



Magnolia Messenger

JAN/FEB, 2008 -- VOLUME 30; NUMBER 1 -- Our 30th Year

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

MAGNOLIA MESSENGER
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After 70 Years Together

Wiley and Margaret Pearson were finally separated by death. She is left. And, there she stands... pondering and wondering... with reasons to be thankful and hopeful.

Christmas in September

Several months ago my June and I visited a congregation in Winchester, VA. Upon entering the building, we were encouraged when the preacher, upon seeing June, stated, "I know who you are. I read the Magnolia Messenger." So thankful, we are, that the MM now goes into every state of the nation.

We also were very pleased to be a participant in the congregational singing that Sunday morning. The songs selected included, "O Come, All Ye Faithful" and "Hark, The Herald Angels Sing".

Apparently that church did not think they had to wait until December to "celebrate in song" the birth of our Lord. Personally, I like the idea of having "Christmas" (i. e., celebrating His birth) in September and in February and in April and in (alf/editor)

Tornado Destroys Caledonia Mississippi Church building

See Page 15

Minister says, "The Church is Far From Gone"

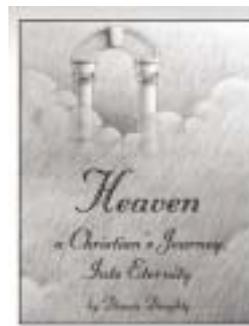


Magnolia Bible College
27th Annual
Benefit Dinner & Silent Auction

Featuring **Terry Bowden**

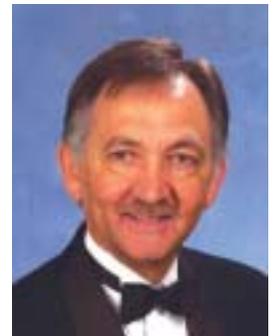
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Make Plans to Attend!
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Our Next
MM RV Rally
features
the man
&
His book
A Study of Heaven
by
Dennis Doughty

(Details on Page 11)



"Mississippi's GOOD NEWS Newspaper" -- Serving Mississippi, Louisiana and Adjoining States



Pictured above is a recent class photo of students taking *The History of the Church in Acts*, a course offered by **Fulton Bible Institute** in Fulton, MS during the Fall term of 2007. The class averaged **57** students per class from **17** different churches from the Northeast Mississippi area. (Details, including names of students on page 17)

QUESTION (A Student Asks)

According to the Bible, being led by the Spirit of God is what assures us we are children of God. Many people talk about feeling the Holy Spirit leading them and God speaking to them, but I have never experienced anything like that. Is something wrong with me? (A Student)

RESPONSE (See Page 3)

READER RESPONDS

I am mailing a small check for help in sending out the Messenger. I have moved and somehow I have lost the Magnolia Messenger. Please put me back on the mailing list...Thank you. I really do miss my paper. It is such a good missionary work. (Donna D. Rohm, Mobile, AL)

(Read More Response on page 2)



Paul Williams
Meteorologist or Minister?
How About Both?

(See Metro-East Church, Page 5)

This Fall (October)
- Lord Willing -
Travel with Christians
to the Northeast
Fall Colors
Wonderful Opportunity
- Two Trips -
Ship or Bus
Make Your Choice!
(See Page 15)

Study SATAN
The Question Box
(Page 20)

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"Put them in mind... to be ready unto every GOOD work." (Titus 3:1)

Readers' Response

(Comments & Suggestions Invited; Criticisms Considered)

Dear Publishing Representative,

I am thankful to God for the good work you are doing by sending out these publications to people all over the United States. I am truly appreciative for my copy. Here is a donation toward the expense of this work. May God continue to bless each and everyone of you. In Christian Love, (Eddie & Joyce Dixon, Pritchard, AL)

Dear brother Franks,

I am your brother in Christ, Felipe G. Cariaga. I am from Manila, Philippines. I serve as minister for the Manila Church of Christ and direct a small preaching school, the Manila School of Evangelism.

I and my wife, Clarita are visiting brother and sister David & Joan Cummins in Cookeville, Tennessee. Brother David handed me your last issue of the Magnolia Messenger. (Sept. & Oct. 2007)

After reading through I am so impressed and edified by the articles. I am writing to make an earnest request that if it is possible could you add me in your mailing address list to be one of the recipients of the Magnolia Messenger starting with the Nov. & Dec. issue? If it is not too much asking, I would appreciate it very much if you could send us old/back issues for our students?...

Hoping this earnest request merits your immediate attention and favor. I am Brother in Christ, (Felipe G. Cariaga, P. O. Box 642, 1099 Manila CPO, Philippines)

Dear Bro. Franks,

Dear brother & sister Franks

Enclosed are our answers to the Question Box. We host a Bible study in our home on Tuesday evenings. Last evening we used "The Question Box" as our study guide. We truly enjoy your publication. May God continue to bless your efforts. Please add this recently baptized member to your mailing list for copies of The Magnolia Messenger. (M/M Terry Newkirk, Waveland, MS)

I look forward to receiving the Magnolia Messenger for sometime now, and I am encouraged by each topic you address, such as "About the Assembly" by brother Ken Joines. (Earline Huntley, Memphis, TN)

Dear Bro. Franks,

I enjoy reading news of churches in Mississippi, especially Tishomingo and Alcorn counties. As I grew up in the 40's and 50's we attended gospel meetings at many of these congregations. Daddy had an old flat-bed truck and we'd pick up neighbors along the way. In 1949 some 20 people were baptized that had ridden the old truck to meetings at Berea, Pleasant Grove, and Burnsville.... (Helen Burney Mann, Bear Creek, AL)

Thanks for reading and 'riting to the Magnolia Messenger

Magnolia Messenger

Church of Christ - Kosciusko

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

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Our Elders Led Us in Prayers

Biblically speaking, it seems there is something rather special about the prayers of elders. You may recall that when James wrote about the sick, he said, "Call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him...." (James 5:14,15)

While it is true that James penned his epistle during a time (the first century) when God often answered prayer **miraculously** through the hands of those endued with miraculous gifts; yet, is it not still the case that godly elders are special folks in Christ's church? Certainly they are among the "righteous". And, James wrote, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16)

On the first church gathering of the new year (Wednesday, January 2, 2008) my June and I were privileged to be in Kosciusko. We were blessed to be a part of a moving and meaningful service which emphasized two special acts of worship -- Singing and Praying. **Ben Jackson**, a ministerial student at MBC, led congregational singing. After the first two songs, **Marlin Ivey**, (one of the four elders) led the first of four prayers by our elders. He led us in giving thanks for our great country and the blessings we, as Americans, enjoy daily -- especially our freedom. We followed in prayer as Marlin led us in asking for continued freedom and for restoration of true peace. We prayed for our world leaders and those serving our country in special ways.

Then, there were two more songs. Afterward, elder **Jim Dendy** led us in giving thanks for the special mission works of the Kosciusko church. We thanked God for the efforts being made both at home and abroad. Specifically, we prayed for God's blessings to continue with the work of MBC, the "Magnolia Messenger" and the missionaries supported by the Kosciusko church -- in Africa, the Ukraine, Scotland, Honduras and Mexico.

Then, after two more songs directed by brother Ben, elder **John Gardner** led us with special petitions made for MBC -- its students and staff. We expressed thanks for the good influence the school has had and is having on the state, nation and the world. We asked God's blessings upon efforts of the local church in reaching the lost of the community.

After the singing of "Victory in Jesus" and "Hold to God's Unchanging Hand", we followed as elder **Dewey Lawrence** led us in prayer on behalf of the preachers, elders, deacons and teachers of the congregation. We thanked God for the talents possessed and for

Turn to PRAYER on Page 16

MARRIAGE

"Had in Honor by All"

Hebrews 13:4

Our gracious God is so good. Shortly after the Almighty created man, He observed, "It is *not good* that the man should be *alone*; I will make him an *help meet* for him" (Gen. 2:18). So, God removed a rib from the side of the sleeping man and, skillfully "builded he into a woman" (2:22).

When introduced to his brand-new God-given companion, Adam commented, "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman.... (2:23)." As evidence of God's plan for the *permanence* of marriage, in contrast to the *temporary* normal parent-child relationship, Holy Scriptures declared, "Therefore shall a man *leave* his father and his mother, and shall *cleave* unto his wife...." (verse 24). Thousands of years later, when Jesus spoke of the lasting durability of marriage, He said, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19:6).

So, according to the Bible, there was the first man and the first woman. They were created and brought together by God. He made *one* man and *one* woman.

Those of us who enjoy family continue to exclaim, "God was/is good." **Family**. What a blessing; then and now!

Each was made for the other. This first *couple* (male & female) formed the first "home". Their "marriage" was a God-approved mental, spiritual and

physical union. The two truly became one flesh.

The Bible says that Adam "knew" his wife, Eve. Into this holy and sacred union, in the course of time, the first child (Cain) was born; then another (Abel). In the beginning, a precious *family* was formed; the *home*, as God would have it, was lovingly designed and firmly established. Those of us who enjoy family continue to exclaim, "God was/is good." **Family**. What a blessing; then and now!

Satan cannot stand happiness. He doesn't want God's crown of creation (humans) to enjoy "a taste of heaven" on earth. Very soon Satan entered that first home. The un-invited visitor was the devil -- that ole **liar**; the "deceiver" (see John 8:44). From the very beginning, mankind's worst enemy, Satan, sought to pervert the divine plan of God for the home.

In the form of a serpent, the devil entered the paradise home where the first couple lived and enjoyed their daily "walk and talk" with God. The Great Adversary of man exercised his cunning craftiness through deceitful temptation, resulting in the introduction of sin in the blissful home of the first couple. Things went from bad to worse. Adam and Eve soon came to experience the consequences of sin which brought great sorrow and suffering into their lives. Very quickly, they were enveloped with unimaginable heartache. One of their sons was murdered and their other named son was the murderer! (Read Genesis 3 and 4.) Yes, the first home was in serious trouble.

Sadly, the troubles multiplied. Cain, the killer, became "a fugitive and a vagabond." Claiming that his punishment was "greater than I can bear," God set a mark on Cain for his own protection (Gen. 4). It wouldn't be all that long before one of Cain's descendants, Lamech, would introduce the practice of polygamy. Lamech was married to two wives (Adah and Zillah) at the same time (Gen. 4:19).

Polygamy was another deviation from God's design for the home. And, even though "respectable" men, in those earlier days of *spiritual darkness*, practiced polygamy, serious problems were created for the home, followed by much heartache. Consider the



A. L. Franks
EDITOR

"...the polygamous practices of even those considered "good men" of the Old Testament were not in harmony with God's original plan of **one** man for **one** woman -- for **life!**"

See MARRIAGE on Page 16

Bible Questions Answered

QUESTION: According to the Bible, being led by the Spirit of God is what assures us we are children of God. Many people talk about feeling the Holy Spirit leading them and God speaking to them, but I have never experienced anything like that. Is something wrong with me? (A Student)

RESPONSE: The fact that you have never heard or felt God or his Spirit talking to you is no indication anything is wrong with you or with your relationship with God.

The Bible passage the questioner references is Romans 8:14: "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." The conclusion is correct that one who is not led by God's Spirit is not God's faithful child. A very important question, however, is, "How do God and his Spirit lead us or communicate with us?"

Through Scripture?

The Spirit certainly leads us through Scripture.

Peter speaks of "the Scripture... which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David" (Acts 1:16). Jesus said, "David himself, in the Holy Spirit, declared," introducing Psalm 110:1. Peter says Scripture is produced by men who "spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). So Scripture is the word of the Holy Spirit.

To the Thessalonian Christians Paul said, "And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers" (1 Thessalonians 2:13). And to the Corinthians, "If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized" (1 Corinthians 14:37-38).

When the inspired words of apostles and prophets were originally heard or are presently read, it is a clear teaching of Scripture that they are words from God. When we do what we read we are told to do, we are being led by God and by his Spirit.

Certainly our relationship with the Holy Spirit (as well as with the Father and the Son) is a personal one; he is a person and we are persons. He is, however, a Spirit person, not a flesh and blood person. Our relationship therefore is not sensory, not physically seen or felt. That does not make it impersonal. Scripture is a loving letter from a living God, and by reading it we may personally commune with the divine person whose word it is.

In Other Ways?

Some say they hear an audible voice. However, most of those who

speak of being led directly by the Spirit today rely on urges, impulses, strong inner convictions.

There seem to be two major unanswered questions regarding this view of the Spirit's leading.

1) What is really being claimed?

Those who claim the Holy Spirit's direct leading almost always believe also in the inspiration, authority and inerrancy of Scripture. They almost hasten to say, at least when asked, that their communication from the Spirit does not possess the same authority or assurance of truth as do the Scriptures. That is to their credit.

However, by the time the direct guidance of the Spirit is sufficiently hedged and explained so that every Christian is not deemed to be as inspired as the apostles, what is the Spirit deemed to have done? What value is there to a non-authoritative, possibly fallible impulse, and to what degree can or should it be attributed to God's Spirit?

Protestations to the contrary notwithstanding, these voices and impulses are often used to convey divine authority.

A church's Pastor is strongly convicted that his congregation needs to sell their present facility and move. He may say "God told me" the church needs to do that, or at least maintain he "feels led" in that decision. Why does he say that if not to put God's authority behind the decision he is urging as best for his church.

His congregation may be disposed to believe he is following God's will, unless there are those who feel strongly that selling and moving is the wrong thing to do. In that case they may oppose the Pastor; but surely they are not opposing what they believe God wills for their church to do.

One or more of them may say "God told me," or may "feel led," to stay.

That brings up the second often unaddressed question: Which one, if either, really heard directly from God, and how can someone who listens to such claims decide whether an authentic word from God has been heard?

2) How does one know it is God's Spirit one is hearing or feeling?

There are incidences, extreme to be sure but not all that rare, of people believing God has told them to do something which is actually contrary to the will of God revealed in Scripture.

Men and women, married but

Response by Cecil May, Jr.



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not to each other, have "fallen in love" and become convinced that God is telling them to leave their mates and run off together. After all, there are few urges stronger than that kind of urge can be.

Parents who kill their children often say they heard voices in their head and believed God was telling them what to do.

Devout people who believe God communicates with them directly will quickly say they would not believe or follow any spirit or impulse that told them to do something which violated Scripture. A question is nevertheless raised: If an impression which would otherwise be deemed to be the voice of God can give counsel contrary to the Bible, what assurance is there that a similar impression is God's word when it speaks on some matter not directly touched on by the Bible?

The lack of any criteria to distinguish between impulses and urges that arise within ourselves because of our human desires or that come perhaps from the devil, and those that are believed to come from God, is a very serious problem. Many adherents, in my experience, refuse to even acknowledge the problem, much less try to suggest a reasonable criteria. Generally it just becomes, "You just know."

But how is that different from the Mormon claim to "just know" by "the inner witness of the Spirit" that the Book of Mormon is true?

What Does the Scripture Say?

Two types of Scripture texts are used by advocates of direct Spirit leading: those specifically addressed to apostles and prophets directly related to their special call and inspiration; and those that speak of the Spirit's leading and

guidance but do not specify inward or personal guidance.

Since there is not enough time or space to examine all such texts, we will look at one of each type.

To the apostles

about their special inspiration

A Scripture often cited to show the Spirit speaks to us today is John 16:13. "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come."

In this discourse, going all the way back to John 13, Jesus is with just his apostles and is talking to them. That fact alone would not show that today's disciples are not included in the promise, since Jesus said many things to the apostles that were to be passed on to us.

All Bible believers recognize that God did grant special powers to the apostles and early prophets and used them to reveal truths to subsequent generations. It should not seem strange that some promises relating to that would be given them. The text itself and its context, not the presuppositions we bring to the text, should determine whether this is a special promise to the apostles or a general promise to all disciples.

Note a parallel promise in the same discourse: "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:26). This promise obviously only applies to those who had seen Jesus in the flesh and had personally heard him say things that the Spirit could cause them to remember.

Even more significant, however, is the scope of the promise, "He will guide you into all the truth." The apostles were given that promise and have now fulfilled its purpose, having given us a Bible that contains all the truth that is necessary for the man of God to "be competent, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). What believers today would really claim to have been guided into all truth, or its negative corollary, to be kept from all error, as the apostles were?

About guidance

without specifying personal, inward guidance

The text that our questioner referenced certainly states that we must be led by the Spirit, but those who read that as "inwardly led" or "led by impulses and urges" must bring those qualifiers and assumptions to the text; they do not get them from the text.

Paul continues in that passage to say that the Spirit "testifies" or "bears witness." "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry,

'Abba! Father!' The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him" (Romans 8:14-17).

How does the Spirit "bear witness"? The inspired author of Hebrews tells us one way he does that: "And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, 'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,' then he adds, 'I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more'" (Hebrews 10:15-17).

The Holy Spirit witnesses, this text says, through the words of Scripture, specifically Jeremiah 31:31, 34 which are quoted here as his witness.

How does the Spirit "bear witness with our spirit that we are sons (children) of God"?

What does the Spirit say concerning who are "sons of God"? One place this "witness of the Spirit" can be found is Galatians 3:26-27: "For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

So the Spirit says those who have faith in Jesus Christ and have been baptized into Christ are children of God. If my spirit can say, "I have faith in Christ and have been baptized into Christ," then the Spirit is bearing witness with my spirit that I am a child of God.

That is a much more reliable word from the Spirit than a feeling, impulse or nudge that may not be from God at all.

Conclusion

I believe God and his Spirit are alive and active in the world. The Holy Spirit dwells in the faithful child of God as the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it. God is King of kings and Lord of lords and rules in the affairs of men and nations. A sparrow cannot fall without his notice nor an empire arise without his blessing. He works all things to the good of those who love him.

God has not performed his last act of providence, but he has given his last revelation. Just as Christ was sacrificed "once for all" for the sins of the world (Hebrews 9:12) so the faith has been delivered "once for all" to the saints (Jude 3).

God has offered his last atoning sacrifice and spoken his last word in Jesus Christ. Both the sacrifice and the revelation are sufficient. His once-for-all sacrifice serves as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). His once-for-all word, through the knowledge of Christ it provides, supplies for us "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3).

Holding Up Tired Hands Or Tripping Up Beautiful Feet?

(Exodus 17:8-13)

Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said to Joshua, "Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand." So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. (NKJV)

- Travis Brown -

Joshua was on the field in battle and Moses was on the hill in prayer. It wasn't Joshua's hands that were heavy in fighting, but Moses' hands were heavy in interceding. Spiritual battles are very taxing. One can become exhausted mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Though the above reference and application can be made of any of God's leaders, I want to turn our attention to preachers of the Gospel for a moment.

Growing up in a preaching family and having preached for fifteen years myself, I am somewhat familiar with the rewards and discouragements of preaching. I know what it is like to be running on empty and feel like there is nowhere to turn. I stand amazed at how God has lifted me up during those times through the encouragement of a brother or sister in Christ. When needed the most, someone always came through with a kind word or deed; taking my tired hands and holding them up until I regained my strength. They never knew just how much I needed their thoughtfulness at that time. I wish there was some way to thank each one individually for what they did. Perhaps one day the sentiment can be clearly conveyed and understood.

Those who decide to go into the ministry make tremendous sacrifices. They sacrifice family time for study as they prepare and equip themselves while gaining an education. Many times family plans are interrupted by a phone call from the hospital. Then there is the call at 3:00 a.m. of a family crisis after an exhausting day of sermon



Travis Brown

preparation, visitation and supporting little Johnny's ball game. A wedding last week, a funeral this week, two sermons, two classes, a bulletin article, a radio program, planning a VBS, trying to restore peace between Sister Jones and Sister Smith, visiting a new family, trying to bring a wayward family back, and on and on and on — hands get heavy and hearts get weary. Preachers need support and encouragement. We need more brethren like Aaron and Hur who take on the task of holding up the tired hands of others.

While Exodus mentions hands, Romans talks of feet. (Romans 10:13-15) For "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!" NKJV

Sadly, there is no shortage of those who make it their business to trip up the feet of those carrying the Gospel to others. Though the apostle Paul had wonderful friends like Epaphroditus and Justus, he also had his share of problems with those like Alexander the coppersmith who "did him much harm" (2 Timothy 4:14). A preacher expects to be treated harshly by those of the world. Jesus said this would be the case (Matthew 10:22; John 15:18-19). However, when mistreatment comes from the brethren it is not an easy recovery. Some of the wounds that run the deepest are caused by our own brethren. Though sometimes unintentional, things are still said and done that result in tripping and pulling down instead of lifting up. Do we treat the preacher and his family in ways that we ourselves would not like to be treated? Do we impose on his privacy and time needed with his family? Do we put

pressure on him to accept our agenda over someone else's? Do we put him in uncomfortable positions of having to choose between standing up for himself or giving in so that he can keep his job? Do we expect him to do the work of an evangelist, and an elder, and a deacon, and an education director, and a maintenance man?

Preaching is one of the most difficult tasks one can undertake. We can either help our preachers to continue fulfilling the greatest task on earth or we can discourage them and even perhaps drive them away from the ministry or even the church altogether. It is painfully apparent that we are in dire need for more preachers today. We are continuing to lose more than we are gaining. If all Christians were more committed to making preaching more of a joy instead of a burden, perhaps we would have more young men wanting to go into the ministry.

Let us be more determined to turn the current tide and offer a brighter hope for the church tomorrow. Please continue to pray for us at Magnolia Bible College. If we are to continue to be a success we need your earnest prayers, monetary support and for you to help us contact those who are willing to make the sacrifices to become Gospel preachers. While contemplating the lives of preachers, please remember this — Though there are sacrifices, difficulties and discouragements along the way, the rewards far outweigh the discouragements. (Mt. 5:11-12; Heb. 11:24-26)

The condition of the church tomorrow is dependent upon our actions today. May we ALL be more determined to be listed among those who are *holding up tired hands* and never be guilty of *tripping up beautiful feet*.

Travis Brown

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Thank YOU for Reading the MM!

Spirit

(Continued from page 3)

No religious view is more fraught with future danger than the view which equates one's own strong urges and impulses with a word from God. No life is more certainly pleasing to God and bound for eternal fellowship with him than that which follows the leading of the Spirit through his word revealed in Scripture.

The Existence of God

Intelligent Design

- Seth Sullivan -

Can something come from nothing? Any sane person will conclude that this is not reasonable. If there is intelligence, then there must have been intelligence in the beginning. If something is in existence, then there must have been a Creator.

In Psalm 19:1, David states "The heavens declare the glory of God." The glory of God can be seen all around! His "invisible

attributes", as Romans 1:20 says, can be clearly seen throughout the earth.

Consider the design of man - how all the body parts function. Each system has its own function which ensures the survival of the entire body. Our bodies are very complex! Our body has many systems such as a self-restoring, self-repairing healing system, an extensive blood circulatory system, an unfathomable reproductive system, etc. Did these systems just come into place by chance?

The Bible says in Psalm 139:4, "I will give thanks to you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well." Consider how the human body

must have food and water for survival. God, in his providence, has provided for man the fruits of the earth. Fields yield crops, plants produce fruit, and springs bring forth water. Therefore, we can conclude that God made the earth for mankind's enjoyment.

There is perfect order between man and the earth. David wrote in Psalm 139:15, "My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and

curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth." Moses would write in Exodus 26:36 of God being the "needlework." In 1 Corinthians 12:18, the Apostle Paul wrote, "But God has put all parts of our body together in the way that he decided is best" (Contemporary English Version).

Where does chaos exist in man? There are no imperfections, nor are there any systems lacking that are necessary for our survival. The order and function of a human body is a direct result of intelligent design. Thus, take comfort in knowing that God is in control!

address:

Seth Sullivan

Lake Harbour Church of Christ
338 Lake Harbour Drive
Ridgeland, MS 39157-4106

India Continues to Call

1,100,000,000 Souls

You may remember, Jesus commanded, "Go ye into all the world... preach the gospel to every creature." (May we never forget the Greatest of all Commissions!) In years gone by, many dedicated American Christians have heard the "Call from India" and have gone over to help evangelize that great nation of 1,100,000,000 precious people who need Jesus Christ more than anything else on earth or in heaven. Among the many Indian mission minded folks is a couple who live in the Meridian area of Mississippi and worship with the church known as "Duffee". They are Irven and Betty Skinner.

The Skinners are seeking to carrying on a mission effort in the state of Andhra Pradesh which was begun by Irven's Dad -- **Winfield Skinner**. Plans are for the Skinners to take out time from their regular work and return to India this coming March and work with an established orphanage known as "Skinner's Garden" which cares for more than 100 homeless children.

We hope to have a report on their visit in an upcoming edition of the MM. Also, we ask that you be anticipating information about the involvement of **Paul C. Swindle**, former preacher for the church in Duffee, Mississippi, who is determined to devote his "retirement years" to being a missionary in India. Our prayer is that God may richly bless our dedicated brethren who are seeking to answer the call from India with its population of more than one billion souls!



Betty and Irven Skinner



22nd Annual Youth Night at the Collins Church of Christ

October 20, 2007, was the occasion of the 22nd annual Youth Night at the Collins church in Collins, Mississippi. **Paul McElroy** of Columbia, **Tyler Young** of Hattiesburg, **Steve Carter** of Collins retold the wonderful stories of Joseph, Moses and Daniel -- emphasizing the *right* choices they made in their lives. **Tyler and Shun Evans** of Tylertown drove home the importance of following these heroes of faith *in* the decisions that we make in our journey.

In the evening fireside devotional Tyler emphasized the need for moral absolutes in our world where these things are not always appreciated.

The Collins church has sponsored this event since 1985, with the single exception of the Katrina interruption. It has always been a highlight of our year, being attended not only by young people from area churches but also by many from the community. (Sent to MM by Steve Carter)

A Very Special Thanks To Each Reader Who Has Chosen to Financially Support the Magnolia Messenger!

Growing Metro-East Church in Jackson Has Moved into Their "New" Facilities



Paul Williams, Minister
Proclaiming the Word - 11/11/07



Home of Metro East Church of Christ
1820 Highway 80 West in Jackson, Mississippi

It was a privilege to visit the Metro-east church in November of this past year where we found that the number of disciples was growing. A few months earlier, the congregation was blessed to move into their recently acquired and renovated facilities on Highway 80 West in Jackson, Mississippi.

Paul Williams, a well known and respected meteorologist for channel 3 TV in Jackson, also enjoys serving the Metro-east Church as their talented and enthusiastic preacher.

As I entered the old building which was once home to a car dealership, I couldn't help but be impressed with the changes that had taken place. Dedicated

workers have fashioned the old building into a beautiful and spacious auditorium which is very comfortable and very suitable for worship services.

A lot has been accomplished; however, the church has not yet had the time nor the funds to completely renovate all of their facilities; therefore, on the day of our visit, several different classes were meeting simultaneously in the large auditorium. The study groups were far enough apart so that the atmosphere was conducive to effective class participation and learning.

Brother Williams had told me a few weeks earlier how they had, with God's help, managed to buy the property. He said that the

property had belonged to a member of the church of Christ who was living in northeast Mississippi. The Christian brother, as owner, was willing to donate to the church a large part of the asking price.

The Metro-east church, celebrating their 7th anniversary in January of this year, is aggressively moving forward, looking to the future, as they seek God's guidance to be with their daily efforts to build up the Cause of Jesus Christ.

May the good Lord richly bless their earnest efforts to glorify His name as they continue to proclaim the gospel of Christ to a lost and dying community. (editor)

Now, You Take it from There!



by
John Simpson
4073 Stillwood Dr
Memphis, TN 38128-3056
j38128sim@yahoo.com

Keep Your Name Clean, Polished and Bright!

Your name is sacred, so guard it with every atom of your being. From Creation, name-giving is ordained of God. In the beginning of earth-time, God named the component parts of the cosmos, declaring them all to be good (Gen. 1:1-18). Then, His first created son (Adam) was granted grace to affix proper names to all living creatures (Gen. 2:19), including mankind (Gen. 2:23).

Your name is priceless. Holy writ declares it precious, and it is to be protected at all cost: "A good name is to be more desired than great wealth, favor is better than silver and gold" (Prov 22:1). Your birth name was affixed without your consent, but as one made in His image, God expects you to wear it admirably. Jesus was given "...the name which is above all names" (Phil. 2:9), and is our perfect example for public decorum. Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote: "If your name is to live at all, it is much better to have it live in peoples' hearts than only in their minds".

Your name is eternally personal. Identity theft is unknown to heaven's record. DNA, as great as it is to forensic science, does not

begin to compare with the accuracy of the divine roll book. God knows you by name, will address you by name and reward you by name.

No finger prints, hair samples or "mug shots" will need be produced in evidence. Roll Call will determine your destiny: "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds...And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:12,15).

The apostle Paul knew fully that God chose him personally (Gal. 1:15), called him by name (Acts 9:4) and will reward him by personal recognition: "...I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day" (1 Tim. 1:12).

Your name is sacred, priceless and eternally personal. So, keep your name clean, polished and bright.

Now, you take from there!

Roy Watson, WBS Teacher, Died at 82

Roy Watson and his wife, Nell, were married for 61 years. She has been left to mourn his passing and to treasure her hope for him. Only death could separate them.

Brother Roy was a talented man who demonstrated his love for the Lord by faithfulness to Christ's Church. He and sister Nell worshipped with the Siwell Road congregation in Jackson.

Brother Watson was a great encourager to those of us associated with the MM. Perhaps his greatest accomplishments involved his dedicated work with **World Bible School**. It was stated during the funeral service that brother Roy had conducted over **13,000** Bible studies with students throughout the world, of whom "hundreds were baptized into Christ."

Mark Ray, preacher for the Siwell Road church, summarized the life of Roy Watson by saying, "Roy took what he had and gave it

to the Lord." He quoted brother Roy who had stated, "My life is filled with purpose." There can be no doubt but that his death inspires hope. Truly, as Mark said, "His legacy lives on."

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Why So Many Denominations?

Are churches of Christ a "borderline cult" like Jim Jones' or David Koresh's church in Waco, Texas? Or, are we just another denomination? Just who are we?

I Timothy 4:1-5
Article # 3 in Series

Editor's Note: By special permission, we are pleased to publish the third in a series of lessons, preached in 2006 on nationwide television, by brother Mack Lyon of Edmond, Oklahoma. These studies were in response to a program aired on CNN-TV. All four sermons are available in a booklet by addressing:

In Search of the Lord's Way
P. O. Box 371
Edmond, Oklahoma 73083
800-321-8633
searchtv@aol.com



Mack Lyon

- Mack Lyon -

Are churches of Christ a "borderline cult" like Jim Jones' or David Koresh's church in Waco, Texas? Or, are we just another denomination? Just who are we? Let me introduce us to you today, will you?

Thank you, thank you, my friend, for joining our Bible study *In Search of the Lord's Way* for becoming a Christian and living the Christian life.

The first four books of the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, reveal to us God's perfect pattern for Christian living in the person of Jesus Christ. Acts, the fifth book, tells us how to become one of His disciples. It gives example after example of true conversion to Christ and His way of life.

The letters, or the epistles, beginning with Paul's to the Romans, reveal to us the perfect pattern for the church that Jesus established. Although no one has ever measured up to the perfect pattern for the Christian's personal life, as it is revealed in Jesus, all true disciples keep striving for it. And the same is true with the perfect pattern for church life. No church I have ever known has ever measured up perfectly to the pattern for the Lord's church, but many of us keep striving for it. And it is far better to aim for the perfect and miss it, than to aim at an imperfect one of human origin and attain it. Don't you agree?

In all our programs this month, we are responding to... a charge against churches of Christ on the Nancy Grace segment of the CNN Evening News program awhile back — that churches of Christ are a young "cult-like sect," established by Alexander Campbell some 150 years or so ago.

Of course, anyone who knows anything at all about churches of Christ knows we are not "a cult like

sect,"— like Jim Jones' cult, in which, well, more than 800 people committed suicide with him in Guyana a few years ago; or the David Koresh fellow whose cult was at the heart of the terrible Waco, Texas incident not too long ago...

In the message last week [*issue-MM*] we studied what the Bible says about "Who Began the Church and When?" Today we will be discussing -- first, a departure from original Christianity, which departure is foretold in the Scriptures themselves, and secondly, we will be studying some efforts at reforming the apostate church and the rise of denominationalism.

Next week [*issue,MM*] we will explore the urgent need for returning to pure, undefiled Christianity as it is revealed in your Bible. We are glad you are with us; we pray we will both be blessed by our study...

We are reading from the apostle Paul's first letter to Timothy, in chapter 4, beginning at verse one. "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having

No church I have ever known has ever measured up perfectly to the pattern for the Lord's church, but many of us keep striving for it. And it is far better to aim for the perfect and miss it, than to aim at an imperfect one of human origin and attain it. Don't you agree?

their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." Now, we read through verse five...

In Acts 20, verses 17 through

38, I believe, is the apostle Paul's farewell to the elders of the church at Ephesus. And in that passage he says, "...take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves."

In the passage we read just awhile ago, in his first letter to Timothy, Paul wrote, "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith" (I Timothy 4:1). When he wrote his farewell to Timothy, he wrote it again. It was a warning worth repeating! This time he said, "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (2 Timothy 4, verses 1 to 4).

The apostle Peter also warned: "...there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed" (2 Peter 2, verses 1 and 2).

These and other such prophecies began to be fulfilled before the end of the very first century. The church at Ephesus is an excellent example of that. It had been a great church. But, by about 96 AD, while the apostle John was exiled on Patmos for preaching the truth of the gospel, he received the revelation which constitutes the last book of the New Testament. And the church at Ephesus had ceased to be all it had been.

The reason I know that is, in Revelation 1:9 to 20, John described the vision he had of the Son of Man standing in the midst of seven golden lampstands. And he didn't understand what those lampstands meant. We probably wouldn't either

See Denominations on Page 13

"Drop-In" Visit at Vidalia

Returning from a working trip to SW Louisiana, darkness began to settle on us as we approached the Mississippi River, near Natchez. We passed by a building in the town of Vidalia, Louisiana, where a sign declared the place to be a meeting house for the "Church of Christ." Since it was Wednesday evening, my June and I decided to "drop-in" for a visit.

Not having eaten supper, we went on over into Mississippi, parked our RV and ate a quick snack. After disconnecting our little tow car, we then drove back over the river bridge to Vidalia, where we could visit with brothers and sisters who would evidence their special love for the Lord and His cause by attending mid-week services.

Arriving only about three minutes before the scheduled time to begin, we were pleased to meet, among others, members of the **Fuqua** family -- three brothers, as I recall. It was also a pleasure to visit briefly with Vidalia's "new" preacher, **Don Tate**. Brother Tate reminded us of a visit he and **Joe Nichols** (a long time friend and brother) had made, many years ago, when they came by our offices in Kosciusko.

Don Tate, who has been preaching for the Vidalia church for the past year, expressed his gratitude to God by saying that Sunday morning attendance had increased significantly -- from an average of 18 to 20, now up to 35 or 40 each Lord's day!

On the Wednesday evening of our visit, the Bible lesson dealt with the question, "Which Law today?" Brother Tate listed ten Bible refer-

ences on his small "handout", given to each student, which clearly answered important questions considered in the study. The teacher expressed his conviction

that much of the confusion and misunderstanding which exists in the religious world of today is caused by a failure to see clearly the distinction between the testaments -- Old and New. No doubt, he is right. It is very important to realize that Old Testament rules/laws are not binding upon those of us

who live under the New Covenant or New Testament. (See 2 Cor. 3:6-13 and Hebrews 8:6-13).

As we looked around the auditorium, we noticed that posted attendance figures during the past week showed 24 present for Bible study on Sunday morning, 36 attended the morning worship hour, 26 returned for evening worship and 24 were counted on Wednesday night. The weekly contribution was \$1,052.00. While these figures may seem small to some folks, they are encouraging to the brethren who call the Vidalia church their "home congregation".

After services and considerable visiting, we returned to our motor home to spend the night. As we reflected on our "drop-in visit", the conclusion was, "It was indeed a pleasant visit; We had made a good choice." We had left Vidalia that night expressing a desire to return and visit again with the church and their capable preacher originally from Arkansas -- having grown up in Hope. (We find it rather interesting that Hope, Arkansas produced not only a **preacher**, but also a **president!**) Better stop writing now! (*Al & June*)



Don Tate

Scripture Admonishes: "Love the brotherhood."

Willard Collins Died at Age 92

In an email from Ken Joines dated Wednesday, December 12, 2007, the following news was received.

Willard Collins died this afternoon at about 3:30. He was 92. Brother Collins was such a great and powerful preacher. Our entire brotherhood is richer and stronger because he lived among us. He was the 14th or 15th president of David Lipscomb College. —Ken Joines

Editor's note: I was not privileged to know brother Collins personally; however, I do recall, back in the early 60's, churches of Christ in Lee County, Mississippi were blessed to cooperate in what was called a "Campaign for Christ." Brother Willard Collins was the featured speaker/preacher. He did a wonderful job proclaiming the Truth of the Gospel. The unity of the area churches, all working together in love, made a very positive impact for good upon the community. (alf)

Sitting in the Shadows

- John F. Gardner -

Just after dark on September 7, 1940, the citizens of London, England heard in the distance the grind and drone of hundreds of German Luftwaffe bombers approaching their city. Soon the eerie whistle of hundreds of tons of bombs, followed by explosions and fires, would turn much of the British Empire's capital city into a region of death and darkness. For 57 consecutive nights the brave English people huddled in dimly lit basements and tunnels to escape the onslaught of Hitler's war machine. Their tenacity and will to overcome is legend.

Those valiant citizens remind one of a passage in Matthew about the spiritual



John Gardner

condition of those in the area where Jesus focused much of his earthly ministry. After recording the great temptation of Jesus in Matthew 4: 1 – 11, the inspired apostle next focuses on Jesus' Galilean ministry (Vv. 12 – 17). Of special interest is the fact that Jesus left Nazareth where he had grown up and located in Capernaum as the base for his area ministry (Matthew 4:13; 9: 1,7). Capernaum was by the sea of Galilee and "in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali."

Matthew recalls the prophecy of Isaiah (9: 1, 2) about the blessing that would come to those two rather nondescript ancestral territories. Although counted somewhat out of the way and in Jesus' day inhabited by many Gentiles ("Galilee of the Gentiles"), the region of Zebulun and Naphtali became the choice place for ministry by the Messiah. His base of ministry was not Jerusalem and Judea among the Jewish elite, although He ministered there around the Jewish feast days and, of course, died outside the city. He chose the busy, "blue collar" towns of Galilee to do most of his mighty works and teach most of his compelling lessons.

The inspired writer tells the reader of his gospel account just how spiritually desperate the people of the area were. "The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned" (Matthew 4:16). Sitting in "darkness" and in "the region and shadow of death" portrays the despair and gloom of lost people. Satan's kingdom is the "domain (power) of darkness" (Colossians 1:13). Darkness compounds the utter horror of the unforgiven sinner's destiny—hell (Matthew 25: 30). Those who walk in darkness are often blind to their condition (1 John 2:11) and remain unaware of what awaits them. Many pass their complete adult lives sitting in the shadows and in the region of death.

Jesus came to those in darkness as a "great Light." His coming was like the dawning of the day. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, prophesied of Jesus, years before, that he would be the "Dayspring from on high" who would "give light to

those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death" (Luke 1:78,79). The Apostle John said of the Word who became flesh that he was "the light [that] shines in the darkness" and "the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world" (John 1: 5, 9). In one of his great "I am" statements, Jesus revealed that he was and is "the light of the world" and those who follow him will not "walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John 8: 12). Those in the Galilean region where Jesus often ministered were privileged beyond measure to have the Light shining among them to dispel their guilt and gloom and to give them life and hope.

Sometimes we may sit in the shadows day by day, not so much because of sin, but because of suffering. Occasionally we may find ourselves battling a gloomy spirit caused by disappointment or failure. A sense of meaninglessness and frustration haunts some. Loss of loved ones, opportunities, or health may cast one into the deep shadows.

Then Jesus comes to deal with whatever sin may be there and to give us sunshine in the soul and hope for the future. He lifts our spirits so that the way is bright again. As our light, He guides us in the right path, enlightens our understanding through His word, nurtures life within us, and cheers the weary soul. He does it in his time and in his way, but He does it, if we stay close to Him.

The light Jesus brings is real because it deals with realities. Verse 17 of Matthew 4 follows immediately on the verses about Jesus' light-bringing ministry to the Galileans. That verse declares that "from that time Jesus began to preach and to say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" His manner may have been different, but Christ's message for those around him was the same as the message of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1). The way out of shadowy spiritual gloom is to firmly renounce sin and to embrace the rule of God in our lives.

To live in the brightness of Christ's light is to constantly pay attention to the heavenly Word that shows us Christ until "the day dawns and the morning star rises" in our hearts (2 Peter 1: 19). It is to choose to "walk in the light as He is in the light" (1 John 1: 7). It is to continue on until we stand in the shining brightness of the One who gives light to all of heaven (Revelation 21: 23; 22: 5).

(John Gardner is Academic Dean of MBC and can be reached by addressing P. O. Box 1109; Kosciusko, MS 39090. His email address is jgardner@magnolia.edu)



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161 P. M. WORSHIP	250
180 BIBLE STUDY	250
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Meeting Place for the Church in luka, MS

On Sunday, October 14, 2007, it was my privilege to enjoy an exciting visit with the church in luka, MS where I was given the opportunity of preaching at both the A.M. and P.M. service with a fellowship meal in between. (It was on one of the rare occasions when my June was unable to accompany me.) I shall be forever grateful for the kind way I was received and for the encouragement given. A pleasure to get to know the leadership of the church and to spend a little time with luka's long time preacher, Lance Foster and his beloved wife. (Wish I had more room to say more.)



Wife, Sandra & Preacher Lance Foster

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Semore Answers Why?

MBC President

Garvis Semore wrote a letter to friends of the college in which he stated, "I was recently reminded why I left full time preaching after twenty-one years and came to Magnolia Bible College. I was also reminded why our recruiting staff, library staff, office staff, academic staff, faculty, student support staff and every volunteer serves at MBC."

Brother Semore's statement continues,

The South Huntington congregation in Kosciusko recently conducted a Gospel Meeting using five seniors at MBC as the speakers. I knew all five men who would be speaking, but I had never heard most of them preach outside of a classroom setting.

Those students reminded me why I'm here. I sat in admiration as I heard scripture after scripture read and explained effectively. I didn't know what to expect, but I was privileged to hear some absolutely fantastic preaching done by men who will soon be graduates of Magnolia Bible College.

Three of the five student preachers are already preaching full time in Mississippi. One of the other students preaches every Sunday for a congregation and supports himself financially with his own business. The fifth student preacher is a frequent speaker around the state and is actively involved in prison ministry and substance abuse counseling.

There are others who will graduate in May and we are equally proud of them. "There are still others who are not quite done with their studies.

I was reminded in a dynamic way why I am at Magnolia Bible College. I say it frequently when I visit congregations, "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). I wish that everyone who reads a letter like this could have been present at the meeting in Kosciusko. I am confident that you would have been equally **impressed**.



Marshall Eubanks
Christian Chapel
Amory, MS



David Paden
Tilden
Fulton, MS



Shun Evans
Tylertown, MS

**5
seniors
at
MBC**



Don Roberson
Coffeerville, MS



Ben Jackson
Kosciusko, MS

JENNINGS, LA.

A Youth Rally is planned for February 2 & 3, 2008 at the Jennings Church of Christ.

BOONEVILLE

Steven Guy, preacher for the Booneville Church of Christ left the Booneville congregation at the end of the year to begin working with the Woodson Chapel congregation in Nashville, Tennessee. **Jim Estes** will serve as the Interim Minister until a new minister is hired. One of the elders, **Eddie Mauney**, emphasized how the Booneville eldership appreciated Steven and Cindy Guy and knows they will be an asset to the Woodson Chapel congregation, just as they are an asset to the Booneville congregation.

NEWALBANY

Johnny Burkhart has resigned as preacher for the New Albany Church of Christ, New Albany, Mississippi where he has preached for nine years. He will be moving to work with the Needmore congregation near Clarksville, Tennessee. Brother Burkhart's first Sunday to preach at the Needmore congregation is January 20, 2008.

LAFAYETTE, LA.

The Riverside Church of Christ in Lafayette, Louisiana has set aside January 26, 2008 for their annual day of Prayer.

CORINTH

The Foote Street Church of Christ plans several special days in 2008. **Glenn and Cindy Colley** will be with the congregation for a weekend married couple's retreat March 28th and 29th. On March 30th, **B. J. Clarke** will be the speaker for the first Fifth Sunday of the year. **Matt Vega** will be the guest speaker on the fifth Sunday in June (29th) **Lonnie Jones** will be the guest speaker on August 31st. and on the last Sunday of the year (November 30th) **Bobby Rawson** will be the speaker. **Blake Nichols**, preacher for the Foote Street congregation, said, "...the teaching done from the Foote Street pulpit during 2008 will be aimed at helping the Foote Street family be a focused family, focusing on crucial family issues from God's Word, which, when followed, will make a difference in our individual families and ultimately in us as the Family of God." **Terry Smith** serves as the Associate Minister for the Foote Street congregation.

Shopping at Sam's Club Yet, Working on the MM

(editor)

You never know who you may see or who may see you. So, I've learned to always try to stay prepared with pen, paper and camera. We just may run into something or someone worthy of mentioning in the next issue of the "Magnolia Messenger".

Anyway, this was impressed upon my mind again, a few months ago, when my June and I took out a little time to shop at Sam's in Jackson. I was browsing through some books, or something, when I looked up and saw a familiar face. Yes, it was Curtis -- Curtis Pittman, gospel preacher, graduate of MBC and a long time friend.

Brother Curtis and I visited several minutes. I learned that one of his co-workers at the Hanging Moss church in Jackson, **Ralph Flowers**, was preaching for the church in **Flora**. It was exciting to know that attendance for the struggling Flora church has increased -- back up to about 70 on Sundays with several baptisms.

Curtis also stated that the Hanging Moss church of Christ, where he has been preaching for 32 years, was now bringing together between **400 and 500** worshippers each Lord's day. (Hanging Moss was once the NW church in Jackson, MS).

When June and I left Sam's, we departed with encouraging thoughts on our minds because we had met and enjoyed visited with Curtis Pittman. (*I don't remember what, if anything, we bought.*) But, I was reminded, again, that you never know who you may meet or what you may learn. Glad to pass it along to you who read the Magnolia Messenger. (alf)



Curtis Pittman
Seen at Sam's

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MBC News

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Rescue the Perishing

Fall Lectures at MBC

Saturday, October 20, 2007 was a very special day in Kosciusko, Mississippi as scores of brethren from throughout the area came together to hear capable speakers address a very vital theme.

Garvis Semore began the lectures calling us to realize that the responsibility of God's people to "Rescue the Perishing" is a "Task Not Completed." At the same time, Sue Crabtree directed, for the women, a study entitled "Ladies Teaching Ladies"

At 10:30, brother Jones, vice president for Academics and Professor at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee spoke on "America, A Perishing Nation". Brother Sammy presented alarming statistics including a study which indicated that in 1976 eighty



Sue Crabtree

church services (of some kind); however, by 2006 that percentage had dropped to only 35%! It is no wonder that our nation seems to be going the wrong way.

After a break for lunch we gathered together again to hear brother Semore, president of MBC, challenge us to always remember that "The Gospel is For All." At the same time, sister Crabtree, Instructor at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Alabama, spoke to the ladies about the disturbing question, "Will I Face Jesus Empty Handed?"



Sam Jones & Garvis Semore

A final presentation for the day was made by brother Jones, a former staff member of MBC, who again stressed the imperative to "Rescue the Perishing" by making practical applications of the oft repeated words of the "command" and popular song.

Among all who were blessed to be in attendance, there surely is agreement that the injunction to *Rescue the Perishing* should be taken seriously and personally. The reminders and the fellowship all contributed to making Saturday, October 20, a very good day. At MBC. In Kosciusko. (alf)

House to House/Heart to Heart,

Alan Webster, Editor, Addressed

Preachers' Meeting at MBC in Kosciusko, MS

In a statement by Allen Webster, he wrote several reasons for thanksgiving as he related encouraging information about a publication which, in 1994, had its beginning in Mississippi -- **Tipplersville**. The name of the widely known and respected publication which is now published in Alabama is "House to House and Heart to Heart."

We rejoice with brother Alan and many others, including the elders of the church in Jacksonville, Alabama, who are overseeing the production of the bi-monthly publication. The paper is an effort to "seek and save" the lost through the influence of direct mail.

Since that first issue with only 1,000 copies, HTH has grown to more than 2,500,000, surpassing the circulation of the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today*. HTH is distributed by more than 1,000 churches of Christ in 48 states (Rhode Island and Hawaii, *not yet*) and six foreign countries. It has been translated into four different languages.



Alan Webster, Editor

"House to House/Heart to Heart" (Above picture of brother Alan was made a few weeks ago in Kosciusko at a preachers' meeting arranged by MBC.)

Alan Looks Happy! (He Has His Reasons)

Brother Webster stated that the paper had found its way to Washington D.C. where the President of the United States quoted from it in a speech. Jay Leno has featured an issue on his TV program. Also,

of great significance is the fact that many have been greatly influenced by the publication in their decision to become Christians.

Surely Alan Webster is right in saying, "HTH puts a positive face on the churches of Christ in the minds of millions of people. There is not a more effective way to reach your entire community."

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The following donors recently made contributions to Magnolia Bible College in memory of, or in honor of, loved ones and/or friends. The names in **bold type** are memorialized or honored. The names following in lighter type are the donors. **Note: MBC and MM memorials are handled separately.** (See also page 10)

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Please Send
MBC Memorials
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Magnolia Bible College
P.O. Box 1109
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Lake Harbour Church Emphasizes **SINGING** in Worship

Occasionally, when in the Jackson area, my June and I enjoy dropping by to visit our brethren who are now known as the "Lake Harbour Church of Christ." One reason we like to do so is because of our long friendship with **John and Beth Pigg**. In 1978, John followed me as the "pulpit preacher" for the church in Kosciusko. This was the year we began publishing the "Magnolia Messenger". Their encouragement to us in our work continues to be much appreciated.

On Sunday evening, January 6, 2008, we visited the Lake Harbour church. I am glad we chose that particular night because most of the service was devoted to singing.

Brother John stated that the church was truly blessed to have **Danny Magee** as their capable song director for the evening service. Brother Danny evidenced an in-depth knowledge of music and an abundance of talent which he used skillfully in leading the "class" on singing. It was an uplifting and edifying service.

The Lake Harbour church is presently served by three elders. The newest elder, **Morris Houston**, serves along with **Marion Freeman** and **Tony Wilburn**. The church also is blessed with the special service of nine deacons. John, as the pulpit preacher has as his associate **Seth Sullivan** who serves as Youth and Educational Minister.

After losing several members to the new church in Madison, in late 2006, the LH congregation presently brings together about 160 worshippers each Lord's day and in 2007, operated on a weekly budget of \$4,700.00. Among the many works supported by LH are Magnolia Bible College, Magnolia Messenger, "In Search of the Lord's Way"; Missionaries J. C. Enlow, Terry Martin and Rocco Pierce. May God continue to richly bless our brethren who call Lake Harbour their home church. Thanks for making our visit both enjoyable and profitable. (alf/mjf)

Pray One for Another

A Worthy Example

Roy and Vadus Johnson

- Married 74 Years -

1933 -- November 25 -- 2007

Roy Johnson said, when he first saw Vadus Allen, that he thought she was the "prettiest little girl." Now after 74 years together in marriage, he still does. Roy, who spent much of his life working in construction, admitted that when he and Vadus first married, "I never thought about how I was going to make a living." But he did. Vadus, when asked about their long marriage, said, "I decided if I got something good, I would hold on to him." She has.

The Johnsons, who became Christians early in life, have been involved in the work of the church in Columbus since they moved there in 1939 with "76 cents in my pocket". Their faithfulness to the Lord is shown by the fact that Roy served as an elder of the Columbus church (what is now 7th Street) for more than 30 years. We commend brother and sister Johnson for their love for the Lord and their love for each other which has lasted more than 74 years and still lasting.... (alf/mjf)



Roy & Vadus Johnson -- Married 74 Years -- Still Are!



Yazoo City Church Hosts Meeting With Spencer Furby

In November, 2007, at a Gospel Meeting in Yazoo City, we were delighted to see, on the night of our visit, about 10 congregations represented. Evangelist **Spencer Furby** from Missouri had come to Mississippi to preach the Word of God. His stirring sermon, based on 2 Peter chapter 3, included a couple of statements I would like to share with readers of the MM.

Spencer said, "Hell is a real place for real people involving real torment." He also observed, "So we may know how to live in the mean time, He (God) tells us of the end time."

Yes, it was a meaningful sermon and service with great fellowship. We came away much encouraged -- thinking... how wonderful it is when brethren come together in unity to hear the Word of God taught plainly and lovingly. **John Dial**, who has cut back some on his work as a medical doctor, continues to serve effectively as the local preacher for the Yazoo City church. (alf)

A Special Sunday Kosciusko



Charlie Hodge

(Duncanville, Texas)

The Huntington Street church in Kosciusko hosted a "One day meeting" with evangelist Charlie Hodge on Sunday, January 20, 2008. Three powerful, unforgettable sermons were delivered in Hodge's own unique way. Three vital topics covered were (1) Prayer, (2) Daily Walking With God and (3) "Heaven." It really was a special day for all in attendance at Kosciusko.



MAGNOLIA MESSENGER

Memorials & Tributes

The person whose name is in **CAPS** is memorialized or honored by the person(s) whose name is in lower case letters. Thank you. God bless! (ALF, editor)

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JOHNNIE DICKERSON
Floy Simpson
(Ashland, MS)

PATRICIA BLACK
Harold & Evelyn Sigmund
John, Debra, David & Kenneth Sigmund
Dody & Renee Treme
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Ina Jay Sadler
(Vidor, TX)

PAULINE FRANKS
Lone Pine Church of Christ
Jerald & Ann Cooley
(Merryville, LA)
Ina Jay Sadler
(Vidor, TX)

RAYMON MATTHEW COOLEY
JEWEL COOLEY
Jess & Cindi Franks
(DeQuincy, LA)

TINA HARDEN
NORMA PRICE
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(Hartford, Ky)

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Pauline Watson
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(Tallahassee, FL)
Charles Aldridge
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VIRGINIA "GIGI" STANLEY
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Columbus Church: A "Drop in Visit" Produced Meaningful Memories

It had been a long time. My June and I decided that it was time (or past time) that we go and visit our brothers and sisters who call the 7th Street church in Columbus, Mississippi their "home congregation."

Perhaps, many readers of the MM will recall that for about a score of years (70's, 80's & 90's?), it was the Columbus Church that hosted the popular annual Youth Rally which attracted visitors from many states with upwards to 2,000 attending each year. And, some will remember that it was **Bill Brumley** (a church elder) who so capably directed the rally. (We were saddened to learn that brother Bill Brumley recently departed this life after an extended illness.)

The date of our visit was on Sunday, November 25, 2007. As we entered the beautiful church building, we were grateful to see brethren we had not seen for a long time. We were reminded of how precious our spiritual family is and how we should make known our discipleship to the world, as Jesus taught, through "loving one another" (John 13:35).

The adult Bible class was capably taught by **Jason DuLaney**. As a teacher, he had come to his class well prepared and conducted the study in a profitable way. (We were reminded of the Biblical passage which declares that the inspired scriptures are indeed, "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Tim. 3:16).

Fellowship and/or visiting between class time and "the worship hour" was very meaningful. We were grateful for the friendliness and the warmth of many in the church that brings together about 350 to 400 each Lord's day.

The present congregation is

overseen by four elders and, according to their bulletin, the church is served by eleven deacons. The pulpit minister for the past several years has been and continues to be **Billy Ferguson**. **Paul Bennett** works in a special way with the youth of the congregation.

We found it beneficial to listen carefully to the sermon preached by Billy. His lesson that Sunday morning was based on Jesus' conversation with Simon Peter, recorded in John 21:15-17. He entitled his sermon, "What Would You Do For Love?" His Biblical points were clearly made and his questions about our love for the Lord were very penetrating. For instance, he asked, "If Jesus looked you in the eye and asked, 'Do you truly love me?' what would your answer be?" The practical applications made by the seasoned young preacher were very meaningful. It was a good lesson. We are thankful for the opportunity to once again visit the 7th Street church in Columbus. We also express our appreciation to **Joe and Toni Thompson** who, so graciously, invited us to go to lunch with them. Their kindness added to the many benefits of our visit in Columbus. (alf/mjf)



Billy Ferguson, Preacher

graciously, invited us to go to lunch with them. Their kindness added to the many benefits of our visit in Columbus. (alf/mjf)

CLASSES	211
WORSHIP	351
SUN. P.M.	168
WED. P.M.	121
OFFERING	6572

Church in Forest, MS Makes Preacher Changes

Readers of the MM may recall some of the problems encountered by the small church in Forest, Mississippi -- back about ten or twelve years ago. The congregation almost closed its doors; however, thanks to the Good Lord who worked primarily through readers of the "Messenger", God made it possible for the church not only to survive but to come alive!

Paul Franks served as "part-time" minister for several years. (Paul now preaches for the church in Lake Charles, LA.) He was followed by **Larry Gallaher** who worked effectively as a full-time preacher up until a few months ago. With a couple of special opportunities made available to him, Larry is presently considering where he may most effectively serve as a preacher of the gospel.



Steve Perry

After Larry's recent resignation, the church asked **Steve Perry** from Brandon, MS to fill the pulpit each service. We were present on October 21 and were blessed to hear a very good sermon based on John 3:16. From all indications, brother Perry is doing a good job. May God continue to bless the work in Forest.



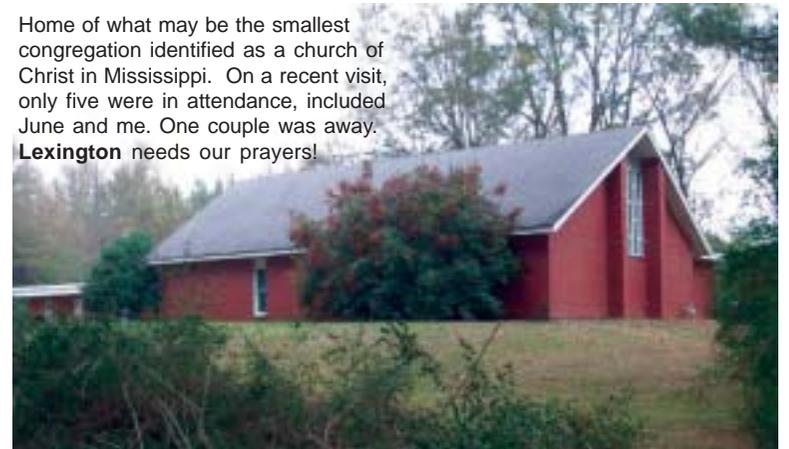
Resignations Bring Changes in Leadership for DeQuincy, LA Church

Because of "advancing age", on Sunday, November 18, 2007, two of the elders and one deacon of the church of Christ in DeQuincy resigned after a total of **93 years** of service. **Ray Hyatt** (on right) served as an elder for 37 years. Elder **J. D. Franks** (middle) had completed 18 years of service. And, as a deacon, **Leonidas Sanders** had served 38 years.

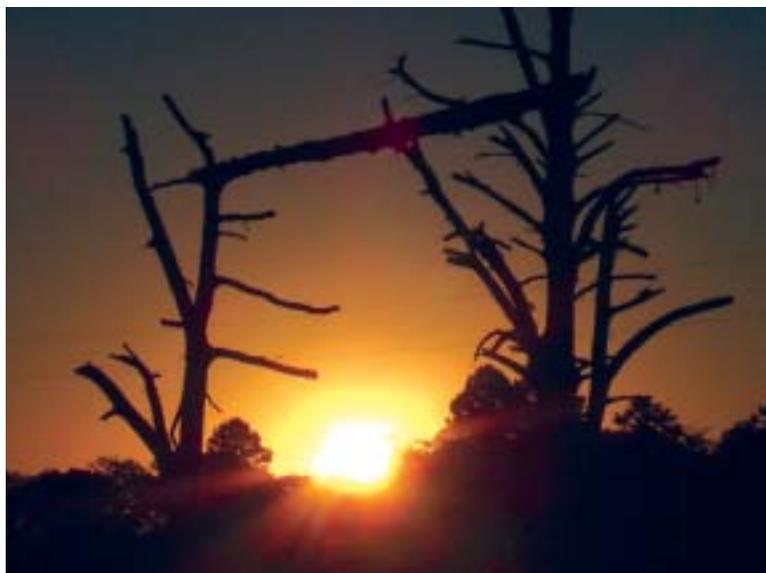
Two new elders and four new deacons were added to the leadership of the church on August 12, 2007. Joining elder **Joey Franks** as new elders were **Don Jackson** and **Louis LaRocque**. Four new deacons were selected to serve along with long-time deacon **Ray Franks**. The new deacons are **Michael Boyle**, **DeWitt Green**, **Ed Istre** and **George Hodges**. **Michael Potthoff** serves as the evangelist/preacher for the congregation in southwest Louisiana that brings together 90 to 100 or more worshippers each Lord's day.

(A very special thanks to **Elizabeth Dickerson** of the DeQuincy church for sending to us the above information and to **Kathy Dickerson** for making the picture.)

Home of what may be the smallest congregation identified as a church of Christ in Mississippi. On a recent visit, only five were in attendance, included June and me. One couple was away. **Lexington** needs our prayers!



<p>Roses in December Why God Gave Us Memory</p> <p>How has God preserved memories for His children? Grab an up-close view of feasts, altars, stones, rods, and even food—all used by Jehovah to stamp His imprint on His offspring. Why should we be surprised when we echo God's sentiment, "Remember Me?"</p> <p>Take a fascinating walk down God's memory lane with Jane McWhorter.</p> <p>By Jane McWhorter</p> <p>\$11.95</p>	<p>The Begging Place A Book about Prayer</p> <p>How can prayer change your life? Bible men and women found strength in difficult times through gut-wrenching prayer. Becky reminds Christian women: "We are God's little girls." A book to inspire and motivate you to meet God at the Begging Place.</p> <p>"Careful and often humorous" —Loretta Semel "Rich spiritual study" —Janet Chan "Heartwarming and encouraging" —Dorly Boudin</p> <p>By Becky Boudin</p> <p>\$10.95</p>	<p>Golden Bubbles A Grandfather's Journey through Grief</p> <p>Lessons learned from a 3-year-old life snatched by lymphoma: how to cope, what to say, who to call, where to go, how to grieve. The reflections are touching, but uplifting. A grown-up, practical approach that begins with death, but ends with life and hope.</p> <p>Take a peek at our previous books. You don't have to clear us up, just be done.</p> <p>—Etha Babinfield</p> <p>By Etha Babinfield</p> <p>\$8.95</p>	<p>Boys to Men A Christian Teen Survival Guide</p> <p>Using ancient virtues as a pivot point, ten Christian young men spoon out survival techniques to their peers.</p> <p>"The biblical principles in this book can help you to become a man—a peer leader—a hero: a hero for the crowd."</p> <p>— Kyle Butt</p> <p>By Kyle Butt</p> <p>\$9.95</p>	<p>Tampering with Truth The New Left in the Lord's Church</p> <p>A tool to help Christians understand and deal with hermeneutical differences that have created a divided brotherhood: instrumental music in worship, contemporary Christian rock, feminism, and the work of the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>"While and where-where discernment exercises within the church have failed the church, you do not seem to have a divided unity."</p> <p>—Publishing Designs</p> <p>By David W. Hester</p> <p>\$9.95</p>
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Sun Rising in East Texas at Salmon Lake Park in Grapeland on a Cool October Morning. Home to the 2007 TEX/LA MM RV Rally

RV Rally Folks Gather for Picture in Front of "Sunshine Inn" (Photo by Kathy)



Rally Participants and Their RV's last fall in Grapeland, Texas (Oct. 24-28, 2007) Many also stayed in cabins available at the park. You don't have to have an RV to Attend!

Plan to Attend
Our Next Mississippi MM RV Rally
 (See ad at bottom of this page. You don't have to have an RV)

"World Evangelism"
 (Winona, MS)
More Workers Added

Leaders of Serious Bible Studies



Dan Manuel (Palestine, TX)



Audrey Manuel (for ladies)



Ray Franks (DeQuincy, LA)



James Tidwell (Many, LA)



A. L. Franks (Kosciusko, MS)



Charles Fulgham (Yazoo City, MS)



Quality Country Music (Morris & Betty & Danny)



Gerald & Charles

C
O
M
E
D
Y

Brethren Jerry and Paula Bates and Louis and Bonnie Rushmore are the newest team members to associate themselves with the 45-year-old evangelistic ministry of J.C. and Betty Choate.



Jerry Bates



Louis Rushmore

Evangelism. **Byron and G a y N i c h o l s** reside in Springfield, MO and concentrate on *The Voice of Truth International* subscriptions. **Wayne and**

The Voice of Truth International, a quarterly Gospel magazine, is doubtless the best known aspect of the church program dubbed World Evangelism, which functions from facilities in Winona, MS. Other facets of the work include the magazine, *Global Harvest*, the Internet magazine, *Gospel Gazette Online*, plus multiple radio and TV programs abroad, massive overseas literature distribution, foreign campaigns and several overseas Bible schools.

Janet Barrier of Florence, AL travel abroad twice annually in the Far East where brother Barrier works with the overseas Bible schools. **Eulene Ramsey** of Winona, MS is World Evangelism's long-standing bookkeeper. In addition, World Evangelism would not be the effective, decades-old program of evangelism that it is without the participation as well as moral and financial support of innumerable Christians and churches of Christ at home and overseas.

The Choates invited the Bates and Rushmores to labor with them in the day-to-day duties in various aspects of World Evangelism, especially considering brother Choate's lingering illness. The good works for which they have been zealous (Titus 2:14), and in which the Choates have invested their lives, deserve to be perpetuated. The evangelistic efforts of the Choates and others over the decades have resulted in hundreds "of thousands of responses and several thousand conversions-annually, throughout India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar (Burma), the Philippines and other nations. Today, numerous congregations, some fully organized with elders and deacons, assemble because of sustained evangelism.

Beyond the extensive program of evangelism already in place, World Evangelism will begin a school of evangelism at Winona, Mississippi in the fall of 2008. World Evangelism will soon undertake the development of a new Bible class curriculum that emphasizes the identity and exclusivity of the Lord's church, to help encourage loyalty to the church of Jesus Christ among our youth as they mature.

Contact information for World Evangelism includes **P.O. Box 72, Winona, Mississippi 38967, www.world-evangelism.org and www.gospelgazette.com.** The effectiveness of World Evangelism to reach lost souls worldwide with the Gospel depends upon the continued generosity and sense of urgency exhibited by Christians and churches of Christ that financially contribute to it.

Additional team members stateside and abroad help make up World

Our Next MM RV Rally

Morton, Mississippi at Roosevelt State Park April 23 - 27, 2008

Featuring **Dennis Doughty**

HEAVEN
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- A RV Site**
- A Room**
- A Cabin**

You may reserve your spot **online** by going to <http://www.reserveamerica.com>. The first 10 people who call Paul Franks and reserve a spot will get one on the water. For more information please feel free to call **Paul Franks at 337-515-7314**

Skyway Hills (Jackson/Pearl)

A "Drop-in Visit"

Located near the International Airport in Jackson, Mississippi is the meeting place of the "Skyway Hills Church of Christ." (Seems fitting... "Skyway")

My earliest association with this church began back in the days when **Bill Lambert** was the respected preacher (also, an elder) at Skyway. In 1971, an invitation was extended to me and my family to move to the Jackson area and work with the church in evangelizing South Mississippi. Our plans were almost made to accept their invitation; however, we changed our minds and decided to accept the challenge of preaching for the South Huntington Street church



Picture made several weeks ago

in Kosciusko. But, I must say -- at the time, it was a difficult choice. (Glad, however, that we chose Kosciusko!)

Over the past 37 years we have sought to maintain a rather close and cordial relationship with the Skyway Hills church. Often, especially in the earlier years, we occasionally would have opportunity to return to speak and/or preach and, on other occasions, just to visit.

Within the past few years our visits have been few. However, in part, after recently receiving a letter from the elders of the congregation in which they expressed their need to cut back on support for missions, we decided to drop in and visit with our brethren.

We did visit; on Sunday morning, January 6, 2008. At 8:45 a.m. we walked into their spacious building, knowing that services were scheduled to begin at the rather early hour of 9:00 o'clock. One of the first persons we were privileged to see was **Betsy Canfield**. It was good to see her and learn that she was making satisfactory progress following a liver transplant she had received several weeks ago. Sister Betsy expressed much gratitude to Almighty God and to so many who had shown genuine interest in her and her family during her prolonged illness.

Now, we had already learned that **Yale Canfield**, long time preacher at Skyway Hills, had resigned a few months ago. Brother Yale and his wife still worship at Skyway Hills and continue to take an active part in the work and worship of the church. We did not know at the time of our visit, but later learned that the two elders (**Lonnie**

Livingston and **Al Garner**) had made known their resignation, as elders, a couple of weeks earlier.

Attendance, the Sunday of our visit, was in the 40's, although the previous Sunday, attendance was in the 70's. The morning Bible class was effectively taught by Al Garner who led in a study of the "Beatitudes". In the absence of a regular voice in the pulpit, guest speakers, along with some of the

men of the congregation, are filling the pulpit each Sunday. The day of our visit **Jerry Mitchell**, a local member, (also a reporter for Jackson's *Clarion Ledger*) brought a good lesson on "Greatness". He challenged all of us to always

keep in mind that greatness, in the sight of the Lord, comes through service to our fellow man.

At the end of the service, an announcement was made concerning a meeting planned that afternoon. All the men of the church were invited to gather at 4:30 P.M. in order that they might discuss and possibly decide how they were going to respond to the present situation of the church.

I must say that, as we departed Skyway Hills, our hearts were heavy as we considered the trials being encountered by our brothers and sisters who make up the struggling group at Skyway. I ask that you join us in prayer that the brethren will have the strength and courage to do the will of the Lord, so that with His help, the church can be all and what God would have it to be. (alf)

Edward Lynch Burns Minister Dies at 81

Edward Lynch Burns, age 81, a minister of the church of Christ, died Saturday, October 27, 2007. Services were conducted at the Oxford Church of Christ, Oxford, Mississippi on October 29, 2007 with **Robert Rawson** and **Steve Hentz** officiating.

Brother Burns was a minister at the Church of Christ in **Courtland**, Mississippi at the time of his death. He served as a minister for 57 years at various churches of Christ in North Mississippi.

Our deepest sympathy to brother Burn's family and to all the many church families where he had ministered. (Information via sister *L. C. Stewart, Water Valley, MS*)

Denominations

(Continued from page 6)

if the Lord hadn't explained them as He did to John in verse 20. He said, "...the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches."

He commissioned John to send letters to each of those seven churches in Asia. One was the church at Ephesus. The Lord's message to that once great church was this: "I know your works... Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place— unless you repent." That is Revelation chapter 2, verses 1 to 7.

That once-great-church would cease to be the Lord's church, if it didn't repent. It isn't that other churches would "mark" or "disfellowship" the one at Ephesus. No, no, nothing like that; that isn't what He said. The Lord said He would remove its candlestick, Himself. So, churches would depart from the faith, and the Son of God would remove their candlesticks, their identity.

Well, it didn't happen in one giant step. Historians tell us that the apostasy developed so slowly, that very likely most members didn't—and still don't know—it even happened. Some people living now— more than twenty centuries later— still proudly maintain their membership in an apostate church. They take pride in the fact that they can trace their lineage, through the centuries, all the way back to Acts chapter two. But, what they don't realize is that they have fallen so far away, that that church bears no slight resemblance to the one in the New Testament.

The first departures were in organization. Jesus Christ, the risen Lord, is the head of the church that you read about in your Bible (Ephesians 1:22 and chapter 5, verse 23). He has never yielded that position or delegated that authority to any human being, my friend— no, not even to the apostle Peter.

He chose twelve men and taught and trained them to be His apostles (ones sent on His authority) as official "ambassadors" of His kingdom (2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 20). One of them betrayed Him and was replaced by Matthias (Acts chapter 1, verse 26). The Bible nowhere names successors to any of the other apostles. Later Paul was especially chosen, "as one born out of due time" (1 Corinthians 15, verse 8) to be an apostle— not a successor to an apostle now, but an apostle. And those apostles live on in the church today through their work and their ministry in the churches. There never were, and there never will be any more apostles in the Lord's church.

According to Ephesians chapter 4, verse 11, Christ also gave some to be prophets. This gift was given to the early church for "the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till, we come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the fullness of Christ" (that is Ephesians chapter 4, verses 11 through 16); or until the will of God was perfectly or completely revealed as it is written in 1 Corinthians chapter 13, verse 10. The apostles and prophets live on in the foundation of the church by their teachings in the Scriptures (Ephesians 2:19-22).

There is biblical authority for evangelists and pastors and

Fourth: In the New Testament, baptism was always administered by immersion (Romans 6:3 and 4). That is the meaning of the word. Scripturally, baptism is not "by immersion"; it is immersion.

teachers in the churches today (Philippians 1:1, for example; and 1 Timothy 3:1 to 14 and Titus chapter 1, verses 1 to 16, and other passages). They continue in each church the work of equipping and edifying the local body of believers.

The New Testament uses six words, elders and presbyters, bishops or overseers, pastors or shepherds, without distinction of office or rank. These were men (always men) chosen from within the congregation by the members of the congregation for the work described in Acts chapter 20, verses 17 through 38, as we read awhile ago. Titus chapter 1, verse 16 also includes that.

And in the New Testament you never read of Synods, Councils, Conventions, Associations or Conferences composed of delegates from all the churches in different localities to constitute an Ecclesiastical Legislative Body. There were deacons in every church, though (Philippians 1:1). An example of their work and service is seen in Acts chapter 6, verses 1 to 7, right on into the 8th chapter. The evangelist's work is described in the name given him in Ephesians 4:11— that of evangelizing or preaching the good news of Christ. Yes, at least two men, Stephen and Philip, chosen by the church to serve tables in the Jerusalem church, also preached or they evangelized.

Up to this point, we have had the Bible for our guide. And we are perfectly comfortable with what we read there, aren't we? But now we must rely on reliable historians. So now, if you doubt me on any of the following material, I suggest before you write me, that you go to your public library, to the religious history section, and study these

things for yourself. I don't know what books there are in your particular library, but I am fully confident that what is there will support what I am saying.

Reliable historians enable us to know that soon after the apostolic age the standing office of the President of the Presbytery must have been formed, and as having preeminent oversight, the person was designed, or was designated "Bishop". So began the apostasy. There was the creation of a new class of officers in the churches known as "country bishops". These began occasional conventions, composed of delegates from different congregations, for the purpose of settling disputes among them, which conventions assumed legislative authority.

There soon followed General Synods and Councils with permanent presiding officers called "Metropolitans". Bishops claimed supreme power. They no longer counseled with the presbyters. The first General Council was called

by the Roman Emperor Constantine in 325 A.D. It was supposed to have represented the universal church. John the Faster, Bishop of Constantinople, assumed the title of "Universal Bishop of the church" in A.D. 588. But Boniface II, Patriarch of Rome had the title transferred to Himself to become the first Pope in 606 A.D.

With the exaltation of mere men to positions of legislative power, came significant changes in fundamental doctrines and in the worship of the church. For example: **First** and most obvious, is that Christ is no longer head of the apostate church. **Second**, the Scriptures are no longer the final word, as we are taught in Colossians 3:16-17. Now, it is "church tradition," approved by the council.

The First Vatican Council, convened by Pope Pius IX, declared the doctrine of Papal Infallibility; that is when he speaks ex-cathedra (meaning *from the chair*) on matters of faith and morals, he then speaks the law of the Lord.

Third: In the beginning of the church, baptism was for repentant believers only (Acts 2:38). But by the middle of the second century, there appear references by notable "scholars" to baptism of infants, some for it, some opposed it. Baptism had been "for the remission of sins," as taught in Acts 2:38. It came to be thought, however, that babies were born sinful, so it was felt that baptism on their second day of life was essential, lest they should die with inherited sins upon them.

Fourth: In the New Testament, baptism was always administered by immersion (Romans 6:3 and 4). That is the meaning of the word. Scripturally, baptism is not "by See DENOMINATIONS on Page 16

Churches Seeking Preachers

Notice: We are pleased to run ads for congregations seeking to find preachers to work with them. Please call or mail your request to: 662-289-3559 or 601-668-3344; "Magnolia Messenger"; P.O. Box 1578; Kosciusko, MS 39090. You may e-mail us by addressing: franksmm@aol.com. We will plan to run each add **not more than two times** unless a specific request for extension is received from the congregation looking for a preacher. **Thank you for asking!**

There is no charge for this service.



Covington Road Church Building In Natchez, MS.

A Special Preacher Is Needed To Serve A Special Church With Special Needs

About 30+ years ago, the Natchez church (4th Street) seemed to be doing really well. The need for new a new building in a new location was determined. As a result, the above pictured facilities were constructed on Covington Road in Natchez. (The larger auditorium will probably seat 400+.)

Over the years, however, the congregation has undergone great losses due to deaths, relocations and other departures. Attendance now runs about 70. A special preacher is needed to help rebuild the church. If you think you may be the one, or if you know of someone who may be able to help, please respond to the ad below. For more information, you are invited to call me, A. L. Franks, editor of the MM. (Call: 601-668-3344 or e-mail: franksmm@aol.com.)

Natchez Pulpit Minister Needed

*Full-time
*Attendance 60 - 70

Please send resume, DVD or tape, and salary requirements to:

Covington Road
Church of Christ
8 Covington Road
Natchez, MS 39120

Church phone: (601) 445-4290

Zachary, La.

Church of Christ; P.O. Box 97; Zachary, La. 70791
Congregation of 90 - 95, located in the growing City of Zachary, LA, is seeking a Full Time Minister to work with us.

Attractive benefit package with home.

Contact **Terry Wall** at (225) 654-9724 e-mail address livinwell50@yahoo.com or **Josh McCartney** at (225) 654-2245 e-mail address joshuamccartney@cox.net.

1-08

Preacher Wanted

Tipton in Kosciusko

The Tipton Street church of Christ in Kosciusko, Mississippi is seeking a minister to work with a congregation of 50 to 70 members. We are seeking a married preacher, with at least ten years experience, who is able to preach, teach and encourage a congregation. He must be a lover of people. The church owns a home for the minister and salary is negotiable. Anyone interested may send a letter to: **Tipton St. church of Christ, ATTN: Contact Members, P. O. Box 762, Kosciusko, MS 39090-0762** or contact one of the following individuals:

J. R. Clark (662)289-5810

Paul Greer (662)289-6220

Prince Lewis (662)289-9263

Leroy Watson (662)289-1450
Must have references and a resume will be helpful.

Laurel, MS

Seeking a Preacher

For more information, please call the church office at 601-426-6209 (leave message) or send resume and/or make inquiry via e-mail, please use the following address:

email@laurelchurchofchrist.net
or simply write to the church:

**Church of Christ
2830 Audubon Drive
Laurel, MS 39440**

(8-13-07) (1 of 3)

"Preach the Word"
"Reprove, rebuke, exhort"

El Dorado, AR Minister Needed

The Hillsboro Street Church of Christ in El Dorado, Arkansas is searching for a preaching minister. This 140-member church is served by four elders and nine deacons. The church has a part-time youth minister and a secretary.

One of the perks offered to all families who move into the area is the "El Dorado Promise." This is a scholarship for graduates of the city school system that pays full tuition (up to the highest tuition of any Arkansas state university). This scholarship money is available for each high school graduate at any accredited college/university in the U.S.

Applicants are requested to send a resume accompanied by two audio or video lessons to: **Search Committee; Hillsboro Street Church of Christ; 1322 West Hillsboro Street; El Dorado, AR 71730.** Additional information may be gained from our web site www.hillsborococ.org or by calling the church office (870) 863-4714. Email can be addressed to joe.leal@yahoo.com

Meridian, MS Church Seeks Minister

Meridian Church of Christ, located in east central Mississippi, is presently seeking to fill the pulpit with a sound preacher of the gospel, beginning in January, 2008.

The population of Meridian is approximately 40,000 within the city limits. We have approximately 85-100 present for Sunday morning worship and 50-60 present on Sunday and Wednesday nights. The congregation is served by three elders and three deacons. We are poised for growth with a number of active families. Currently we support the following mission activities: Robert Martin and Stacy Ferguson in the South Pacific missions, Magnolia Bible College, Pine Vale Children's Home, and Magnolia Messenger.

The minister's responsibilities will include preaching and teaching the gospel, visiting newcomers, members, and local hospitals on a regular basis. The minister will also supervise the church office/secretary. These activities will include editing the weekly bulletin, maintaining the church directory, writing newcomer's letters, etc.

Liberties will include two week's paid vacation per year, one gospel meeting per year with pay. Minister may attend two lectureships per year with pay and normal expenses.

Compensation is negotiable in accordance with experience and ability and will include all pay and allowances for services. Please send resumes to:

The Elders

Meridian Church of Christ
2229 Hwy 19 North
Meridian, MS 39307

Or call:

Dwight Callens - 601-483-6086

callensdw@bellsouth.net

Tom Fair - 601-681-8293

henrytfair@wmconnect.com

Jesse Simpson: 601-513-4135
simpsj1@labcorp.com

New York Jamestown Church of Christ

Preacher Search

The Jamestown Church of Christ, Jamestown, NY, located in the beautiful Allegany region of Western New York, is prayerfully seeking a full time minister to fill the vacancy due to the relocation of our current minister of over 9 years.

We are a doctrinally sound congregation recognizing the scriptures as the sole authority for our existence. We have an attendance of 75-85 members with a good mix of all age groups. We are financially sound, evangelistic by nature and have a desire to promote and spread the gospel throughout Western New York, Pennsylvania and the world.

The Jamestown community has a population of approximately 40,000, with excellent schools and a rural setting. We are the only church in Chautauqua County and the potential for growth in the area is great.

We are seeking a mature, married, family oriented minister that is energetic, outgoing, doctrinally sound, and has the ability to relate to all age groups and across multi-cultural backgrounds. The ideal candidate will have experience in fostering church growth through development and implementation of educational and evangelistic programs. The candidate must have strong verifiable "leadership" references.

Education: higher education preferably in Biblical Studies or a Preaching / Ministerial certificate from a recognized school in the brotherhood. Application Portfolio to include: Cover letter, complete resume including references both personal and from past congregation(s). Also, include spousal interests/activities related to the church. CD with 2 sermons, family photo and any health conditions should be included. Please submit the portfolio to the following address: Minister Search Jamestown Church of Christ, 875 Fairmount Ave. W.E. Jamestown, NY 14701

JOB: THE BOOK; THE MAN

(Answers - Last Issue)

Quotes from Job, the Man

(Find the verse in the book which includes the statement made by the man)

1. "... The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21)
2. "... I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day." (7:4)
3. [God] "which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number." (9:10)
4. [the Lord] "In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind." (12:10)
5. "... I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." (23:12)
6. "He [God] stretcheth out the north over the empty space, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." (26:7)
7. "...Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." (28:28)

Who Said What?

Match the person with his/her statement; Supply the missing reference numbers. The answers are: 1. Job's wife; 2. Elihu; 3. Eliphaz; 4. Job; 5. Bildad; 6. Satan, and 7. Zophar

- 4- 1. "Naked came I out of my mother's womb..." (1:21)
- 6- 2. "... Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." (2:4)
- 1- 3. "... Curse God, and die." (2:9)
- 3- 4. "... They that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same." (4:8)
- 5- 5. "For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow." (8:9)
- 7- 6. "That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment." (20:5)
- 2- 7. "Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment." (32:9)

More Matching

Match the name (left) with the description (right). The number in parenthesis is the chapter where answer is found

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 2- Behemoth (40) | 1. Sea Creature |
| 3- Jemima (42) | 2. Land Animal |
| 1- Leviathan (41) | 3. Beautiful Woman |
| 4- Sabeans (1) | 4. Murdering Thieves |
| 5- Eliphaz (1) | 5. Temanite |

Final Fill-ins

1. **Question:** "Can that which is **unsavoury** be eaten **without** salt? or is there any **taste** in the **white** of an egg?" (6:6)
2. **Observation:** "Man that is **born** of a woman is of **few** days and full of **trouble**. He cometh forth like a **flower**, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a **shadow** and continueth not." (14:1,2)

At the Por Los Niños children's homes we believe in empowering children to face the future. This means feeding the children physically, mentally, and spiritually. We provide a loving home-style atmosphere with Christian house parents in a village setting. A good education is foremost and we are currently building a new school which will have a computer lab, library, and English language courses.

You Can Visit the Children You Sponsor!

Call About Seven or Ten Day Work Trips To The Por Los Niños Village.

Help Central America End Cycles of Poverty and Hunger

Family Life Missions
Starkville, MS. 39760

Call 662-324-8472
Family Life Missions
Po Box 928
Starkville, MS. 39760

Call us today and help give a child hope to face the future.

Thursday afternoon; January 10, 2008

Tornado Destroys Caledonia Church Building

Minister Meredith
Stated,
"The Church is Far From Gone"

We had heard about the storms which ravaged Mississippi on January 10 and had learned that a tornado demolished the meeting house of the Caledonia Church of Christ.

Like many others, my June and I were disturbed by the news and immediately made plans to visit our brethren in the community located a few miles NE of Columbus, Mississippi. Our visit was made on Sunday, just three days after the destructive storm. We found the church at 9:00 a.m. assembled in a *borrowed building* only a couple of blocks from their destroyed facilities.

A Bible class was in progress when we entered the building. Various ones were heard making comments about what had happened. Someone observed, "God was in it." A lady said she prayed as the storm hit, "Lord bless us all." Then, with a grateful heart she exclaimed, "No one was killed!" The teacher/preacher, Shane Meredith, related a statement he had heard, "Boy, we were *lucky*." His response was, "No, we were *blessed*."

In the weekly church bulletin the preacher shared some of his thoughts about the storm and its aftermath. I quote,

I cannot count the times in the past two days that I have heard people say they are sorry that the church is gone or destroyed. Of course, I understand that they mean the *church building*, not the people; but it brings up an important point.

The building the church worshipped in is gone, but the church is still here and stronger than ever. Our building is gone but our love for God, for one another and for the lost is not." I

Corinthians 13:13 says, So now faith, hope, and love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love." Even though we face great obstacles, with love, nothing will stop us from worshipping God as His family and do the work that He sets out for us to do... Because of this I have no doubt we will carry on stronger than ever before."

The spirit we saw when visiting the Caledonia church was a mixture of thanksgiving and optimism. Although there was wide-

spread damage and destruction; yet, no lives were lost and, among the 50 or so members of the Caledonia church, no one was even scratched!

The brethren plan to rebuild and are in need of our encouragement and our prayers. For more information:

Caledonia Church of Christ
PO Box 9
Caledonia, MS 39740.
Phone: 662-356-6017.
www.churchofchrist1.com



A View From Inside the Caledonia Church Auditorium
With its Collapsed Roof (See picture on page 1)

You Have a Choice; Take Your Pick!

SHIP

Atlantic, Canada & Quebec Cruise
(Including Nova Scotia)

October 9-18, 2008

Nine (9) Nights

(Starts on Thursday; Ends on Saturday)

- **Royal Caribbean** -

"Explorer of the Seas"

Departure Port: Cape Liberty Cruise Port, New Jersey (Across the river from New York City)

Ports of Call: Cape Liberty Cruise Port, New Jersey; Sydney, Nova Scotia; Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; Saguenay River, Quebec; Quebec City, Quebec; Halifax, Nova Scotia; Cape Liberty Cruise Port, New Jersey

Cost: The total cost for the cruise for one person including all taxes, port charges and **fuel surcharges** is **\$961.27**. (Inside cabin, double occupancy) Ocean view, Balcony, Deluxe & Suite cabins are also available. This will cover shipboard accommodations, ocean transportation, all food and entertainment on the ship.

The only other expenses that you will have will be getting to/from the departure port. (Airfare should cost around \$300 to \$400 per person). Your gratuities will cost around \$100 per person.

You will need to send a **deposit of \$500 by April 7, 2008** to reserve a cabin. Your deposit is *refundable* up to the **final payment** date which is **July 24**.

We want **YOU** to go with us!

"Cruise with Christians"

Tour Hosts: **Al and June Franks** and **Paul and Glenda Franks** are to be your hosts on this spectacular journey. You can contact **Paul at 337-515-7314**. Our plans are to have dinner together each night and to conduct worship services on the Lord's Day in a private meeting room. There will be other opportunities to do things together. You are invited and are welcome to go with us.

Contact: Don West of **West Travel Service** in Jackson, Mississippi is handling this trip for us again. Contact: westtv1@bellsouth.net Phone: 601-957-1660; **West Travel Service, 800 Colonial Circle, Jackson, MS 39211-3314** or paulfranks@bellsouth.net

BUS

New England Fall Colors

(Departing from and returning to Knoxville, TN)

October 5 - 13, 2008

(Sunday through Monday)

- Green Coach Tours -

Overnight Stays

Gettysburg, PA

Lancaster, PA

New York (2)

New Hampshire

Maine

New Jersey

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Places of Special Interest

Shenandoah Valley (VA)

Gettysburg Battlefield (PA)

Amish Country (PA)

Adirondack Mountains (NY)

Lake Placid (NY)

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White Mountains (NH)

Boston (MA)

Plymouth (MA)

Newport (RI)

Cornelius Vanderbilt home (RI)

Tour Hosts: Ray & Donna Franks

Costs: (from/to Knoxville) **per person**

Triple/Quad: \$1,199.00

Double: \$1,349.00

Single: \$1,799.00

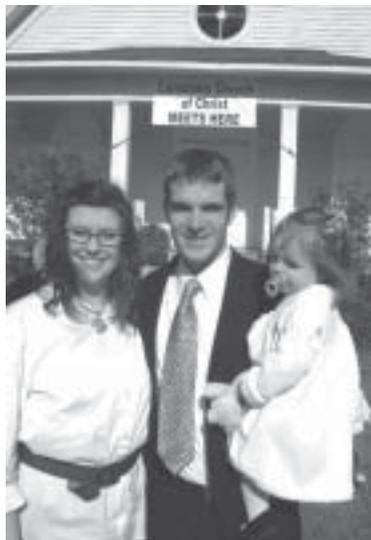
(Includes all lodging, taxes and tour director)

Deadline: April 1, 2008

Must have 40 travelers booked for the trip with \$100.00 deposit paid by each. Final and full payment must be received 45 days prior to departure. All Checks should be made payable to **Louisiana RV Rally (P. O. Drawer 218; DeQuincy, LA 70633)**. Booking is on a first come basis.

Telephone numbers

337-786-3095 or (cell) 337-515-0866



Meghan, Shane and Lily Meredith

Marriage

(Continued from page 2)

examples of Abraham, Jacob and David, each of whom had more than one wife at the same time. Scriptures reveal that multiple wives brought multiple difficulties.

The New Testament, with its advanced teachings for what should be a much more *enlight-*

...thanking the Good Lord for everyone who still respects God's **plan** and His **place** for sexual activity.

ened age, clearly shows that the polygamous practices of even those considered "good men" of the Old Testament were not in harmony with God's original plan of **one** man for **one** woman -- for **life!** (Study Matthew 19:1-6; I Cor. 7:1-2.)

Deviations and departures from God's will for the home has brought problem after problem. Because of stubborn and/or ignorant disobedience to the sacred rules regulating the home as God would have it to be, many have found that the "home" -- instead of being a "taste of heaven", becomes a "touch of hell".

The home, as God would have it, is definitely one man and one woman, joined together "till death do we part". Jesus commanded, "Let not man put

...many have found that the "home" -- instead of being a "taste of heaven", becomes a "touch of hell".

asunder." (Matthew 19:1-6). Sexual relations outside of marriage have been contrary to the will of the Lord from the beginning. His laws (rules), intended for the good and happiness of the human race, have not changed.

Before closing this article, I ask you to join with me in thanking the Good Lord for everyone who still respects God's **plan** and His **place** for sexual activity. Let us always remember the apostle's instructions on how to **avoid fornication**. He wrote, "Let every man have his own wife and let every woman have her own husband." (I Corinthians 7:1,2) This is the way (place) God intended. Sex in

marriage; within the "holy bonds of matrimony", in "wedlock". That's *where* God placed sex. And, that's where it is to remain.

It is time for good people (God's people) to rise up and call sin, S I N. Please do not be a participant in the minimization of sin by calling evil "good" and by misusing such words as "affair"

and "gay."

The Bible still says, "Let marriage be had in honor among all." In marriage, and only in marriage, is the bed "undefiled". Remember: "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). A final plea: **Please pray for purity!** (alf, editor) franksmm@aol.com

Madison, Mississippi A Church "On the Move"

A little more than a year ago, several brethren, primarily from the "South Madison" (now, "Lake Harbour") church decided to "plant a church" in the city of Madison, Mississippi. This new work got off to an encouraging start when about 100 folks joined together in the effort.

"Progress" has accompanied this church from the beginning. They started out by renting an old school building in the town of Madison as their temporary home.

Progress continues. Things are changing. Madison is on the move. The church has acquired an attractive tract of land only a few miles northwest of their present location and are proceeding with plans to build a new facility. Through the sacrificial generosity of the church, six acres of the building site have already been paid for; another five acres are reserved for their purchase and use.

The church has recently started searching for a full time preacher. Up until a few weeks ago, Aaron Foster, one of the charter members, did most of the preaching. (His company, however, required that he and his family move to Tupelo.) Alonzo Welch is listed in their weekly bulletin as "minister"; although, brother Welch is not able to be very active due to automobile accidents and advancing age (near 90). He and sister Welch attend when they are able to do so.

My June and I were privileged to visit our Madison brethren on Wednesday evening, January 9, 2008. Attendance for the midweek service was probably somewhere between 60 and 70. Their Sunday morning attendance usually runs above 100 -- their bulletin stated that on the previous Sunday 103 were present.

We were thankful to be able to greet and visit briefly with several we have known over the years -- including Bill and Barbara Richards and Bob and Nancy Brown.

It was good to speak to Jorene Kendrick and to hear her express her feelings following the death of her beloved husband, Bill, who died this past September. She spoke to us of her desire to remain faithful to the Lord and His church,

in part, she said, "because that's what Bill would want me to do."

The class study from the book of Mark was capably conducted by Kyle Smith. Geoff Johnson presented an excellent devotional on the need to use our God-given talents. The church is also served by Quinn Tolbert as "Youth Minister" who is apparently doing a good job leading the young people as they make preparations to attend the "Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes" in Nashville this Spring.

Speaking of *young* folks..., I haven't seen, proportionately, as many young people in any other congregation lately. At the midweek service we were delighted to see several young couples and many children who were excited about being a part of the Madison church. What a credit to the parents and grandparents! Yes, there is hope for the future of the church!

The newly established Madison church is in a rapidly growing neighborhood. Although they are presently without a full-time preacher and they have no elders; yet, they seem to be solidly united in a common effort to firmly establish in Madison a New Testament church that is not ashamed to wear the name of Christ and not afraid to teach the doctrine of Christ. May God bless the Madison church -- a church truly "on the move".

Danny and I appreciate the good work that you are doing in the name of our Lord. Please accept this contribution as a token of our appreciation and to help continue this service. May God bless you. Respectfully, (Maggie Craddock, Springdale, AR)

PRAYER

(Continued from page 2)

the love manifested by the dedicated members of the Kosciusko church.

It was a great beginning for what we trust will be a good year for the Cause of Christ in Attala County, Mississippi and the world. A special thanks to evangelist **Les Ferguson** for putting together the arrangement for our first service on the first Wednesday night of the brand new year. What a privilege to pray! What a blessing to have our elders lead us in fervent prayers! (alf)

Denominations

(Continued from page 13)

immersion"; it *is* immersion. The first case of sprinkling for baptism was called "clinic baptism," because the subject was very ill. When he had recovered and was about to become a Bishop, he was rejected because it was contended he had not been baptized. Sprinkling for baptism was not fully approved until the Council of Ravenna in 1311 A.D. It has never had the approval of Christ.

Fifth: Instrumental music was not accepted in public worship until in the eighth century A.D. Other matters of worship will have to be taken up later. And, we have mentioned these -- only as illustrations of the apostle Paul's statement in our text that, "...in latter times some will depart from the faith..." They have.

And let us pray about it. Father, we are thankful to You for your preservation of your church through the centuries based on the truth that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead as revealed in the Bible. We pray, Father, that we can persuade people everywhere to follow your teachings as they are revealed in your word in the Bible. In Jesus' name, Amen.

You may be wondering about the title that we have given the message today -- and we haven't touched on it yet, have we? Well, the question, "Why So Many Denominations?" Let us use the rest of our time there, whatta ya say?

As the centuries rolled on, the departures from the faith became more and more, and the apostate church, led by men obsessed with their great power, became corrupt morally as well as doctrinally. But, not every one acquiesced or yielded to them. Men of unusual courage -- members of the apostate church they were now, who had opportunity to know the Bible and the kind of church they saw in it, sought a "reformation" of the church so as to fit the one they read about in the New Testament.

John Wycliff was one such person. He was born sometime around 1320. He has been called "The Morning Star of the Reformation." He is best known for his translation of the Bible into English, making it possible for the English-speaking world to read it for themselves. He made fifty charges against the apostate church. He died in 1384.

Martin Luther who lived from 1483 to 1546, has often been called "the father of the reformation." He had 95 objections to the church. He

is remembered for having nailed them to the church door in Wittenburg, Germany.

John Calvin, 1506 to 1564, was another great reformer. His influence may be stronger among protestants, these five centuries later, than any of the others that we have mentioned or even could mention. While these reformers -- and many others we don't have time to mention -- were great men and they came forth with great ideas and a dogged determination to reform the apostate church as it was then, they were just men.

And we should accept what they taught only when it is in agreement with the plain teachings of the New Testament. They were united in a noble idea of reformation, but they differed sharply on some critical matters of faith and doctrine. And because of those differences, "the old-line" denominations were born.

We pray, Father, that we can persuade people everywhere to follow your teachings as they are revealed in your word in the Bible. In Jesus' name, Amen.

With the idea that denominational Christianity has the approval of God, the door then was opened to the birth of any

new denomination a person wants to start on whatever grounds he wants to found it. We can't help but ask the questions Paul asked: "Now I say this, that each of you says, I am of Paul, or I am of Apollos, or I am of Cephas, or I am of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?"

Next week [issue-MM], we will begin here with the idea of -- not reformation, but the need for a return to the New Testament in our present society and the church as we read about it there. I hope you can be with us then. If you think you would like to have a free copy of these messages published in a little book, you may have it, *free*, just by sending your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083, or by e-mail searchtv@aol.com. Or, if you prefer to call, please use our toll-free number. That is 1-800-321-8633. Say, we are so glad you were with us today. Do it again next week, will you? We love you.

(Continued, Next Issue)

PASCAGOULA

We have learned that **John Dobbs**, who preached many years for the Central church in Pascagoula, Mississippi, has recently accepted an invitation from the Forsythe church in Monroe, LA, to become their full time preacher. John became widely known for his dedicated work after Katrina hit the Gulf Coast a couple of years ago. We pray God's blessings to be with both congregations.

A Funeral Service

The Matter of Music

**No apology.
No scripture.**

A funeral service was conducted on Saturday morning, December 8, 2007, for the dear mother of a personal friend and brother named "Jackson". The deceased lady, named Illene, was 85. The place for the funeral was Johnson's Funeral Home in Lake Charles, Louisiana. I was present.

Music was a significant part of the memorial service. The beloved song, "Amazing Grace" was sung. I listened intently and was moved by the meaningful words of the well known and popular hymn. What I heard was just singing. Music? Yes, but not instrumental. Just vocal.

Afterwards, there were three other songs sung by an "ordinary" group of 15 singers from the Enterprise Boulevard church of Christ in Lake Charles. I listened with great interest and found myself wanting to "join in" the group singing. But, for some reason I was not asked to do so!

The edifying and uplifting words were clearly spoken; very understandable and the message of each song was penetrating.

The melodious voices were so very beautiful as the mixed group

(7 males; 8 females) blended their voices in beautiful harmony. Having a good song leader named Doug helped.

As I recall, the talented group sang three songs, including the ever popular "How Great Thou Art" and "The Old Rugged Cross". At the close of the service, we listened with hope inspired to the wonderful words of the song, "No Tears in Heaven".

I couldn't help but to think about those of us who claim membership in the church that gratefully wears the name of its divine builder (Jesus Christ) and who use only vocal (acappella) music in our worship. The thought that came repeatedly to my mind was, "There is absolutely no need to ever feel embarrassed and/or feel the need to apologize for **just singing** without the accompaniment of instruments."

No apology is needed. No scripture is found in New Testament teachings which gives authority for any music in Christian worship other than singing/vocal. (Study Ephesians 5:19 -- "...singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord." See Colossians 3:17-- "...singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Singing is authorized and approved; therefore, practiced. No need for apology. No scripture found. (alf, editor)

franksmm@aol.com
Comments Invited!



Vera "Grandma" Davis
Active at Age 95

In a recent visit with the church in Caledonia, Mississippi, we were privileged to get acquainted with sister Vera Davis. We found out that she, at the age of 95 (as of January 31, 2008) remains faithful in attending church services. In so doing, "Grandma" Davis serves as a worthy example of an older Christian who does not let her age keep her from being active in the service of the Lord.

CLEVELAND CHURCH HIRES NEW PREACHER

Tim McCarter has been preaching in Jamestown, New York; however, recently he accepted an invitation to work with the Cleveland Church of Christ in Cleveland. Tim is a native of Mississippi (near Booneville). We are thankful he and his family are returning to work in his home state of Mississippi.

Fulton Bible Institute Class Brought Together 57 Students from 17 Different Congregations

Pictured on page one is a recent class photo of students taking *The History of the Church in Acts*, a course offered by Fulton Bible Institute in Fulton, MS during the Fall term of 2007. The class averaged 57 students per class from 17 different churches in the Northeast Mississippi area.

In addition, 2 non-Christians attended. At the end of the course banquet, Taisheivya Smith, received the Star Student Award and the Westside Church of Christ in Houston, MS received the Church Participation Award.

Included in the picture taken at the banquet are: Barbara Baskin, LeAnn Beam, Mickey Beam, Brenda Byrne, Ronnie Clayton, Dee Dee Colburn, Jimmie Faye Cooper, Betty Crosswhite, Linda Crosswhite, Russ Crosswhite, Linda Enlow, Carl Gaddy, Dianne Gaddy, Bob Gilliland, Jim Gilliland, Bobbie Griffin, and Elizabeth Huggins.

Also included are Yvonne Hughes, Annie Johnson, Steve Johnson, Terri Johnson, Amos Jones, Nate Jones, Qudell Jones, Thelma King, Robert Logan, Cassandra Lyons, Barbara Lummus, Gwen Martin, Herman Martin, Janet McMillen, Bill Miles, Kim Pearce, Shirley Pearce, Barbara Perry, Betty Reich, Cliff Rial, Charlotte Ritter and Lee Robinson.

In addition, pictured are Misty Robinson, Bobbie Roden, Darlene

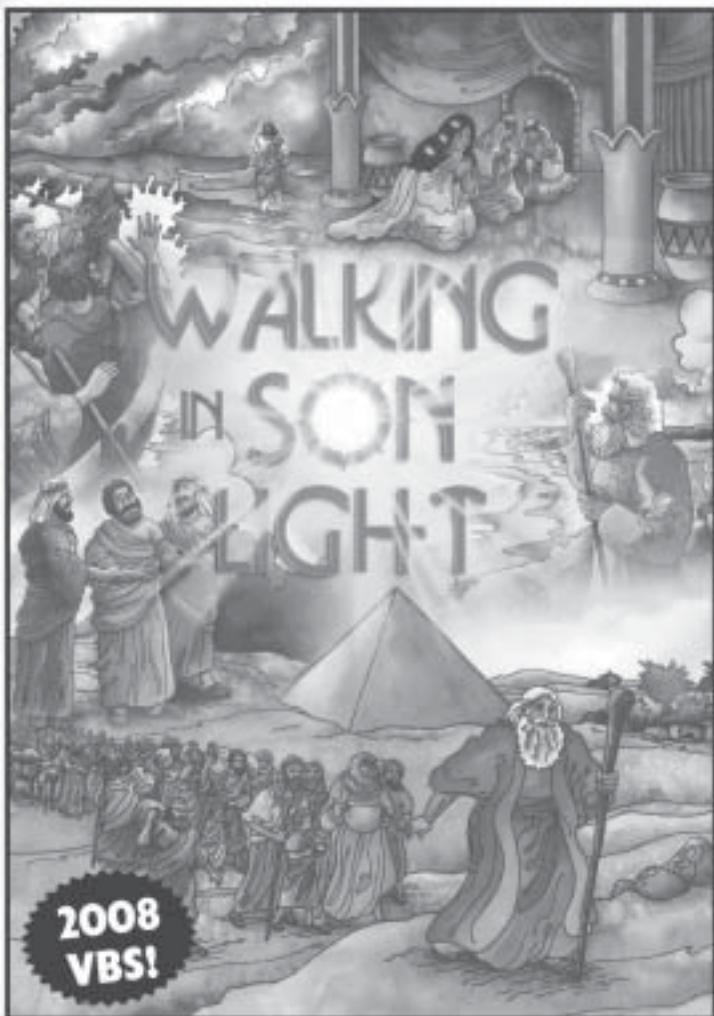
Rutledge, Beth Shappley, Jessica Shappley, Steve Shappley, Brittany Smalley, Jacqueline Smalley, Taisheivya Smith, Tommy Standford, Evelyn Stanord, Johnny Taylor, Thim Taylor, Barbara Tucker, Jimmy Tucker, Delbert Turner, Mary Ann Turner, Patty Wallace, Carolyn Wren and Lois Cleo Wright

The next course is a twelve-week study of *The Book of Ephesians*. It will meet, Lord willing, Tuesday nights from 7:00 - 8:30 PM. beginning January 29, 2008.

Fulton Bible Institute is located at 500 South Clifton Street in Fulton, MS. For more information or if interested in taking a course, please contact **Russ Crosswhite**, the School Administrator, at **662-862-4549**. Mailing address: **P.O. Box 271, Fulton, MS 38843**. E-mail: **gcross@network-one.com**

BOONEVILLE CHURCH HONORS THEIR ELDERS

The Booneville Church of Christ recently hosted an "Elder Appreciation Reception". The Elders for the Booneville congregation are **Buster Green, Eddie Allen, Roger Griffin, and Eddie Mauney**. Brother Griffin has announced his resignation as an elder because of his move back to his home place in Houlika, MS. It was stated in the church bulletin that the Griffins have invested forty years of their lives with the Booneville congregation.



2008
VBS!

WALKING IN SON LIGHT

This summer, walk in Son Light with Abraham, Moses, Esther, Peter, and Paul. God gave them very special missions, and each walked by faith toward a prize that blessed many. By their walks, they became champions and great examples for us, as we follow them into the glorious light of God's Son, Jesus Christ. Coming January, 2008.

5 Great Walks

Abraham: Put God First (Genesis 12:1-3, 18:1-19)

Moses: Take His Word to Heart (Exodus 3:1-22, 4:1-17)

Esther: Save Your Friends (Esther 4:10-17, Esther 5:1-3)

Peter: Keep the Son in Your Eyes (Matthew 14:25-33)

Paul: Be Chosen Vessels (Acts 9:3-18)

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(See Question Box)

These Sent In Answers

(Turn to Page 20)

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4. Martha Mantel
5. Linda Ruth Reed
6. Debbie Anderson
7. Jimmy Anderson
8. C. Bolding
9. Paulette Boudreaux
10. Dortha Carlile
11. Joe Carlile
12. Karen Cash
13. Joe Cash
14. Patricia Cole
15. Tommy Cole
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17. Vester Cooper
18. Suzan Dubrock
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559. Nannette Wicks
560. Joan Loftis
561. Dotsy Downs
562. Payge Jackson
563. Cayley Rodrigue
564. Jennifer Rodrigue
565. Lara Cooley
566. YOUR NAME, Next time. Okay?

All answers received before January 15, 2008, have been included. Thanks to all who read the MM and who answered "The Question Box". (see page 20)

Pine Vale Children's Home

Relief House Parents Needed

Applicants preferably have had some experience in rearing children, like to be involved in church activities, special activities and traveling. Applicants should be well organized and flexible. For those interested in doing mission work, this is a wonderful opportunity to make a difference in the life of a child. Position involves caring for children during staff breaks and vacations and maintaining grounds and pantry areas.

Pine Vale is located 50 miles from the campus of Freed Hardeman University and 55 miles from Heritage Christian University.

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Interested couples should contact:

Bonnie Vansandt, Director

Pine Vale Children's Home
1872 CR 700; Corinth, MS 38834

662-286-6555 or e-mail:

PineValeCH@comcast.net

"Helping Children Grow"

... From A Woman's Viewpoint ...

- Reminders - During 2007

- Mona June Franks -

The year 2007 has now come and gone. However, during the year, we were reminded of some lessons we had previously learned.

The year 2007 brought trials and tribulations. But as a result of our trials and tribulations we should have been made stronger and wiser and brought closer to God.

Just a reminder of some of the scriptures relating to our many trials and tribulations. The Bible says, "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." (Prov. 3: 11-12)

The Old Testament character, Job, said, "But he knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job 23:10) The wise man Solomon said, "Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better." (Eccl. 7:3)

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

The Bible also says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the



June Franks

fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (I Peter 4:12-13)

As we look back over the year 2007, we realize how truly blessed we have been and how wonderful the Lord has been to each one of us. We have learned, even through the bad times, that we were receiving blessings from God.

God's promises are so precious. God has promised to be with us at all times. Just as the popular poem depicts a person walking on the seashore. And when trials and tribulations came, he looked back and there was only one set of footprints. He wondered where God was when he was suffering; however, the Lord reminded him that it was during his time of special need that God

was carrying him.

In any situation, whether good or bad, we should ask ourselves what we can learn from it.

The year 2007 reminded us once again of how quickly time is going by. It seemed that the year 2007 had just gotten started when the year 2008 rolled around. Time

is so precious. Time is our life and how we spend it is so important.

The year 2007 also reminded us of just how fragile life is. The Bible says, "...For what is your life: It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." (James 4:14) We are told that we are only a heart beat away from eternity at all times.

For many of us, the year 2007 brought death to a family member or to a close friend. Some of these deaths makes us realize that (a) you don't have to be old to die and (b) you don't have to be sick. Also, (c) that death is no respecter of persons.

We are reminded of what is really important. The most important thing you can do in life is to get ready so that you will be ready when ever death may come. We are living in a materialistic society; but, at our death our material possessions will not matter to us. All of our earthly possessions will become the property of someone else.

We were also reminded in 2007, that we can't control other people. We can pray for them and do our best to set a good example before them, but we can not make others do right. Sometimes, I wish we could!

God has blessed us with a brand new year. What we do with this year is left up to us.

Looking back at the year 2007, we can certainly learn from our experiences and be reminded of lessons we had previously learned. However, we shouldn't dwell for long on the past; instead, look to the future with hope and in prayer that 2008 will be indeed a good year.

We need to be reminded in the beginning of 2008 that our attitude is very important. Let us strive in this new year to have the attitude of one dear Christian brother, who, when asked how he is doing, he always responds, "Better than I deserve."

— — —
Mrs. A. L. Franks
P. O. Box 1578
Kosciusko, MS 39090

READER RESPONDS

I enjoy your paper very much. This is the first time I have entered the Question Box. Sincerely, (Carolyn Kimball, Bastrop, LA)

The following poem was submitted by Mickey Gibson who attends services with Sister George at the Philadelphia church. Mickey stated, "Mrs. George is a faithful member of the Philadelphia Church of Christ. She drives 17 miles each way and is 82 years old. She almost never misses a service. She is a wonderful example for everyone in the congregation."

"Dear God"

When I arose from sleep so early,
And I looked out upon the earth;
I thought, Dear God how great you are,
And what little I am worth.

You made this great and beautiful world,
The sun, the stars, and moon.
And all the flowers, birds, and trees,
The morning, night, and noon.

I feel so ashamed when I behold,
The wonders of your hand.
And look upon my own poor soul,
When dirty rags I am.

I'll never know how One so great,
Could love someone like me.
I'm sure that some will laugh,
And say Oh! that will never be.

But let them say whatever they may,
For I have no doubt, you see.
That Jesus lived and died alone,
To save a soul like me.

Dear God your love is more than we deserve,
Some things I sure regret.
But then I know I'll live again,
Because you love, forgive, and forget.

Written by: - Evelyn Bates George -

"My Feelings"

As I awoke this morning,
And I said "Lord" What must I do?
He said, "Child I have told you
That I would always be with you."

Sometimes the struggles in life,
Just about get the best of me,
The Lord said "Child, I'm here,
Just look for me and you will see.

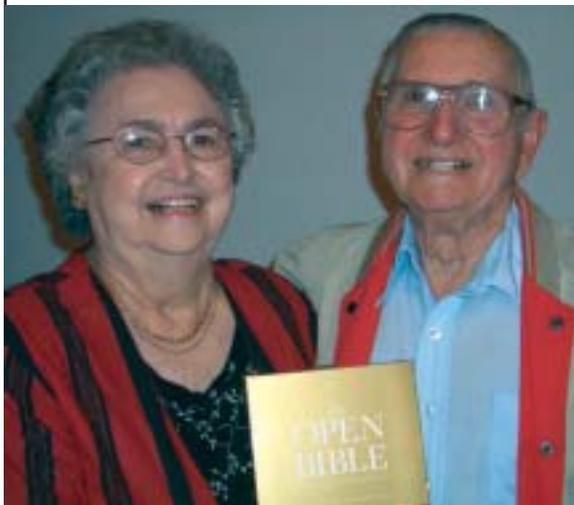
I'm so thankful for all my family,
Whom I love with all my heart,
And I am thankful for my blessings,
That you have always had a part.

Sometimes I have pain in my life,
But "Lord" I know you are always near,
You gently reach out your arms to me,
So that I would not have any fear.

Lord I'm looking forward to the day,
When you will call me home,
There will be no tears in heaven,
And I will never have no more to roam.

by: Patricia Barnett; 10850 Road 351; Union, MS. 39365

Our Recent Bible Winners



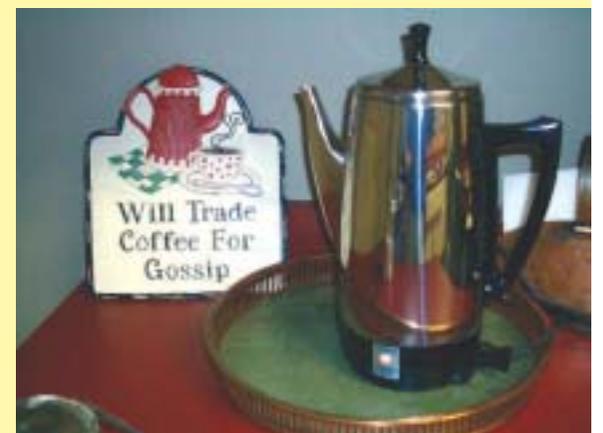
Ruth and Vic Hawn, (Salttillo, Mississippi)

The Hawns are members of the Mayfield church of Christ where Adam Miller serves as the preacher. Thanks for their encouragement. May God bless!

Yield
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Sorta Funny; But also very serious!



The Question Box

NOTE: You may find it helpful to use the King James Version.

Our Greatest Enemy: SATAN

Life is filled with danger. All have enemies - those who would harm us. The greatest enemy of all is Satan. Warnings abound in Scripture. Paul admonished, "Neither give place to the devil." He spoke of the "wiles of the devil" and exhorted Christians to prepare for battle with Satan by putting on "the whole armour of God." (Ephesians 4:27; 6:11). He also wrote about the "snare of the devil" in both I Timothy 3:7 and 2 Timothy 2:26). By inspiration, the disciple James commanded, "Resist the devil" (James 4:7) and the apostle Peter called upon Christians to "be sober" and to "be vigilant". He tells why, "...because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

This month's study is intended to remind us of our common enemy -- the devil. This lesson will demonstrate from the Holy Scriptures how we can successfully wage war against the one who would destroy, not only our souls but also our very lives. Special attention is called to Jesus, our example, reminding us of how He successfully defeated man's greatest enemy.

Please answer each section of this vital lesson and send your answers to us. By so doing, you will encourage others (see page 18) and you may be selected as our next Bible winner. (Each issue we award a beautiful study Bible to one student, selected at random, who sent in answers. **You may be the one.**) Thank you for your interest in the world's greatest book and for studying this lesson about our greatest enemy. (alf/Editor)

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I. Designations of the Devil

(Match the passage in column one which speaks of the devil, using a designation found in column two)

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| ___ Revelation 12:9 | 1. "Roaring Lion" |
| ___ I Peter 5:8 | 2. "Beelzebub" |
| ___ 2 Corinthians 4:4 | 3. "God of this world" |
| ___ 2 Corinthians 11:14 | 4. "Tempter" |
| ___ John 8:44 | 5. "Old serpent" |
| ___ Matthew 4:3 | 6. "Murderer" |
| ___ Matthew 12:24 | 7. "Angel of light" |

II. Satan and the Saviour

To whom or about whom did Jesus say: (Study Matthew 4:10; 16:23 and John 6:70)

- | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------|
| ___ Judas | 1. "Get behind me." |
| ___ Peter | 2. "One of you is a devil." |
| ___ Satan | 3. "Get thee hence." |

III. Scripture Vs. Satan

Find the Old Testament scripture in Deuteronomy that Jesus most likely quoted as He successfully resisted Satan's temptations. (cf. Matt. 4 & Luke 4) Supply the number of the missing verse.

- "Man shall not live by bread alone..." Deut. 8:___
- "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Deut. 6:___
- "Thou shalt serve the Lord thy God..." Deut.10:___

IV. Some Sins Caused by Satan

Match the person named in column 1 with the sin committed in column 2. References to help: Luke 22 and Acts chapters 5 & 13.

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| ___ Barjesus | 1. "'Tempted the Spirit of the Lord" |
| ___ "Iscariot" | 2. "Perverted the right ways of the Lord" |
| ___ Sapphira | 3. "Betrayed the Lord Jesus" |

V. The Devil and the Churches

The devil or Satan is mentioned in at least four of the letters written to the seven churches of Asia. (Study Revelation chapters 2 and 3.) Write in the names of the four churches.. First letter in name is supplied.

- S _____
 Pe _____
 T _____
 Ph _____

VI. The End of the Devil

(fill in missing words)

- "Everlasting _____ prepared for the _____ and his angels"-- Matt. 25:41
- Lake of _____ and brimstone. Tormented _____ and _____ forever and _____." -- Rev. 20:10)

Thank you for answering "The Question Box"

Please Send Your Answers to Us.

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____
 Zip: _____ Telephone: _____

Notice: Each person who sends in answers will be recognized in the next issue of the "MM" (see page 18). Also the name of one student will be selected, at random, to be awarded a beautiful New Study Bible. **You may be the one.** Please send your answers to:

**The Question Box
 P. O. Box 1578
 Kosciusko, MS 39090**

Answers -- The Question Box -- Last Issue
 See Page 14

What Will They See?

Several years ago, a preacher from out-of-state accepted an invitation to serve with a congregation in Houston, Texas. Some weeks after he arrived, he had an occasion to ride the bus from his home to the downtown area. When he sat down, he discovered that the driver had accidentally given him a quarter too much change. As he considered what to do, he thought to himself, "You'd better give the quarter back. It would be wrong to keep it."

Then he thought, "Oh, forget it, it's only a quarter. Who would worry about this little amount? Anyway, the bus company gets too much fare; they will never miss it. Accept it as a gift from God and keep quiet."

When his stop came, he paused momentarily at the door, then he handed the quarter to the driver and said, "Here, you gave me too much change." The driver, with a smile replied, "Aren't

you the new preacher in town? I have been thinking a lot lately about going somewhere to worship. I just wanted to see what you would do if I gave you too much change. I'll see you at worship on Sunday."

Paul said to another preacher, "Be an example in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity" (I Timothy 4: 12). Jesus said, "He who is faithful in little will be faithful also in much."

Our lives are the *only* Bible some people will ever read. This is an example of how much people watch Christians and put us to the test! Always be on guard -- and remember -- You carry the name of Christ on your shoulders when you call yourself "Christian."

(Editor's note: The above article was taken from the bulletin of the Capital City church in Baton Rouge, LA where Glenn Beall serves as preacher. Brother Beall stated that he copied and adapted it from "Ventura Bulletin". The challenging article deserves prayerful consideration by everyone who calls himself a "Christian". The Capital City church of Christ brings together about 30 worshippers each Lord's day over on the eastern side of Louisiana's capital city.)

Our New Bible Winner
Lisa Dearman
 Brandon, MS
Congratulations!

A Special Thanks To MM Supporters

A few weeks ago, more than 1,000 letters were mailed to MM readers (individuals and congregations) who have, in the past few years, assisted financially in the publication of the Magnolia Messenger and the associated mission efforts of Al & June Franks. We expressed regret for not being able to publish the planned issue of the MM for Nov/Dec, 2007. We also made an earnest plea for continued and, if possible, increased support.

Our hearts are overflowing with gratitude to a Gracious God and to his generous children -- many of whom have already responded. We are very thankful to say that all past due bills have been paid and, with this issue, we are now "back on schedule" for publishing in 2008. **Again, a very special THANKS!**

Al & June Franks



Another Beautiful Sunset
 Reminding us of God's Love for Beauty and for Mankind.