 Peter 5:1-2. He spoke to his fellow elders and charged them to "shepherd the flock of God that is among you." Once again, Peter used the same

three terms to describe the same office: "elders," "shepherds," and "overseers." For some reason, the religious world just hasn't gotten that message.

Peter made one other point that must not be missed: Jesus is "the Chief Shepherd" (1 Peter 5:4). Though there are shepherds on earth (the elders), they are yet subject to the will of Jesus. Elders have no right to change what the Lord has revealed. Their job is to guide and protect the flock, not to make adjustments to teachings and practices.

At Central we are blessed with seven godly elders. They deserve our respect and submission (see Hebrews 13:17) as long as they faithfully lead us in Christ's way. It would be good for us to pray for these shepherds on a regular basis.

So, who is your pastor? I thank you for any respect you might have for your preacher, but he is not your pastor (though some preachers serve in both roles – see 1 Timothy 5:17). As for me, I'm content to be your preacher, serving alongside you under our elders' watchful care. joycaster@gmail.com **MM**

(This is Tim's first article in The Messenger. He graduated from F-HC in 1976 with B.A. degrees in Bible and Communication; and received a master's degree in 1979. He is married to the former Joyce Edlin, whom he met at F-HC. Tim has preached for the Central Church of Christ in Johnson City, TN, since June of 1983. He has engaged in mission work in Peru, Nicaragua, and Ecuador, and conducted numerous gospel meetings. For the past nine years he has been heavily involved in prison ministry, which has become a passion of his.)



Tim Hall



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“Bodily Exercise”

by Dennis Doughty, Editor

Our Supreme Court has been in the news a lot of late. The High Court has met in half a dozen different locations during its history. It met in the Old Senate Chamber from 1860 to 1935.

The classical Corinthian architectural style building they now reside in was completed in 1935. In the 1940's, a large storage area on the fourth floor was converted into a workout gym and a small basketball court. Near the entrance to the gym is a sign that reads ***“PLAYING BASKETBALL AND WEIGHTLIFTING ARE PROHIBITED WHILE THE COURT IS IN SESSION.”*** Evidently, the Supreme Court recognizes that recreational activities, as beneficial as they can be, must be kept in proper perspective.



Dennis Doughty

Timothy was a young man and would have enjoyed physical activities. Paul wrote him and cautioned him saying, “For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come” (1 Tim. 4:8, KJV). Evidently, the High Court of Heaven recognizes that recreational activities, as beneficial as they can be, must be kept in proper perspective.

We live in a very leisure time, recreational, sport and hobby-centered culture. Each weekend and holiday we flock to billion-dollar sport arenas, glitzy Vegas-style casinos, luxury cruise ships or beautiful golf resorts.

An advertisement announcing the new professional football season stated, “When the NFL is back, Sunday becomes the most important day of the week.” This statement is such a sad commentary of our society. There is an element of truth to this. It could be that in NFL cities across the land from LA to Dallas, Atlanta

to New England, there are more people attending football games on Sundays than worship services. To the NFL, all non-football Sundays have little importance.

Paul did say that “bodily exercise” had some profit to it. It has its place. Most of us need a break at times. Our sports, hobbies, and vacations can help us stay physically and mentally healthy. After the apostles returned from their first mission trip, Jesus said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while...they went away in the boat to a secluded place by themselves” (Mark 6: 30-32).

The old proverb, first found in print way back in 1659, states, “All work and no play make Jack a dull boy.” The Lord Himself knew that we all need some diversion from the stress of the work week. Diversion, but not devotion, rest, but not idleness.

Let our recreation be a brief departure from the truly important things in life, things which lead to spiritual growth and service, and the promise of the life that is to come! Jesus taught, “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33). In other words, Study the scriptures more than the sports page!

Paul used the sports of his day to encourage us, “everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things,” he said, speaking of the athletes' training. “They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable” (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). A shelf full of trophies cannot compare to a “Crown of Righteousness”

The Justices of the Supreme Court knew that dedication to the matters at hand came first and foremost, so their gym was closed while the court was in session. So follow their lead; While the worship to God is in session on Sunday mornings, don't be in the gym! **MM**

Freed-Hardeman Men's Basketball Wins National Championship

Dignitaries and community members joined Freed-Hardeman University faculty, staff, and students in honoring the 2024 NAIA National Champions, FHU Men's Basketball, Tuesday, April 2! The Lions brought home the first national title for men's basketball (joining the 2018 national title held by FHU Women's Basketball) with their hard-fought win against Langston University in the final game in Kansas City, Missouri, March 26, 2024.

Congressman David Kustoff, who represents the 8th Congressional District, attended the ceremony to congratulate the national champions. He encouraged the team to relish the moment. “You have displayed selflessness, teamwork, and character; these are traits that will serve you well throughout your lives,” Kustoff told the team.

In the days since the team's big win, more accolades have poured in with head coach Drew Stutts winning NAIA's Coach of the Year award. Stutts, who is in his fifth season as the head coach for the FHU Lions, holds the record as the fastest FHU men's basketball

head coach to record 50 wins.

Ever the coach, Stutts used his moment on stage to encourage the FHU student body in chapel. “Belief is extremely powerful; sometimes we sell ourselves short, but with God's help, anything is possible,” he said. “Don't bury your talent.” **MM**



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

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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

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.

huntpe@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

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

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS CHURCH OF CHRIST

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

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

ANTIOCH CHURCH OF CHRIST

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MEIGG STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST,

a congregation of approximately 50 active members and located in Corinth, Ms, is seeking a full-time minister to fill the position of current minister. Submit resume and a video/audio of a sermon to **Meigg Street Church of Christ; P.O. Box 47, Corinth, MS 38834 by December 28, 2023. Paul Waddle: (662) 523-5708**

DEFUNIAK SPRINGS COLLEGE AVE.

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

Contact: Mack Moore 850-892-5376 or email

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. 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**

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

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

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

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. 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

JOHNSON GROVE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Johnson Grove Church of Christ in Bogue Chitto, Mississippi, is actively seeking to employ a full-time Associate/Youth minister but could be open to a bi-vocational person under the right circumstances. The primary focus will be ministering to our youth group of 20+ young people. please email:

Andrew Redd (Elder) aredd5268@gmail.com

Douglas Kimble (Minister) dkpreach@bell-south.net

VANCLEAVE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Is a small congregation of about 50-60 regular members, meeting in the small town of Vancleave in coastal Mississippi. We are currently led by three elders along with two deacons. Vancleave is a growing and safe community that we feel provides great opportunity for growth. If you are interested in serving with us, please send your resume and, if possible, two audio or video sermons to:

Vancleave church of Christ , 11101 Hwy 57 Vancleave, MS 39565

Or email it to: vcocministry@vancleavevmschurch.org

WINONA CHURCH OF CHRIST

Is currently seeking out a qualified individual to fill the role of outreach minister. Responsibilities include, but are not completely limited to, planning, organizing, and coordinating church events designed to draw interest to the congregation. **Contact Brad Gray**

662-801-0437 coachgray8@gmail.com

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.

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>**

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by Dennis Doughty "INSCRIPTIONS"

"The Works of the Devil"

Why is there so much evil in this world? Why do good people suffer? Why all this carnage and murder in our nation? Why so many wars around the world? Why? I heard this statement recently: "What lies behind something you can't explain, is something you can explain." That "something" we can explain is the devil, "the serpent of old" (Rev. 20:2), he is at work in this world.

The devil lost his effort to overthrow God, and "was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him" (Rev. 12:9). John tells us that "the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jn. 3:8).

Jesus "appeared" in this world, overcame the devil's temptations, and by His resurrection overcame death, Satan's greatest tool. Jesus destroyed "the works of the devil," and gave the world good over evil, healing over suffering, peace over anxiety, love over hate, hope over despair, life over death. With Christ in your life you can "resist the devil and he will flee from you" (Jms. 4:7). It is hard to make sense of the things we see on the five o'clock news. But I can know that those who do such evil things are "of the devil." That I can explain.

The Lord's Supper

"He took some bread, and after a blessing He broke it, and gave it to them, and said, 'Take it, this is My body'" (Mark 14:22). The body of Jesus was a flesh and blood body. He freely offered it as a human sacrifice. "But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God" (He. 10:12). He gave His body, broken for us, on the cross.

"And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank from it, and He said, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many'" (Mark 12:24-25). His innocent, sinless blood was willingly poured out on Golgotha's soil. It was "through His own blood" spilled on the cross, that we have "redemption" (He. 9:12).

Unleavened bread, fruit of the vine, these two simple items become sacred in meaning when we partake of them together; "the cup of blessing which we bless" Paul wrote, is "a sharing in the blood of Christ," and "the bread which we break" is "a sharing in the body of Christ" (1 Cor. 10:16). May it always be a special, holy time in your week, in your spiritual life. A time Jesus asks YOU to "remember" what He did for you. A time for your life to pause a moment, to be still, under the shadow of the cross.

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

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Question Box - June 2024

Jesus Taught Absolute

Truth!

True or False

- ____ (1) Jesus taught there is only one way to God. Jesus said, "I am the _____, the _____ and the life." (John ____:6)
 ____ (2) If you are interested in truth, then you will listen to Jesus. "Everyone that is of the _____ heareth my _____." (John 18: __)
 ____ (3) God's word is truth! "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy _____ is _____." (John ____:17)
 ____ (4) Jesus said there were many ways to God. (John 14:6)
 ____ (5) Jesus said God created us in the beginning as _____ and _____. (Matt. 19:____)
 ____ (6) Jesus said marriage is to be between a man and a woman or between two men or two women. (Matt. 19:5)

- ____ (7) Jesus said, "What therefore God hath _____ together, let not man put _____." (Matt 19: ____)
 ____ (8) Jesus said, If thy brother sins against you, you should just grin and bear it or just talk about him to everyone you meet. (Luke 17:3)
 ____ (9) Jesus commanded his followers to "...go _____ therefore, and _____ all nations, _____ them..." (Matt. ____: 19)
 ____ (10) Jesus invites us to follow His principles voluntarily. Jesus didn't force the rich man to redistribute his wealth. (Matt. 19:16-21)

Question Box answers for March MM 2024

- | | | | |
|-----------|--------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1. Every | 4. Spiritual | 6. teaching | 9. reads |
| 2. Psalms | Songs | 7. name | 10. themselves |
| 3. Hymns | 5. worship | 8. add | |

Prepared by Glenn & Beth Beall, foyfoyirish@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"

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