

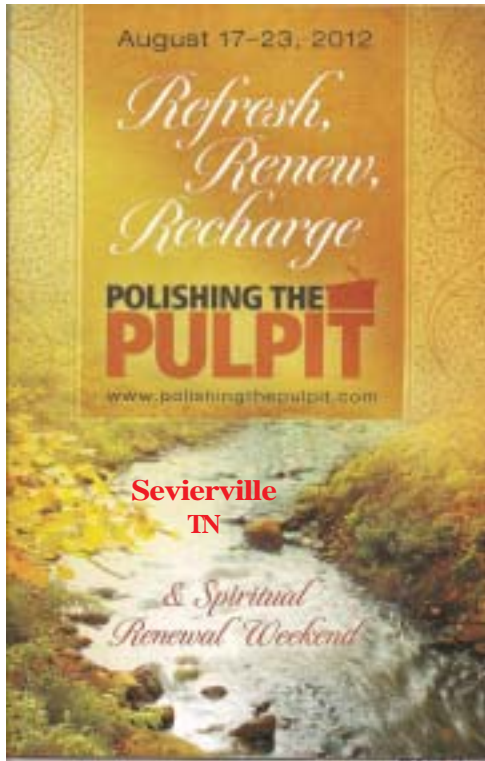


Our 34th Year

Magnolia Messenger


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

Volume 34
Number 2
April-June,
2012



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Gospel Broadcasting Network
Moving to Mississippi
How You Can Help
(See page 15)



Mississippi
Leads the Nation as the
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(Information on Page 9)

A Sad Day In America
May 9, 2012
But, Remember:
Homosexuality
Is Not The Only Sexual Sin!
Consider:
Cohabitation
(Read-Study-Pray)
(Turn to Page 19)

THE CHURCH
THEN AND NOW
"We Live in a Different World"
(Study Begins on Page 2)

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CHANGE SERVICE
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Why Worry?
Study with Seth
(Page 8)

SOUTHAVEN
The 2012 Power Lectures are scheduled for July 22-26, 2012 at the Southaven Church of Christ in Southaven, Mississippi. The theme is: "Job: A Man Who Lost Everything Except For His Faith."

CORINTH
The Campaign For Christ is scheduled for September 23-25, 2012 in Corinth, Mississippi.

A Reader Asks:
QUESTION: Please share some insight into 1 Peter 3:18-21. The part about Jesus preaching to the disobedient spirits who had died in the days of Noah is especially puzzling. (T.P.)
Brother May's Insightful Response Begins on Page 3.

Are YOU Prepared to Die TODAY?
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Medical Missions Family
(Plans Detailed on Page 21)

Roger Reflects:
"Abortion, gay rights, the role of government in the lives of individual citizens must all be exposed to the light of the gospel in our lives."
(Read More on Page 13)

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Magnolia Messenger
P. O. Box 1578
Kosciusko, MS 39090
662-289-3559
601-668-3344
franksmm@aol.com

"Aquila and Priscilla"
by
John Gardner
If we have many couples like them in the churches of Christ, we will have no fear that the work of the Lord will stagnate. It will surely thrive!
(Read More on Page 12)

"Lads To Leaders" Meetings
Over 19,000
(See Page 7)

The Titanic
One of Two Famous Ships
(Study on Page 5)



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

Readers' Response

(Comments & Suggestions Invited; Criticisms Considered)

Someone had left a copy of the "Magnolia Messenger" in the Dr's office. I was impressed by the way you presented the Bible. I would like for you to put my name on the mailing list. I worship at Sherrod Avenue congregation here in Florence, AL. My mailing address is: (Edgar Mitchell, Florence, AL)

Thank you for sending me the MM and for the great job you do as editor. It is filled with interesting and informative articles. I read it and pass it on to a couple in the congregation who formerly worshiped in MS. I want to thank you especially for the fine article "There Was Once A Place" by Steve Reeves which appeared in the Jan-Mar 2012 issue.

It is very timely and needs to be widely circulated. I wrote to Steve to thank him for the article and suggested he put it on the internet so that it can also be distributed by that medium.

We appreciate you and your good wife and your constant efforts to teach, encourage and build up the kingdom. (Rod Rutherford, preacher, Gatlinburg, TN)

Just a note to thank you for the work that goes into the "great" Magnolia Messenger that I read from front to back with great interest, one of the best if not the best of our brotherhood... I thank God for all his blessings and it is to His glory... Your fellow servants in the Lord, (Wheldon & Carol Hendrix, Henderson, TN)

"We appreciate the good work that you are doing through your publication and enjoy reading each issue from cover to cover. Thank you." (Jerry Sparks; Millport, AL)

Please accept this donation and add me to your subscription list of the Magnolia Messenger. I have enjoyed this study and would like to study on a regular basis. Thank you, (My church is Antioch Church of Christ and I was recently baptized as a member) (Rhonda Milton, Coldwater, MS)

I am writing to ask you to send the Magnolia Messenger to my sister-in-law. She said she used to receive it but she hasn't received it in a few years. I receive it here in California and enjoy it very much. I did give my last one to one of the elders at church. I go to the Elk Grove Church of Christ in Elk Grove, CA. My husband and I raised our children in Clarksdale, MS. Thanking you for the good work you do. (Mrs. Aileen Dendy, Elk Grove, CA)

For some reason I have not been receiving the MM through the mail. Please would you all help with this problem. I really enjoy the Messenger. The articles are on time and helpful. God provides us with what we need to help in our spiritual growth. Just happened to be in the hall today when the chaplain came in with a few issues of the MM. Enjoy the Question Box. God bless y'all real good. (Jack Stillman, Parchman, MS)

"We Live in a Different World"

1st Century Church -- 21st Century Church

- A. L. Franks -

In New Testament times (the First Century A.D.), Jesus Christ willingly gave his life at Calvary, shedding His blood as the price for purchasing His church. (Eph. 5:23). As He promised, the Lord built His church on the solid foundation of His divine Sonship. The "rock" upon which Christ built his church is the "truth" confessed by Simon Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

Jesus made a remarkable statement. He promised, "Upon this rock I will build my church...." He added that even the "gates of Hell" [Hades] (his upcoming death) would not prevent Him from keeping the promise to build His church. And, He kept His promise. He built His church upon His divinity and purchased it with his precious blood. Make no mistake. The Lord's church is divine and is the greatest institution in the world. (Acts 20:28; Matthew 16:13-18)

Every soul, saved through obedience to the Gospel of Christ, is added to the church, to Christ's church, by the Lord Himself (Acts 2:47). The Bible clearly teaches that the church of Christ is the body of Christ and that Jesus is the saviour

of His body, His church (Eph. 5:23). All who are saved are added to the church of which Jesus is said to be the Saviour.

The church of the first century, the church you read about in the New Testament, is not and never has been a denomination. The church of the Lord is simply the body of believers who have humbly submitted themselves to the Lordship of Jesus through obedience to His gospel plan of salvation and who seek daily to follow in the footsteps of their Saviour and Master. Every person who has obeyed the gospel and who follows Jesus has reason for life on earth and assurance of life eternal in Heaven.



A. L. Franks, Editor

In those early years, covered by New Testament writings (the first century), believers in and followers of Christ were simply members of Christ's body; His church. That's the way it was, back then. But what about now?

God's plan and God's place for salvation have not changed over the centuries. Those who were saved back then were added to the church; those who are saved today are also added to the same church by the same Saviour! Those who continued

In the early days of the New Testament church era which is covered by the book of Acts, there were no denominations. There was simply the church -- the church Christ built; the church Jesus purchased with His blood; the church over which Jesus ruled as Lord.

faithfully to serve the Lord then and those who continue to serve the Lord faithfully today are all members of the same church Jesus built, the one He purchased with His precious blood.

How was the first century church identified in New Testament writings? The simple truth of the matter is that the Lord's church in the first century was not given a specific "name." All who made up the body of believers were known simply as "saints", "Christians" and/or "disciples."

In those early days there was no "denominational name" given to followers of Christ such as "baptists", "methodists", "presbyterians", "catholics", "pentecostals", or even "church of Christ's." A study of New Testament teachings indicates that denominational names and divisions were not in the plan of

Christ for His followers. (Study John 17:20-23 and I Cor. 1:10-13.)

A careful study of the first century inspired scriptures reveals that the church or body of Christ was frequently identified simply as the "church" or the "body" or the "family" (household) or the "kingdom." Often, in New Testament writings, the relationship of the church to God and/or Christ is demonstrated by the use of such expressions as "the church of God", "the church of the Lord", "the household of faith", "the kingdom of Heaven" and/or "the kingdom of God."

Considering the vital and prominent role of its builder, Saviour and Lord, the church of the first century was frequently spoken of in a way that expressed the relationship of the church to Christ. (I Thess. 1:1; Romans 16:16; Acts 20:28 [ASV]; Matt. 16:18)

In the early days of the New Testament church era which is covered by the book of Acts, there were no denominations. There was simply the church -- the church Christ built; the church Jesus purchased with His blood; the church over which Jesus ruled as Lord. It was the church that fulfilled Old Testament prophecies concerning the establishment of God's spiritual kingdom on earth.

The first century church which served cities like Corinth and Ephesus was known simply as the body of Christ -- comprised of all who had become children of God through "the new birth" that Jesus said was essential for entrance into the kingdom of God (John 3:1-15). In this kingdom, in this church, in this body are all who are blessed to know the Almighty One as their "Father" and to know all of His children as "brothers and sisters" in the world's greatest family.

Sounds simple. Sounds scriptural. It is. But, admittedly, we do live in a different world.

See Different World -- Page 16

Magnolia Messenger

Church of Christ - Kosciusko

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Contributions from churches and individuals make possible the circulation of more than 24,000 copies of each issue of the "Magnolia Messenger". Your prayers and support are **requested, needed and appreciated!**

Supported By Contributions

A. L. Franks, Editor

Paul Franks, On Line Editor; www

Cecil May, Jr., Bible Questions Answered

June & Glenda Franks, Special Assistants

Telephone Numbers

Office/Home

662-289-3559

Cell

601-668-3344

Mailing Address

Magnolia Messenger

P. O. Box 1578

Kosciusko, MS 39090

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

E-Mail: franksmm@aol.com

Bible Questions Answered

QUESTION: Please share some insight into 1 Peter 3:18-21. The part about Jesus preaching to the disobedient spirits who had died in the days of Noah is especially puzzling. (T.P.)

RESPONSE:

The complete passage inquired about reads: "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:18-21).

The word translated "saved" in the phrase in verse 20, "saved by water," can also mean "brought safely through." Some translations, including ESV, translate it that way, although most familiar translations have "saved by water." The analogy Peter himself makes between "saved by water" (verse 20) and "baptism now saves you" (verse 21) where the word used just means "saved," suggests "saved by water" is the correct translation in verse 20. "Baptism saves" in verse 21 is unquestionably correct and is used by all standard translations.

The First Epistle of Peter is written to "the elect exiles of the dispersion" (1:1), language used by the Jews about themselves reflecting how scattered throughout the world they were since the Assyrian (Israel) and Babylonian (Judah) exiles. Peter adopts their Jewish phraseology to address Christians who were likewise scattered.

Suffering As Christ Did

The epistle is designed to encourage Christians who are confused and discouraged by persecution. In it Peter points them to Jesus as an example of one persecuted, indeed crucified, for doing right. They could rejoice knowing that in suffering for doing good they were following their master.

Response by Cecil May, Jr.



Cecil May, Jr., Dean
College of Biblical Studies
Faulkner University
5345 Atlanta Highway
Montgomery, AL 36109
334-386-7154
cmay@faulkner.edu

In one brief statement Peter sets forth the fact and the basis of our reconciliation to God. "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh."

Christ. The Messiah, the Anointed King of the kingdom of God.

Also suffered. He did not lead the Jewish armies to military victory over the Roman oppressors as they expected; he was the Suffering Servant on a Roman cross as Isaiah the prophet predicted (Matthew 16:21).

Once. Hapax, once for all, not repeatedly, as the Jewish animal sacrifices were (Hebrews 10:12).

For sins. "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3).

The righteous for the unrighteous. Though unheard of, Christ did it that way (Romans 5:7-8). "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

That he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh. God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself by Jesus' death on the cross (2 Corinthians 5:19).

Proclaimed to Spirits in Prison

Having mentioned Jesus "being put to death in the flesh," he follows with this puzzling statement, "but made alive in the spirit in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison."

Virtually every commentator remarks on the difficulty of adequately and with any certainty explaining what Jesus is said to have done in this verse and on the great variety of interpretations different students have suggested through the years.

The main questions under consideration are: Who are the spirits to whom Jesus preached? In what sense was Jesus "in the spirit" when he preached? When was the preaching done? What was preached or proclaimed?

No Second Chance

Among the many suggestions proposed to explain this event, several commentators include the idea that, when Jesus "went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison," he preached the gospel to them and gave them a second chance after their death to repent and be saved.

A primary rule of hermeneutics is that difficult passages are to be explained in harmony with clearly stated ones, not the other way around. This is admittedly a difficult passage, and the Bible clearly and consistently states that this life is our opportunity to prepare for judgement and eternity. For example, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil" (2 Corinthians 5:10). Note: "for what he has done in the body"!

Besides that, the text says, "he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison." The ESV trans-

lators wisely chose "proclaimed" instead of "preached" (KJV and NKJV) because the word Peter used (*kerusso*) does not mean "preach the gospel," as one of the words frequently translated "preach" (*euangelio*) does, but rather means "proclaim" or "announce."

If Christ is represented as going into the Spirit world and proclaiming, it is not to be supposed he preached the gospel or offered the dead a second chance to repent. That would not be in harmony with the rest of Scripture and is not required by the word Peter used to describe what Jesus did.

Preached through Noah?

One view held by many faithful, knowledgeable students of Scripture is that Jesus proclaimed (heralded) to the disobedient in the days of Noah representatively through Noah, who is called "a herald of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5). They were "spirits in prison" at the time Peter was writing, not at the time Jesus through Noah preached to them.

Earlier in the same epistle the Holy Spirit, who is also called the Spirit of Christ, preached through the prophets as they prophesied concerning the atoning death Christ would suffer (1 Peter 1:10-11). Why would it be considered strange then that Christ would preach through Noah?

According to this view, the pertinent questions are answered thus: *Who are the spirits to whom Jesus preached?* The people who were disobedient in the days of Noah. *In what sense was Jesus "in the spirit" when he preached?* He was the Spirit inspiring Noah. *When was the preaching done?*

While the ark was being prepared. *What was preached or proclaimed?* That God's judgement was surely coming on the wicked and they needed to repent and get in the ark.

Proclaimed His Sovereignty In Hades?

Another view, also held by respected and knowledgeable students, is that during the time between Jesus's death and resurrection Jesus was in Hades, the realm of the dead, and there proclaimed to the wicked dead his lordship and sovereignty, his victory over sin and death.

Peter's citation of Psalm 16:8-11 in his Pentecost sermon as David's prophecy of Christ's resurrection (Acts 2:24-31) includes the words, "You will not abandon my soul to Hades," implying that Jesus' soul or spirit went to Hades at his death, as does that of all men and women when they die. Christ's words to the penitent thief, "Today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43), combined with Peter's declaration that Christ descended into Hades help make the case that Hades is composed of two "compartments," one a place of comfort and bliss where Lazarus and Abraham are, and one a place of imprisonment and torment where the rich man and the disobedient angels are (Luke 16:19-31; 2 Peter 2:4).

The King James Version and the so-called "Apostle's Creed" have Jesus in "hell" following his death, but that is the result of a failure to distinguish between *gehenna* (hell), the place of eternal fire and brimstone (Matthew 18:9; 25:46) and *hades*, the place

See SPIRITS IN PRISON, pg. 10

Brand New Book

Bible Questions Answered

by Cecil May, Jr.

A compilation of brother May's response to questions asked by MM readers over the past 30 years

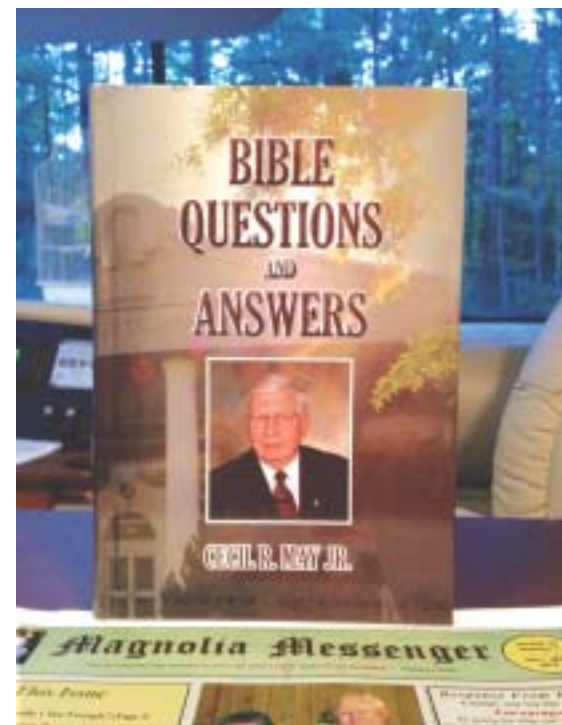
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Morton Church Is Served by Willie Hammock as Preacher



Willie Hammock

For the past couple of years, the Morton congregation has benefited from the capable service of Willie Hammock as preacher. Brother Willie expressed much gratitude for the opportunity he has been given to preach for the Morton church which brings together about 30 or 40 worshippers each Lord's day.

He stated that he was greatly encouraged by **Paul Walden**, (now deceased) who had him to "fill-in" on occasions while he was still preaching at Morton. Willie also expressed thanks for the opportunity he had to study under the guidance of MBC teachers. Brother Willie and his wife, **Misty** and their children, live in the Brandon area and drive over to Morton for services and other times as needed. He also is employed by the United States Postal Service, but indicates that his real interest is in serving as a preacher of the gospel.

Nile Church To Host Gospel Meeting With Evangelist James A. Horton

The Nile congregation in central Mississippi (near Kosciusko) has scheduled their summer meeting for July 15 - 18, 2012, with guest evangelist **James A. Horton**, a minister of the Beech Hill church near Ripley, Mississippi. The theme of the summer series is "**Sermons for Saints and Sinners**". According to **Bill Hettick**, a church leader at Nile, services are scheduled for Sunday beginning at 9:30 in the morning and 6:00 o'clock in the evening. On Monday through Wednesday, services are to be held at 7:00 P.M. All are cordially invited to attend. **Jim Mordecai** serves as the local preacher for the county church in south Attala County.

Nile Church of Christ
4608 Attala Road 1106
Carthage, Mississippi
601-267-5258; 601-267-9554

Drop-In Visit With Robert L. Johnson, Preacher for the 10th Ave Church in Columbus

My June and I were encouraged by a brief "drop in visit" with the preacher for the 10th Ave church in Columbus, Mississippi. It was on a Wednesday morning, back in March, when we stopped by the church building and were warmly received by brother Johnson. He informed us that he had been serving as preacher for the Columbus church since May of 2005. He and his wife, **Emma**, before coming to Mississippi, had previously worked with churches in Georgia, Florida and Ohio.



Robert L. Johnson
10th Avenue Preacher

He commented that he was "enjoying" working under the two elders of the church who are **Author Burr** and **Ervin Burr**. I understood brother Robert to say that the 10th Avenue church presently has about 100 members and that Sunday attendance usually runs in the neighborhood of 115 to 125.

The preacher, now in his 8th year with the Columbus church, spoke with excitement about their daily 30 minute radio program which is broadcast on station WTWG (AM-1050) at 7:30 each morning.

We were very thankful that brother Robert could take out time on a busy Wednesday morning to provide us with; yet, another "encouraging visit." We also deeply appreciate his kind remarks concerning the MM and his concern for the spiritual well-being of the Lord's church. May God bless.

BATESVILLE

Dale Jenkins is scheduled to preach in a gospel meeting at the Batesville Church of Christ in October. The dates are October 21-24, 2012. **Michael Bates** serves as preacher for the Batesville congregation.

We love the MM! Keep up the great works. (**Monique & Troy Butler**, New Orleans, LA)

Tipton Street Kosciusko Church of Christ Welcomes New Preacher



Donald Woods

Lord willing, June 3, 2012, will begin Donald Woods full-time service as the new preacher for the Tipton Street congregation in Kosciusko, Mississippi.

Brother Woods, his wife, **June** and their two children, **Caleb** and **Zipporah**, have been living and serving the Lord in Selmer, Tennessee. He is excited about coming to central Mississippi and working with the brethren who identify Tipton Street as their home congregation.

Leroy Watson, a leader in the local church, has been doing most of the preaching during the past several months. And, from what I've heard, brother Watson has been doing a good job. We pray God's richest blessings upon all.

Readers' Response

I enjoy the Magnolia Messenger. Great Biblical reading, and information. Thank you, (**Merlene Scott**, Dothan, AL)

**Thank You
for
Reading the MM
Supporting the MM
Answering the "QB"**



Somewhere in Mississippi

Church History

The Mayfield Church in Saitillo, MS

EDITOR'S NOTE: The history of each Mississippi church is, without doubt, of great interest to those closely associated with the congregation. Recently Ruth Gunter sent to the MM a brief history of the Mayfield church, the first church in Mississippi for which I was privileged to serve as preacher. My June and I moved to Saitillo January of 1957, in order that I may become Mayfield's first "full-time preacher." Thanks, sister Ruth, for sending us the interesting and informative historical account.

In the fall of 1930, eight families started meeting in the home of Brother Jasper Rogers as it was agreed from a conversation in a cotton patch that they needed a place to worship the Lord. Beds were taken down and planks were spread on stove wood blocks for seating. This was the beginning of what is now the congregation of the Lord's church that is known as the Mayfield Church of Christ in Saitillo, Mississippi.

In the spring of 1934 the first gospel meeting was held under the shade trees with Brothers Jasper Rogers, Paul Murphy, and Frank Cole speaking and Brothers Ed Pardin and Elzy Skelton leading singing. The next year an old building was purchased, torn down by the men and the first house of worship in the area was built near the old Mayfield schoolhouse.

The new congregation was called *Mayfield Church of Christ* with 75 regular attendees. Brother Rogers and Brother Marcus Smith were elders and Brother Rich Rogers and Brother Doug Davis were deacons. Brother W.R. Wilcut held the first gospel meeting in the building. Baptisms were in local ponds and creeks. Later, Brother Smith moved and Brother Charlie Rogers and Brother Willie Clark were ordained as elders.

In 1950, two acres of land on Highway 45 were purchased, and in the spring of 1952, a building consisting of an auditorium and two classrooms were completed. Dinner on the grounds and all day services celebrated opening day.

As time passed an additional acre of land was purchased and four more class-rooms, two bathrooms and baptistry were added. Brother Clyde Neaves became the full time song leader and was ordained as an elder. Shortly after this Brother Noval

Clark was ordained as elder. As time passed, five more classrooms and a utility room were added, more land was purchased, and a house was built for a minister's home. The first full time minister for the Mayfield congregation was Brother Lavern [A.L./ "Al"] Franks.

In 1979, Brother Charlie Rogers died and Brother Johnny Brazeal was ordained as an elder.

In 1983, there were three elders and five deacons in the leadership of the Mayfield congregation. This year the building was bricked and in 1985 an educational building was constructed under the leadership of these men.

In 1995, the elders decided to build a new building. The old building was sold and moved, and construction began on the new building. The congregation met in the educational building while construction was being done, and in the fall of 1995, the building was complete, and worship began in the new building.

Mayfield congregation has had great leadership in the years of her existence and is grateful to our Lord for these men and their dedication to the work of the Lord's Church. These men are: Jasper Rogers, Marcus Smith, Charlie Rogers, Willie Clark, Clyde Neaves, Noval Clark, Johnny Brazeal, Lonnie Neaves, Oscar Buchanan, Shelby Lyons, Don Fox, Pete Worthey, and Mike Stanford. These men served and are serving as elders of the congregation along with other good Christian men who have served and are serving as deacons.

Today, the congregation consists of approximately 150 members, and Brother Adam T. Miller serves as minister and J. Adam Miller serves as associate minister. The elders are Lonnie Neaves, Mike Stanford and Pete Worthey. The deacons are Ray Brown, Phillip Lansdell, Curt Mize, Mark Neaves, Bob Stanford and Mark Stiles.



Mayfield's Bus Seen in Memphis (Lads to Leaders Convention)

**MM Welcomes
Other Church History Reports**



A Replica of the Titanic Constructed in Pigeon Forge, TN

Two Famous Ships The Titanic & Noah's Ark

April 15, 2012

100th Anniversary

The Sinking of the Titanic

- Dennis Doughty -

Two of the most famous ships in history are Noah's Ark, and the cruise ship Titanic. This past April 15th, marked the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic. In comparison both ships were of great size; the Ark was 450 feet long and 75 feet wide (5,400 years would pass before man would build a bigger ship). The Titanic was 882 feet long and 92 feet wide.

It took four years and thousands of workers to build the Titanic, while Noah and his 3 sons worked over a hundred years to build the Ark. The Titanic cost lives; 1,507 went to a watery grave. The Ark saved lives; "That is, eight persons were brought safely through the water" (1 Peter 3:20), along with thousands of animals. The ruins of the Titanic now lie miles beneath the ocean in the cold waters of the north Atlantic; the ruins of the Ark now lie miles above the ocean somewhere on the mountains of Ararat.

The Ark stayed afloat for over seven months (Genesis 8:4); the Titanic sank on its fourth day at sea. Many of the passengers of the Titanic died in their tuxedos and evening dresses as they partied into the night.

On board were thirteen newlywed couples on their honeymoon. In an eerie likeness Jesus said his coming would be like the coming of the flood in Noah's day; "they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage" (Matthew 24:37,38). Those in Noah's day quickly perished as "the fountains of the great deep burst open" (Genesis 7:11). In similar fashion the hull of the Titanic was ripped open by the iceberg and the passengers had only 2 hours and 20 minutes to get ready to meet their Maker.

The waters of the flood washed away the wicked but saved the Ark, which led Peter to make the comparison; "In the same way baptism does also now save us" (1 Peter 3:20, 21). God was behind the building of the Ark, while man was the builder of the Titanic. One was a luxurious pleasure trip that had a tragic end, the other a deep spiritual journey that gave life in a new world. Which ship are you aboard?

dennis1848@bellsouth.net



An Artist's Conception of Noah's Ark

Tunica Church Campaign To Be Assisted By Lake Harbour & Goodman Oaks

For Five Days in July the Lord's church in Tunica will be reaching out to the community in some exciting ways. Events will begin on Wednesday night, July 18th, and continue through Sunday the 22nd. There will be a special prayer service on Wednesday night, Thursday evening a youth devotional will be held in the amphitheatre downtown, Friday night a week-end gospel meeting will begin, Saturday morning there will be a children's program with games and a special puppet presentation, all concluding with a wonderful Sunday with great preaching and great food! All of this will be preceded by two mass mailings of the "House To House, Heart to Heart" publication.

These events are only possible by the support and participation of two strong Mississippi congregations; the **Lake Harbour church** in Ridgeland, and the **Goodman Oaks congregation** in Southaven. The youth group from Lake Harbour, led by **Frank Powell**, will spend several days in Tunica helping with these activities and sharing their faith with the youth of our community. The **Lads to Leaders** program from Goodman oaks will be bringing their puppet program down on Saturday morning for our younger children. **John Pigg**, the pulpit minister at Lake Harbour will be doing the preaching Friday, Saturday and Sunday morning.

We are thrilled to have the support of these fellow congregations as we try to reach out to Tunica county. We know God will use these activities to spread the gospel in this important part of the state.

Dennis Doughty, Minister
Tunica Church of Christ
Dennis1848@bellsouth.net

Reader's Response

Enclosed please find a check to assist you in your efforts with Magnolia Messenger. It brings me great enjoyment to read the various articles. You and June are doing a great work and we may never know how many lives you have impacted throughout the years. I am also writing to ask you remove Mrs. Harold Williams from your mailing list. Mrs. Williams joined her husband and the angels in heaven on October 19, 2011. Mom enjoyed the paper and in her later years she really enjoyed completing the Question Box and reading about family. Thanks for helping to make her later years happy ones. In Christian Love and gratitude, **(Brenda Littleton, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma)**

Thank You For
Receiving and Reading the MM

Now You Take It From There....

- by -

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



"Free at Last, Free at Last!"

Under the mighty hand of God, Israel was freed from Egyptian slavery. Subsequently, they were given laws governing recompense, slavery rights and animal behavior liabilities. A few of these are interesting, to say the least; recorded in Exodus, chapter 21:

Personal Injury Clauses

"He who strikes his father or mother shall surely be put to death" (V.15).

"He who kidnaps a man, whether he sells him or he is found in his possession, shall surely be put to death" (V.16).

"He who curses his father or mother shall surely be put to death" (V. 17).

"If a man strikes his male or female slave with a rod and he dies at his hand, he shall be punished. If, however, he survives a day or two, no vengeance shall be taken, for he is his property" (VV. 21-22).

"If a man strikes the eye of his male or female slave, and destroys it, he shall let him go free on account of his eye. And if he knocks out a tooth of his male or female slave, he shall let him go free on account of his tooth" (VV. 26-27).

Slavery Rights

"If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment" (V. 2).

"But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man', then his master shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And shall pierce his ear with an awl, and he shall serve him permanently" (V. 6).

"If a man sells his daughter as a female slave, she is not to go free as the male slaves do" (V. 7).

Animal Behavior Liability

"If an ox gores a man or woman to death, the ox shall surely be stoned and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall go unpunished" (V. 28).

"If the ox gores a male or female slave, the owner shall give his or her master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned" (V. 32).

Thank God for Calvary, and for Christ as the mediator of a new covenant (Heb. 9:15), and for the abolition of spiritual slavery: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). **"Free at last, free at last!"**

Now, you take it from there!

“The Sinner’s Prayer”

One version of the “Sinner’s prayer,”

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know I am lost; I confess my sin to Thee. Forgive my sin, and save my soul. I believe with all my heart that Thou, dear Jesus, did die on the cross; I believe they placed Your body in the tomb, and I believe You rose again the third day just as the Bible tells us. I trust Thee, Jesus, as my Saviour this very minute. Come into my heart and save me Thank You, Jesus, for saving my soul. Amen

Name _____

The author (**not** Jesus, the Saviour!) added: “Please sign this prayer and mail it to us so that we can rejoice with you. We will send you several booklets free, to help you grow in grace and better understand the Bible.”

QUESTION: Does Salvation Come Through Reciting “The Sinner’s Prayer”?

- editor -

Saul of Tarsus was a sinner. He described himself as “the chief of sinners” (I Tim. 1:15). Before he became a preacher for Christ, he was a persecutor of Christ. His former life was dedicated to destroying the church. But, on his way to Damascus to arrest and imprison Christians, he saw a “great light” and heard a heavenly voice. It was the voice of Jesus who, among other things, instructed him to go into Damascus where the Lord said, “...it shall be told thee what thou must do.”

Within a matter of hours, Saul moved from unbelief to **belief** in Jesus as the Son of God. As evidenced by the immediate changes in his conduct, he truly **repented** of his sins. For three days, Saul made his every move in darkness (having been blinded). Further more, he spent his time **fasting** -- neither eating nor drinking. And, based on what the Lord said to Ananias, Saul spent time in **prayer** (see Acts 9:11). Was he saved? Had his sins been forgiven? Was he told to say the “sinner’s prayer”? What does the Bible teach?

A prayerful study of Acts 9:1-22 and Acts 22:3-21 shows that Saul became a believer, he repented, he fasted and he prayed. Yet, according to Acts 22:16, he *still had* his sins; he was **not yet forgiven**. When an inspired preacher of the gospel came to him he said to Saul, “And now *why tarriest thou*; arise *and* be baptized and **wash away thy sins**, calling on the name of the Lord.” (Acts 22:16). So, in addition to believing, repenting and praying, Saul was yet in need of “arising” and “being baptized”. And, please note that the preacher clearly stated that God, through baptism (an act of faith) would “wash away” his sins. But not before he was baptized.

When all things are considered in the account of Saul’s conversion, it is plain to see why Jesus said, “Not everyone that *saith unto me Lord, Lord* shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that *doeth the will of my Father* who is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21). Doing the will of the Father is important; it is vital; it is necessary. And, being baptized in a part of that will!

Prayer, by itself, does not result in salvation. It is not enough to recite what is called “the sinner’s prayer.” Jesus saves. But, he promises to save only those who truly believe and evidence their faith through obedience to the Gospel plan of salvation as taught in the holy Scriptures. This includes FAITH, REPENTANCE and BAPTISM.

Mark 16:16: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned.”

Acts 2:38: “Repent you and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

I Peter 3:21: “The like figure whereunto baptism doth also save us (not the putting way of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

(A. L. Franks; franksmm@aol.com)



John Carlisto
Led Prayer



Marshall Eubanks
Preached Sermon



Scott Gallaher
Led Singing

Tuesday Evening, May 8, 2012

Unity at Union

Report by Editor

On Tuesday afternoon, my June and I were camped in our RV near Morton, Mississippi when we decided to attend a Gospel Meeting in progress at Union. Looking at our map, we realized that on our way to Union, we would pass very close to the residence of two long time friends and relatives in Christ -- **Larry and Debbie Gallaher**.

We left the campground in time to drop by for a brief visit with the Gallahers. When I asked if they would go with us to the meeting in Union, they readily accepted. So, making our way through the “woods” on “back roads” with their navigational skills we got to Union in time to stop by Wards Restaurant for a snack.

After supper, arriving at the newly expanded and renovated church building, we were delighted with the opportunity of greeting several brothers and sisters from area congregations, along with church members and visitors from the Union community.

After reflection, it seems appropriate to describe the Tuesday night assembly as a time of “Unity at Union.” In addition to many from the local area, visitors had come from several other congregations, including **Philadelphia, Meridian, Little Rock (Duffie), Kosciusko and Quitman**. It was an opportunity to come together as brothers and sisters in the family of God to worship God in “spirit and truth” and to benefit from the preaching of **Marshall Eubanks**.

Brother Eubanks serves as a minister with the Christian Chapel congregation, near Amory, Mississippi. He is also a graduate of MBC. He and his family have been serving the “rather large” country church for the past several years and, from reports received, he is doing an

“excellent job.”

The soft spoken and gifted speaker combined a request and a topic title in his sermon called, “Make Me A Servant.” Using the apostle Peter as an example of a servant, he encouraged us to realize that being a “servant of the Lord” does not require perfection. Peter had many outstanding qualities, but he was not perfect. Like Peter, the preacher said that he, too, was a “work in progress.” Brother Marshall encouraged us to never give up or give in our efforts to be a servant of the Lord.

About 70 were present for the Tuesday evening service and had opportunity to grow spiritually through the song service which was very capably led by **Scott Gallaher**.

We were blessed to meet the preacher for the Northside church in Meridian, **John Carlisto** and his “growing family” (soon to have their fifth child.) In addition to leading the opening prayer, brother John announced a spe-

cial day of lectures to be held at Northside on June 23, 2012. This all day series is to feature such speakers as **Rick Benson** (Union), **Thurman Hodge** (Union), **Chris Shipley** (Duffee) and **John Carlisto** (Northside, Meridian).

Also, Rick Benson, local preacher and one of three elders at Union (the other two are: **Bill Koch** and **Sam Williamson**), announced plans for their upcoming **Youth Day** on **Saturday, June 16, 2012** with the theme, “**How Do We Know God is There?**” **Shane Meredith** who has recently moved to preach for the church in Winona, Mississippi, is to be the guest speaker.

Looking back over the visit at Union and considering the spirit of unity that was clearly evident in the service and fellowship, we cannot help but once again thank God for “Unity at Union.” May our work together as God’s children be characterized by a love for God, for Truth and for one another.



Meeting Place for the Steens, Mississippi church of Christ

Late in the day on a Tuesday, back in March, we stopped by the church building owned by our brethren in Steens, Mississippi. Their preacher, who lives next door, was not at home.

Sorry we missed seeing him; however, we did learn from **Harold and Linda Speed**, who live nearby, that their preacher is **Larry Montgomery**. Larry and his wife, **Connie**, have been serving the Steens congregation for

the past 4 years. We also learned that the church is overseen by two elders who are **Frank McDaniels** and **Pete Bowen**.

We are looking forward to a return visit to the Columbus, Mississippi area and, perhaps, not only a visit with Steen’s preacher but also with the entire church. A very special thanks to Harold and Linda for their kindness shown to us when we unexpectedly knocked on their door. (editor)

Starkville Church is Grateful to Announce: One Hundred Studies and Counting...

One hundred individual Bible studies set up in ten months. One hundred Bible studies set up in the heart of the Bible belt. One hundred studies set up not by door-knocking, not by a special campaign, not by hosting a gospel meeting, but by simply asking assembly guests, "Would you like to study the Bible?" While many congregations may be hesitant to ask visitors for a Bible study, the Starkville church of Christ is not.



Andy Miller, Pulpit Minister at Starkville Church

Since May of 2011, the Mississippi congregation has set up over 100 one-on-one Bible studies with guests at their assemblies and other spiritual events. Preaching minister Andy Miller reports that since 2006, the number of those coming to Christ per year through their fellowship has increased fivefold. The congregation has grown from an average of 2.7 baptisms per 100 members to over 11 baptisms per 100 members. The research of John Ellas, church growth researcher and consultant, indicates that a congregation needs at least 4.9 baptisms per 100 members to grow.

Miller has served in ministry for 27 years, 12 of those as a full-time outreach minister. He stated that it seems Christians are comfortable asking their assembly guests about their jobs, family, and recreational interests, but we're not comfortable asking them if they would like to learn about Jesus. Miller says that the first question we should ask a guest is, "Would you like to study the Bible?"

"The Lord's church would grow by leaps and bounds if we would keep in mind First Time/First Question. That is, the first-time guest needs to be asked for a Bible study their very first visit. Also, our first question needs to be 'Would you like to study the Bible?'"

"The key to growth is simply spreading God's Word. In Acts we find as the word of God

spread, the number of disciples increased rapidly—the harvest that results from asking, "Would you like to study the Bible?" Miller indicated that from the data

One hundred studies set up not by door-knocking, not by a special campaign, not by hosting a gospel meeting, but by simply asking assembly guests, "Would you like to study the Bible?"

he has recorded over the years that nine out of ten guests will accept an invitation to a Bible study. "The more we ask, the more studies we will have and the more seekers God will bring our

way. God will cause the increase—we just need to do a better job of planting and watering."

The Starkville church of

Christ serves the campus community of Mississippi State University. Sixty percent of their Bible studies are with students at MSU, and the other forty percent are with residents from the community. Miller reports that about ten percent of those who studied and have become

Miller reports that since 2006, the number of those coming to Christ per year through their fellowship has increased fivefold.

Christians first contacted the church through the congregation's website. Miller explains that once a congregation

is equipped to lead studies, prepares their hearts to receive the people God is bringing, and anticipates the Lord will be at work, the studies come easily. Over the past ten months, more than 25 members of the Starkville church have been involved in leading the one-on-one studies. So far, a third of those in the studies have come to Christ through baptism.

Miller has developed Spread the Word outreach literature to train Christians to share their faith. The material

includes five one-on-one studies and a 12-study follow-up series for new Christians called "New Beginnings." To assist other congregations in equipping members to share the good news of Jesus, Miller has developed a weekend Spread the Word Workshop. For more information he can be contacted at amiller.spreadingtheword@gmail.com.

Andy Miller

(662) 518-1458 cell

(662) 323-1499 office

andymiller@starkvillechurch.org

(Report for MM prepared by Andy Miller, preacher for the Starkville church on East Lee Boulevard)



Home of the Starkville Church of Christ
New Auditorium (upstairs) and Student Center (downstairs)



Perry Jinkerson
Campus Minister



Wesley Thompson
Youth Minister

The Starkville congregation is home to 314 members and, according to their website, is overseen by six shepherds (elders). The servants are: **Basom Allen, Bailey Howell, Johnie Jenkins, Roger King, Dean Stewart, and David Shaw.**

In addition to serving the growing congregations, the leadership is dedicated to being of service to the students who call Mississippi State their University. A very active program for college students is integrated into the work of the local church with upwards to 130 students participating.

Thank YOU for reading the Magnolia Messenger

Lads to Leaders Convention Drew More than 19,000

According to **Brenda Johnson**, office manager for Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes, their annual convention attendance for this past April was 19,028. This crowd, which included young people from all over the country, gathered in six locations with **Nashville bringing in almost 10,000** participants. Other convention sites were in **Atlanta, Memphis, Orlando, Indianapolis and Dallas.**

Sister Brenda added, "... this year 112 youth received Lads Scholarships to various Christian schools. The amounts vary. There are currently around 400 students attending a Christian University who benefited from a Lads Scholarship."

Thousands of youth and adults gather to display the talents they've worked on all year at the annual convention week-

end event. It encourages and motivates participants to grow, and brings families and churches together by crossing generational lines.

At the convention, student and adults are recognized for the work they've completed over the past year, and students in grades 3-12 are given the opportunity to compete against other students of similar age and abilities in such areas as speech, songleading, debate, puppet, Bible Bowl and art.

March 29 - 31, 2013

Atlanta, Dallas Indianapolis, Memphis, Nashville and Orlando

Theme:

Proverbs 3:5-6 -- *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on our own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths.*

THE MESSAGE
on *front* of
The Speakers' Stand

PRAYER:
THE SOURCE OF POWER



Ray Franks, a Speaker **behind** the Stand
(As Seen at our Recent RV Rally)
Read Report on Page 9

Dealing With

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- Seth Sullivan -

Have you ever had one of those days when you were just feeling uneasy? Perhaps it was that presentation you had to make, or maybe it was a dispute you had to settle. Maybe you just had great concern for future events. What is it that brings this uneasiness? It is called worrying.

This mental ailment causes a person to stress excessively about unfolding events. Let me ask you a question, "Do you find yourself worrying a lot? Is anxiety a regular neighbor in your spiritual life?" If so, let's get a prescription for it. The Holy Word is our pharmacy.

1. The Lord Jesus proclaims that we should not worry about tomorrow.

a. Matthew 6:25, 26, "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor yet for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"

b. The Lord then compares us to birds, how that our Heavenly Father takes care of them and the Lord makes the analogy, "Are you not much better than they?" (v. 26).

2. Aim at living a day at a time. Don't borrow tomorrow's troubles.

a. The Lord explains to us that each day has issues. It is to our advantage that we focus on what is in store for the day and let tomorrow bring itself (Matt. 6:34).

3. When you have concerns, pray about it.

a. Philippians 4:6, 7, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer

and supplication, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

b. Our resolve will be tested, but when you have prayed and made petitions to God about the issues surrounding your life, move forward knowing that God is in control.

4. When you pray, be sure to tell the Lord about everything!

a. I Peter 5:6, 7, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

b. This is a very encouraging passage! My Lord wants me to tell Him about everything going on in my life. What a loving Savior! Do you have an adequate amount of time set aside each day to talk with the Lord?

The days can be rough and the routine tasks more difficult. However, don't allow those circumstances to venture you away from *alone time* with the Lord. Stress can be a good thing, but too much also weighs you down (Prov. 12:25; 14:30). Take comfort in knowing that God cares about the issues in your life!

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sethka63hotmail.com



Ronnie Cosby

Former Preacher from Natchez (Hwy 61 South) Preaches in Meeting at Yazoo City

My June and I have some difficulty in answering, "Where is home?" For more than fifty years, we have been blessed to work in several communities where we lived and preached full-time. For the past seventeen years, using a motorhome in our work, we find ourselves in many different places and have learned to "feel at home" wherever we are. Of course, for the past forty-one years, Kosciusko has served as our base, our real earthly home.

When we think of "home", we have to include Yazoo City where we have lived and served over the span of many years -- since 1959. It was a blessing to return to Yazoo City -- "one of our homes" -- on a Monday night in April and visit with the church during a gospel meeting with evangelist *Ronnie Cosby*. Brother Ronnie worked with the Highway 61 South church in Natchez up until his recent "retirement" and move to Kentucky.

His lesson, the night of our visit, on "The Mind of Christ" was well prepared and effectively presented. **Larry Echols**, a former classmate (in the '70s) of Ronnie at the White's Ferry Road School of Preaching, presently is doing a good job as preacher for the Yazoo City church. It was truly good to go back "home", visit our dear family and hear brother Ronnie preach "The Mind of Christ."

News Notes

CROCKETT

The Crockett Church of Christ located near Senatobia, Mississippi is planning a gospel meeting with **Dan Beardain**. The dates are July 22-26, 2012. **Robert Rawson** is the local minister.

BATESVILLE

The Northwest Mississippi Gospel Meeting will hold on September 24-26, 2012 in Batesville, Mississippi.

"Went to Church Today... And Was Not Greatly Depressed"

- Fenter D. Northern -

The above title is a line found in one of Robert Louis Stevenson's journals. I felt a bit amused when I read it the other day, but it does speak a lot to the mood of the preacher that carries over into his sermon delivery. It might be saying a lot about Stevenson as well.

I believe that sermon preparation and its delivery can soar to its best only when accompanied with a lot of pre-focused meditation. The gospel is the good news. We have heard that many times from preachers but it goes far beyond those two nice words.

Think of the news the preacher is to proclaim. Our mighty God broke into history with the glory of holy angels singing the birth of a Savior. Man is no longer doomed in sin. A second Adam has come to undo the tragedy of the first Adam. He died, but God the father accepted that death of His sinless Son as a sacrifice for sin. The Devil, with his demonic deeds and power of death, has met his nemesis in Christ and his mission to doom man has been turned into irrevocable defeat.

Faithful preachers are aware that the living Christ, through the Spirit, is to be let loose in the sermon— that it contains the

power to convert sinners and luke-warm church members into something they could never attain alone — a new personality beyond their own recognition.



Fenter Northern
Former Academic Dean of MBC

The preacher's sermon is the most crucial message to break across human lips — energizing to the soul and awe stirring in wonder. No other truth uttered can compare or over shadow it. Why would anyone pervert it? Sadly it has been so abused by self aspiring church leaders since the beginning (Gal. 1:8,9).

No stranger that visits services should, after sitting through such a service, be left to say what Stevenson said about his visit to church.

But preachers know there are also some who can sit quite unattached through a blessed message of gospel dynamite.

Fenter Northern
6213 Bell Grove Pl
Montgomery, AL
fnorthern@charter.net

75th Anniversary

Enterprise Boulevard
Church of Christ
Lake Charles, Louisiana

Saturday, June 30

2:00 - 5:30: Fellowship/Food/Fun

Sunday, July 1, 2012

9:30: Bible Study

Speaker: **Jerry Arnwine**

10:30: Worship

Speaker: **Larry Keele**

Fellowship Meal After morning services

1:15 PM -- Concluding Services

For more information,
call Paul Franks (preacher) at
337-515-7314

A Report On Our 14th Annual MM RV Rally

- June Franks -

Beautiful Lake Tiah-O'Khata in Louisville, Mississippi was the setting for the 14th annual Magnolia Messenger RV Rally.

Al and I arrived on Monday before the rally actually was to begin on Tuesday, April 24, 2012. We found several had arrived early and were already enjoying just being together. The evening meal was being spread on tables at Ray and Donna Franks' motorhome and everyone was invited to join in for a delicious supper and delightful fellowship.

The next day, Tuesday, was a day of preparation that involved several in decorating the spacious assembly room that was to be our meeting place and to make sure all the supplies were available for our big fish fry.

The rally officially began on Tuesday night with a fish fry and a gospel singing. David Mcgee from Wesson, Mississippi, along with several others, cooked the fish, hush puppies and french fries along with the cole slaw for about sixty people. The fish fry was most definitely enjoyed by all as was also the gospel singing.

In addition to our campers, some came from the Louisville congregation to the fish fry and singing as well as several from Kosciusko who came over together in a van. We are thankful that these took time from their busy schedules to come.

On Wednesday morning, a special time had been set aside for everyone to introduce themselves and tell something about their home church. This occasion is always interesting and also keeps us informed as to what is going on in other congregations.

Cecil May was our keynote speaker this year. Brother Cecil spoke six times during the course of the rally and, as expected, presented very interesting and informative lessons. It was great having Cecil and his wife, Winnie, with us.

On Wednesday night the Louisville church of Christ treated all the rally people with a delicious hamburger supper, providing all the trimmings including with baked beans and homemade brownies.

After the meal, brother Cecil spoke to all in the Louisville church building. It was wonderful to see the church building nearly full. A special thanks to the Louisville



Cecil May, Jr.
Shown Speaking Seriously
"Are You A Sheep or a Goat?"

church for hosting this event on Wednesday night.

On Thursday morning, Jerry Welborn, preacher for the Louisville congregation, did the devotional. Afterwards, brother Cecil continued with his lessons from the Word of God.

Thursday was our day to have a potluck meal. We always enjoy this event and can't wait to see what everyone else brings; and, if we like it, we all want the recipe. That night, we had leftovers from the potluck which was sufficient for everyone.

Then came the auction. Ray and Donna Franks from DeQuincy, Louisiana were responsible for the auction. Ray did a good job auctioning all the items with the purpose of raising funds to pay for the rally with all "left-overs" contributed to the Magnolia Messenger.

It seemed like those bidding were filled with generosity. Personally, I love the auction. It was fun -- even if I did wind up paying fifty-five dollars for a little jar of mayhaw jelly. But we all knew that after the rally bills were paid that the rest of the money would go to the Magnolia Messenger for which Al and I are so appreciative.

We are thankful to announce that the amount given to the Messenger, after all expenses were paid, was approximately \$3,600.

On Friday morning, Ray Franks did the devotional and Cecil May and Al Franks answered questions submitted by the audience.

The afternoons were usually unscheduled with everyone enjoying some free time. There was a great deal of time for visiting and playing games.

Friday night was the Magnolia

Messenger "Appreciation Dinner." The dinner this year was at the restaurant at Lake Tiah-O' Khata. Brother Cecil was the after dinner speaker. Our youngest son, Stephen, came and brought his family which was a treat for Al and myself.

One of the benefits of having the rally at Lake Tiah-O'Khata is the excellent restaurant located on the grounds. I believe that all can attest to the fact that the restaurant serves delicious food.

The idea to begin Magnolia Messenger RV rallies was developed by our oldest son, Paul, who continues to direct the Mississippi rallies. Paul loves camping and he loves people. When you combine these two loves along with great Bible lessons you have the making for a wonderful and enjoyable time together.

We appreciate Paul and Glenda, his faithful helper, for all they do in making the Magnolia Messenger RV Rallies a great success.

Of course, without you who come, the rallies could not be. So we deeply appreciate all who came this year. We are so sorry that Jerry and Eleta Grimmitt had to leave early because of Eleta's illness.

Several who used to come were unable to attend this year because of illness. The DeLancey's from Yazoo City had made reservations to come but their daughter, Susan, had a stroke two weeks before the rally was to begin. Our prayers are for Susan and Eleta, as well as others who have special need of God's blessings. We sure miss each and everyone. In our rallies, whether in Mississippi, Louisiana or Texas, it seems everyone feels a part of a close knit family.

In closing, you **do not** have to have an RV to come to the rallies. There are nice cabins available and motel rooms. If you have never been to a rally let me encourage you to come. It will definitely be worth your time and money.

Hope to see everyone at the next rally in Grapeland, Texas. Thank you and love to all. (June)

Rally Attendees Helped To Nearly Fill the Louisville Church Building on Wednesday Evening

Mississippi Leads the Nation as the "Most Religious State"

Frequently when national surveys are made of "desirable qualities" in the various states, Mississippi has a way of coming out on or near the bottom. However, in a recent survey to determine the states with the highest number of "church connected" citizens, Mississippi came out on the very top! For a change, Mississippi was **number One!**

The survey used the number of adherents with a local congregation (church) as a basis for their study. "Adherents" includes members of that church, their children and others who attend even though they may not be members.

Mississippi was Number 1. Fifty-nine percent of those who live in Mississippi claim a personal connection with some local church. By "church" the study included many religious bodies, over 200 different churches.

States adjoining Mississippi were also high on the list. While Mississippi was number one, Alabama came in number 3 with

56%; Louisiana was number 4 with 54%; Alabama was number 5 with 54% and Tennessee was in 7th place with 52%.

American states in the Northeast and the West, generally, had the smallest percentage of "church connected" folks. **Vermont** was on the very bottom with only 23% claiming a direct connection with a religious institution. An exception was Utah with 57 percent of those who live there professing a connection with some church.

When all things are considered, however, Mississippi is still very much a "mission state"; especially when it comes to folks being faithful members of the church described in the New Testament. And may we remember that more than 40% of those who call Mississippi "home" are not, in any way, affiliated with any local church. **Something to think about!** - editor - (The above report is based on information gleaned from AOL news on May 20, 2012)

14th Annual LATEX RV RALLY

October 24--28, 2012 (See Page 19)



After hamburgers; Going to the church building for spiritual food!



SPIRITS IN PRISON

(Continued from page 3)

of all the dead, sometimes even the grave.

Paul also speaks of Christ descending "into the abyss" at his death (Romans 10:7) and descending "into the lower parts of the earth" (Ephesians 4:9). Those "under the earth," he says, will acknowledge that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:11).

Peter says Jesus was "put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit." The view that Peter is saying Christ preached through Noah to the people of Noah's day seems to require "the spirit" here to be the Holy Spirit, according to the comparison suggested to 1 Peter 1:10-11, where the Holy Spirit is inspiring the prophets. Since the ESV translators did not capitalize "spirit in this passage," they obviously did not think so.

It is common in Scripture to refer to "flesh" and "spirit" as the two "parts" making up a person: "For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead" (James 2:26). Restoration to life occurs when the spirit returns to the body (Luke 8:55). The gospel writers use the same words in the same way in describing the death of Christ: "And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit" (Matthew 27:50, see also Luke 23:46 and John 19:30).

The meaning of the passage, therefore, may be, "When Christ was put to death in the flesh, that is, died as a human being, his spirit, which was still alive, went and proclaimed victory over sin and death to the spirits in Hades, specifically to those who did not obey in the days of Noah."

In accord with this view the pertinent questions are answered as follows: *Who are the spirits to whom Jesus preached?* Peter specifically names "those who were disobedient in the days of Noah." That does not necessarily rule out the possibility that Jesus' audience included others of other ages. The reference specifically to those of Noah's day may simply be due to the fact that he was about to follow up with further discussions of those particular people. *In what sense was Jesus "in the spirit" when he preached?* He was a spirit, since it was between his death and resurrection, while his body was still in the grave. *When was the preaching done?* During the "three days" between Jesus' crucifixion and resurrec-

tion. *What was preached or proclaimed?* Remember, Peter did not use the word that means "preached the gospel." He announced, or proclaimed something, perhaps a proclamation of his sovereign power and the victory over sin and Satan which he accomplished by his death. The disobedient spirits, by acknowledging his lordship (Philippians 2:11), validated his proclamation.

Which View is Correct?

Either may be. Neither violates any clear Scriptural truth. I lean toward the latter view. In addition to considerations concerning the word "spirit" suggested in the discussion above, the latter view seems to take the words of Peter in their most natural sense. When I have held the view that the preaching was done through Noah, after leaving consideration of the text for a time and then returning to it, I have to "go look it up again" to see what it was I thought about it. In other words, that does not seem to be the most natural sense of the passage.

God's Patience

The "spirits in prison" to whom the proclamation was made, were disobedient "when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared."

Newer translations often distinguish between "patience" (*hupomonen*), which is better translated "endurance" or "perseverance" (as in James 5:11, "the patience of Job") and "patience" (*makrothumia*) which means "longsuffering" (as in James 5:10, "As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord").

In the latter sense of longsuffering it is often attributed to God, as here. The Lord showed his longsuffering to the wicked in Noah's day by warning, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years" (Genesis 6:3). Peter said concerning Paul's writings, "And count the patience (*makrothumia*) of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him" (2 Peter 3:15). In this instance "the patience of God" is virtually equivalent to "the grace of God," "which," as Peter went on to say, "the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruc-

See **SPIRITS IN PRISON**, pg. 18



Present for Preachers' Meeting in DeRidder, Louisiana

(From left to right) **Jay Alexander** (DeRidder-Bilbo), **Trey Henry** (Leesville), **James Tidwell** (Toledo Bend), **Doug Brackbill** (Boxwood), **Bill Collins** (DeQuincy) and **Tim Allen** (Merryville). **Paul Franks** (Lake Charles - Enterprise Boulevard) -- not pictured but took picture.

Each month a group of preachers in the DeRidder, Louisiana area meet together to eat and pray and discuss their work. During the month of April, I was able to go and visit with the preachers pictured above. Two of

these preachers have just moved to the area. Doug Brackbill works with the Boxwood Church of Christ where my father, Al Franks, went to church as a child and Tim Allen preaches for the Merryville Church in Merryville, LA. We

welcome them to the area. The greatest work that any young man can choose to do is to preach the gospel. I am thankful for that opportunity each day.

apaulfranks@gmail.com

Tupelo Church Provides Lodging for Families of Hospital Patients

A recent note from Doug Greenway, preacher for the West Main Church of Christ in Tupelo, Mississippi.

Brother AL,

For years, we have appreciated the hospitality of our brethren when at Mayo Clinic www.rochesterchurchofchrist.org for housing, counseling etc. Stacy Sikes is the contact.

At M.D. Anderson in central Texas, Virgil Fry heads up an effort of the Lord's church @ www.lifelinechaplancy.org.

We could continue with examples of the Homewood church at UAB Birmingham www.homewoodchurch.org/#/ministries/hospital-apartments and the Central and Pleasant Valley churches in Little Rock (who ministered to us personally at UAMS in 2006). www.acentralchurch.org and www.pvcc.org.

In Tupelo, MS we have North Mississippi Medical Center, which is a 650-bed regional-referral center serving 750,000 people and is the largest hospital in Mississippi and the largest non-metropolitan hospital in America.

We at the West Main church of Christ invite any brethren to contact us with any needs you may have while a patient or as family members of a patient in this hospital or in area health care. We have 25 church members employed in the hospital system, provide snacks for ICU & NICU and 3 of us are volunteer chaplains. We at West Main visit the hospital constantly.

We now have one 2-bedroom apartment and one 1-bedroom apartment that are **available free** on an as-needed basis as well as FULL RV hook-up (all on

our church property) for 30 or 50-amp, with water and dump station. Call the church office for reservations @ (662) 842-9263 or contact our RV-ing custodian Jimmy Oakes @ 231-5245. The RV hook-up is available free even if you're just passing through and would like to "hook up" with us!

Jesus went about doing good (Acts 10:38), and so must we. **Doug Greenway, minister West Main church of Christ 2460 West Main Street Tupelo, MS 38801.**

MM Welcomes Church News



Always Welcome at West Main in Tupelo

Are You Ready?

Are **YOU** Prepared to Die **TODAY**?

Are you ready to die... *today*? Are you prepared for the Lord's coming... *today*? Going to Jesus, or Jesus coming to you, may take place **today**. You may die or He may come! Whether "going" or "coming", the all important question is, "Are you ready; are you prepared?"



Mississippi Cemetery: Sobering Message

Jesus is coming again. Our Lord promised, "If I go and prepare a place for you, *I will come again....*" (John 14:3). Angels declared, "...this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, *shall so come* in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven" (Acts 1:11). No doubt about it. He is coming. When? No man knows, so said Jesus. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man...." (Matt. 24:6). Our Lord pleaded, "Therefore be you also ready: for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24:44).

Today may be the day of our Lord's return. This may be your last day on earth. The world could end today! Are you ready? Are you prepared for His coming?

Your approaching death is getting closer and closer. Death is certain. "It is appointed unto man once to die...." (Heb. 9:27). The *time* of your death is uncertain. It could be today. It could be this very hour!

Death can and often does come suddenly and without any warning. Lightning strikes a young lady. Instantly, death occurs. The tornado hits. Immediately a man's life ends. The car crashes. She draws her last breath. That's it. It is over.

A gun is pointed. The trigger is pulled. An explosion is heard and a speeding bullet enters the body a high school student and immediately his heart stops beating. Carbon monoxide fills the room and the unsuspecting couple never wakes up.

Without any warning, there is hemorrhaging on the brain and that grandmother's physical organ never functions again. A sudden blood clot forms and blocks circulation. There follows immediately the loss of consciousness from which the 55 year old male never regains. A major blood vessel bursts without any warning and death comes immediately to the young athlete. When all seems well, suddenly the heart of the business executive stops beating. And in

spite of all efforts, it is all over for him.

Such is death. It is that final separation of body and spirit. It's in your future. Maybe today. Are you ready? Are you prepared? Are you a Christian? Are you faithful?

He (Jesus), who promised to come someday, may return today. That (death), which must come someday, may make a visit with you today! No one knows. Only God. Only through the Lord Jesus Christ is preparation for "coming or going" made possible. He died and rose again so that you can die; yet, live forever. The Saviour of the world came from heaven to earth "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). Eternal life/salvation (a home in Heaven) is only possible through Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Do you know Him? Have you followed His divine plan for your salvation? Have you demonstrated your faith in Him, as your Lord and Saviour, by obeying His plan for salvation?

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life. So teaches "the golden text" - John 3:16). Jesus came to this earth to save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). He came to earth to establish His church, His kingdom (Matt. 16:18). The church Jesus built is His church, His spiritual body includes all sinners saved by His grace through their faith (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:22; Eph. 2:8,9)

Jesus requires (commands!) those who would be saved to **believe** (John 8:24 -- "...for if you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sins."); to **repent** (Luke 13:3 -- "...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish") and to **be baptized** (Mark 16:16 -- "...He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved....")

Faithful followers of Christ daily walk in the footsteps of Jesus. Christians respond to the teachings of God's grace by denying "ungodli-

ness and worldly lusts" and by living "soberly, righteously and godly" in this present world (Titus 2:11,12). True disciples of the Master enjoy the blessings of fellowship with both Divinity and humanity by daily "walking in the light" where the blood of Christ continually cleanses "from all

sin" (I John 1:7).

Are you ready to die? Today? Right now? **Yes. IF** you have accepted His gracious offer of salvation through your faith in Him, repentance of your sins and have been baptized into Christ. **Yes**, you are ready, whether you "go" or He "comes", **IF** you are walking daily "in the light" -- being directed by the will of God as revealed through the pages of His sacred scriptures. One more time: "Are **you** ready?" **Today?**

**Questions
Comments Invited**
franksmm@aol.com
601-668-3344
A. L. Franks
P. O. Box 1578
Kosciusko, MS 39090

Readers' Response

I, Shawanda Elliott, am interested in receiving a Magnolia Messenger every three months. If you would please send one for the months of Jan.-Mar. 2012 and so forth. Please! Your kindness is greatly appreciated. Have a blessed Day! Thanks, (Shawanda Elliott, Cleveland, MS)

Dear Editor:

This is to advise you of my change of address. I am a 65 year old inmate from Eunice, LA and I've been incarcerated for approximately 28 years in a Mississippi prison. In 1996 I accepted our Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour. Since that time, I have grown daily in His Word. Your Magnolia Messenger has been a source of comfort to me. Thank you and all of God's servants who contribute to the Messenger. All of you have been a blessing to me. May God's protection and peace be with you always. In Christ's Love, (Danny Singleton, Pearl, MS)

I love looking for the answers to your Bible questions. It reminds me of my godly mother who would upon receiving a new Bible study workbook, turn in and fill out the entire workbook as soon as she could. (Linda Anderson, Gainesboro, TN)

MM Loves to Hear from YOU



Home for the Lone Oak Church near Columbus, MS

Another "Drop-in Visit"

Wednesday night (June 13).

Over the past several years the Lawsons have been involved in a special program which they

On Wednesday evening, March 21, 2012, my June and I were in the Columbus area and were blessed to "drop in" for a midweek service with our brethren who identify themselves as Lone Oak church of Christ in Lowndes County, Mississippi. Here we received a very warm welcome and thoroughly enjoyed the services and the fellowship offered by loving and caring brethren.

We were blessed to sit in the auditorium class for a excellent study led by Lone Oak's preacher **Eddie Lawson**. Eddie and his wife, **Evelyn**, live in Hamilton, Alabama, but drive over to Lone Oak for every service and other times as needed.

The Lone Oak congregation church runs about 70 in attendance -- up from about 50 a couple of years ago when the Lawsons began their work with the country church. Due to the death of one elder and the illness of another, the church presently is without an eldership. Brother Eddie expressed appreciation to the church for their dedication doing what they can to promote church growth. I spoke by phone to brother Eddie on Sunday afternoon (6-10-12). He informed me they Lone Oak church was in the midst of a evangelistic campaign with about a dozen outside workers who had come to assist the brethren in going "house to house" with the gospel message. The soul-saving effort was scheduled to go through



Eddie Lawson

call "God's Family Evangelistic Ministries". Their objective is to reach as many souls as possible with the gospel of Christ right here in America. Their mission is summed up in the words: "America is our mission field."

The Lawson effort has, through the years, involved up to 20 or more volunteer workers from various parts of the country who have assisted in campaigns conducted across the nation. **Brother Lawson is available to discuss with you the possibility of an evangelistic campaign in your community.**

If interested, please feel free to contact brother Eddie at (205) 412-4184 or email they Lawsons: **eddie.evelyn@yahoo.com**. At the present time their emphasis is on building up the Lone Oak church through the teaching of God's Word. They would welcome an opportunity to be of assistance in other places.



Somewhere in Mississippi

Aquila and Priscilla

A Couple Worthy to Imitate

John Gardner

The New Testament does not often speak of Christian couples *per se*. The husband and wife mentioned in the Scriptures are often addressed or recognized as a part of a family unit with children (Philemon 1 & 2, where Archippus is taken to be their adult son). One Christian couple, however, stands out from the rest and is easily recognized by students of the New Testament.

Aquila and Priscilla (or Prisca) are always presented in Acts and Paul's epistles in a positive light. They were major workers in the advancement of the gospel in key places in the Roman Empire and are worthy of serious study.

From information in Acts 18 and a few verses in Romans 16 we can gain a lot of insight into who these two were and what they meant to Paul and other early Christians.

Aquila was a Jew from Pontus (Acts 18:2, New King James Version). Nothing is said about Priscilla's background, leading some to speculate she may have been a Gentile. Because she is mentioned before Aquila in some passages (Acts 18: 18 [and 26 in the English Standard Version]; Romans 16: 3), some think she may have had some status in society (like the "leading women" in Acts 17: 4).

The couple was in Corinth when they are first introduced in the Scriptures because Claudius Caesar had banished Jews from Rome (ca. 49 AD). It seems likely that they were already Christians when they came to Corinth. Perhaps they came in contact with the gospel at Rome or even Pontus since some from those places were present on Pentecost (Acts 2: 9, 10).

Aquila and Priscilla were tentmakers by trade. They labored with their hands in an honorable profession which evidently brought them some success since they had a dwelling large enough to provide a place for the church to meet (1 Corinthians 16: 19).

They welcomed Paul to Corinth, giving him an opening to ply his trade and a roof over his head (Acts 18: 3). Such hospitality extended over many months (Vv. 11, 18). They became close with the apostle "as he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 18: 4). He later focused most of his attention on the Gentiles. Many of the citizens of Corinth were converted to the Lord (Acts 18: 8), and his supporting Christian couple had a part in that work.



John Gardner

When Paul left Corinth, Priscilla and Aquila went with him to Ephesus where he eventually left them to work while he went on (Acts 18: 18). By the time Paul wrote Romans, they were back in Rome (Romans 16:3-5a). In Paul's last inspired letter, he urges Timothy to "greet Prisca (Priscilla) and Aquila" (2 Timothy 4: 19). By then they were back in Ephesus.

The Christian couple we are considering is remembered mostly for their teaching of an eloquent man who was "mighty in the Scriptures" (Acts 18: 24 - 28). Apollos of Alexandria in Egypt was a powerful speaker and well versed in the Scriptures. He was fervent and bold in his preaching and teaching. He accurately presented "the things of the Lord", except he knew only about the baptism John the Immerser proclaimed and practiced. Priscilla and Aquila took him aside and "explained to him the way of the Lord more accurately" (Acts 18: 26). He took the instruction to heart and was commended by the church at Ephesus to those in Achaia (V. 27).

Aquila and Priscilla show us some remarkable characteristics that are worthy to imitate. First, although they were apparently successful in the affairs of this life, **they were genuinely converted to Christ and to His cause.** Wherever they were, they had an eye on the prospects for advancing the cause of Jesus their Savior. Being a Christian meant more to them than just "treating people nice" and assembling occasionally on Sunday.

They were knowledgeable in the Scriptures, as evidenced by their ability to educate Apollos who himself knew the Scriptures very well. They were not "professionals" in teaching the Bible, but they really had a deep understanding of Jesus, His gospel for the whole world, and the "rest of the story" after John the Baptist.

It is crystal clear that **to the couple before us, doctrine mattered.** Apollos was wrong about baptism and the Holy Spirit (as evidenced by his disciples in Acts 19: 1 - 5), and it mattered. Too many in and out of the church have serious doubts about the role of correct doctrine in one's salvation.

Priscilla and Aquila were courageous, not only for taking upon themselves the task of correcting a man like Apollos, but even more because "they risked their own necks" for Paul's life (Romans 16: 4) on some occasion. Hardly fair-weather, weekend Christians! They were willing to pay the ultimate price for the cause of the Lord.

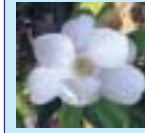
They were very hospitable people. They took Paul into their home for a long time and opened their house to the church, probably for an extended time. When Paul wrote the Romans to be "given to hospitality" (Romans 12: 13b), they had an excellent example in their midst (Romans 16: 5). That letter from Paul likely would have been read to Christians assembling in the house of Aquila and Priscilla!

The excellent couple under consideration **exerted positive influences beyond their immediate area.** Paul said that "all the churches of the Gentiles" gave thanks for their works (Romans 16: 4). Whether he meant that the many churches where Paul preached would hear of the risk-taking Aquila and Priscilla undertook to help Paul or whether they themselves had ministered in those Gentile churches, it is an impressive testimony to the broad, positive influence of the godly couple felt far and wide.

Finally, they were very cooperative and team players. The husband Aquila and the wife Priscilla were a team. They worked together at tent-making, but more importantly, they labored together in the gospel. They worked together to teach Apollos. As a team, they worked often and well with other Christians, as a part of Paul's team and of the church that met in their house.

There is a lot to learn from this first century couple in Christ. If we have many couples like them in the churches of Christ, we will have no fear that the work of the Lord will stagnate. It will surely thrive! God is certain to bless the likes of Aquila and Priscilla in 21st century churches of Christ today.

John Gardner; P. O. Box 251
Brandon, MS 39043-0251
gardner.john43@gmail.com



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!

In Memory Of

LORENE POLK

Ms. Hazel Cook
(Columbus, MS)

MARLIN IVEY

M/M John T. Smithson
(Chattanooga, TN)

CAROL HENLEY PHILLIPS

Jay & Mary Henley
(Brandon, MS)

J. ROY JOHNSON

DANNY BEAMAN
Rick & Betty Bishop
(Columbus, MS)

LOIS DENDY GRIFFIN

Loydelle McCarley
Anne Stevens
(Scotts Hill, TN)
Reicy, Marty & Suzanne
Sanders
(Brandon, MS)

WILBUR MOFFETT

Johnnie Gill
(Lucedale, MS)

THARON MORGAN MS. MARTI SOLOMON

Dean & Nellie Caldwell
(Vicksburg, MS)

PAUL SPARKS

Dorsa Sparks
Nancy & Lamar Bolton
(Belmont, MS)

MILLIARD FRENCH QUAY SAMUELS

(Frances Stewart
(Water Valley, MS)

BOBBY GREENLEE

T. C. Nowell, Jr.
(Starkville, MS)

PEARL MELTON

Sid & Jean Clemmer
(Falkner, MS)

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ROB HALL
RICHIE BOYER
ARDELL DOWDY
Deanie & James Bradshaw
(Indianola, MS)

HEATHER SPENCER

PETE SMITH
MADELINE BROADWAY
OPHELIA "BILL" WALKER

RANDY REECE
NORMAN RHODES
JOHNNY ALDRIDGE
DONNIE DELANCEY
Wilburn & Velma DeLancey
(Benton, MS)

CLAUDE HOUSTON

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(Hernando, MS)

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CAROLYN GRAY

Aaron & Jeanette Horis
(Harrison, AR)

SHARON STRICKLAND CANNON

Charles, Juanita & Gloria
Fulgham
(Yazoo City, MS)

In Honor Of

AUDREY SEAGO

Rita Whalen
(Senatobia, MS)

WINNIE RICHARDS

Charles & Juanita Fulgham
(Yazoo City, MS)

EILEEN WILLIFORD

Ray & Fran Williford
(Leland, MS)

NOTE:

If requested, a written acknowledgment is mailed by the MM to each family on behalf of the person you memorialize and/or honor.

Thank You

For Remembering the MM
As You
Remember and/or Honor
Your Loved Ones

Please: Send Your Gifts To:

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

Understanding Moral and Spiritual Issues

#3

Secular Pluralism vs. Christian Pluralism

- Roger Hines -

There seems to be a misunderstanding in our country and even in the church about the nature of pluralism, the types of pluralism, which type of pluralism is good and which type is bad, and the role of the church in the context of both secular and Christian pluralism. Because of this misunderstanding, relativism becomes the underlying hermeneutic in discerning between biblical truth, tolerance, personal happiness, public issues and religious issues, and who sets the agenda for Christians in the interaction with all aspects of their lives.

First, one must understand the basic difference between secular pluralism and Christian pluralism. Both recognize that people have some obvious differences, such as gender, race, nationality, and beliefs, yet they make a difference between the importance of those differences in relation to what is right and what is wrong, what is truth and what is error, what is unifying and what is divisive.

Secular pluralists teach that the differences are the determining factors in any interaction with people. The ultimate determiner of how one views marriage, how one views public policy and the role of government, how one views religion and its role in society, how one views human life in the individual and the group with which the individual aligns himself or herself. The group determines truth.

This is seen even in how groups view the Bible, not as containing a timeless message that calls one to subordinate the group to the lordship of Christ but as a message that the group can adapt to fit its own goals. So, the members of the group (i.e. liberation theology, feminist theology, black theology, gay theology, Marxist theology) view the relevance of the gospel in relation to how it relates to what they deem important.

Thus, by its very nature, secular pluralism is divisive and self-serving. As I had written in the previous article regarding affirmation vs. transformation, no change of heart or mind is needed in secular pluralism. Secular pluralism is easy and requires no



Roger Hines

self-denial. It is lauded by our modern society because in the name of tolerance and civility people can reject the lordship of Christ. People never have and never will be united by human laws apart from the unifying force of the gospel. The *e pluribus Unum* that is on our coins (“from the many one [people is formed]”) is only a vain and desperate prayer without the recognition of our country’s motto “In God We Trust” on the other side of the coins.

Second, Christian pluralism is not an end in itself; it is not some goal that we achieve. It is not something that we celebrate. Indeed, in actuality, Christian pluralism is an oxymoron. It recognizes that people come from different background, but that they lay those differences aside and put to death the things of the flesh to become alive in the spirit (Colossians 3:5).

Christian pluralism is the recognition that Christ died for all people of all races and nationalities and that male and female both were acceptable with Him. The focus is on what Christ makes us and not what we make Christ. Instead, it is not what we are that defines us and what are the ultimate goals and truth in life, but it is that we lay our ways at the cross of Christ and use our different talents to advance His cause in the world.

Thus, the ultimate result of such a fellowship is unity. It is not a superficial definition of unity in diversity; rather while we

recognize our diversity, our differences are used in the service of Christ and where those differences are wrong, we die to self in laying those differences at the foot of the cross. Secular pluralists call the differences in ethics and morality as human rights that must be universally recognized while the Scripture admonishes, “let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us” (Hebrews 12:1b—NKJV). The only way that we can do so is first to recognize that are ways are selfish, divisive, based on power, biased in regards to particular groups in our society, and ultimately sinful.

Secular pluralism says that if we follow the right human system, then we will evolve into tolerance and peace. No wonder the gospel is seen as superficial and a hindrance to many secularists. Unless the author and finisher of our faith is Christ (Hebrews 12:2) and not people and their value systems and unless the gospel of Christ is the main influence on the laws of our land, then our laws will always show favoritism and the many will be at the mercy of the few.

Christians need to clearly understand that people will never get it right and cannot get it right. Secularists like to say that morality cannot be legislated and then constantly seek to legislate it. Christians need to quit cowering to people who tell them that religion is simply a private matter and that they need to listen to what people (the unredeemed people at that) are saying are the real issues.

If our laws are not based on the gospel of Christ, then democracy becomes mob rule. As the noted political observer and writer of a couple of generations ago, Theodore H. White, wrote in his book on the 1960 presidential election, “. . . the marks of Christianity lay all across the Constitution. Although Christianity has never been the guarantee of a democratic state

See PLURALISM on page 17

Christians need to quit cowering to people who tell them that religion is simply a private matter and that they need to listen to what people (the unredeemed people at that) are saying are the real issues.

Warm Welcome

Among the many church bulletins received regularly (via mail and email) is one from the Lord’s church in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. Charlie Buckley is the long time preacher and bulletin editor.

Their weekly bulletin states,

**WELCOME TO
THE WORSHIP SERVICES
OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST
IN BAY ST LOUIS, MISSISSIPPI**

To all who are spiritually weary and seek rest; to all who mourn and long for comfort; to all who struggle and desire victory; to all who are strangers and want fellowship; to all who hunger and thirst for righteousness; to all who sin and need the Savior; and to whoever will come, the church opens wide her doors and offers her welcome in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are excited that you have chosen to visit and worship with us this Lord’s Day. If you are searching for a church will you not consider the church of Christ in bay St Louis? If you would like a personal study or would like to know more about the church, we are here for you. (bslcoc@bellsouth.net; 501 Pine Street; P. O. Box 2158; Bay St Louis, MS 39525)

“A Good Sign” in a “Sinful World”

Not all changes are bad!

- Editor -

When I was growing up in SW Louisiana (mid 1900s), my impression was that it was expected that adults would, in some form, use tobacco. I recall no warnings stressing the dangers of smoking, dipping and/or chewing tobacco. Children

were discouraged by grown-ups from using the weed; but, the message seemed rather clear that “tobacco was for adults”. Many youth concluded that slipping around “behind the barn” and smoking would hasten adulthood. This desire to act “grown up” was very strong and influenced many teens to give tobacco a try.

Thank the Lord. Times have changed. In part, because extensive studies, in recent decades, have made undeniably clear that the use of tobacco is harmful to the human body. Considering the rise in cancer -- especially lung cancer and various heart ailments, it is now generally understood that tobacco, in any form, is harmful and that one expresses love for his life and health by refraining from its use.



Seen at a Tennessee Hotel

Of course, the holy scriptures have always taught that our bodies serve as a “temple of the Holy Spirit.” It seems that no God-fearing person would ever want to harm his “temple.”

Then, there are the admonitions in scripture to not give in to the lusts of

the flesh so as to become addicted to anything or any substance that would not be helpful.

Yes, in spite of our many present problems, we have made some progress. Not all changes are bad. I, personally, give thanks to the Lord that it is now possible to go into restaurants and other public places without having to breath smoke filled air.

For those who choose to continue the practice of tobacco use, I can only warn and pray that their understanding of the dangers of tobacco will increase and their desire to not harm themselves and/or others will overrule the desires of the flesh. May God richly bless you in making a decision to give up the use of tobacco in every form. You can. With His help!

“What Was The Happiest Day of Your Life?”

Our Friend Responded:

“The day that I got saved.”

- Editor -

My June and I were in a restaurant not long ago, enjoying a good “home-cooked” meal. A friend of ours walked by and kindly asked how we were doing. Our answer was, “Okay.” We thanked her for her interest and thoughtfulness.

A few minutes later, I asked the lady, “Would you mind telling us about the ‘happiest day in your life’?” Very quickly, almost without

She was “sprinkled” as a baby, “saved” when she was sixteen, and at the age of 30, she felt that her sins were truly “washed away” when she was finally baptized (immersed).

a second thought, she responded, “The day that I got saved.” I was not expecting that answer. My respect for our friend was increased.

Then, I asked her to tell us about “that day” -- the day she was saved. She said she was sprinkled as a baby and was about sixteen years old when she decided to dedicate her life to the Lord and was saved. Then about 14 years later, she told us that she decided to join a church in her community which required baptism for church membership. So, if I understood her correctly, she was about thirty years old she was baptized (immersed).

As she continued sharing with us events in her life, she made the comment that, “*although it may seem sorta strange to some*”, she said when she was finally baptized or immersed (at the age of 30), she had a feeling that her sins were now “washed away.”

Our friend was kind enough to answer my question about the “happiest day in her life” and shared with us her “salvation experiences.” To recap: She was “sprinkled” as a baby, “saved” when she was sixteen, and at the age of 30, she felt that her sins were truly “washed away” when she was finally baptized (immersed).

Our conversation brought on more thought. I began to ponder some questions. How do the salvation experiences of our friend match up with Bible teachings? What does the Bible actually say? How is one really saved? Here are a few thoughts that come to mind.

First of all, the need for and/or the practice of infant baptism is not taught in the New Testament. According to the Scriptures, the per-

son being baptized must be a believer, he must also repent of sins. (See Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Infants are incapable of believing and/or repenting. Baptism is not for infants!

Second, Bible baptism is a **burial** in water. Romans 6:4 states, “We were *buried* therefore with him *through baptism* into death...” Bible students know that Jesus was, Himself, baptized in a river -- the Jordan. And, when he was baptized, He “went *up* straight-way from the water...” (Matt. 3:13-17). Concerning John, the *immerser* (the *baptist*), the Bible says, “And John also was baptizing in

Aenon near to Salim, because there was ***much*** water there...” (John 3:23). According to Acts chapter 8, when one is baptized he/she goes “*down into the water*”, is “*baptized*” and then comes “*up out of the water*” (verses 38,39). The sprinkling or pouring of water, as a religious rite, does not meet the biblical requirement of baptism!

In the **third** place, the responsible person, in need of salvation, is required by the Lord (according to Holy Scripture) to make known his faith/trust in Jesus as the Saviour. Faith/belief is required at any age. Jesus plainly said, “Except you *believe* that I am He [the Christ or the Messiah], you shall die in your sins” (John 8:24). When one truly believes in Jesus as the Saviour, he will *show that faith* through *obedience* to His Lord and Saviour. Jesus said, “He that *believes and is baptized* shall be saved; he that believes not shall be condemned (Mark 16:16).

Baptism is a Christ-given requirement. Baptism evidences true faith and always *precedes* salvation according to Jesus’ plan to save sinners. No where does the New Testament teach one is saved *without* or *before* baptism. In every account given in the “Book of Conversions” (the book of Acts) faith, repentance and baptism always come before salvation. For instance, “...Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, *for* [unto] the remission of sins....”

(Acts 2:38). Saul (who later became Paul the apostle) was commanded, after he had believed, repented and even fasted for three days, to “...arise and be baptized and wash away your sins....” (Acts 22:16) There is no evidence in Scripture to support the belief that one is saved before he makes known his faith in Jesus through submission to repentance and water baptism.

A “profession of faith” and/or a recitation of the “sinner’s prayer” do not, within themselves, result in salvation. That profession must be followed with action -- “*be baptized*” (Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16). An appeal to the example of the “thief on the cross” is inadequate. To say, “I want to be saved like the thief on the cross and the thief was not baptized” is a mistake. The dying thief was in the presence of his Lord and Saviour. He lived and died before the New Testament of Jesus became effective (see Hebrews 9:11-22). The commandment of baptism, as stated in the Great Commission and which is a part of the New Covenant/Testament, had not been given at the time the thief lived and died. In contrast, you and I live this side of the cross and are required to show our faith in Jesus by submitting to His will in the New Testament which most certainly requires baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

And **finally**, the idea of waiting fourteen long years after “the day of salvation”, before submitting to the Saviour’s requirement to be baptized or immersed, indicates a failure to understand the connection made by the Lord between salvation and baptism. When sinners asked what to do, on Pentecost day, the inspired apostle plainly answered, “Repent you and be baptized everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins and you shall receive the

A “profession of faith” and/or a recitation of the “sinner’s prayer” do not, within themselves, result in salvation. That profession must be followed with action -- “be baptized” (Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16).

gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). And, as already mentioned, the praying, penitent Saul was asked, “Why do you tarry?” The inspired

See FRIEND on page 16

Now, They Have Both Departed



Mr and Mrs
Paul
Sparks,
Sr.

Served
Mississippi
Churches
for
50
Years

Joan Sparks
Died
Nov., 2010

Paul Sparks
Died
May 1, 2012

Funeral Services for Paul Sparks, Sr. (a Mississippi gospel preacher) were conducted in Kosciusko, Mississippi on Saturday, May 6, 2012. Robert Rawson, long time friend and fellow preacher of the gospel, conducted the services -- leading congregational singing and delivering the funeral message.

Paul and his wife, Joan, served several Mississippi churches of Christ over a period of 50 years. These congregations include Kosciusko, Aberdeen, Skyline, Indianola and Durant. According to Robert Rawson, brother Paul was instrumental in encouraging him and other young men to preach.

For the past few years, Paul has been unable to work full time and in recent months was confined to a nursing facility in the Nashville area. The departed Sparks are survived by two children -- **Paul, Jr.** and **Amanda**. Their father’s sojourn on earth was described as “A Life of Service.” The influence of Paul and Joan will continue to be felt -- both in time and eternity. May God richly bless. (alf)

Meaningful Memorial

This Bread; This Cup

Jesus said, “*My body; my blood.*”
“This do in remembrance of me”



on the
Lord’s Day
we partake
of the
Lord’s Supper

As the first
century church
did, so do we.
(Acts 20:7)

Exhort
One Another

“Not forsaking
the assembling
of ourselves
together....”
(Heb. 10:25)

Jacksonville, Alabama

An Enjoyable and Profitable Visit

- June Franks -

About twenty years ago, Al preached several months for the church in Clarksdale, Mississippi while they were without a full-time preacher. It was a very enjoyable time in our lives. We were able to meet some wonderful people who were members of the Clarksdale congregation and found them to be very hospitable.

Since we commuted to Clarksdale from Kosciusko, almost every Sunday someone in the church would invite us into their home for lunch. One of those families was the Tyler family -- **Chuck and Betty**, whom we had not seen more than a time or two over the past twenty years. They had left Clarksdale and moved to Jacksonville, Alabama.

Recently Al decided it would be very profitable for us to visit the Lord's church in Jacksonville, Alabama in view of doing a story for the *Messenger*. The Jacksonville congregation publishes the most widely circulated paper among churches of Christ. The bi-monthly is known far and wide as "**House to House, Heart to Heart**". (Circulation: over 2,000,000 copies of each issue.)

So, on Sunday, June 3, 2012, we made it to Jacksonville. Arriving at the church building that Sunday morning, we were blessed to meet so many fellow Christians we had never met. As we were meeting and greeting, in came Betty Tyler. We were very pleased to see Betty since we had not seen her, but maybe a couple of times, since her move to Jacksonville. Chuck, Betty's husband, had already taken his seat in the auditorium as his health is failing.

Allen Webster, pulpit minister, for the Jacksonville congregation was away in a gospel meeting. Sorry we missed him, but we heard three good lessons from the visiting speaker, **Charles Pugh**. Brother Pugh is from West Virginia and serves as the director of Warren Christian Apologetics Center and also teaches in the West Virginia School of Preaching.

After very meaningful morning services, we were blessed with the opportunity of eating at a local restaurant and visiting with Betty and Chuck Tyler, along with their son, David and his son, Chase. Also joining us for lunch

was a very nice young man named **Jeremy Turner**.

During the afternoon on that Sunday, we decided to return to Jacksonville for the evening services. Al also made an appointment to visit with **Luke Griffin** who is director of operations for the "House to House/Heart to Heart" publishing program.

We were blessed with the privilege of returning to Jacksonville where we, again, we enjoyed

oughly enjoyed being in Chuck and Betty's home.

Betty had told us about a special quilt that she was making by hand. A lady had asked Betty to make the quilt out of her deceased daddy's neckties so that she could present the "necktie quilt" to her mother as a memorial gift.

The quilt is beautiful. (I hope the picture will give you some idea of its beauty.) Betty is a very talented seamstress. She is known for her beautiful drapes and comforters. Seeing Betty's work of love reminded me of Dorcas who was said to be "full of good works and almsdeeds" (Acts 9:36)

When it was time for us to leave, Betty loaded us down with fresh peaches, squash and several jars of homemade can goods. As we departed to go back to our motorhome in Gadsden, we were made to feel very thankful to the Jacksonville church and, especially to Betty and her family for making our visit enjoyable and profitable. (June Franks)



Betty Tyler Shows Her "Quilt of Many Ties"

the opportunity of worship and fellowship. After the evening services, Betty invited us to her home to pick up some fresh squash and to see a quilt she was making. Her son, David, prepared supper and we were invited to eat with them. The food was delicious. Needless to say, we thor-

Next Issue, Lord Willing
a story on
"House to House/
Heart to Heart"
(a gospel paper with a
circulation of over 2 million
copies of each issue!)

Gospel Broadcasting Network
Moving to Mississippi

According to an announcement made by GBN, plans are under way to relocate to Olive Branch, Mississippi. This past year the Southaven church of Christ in Southaven, Mississippi, accepted the challenge of overseeing the evangelistic efforts of GBN. Moving from the Chattanooga area (Ringgold, GA) to the Memphis area will enable the Southaven church to be more directly and intimately involved in the oversight of the Gospel Broadcasting Network.

Efforts are now underway to raise funds to purchase a building in Olive Branch which, with some modifications, will be well suited for all that is needed to produce quality programming to be "aired" 24/7.

GBN stated: "Brethren, we need your help! Can you make a

contribution toward the new building? Presently, we have received approximately \$158,050 (updated June 6, 2012). That leaves us with a goal of \$330,950 to raise.

"We are also pleased to announce that individual donations to the building fund in excess of \$500.00 will be matched for the remainder of 2012, up to the total amount of \$150,000.00.

"If we could find 362 Christians and/or congregations who each would donate \$500 a piece we would own this building! If you want to contribute you can send us a check in mail to the address below."

Gospel Broadcasting Network
3969 Cloud Springs Road
Ringgold, GA 30736
(Please mark: "Building Fund")



Lectureship Speakers in Durant

(From left: Greg Ledbetter, Robert Rawson and Walter Williams)

Robert Rawson (center), long time preacher for the Lord's church in Batesville, Mississippi, now preaches for the church in Crockett, Mississippi. In addition to his work as a local preacher Robert continues to encourage soul winning and mission efforts throughout the area.

Recently, he arranged for a "Bible Lectureship and Discussion" to be held in Durant, Mississippi. This special event was conducted April 9 - 11, 2012 on

the theme, "Evangelism in the Home and Family." Featured speakers included **Walter Williams, Greg Ledbetter, Phil Evans and Robert Rawson**.

We were blessed to be in attendance on Tuesday evening and were privileged to be instructed by brethren Williams, Rawson and Ledbetter. It was a very good program with excellent lessons on a vital area of study - "Evangelism" with emphasizes upon the home and family. (alf)

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Manuel Cotton

Reveals hidden talent by leading a song at a recent Sunday Night Singing at the Oak Ridge church. Thanks, brother Cotton, for encouraging me to try song leading. Your example is contagious. (editor)

Booneville Church
Believes In
Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes

150 Participants

We had a great weekend at the Lads to Leaders Convention! About 150 of our folks made the trip to participate in this program. Our young people did an excellent job and represented us well.

Weekends like this are a good reminder of the fact that we have brothers and sisters in Christ all over the nation and the world. So many people (adults and young people) put a lot of work into making this past weekend really special.

I want to say thank you for all of your hard work. I hope you realize the investment you are making. Keep up the good work! (taken from the Booneville church [2nd Street] bulletin)

"Lads to Leaders" was founded in 1968 by **Zack Zorn**. The goal was to develop youth into Christian leaders. That first group of eight boys has grown to over 20,000 today.

334-215-0251
www.lads-to-leaders.org

Different World

(Continued from page 2)

Many things have changed; not all for the better. But, be assured God's word has not changed. God's plan and God's place for salvation is the same today as it was then. Sadly, many have taken it upon themselves to change God's plan for salvation and God's place of salvation.

Not long after the early days of the Lord's church on earth, there developed, what the apostle Paul called, "a falling away." Even from among church leaders (elders) arose false teachers who influenced many to "depart from the faith." (Study Acts 20:29-32; 2 Thess. 2:1-12; 1 Tim. 4:1-5.)

Because of the working of mankind's common enemy, Satan, the time came when the church (as described in the New Testament) became something very different from what it was originally.

Non-biblical designations came to be used to identify what was called originally "the church." Different doctrines were taught; different forms of organization came into being and the simple New Testament plan for salvation was corrupted. Many of these changes resulted in what we know today as Roman Catholicism and Protestant denominationalism.

The religious environment which has developed over the past three or four centuries is, for the most part, very different from that of the first century church you read about in the New Testament.

A few years after I was born, more than 70 years ago, I was richly blessed to be introduced to a genuine effort to restore *New Testament Christianity*. I heard the plea: "Let's go back to the Bible. Let's call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible requirements in Bible ways." I was taught about the New Testament church through the influence of family and friends who had benefited from sincere efforts to "restore the church of the first century - the church you read about in the

Bible."

My early knowledge of the church emphasized that the original church of Christ was not a denomination and that it did not have a denominational name. I soon learned that individual congregations, then and now, were independent and that each congregation carried on its work and worship without denominational hierarchy and/or earthly headquarters and that each church was under submission only to Jesus Christ as THE head of His church.

As I grew older and became more aware of what was going on, I rejoiced to learn that there were many congregations (churches) that were seeking to be simply "the body of Christ." Their desire was to allow Jesus, through the writings of the New Testament, to be in complete control of the beliefs and practices of the church and its individual members.

Because of our allegiance to, respect for, and love for Jesus, the Christ, congregations were often referred to as "churches

How was the first century church identified in New Testament writings? The simple truth of the matter is that the Lord's church in the first century was not given a specific name."

of Christ" (like you read in Romans 16:16). I soon learned that the phrase "Church of Christ" was not and *is not* the name of the church; that it is, rather, an expression used by believers to show a very special relationship with Christ Jesus as the Builder, the Head and the Saviour of His spiritual body -- His church.

Now, more than sixty years after I was first introduced to "New Testament Christianity" and became a member of the church of our Lord, I am still very confident that my decision to become simply a Christian and a member of Christ's church was not a mistake. It was a good *beginning*.

That introduction and decision, made more than three score years ago, was the beginning of a life-long commitment to be in submission to the Lordship of Jesus, to be an avid student of His will as revealed in the written record (Bible) and to earnestly seek to follow closely the New Testament in all aspects of Godly Living, Gospel Teaching, Church Organization, Spiritual Worship and Christ-like Attitudes and Actions.

After all, He (Jesus) is my example. He is my Lord. He is my Saviour. He is everything to me. This causes me to have great respect for His church of which I am so thankful to be a member. Here I am and remain: "Just a Christian"; simply "A member of Christ's spiritual body -- His church."

I would like to encourage you to become a Christian and a member of Christ's church. As a child of God, diligently seek to grow in "grace and knowledge" as you earnestly endeavor to become more "Christ-like". And, may no one ever forget that his/her salvation is through His grace and by His mercy. May all who have become Christians join together in saying, "Thank the Good Lord!"

A. L. Franks
P. O. Box 1578
Kosciusko, MS 39090
franksmm@aol.com
601-668-3344



Time To Stop
S-T-O-P

Forsaking the Assembly
Neglecting to Visit the Sick
Bad, Hurtful Habits
Neglecting Daily Bible Study
Putting Off Answering
"The Question Box"
(See Page 24)

FRIEND

(Continued from page 14)

preacher then commanded, "Arise, be baptized and wash away your sins" (Acts 22:16). Later, to make crystal clear the necessity of water baptism, the apostle Peter wrote, "The like figure where unto baptism does also now save us, not the washing away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God" (1 Peter 3:21). Every Bible example of conversion indicates that the penitent believer did not eat, drink or sleep until he completed his obedience of faith in Jesus by being baptized into Christ.

In closing this response, I want to thank our very special friend for being so keenly aware of the importance of her salvation. I deeply appreciate her thoughtful answer; however, if I understand correctly, there are a few major differences in what she felt was her "day of salvation" and the day of salvation as actually taught in the Holy Scriptures.

In review, our friend said she was sprinkled as a child, "saved" when she was sixteen and then, about fourteen years later, she was baptized. I have no doubt but that her beliefs and actions over the years, involved sincerity and dedication; yet, her "day of salvation" is not in agreement with New Testament teachings and examples of conversion.

The Lord Jesus Christ and the inspired writers of the New Testa-

ment all unite in teaching clearly that a sinner must hear the gospel of Christ, believe in and trust Jesus as his Saviour with all his heart, express regret for and show repentance of sins, confess his faith in Jesus as the Son of God and be baptized into Christ. Such is the teaching of the New Testament. (See references already cited.)

The plan of salvation, as given in the Bible -- when humbly obeyed, brings salvation. The obedient sinner has reason to rejoice in that his sins are forgiven, he is born again and is now a child of God.. When this happens through the love of God and the grace of Jesus Christ, on that very day, the saved person can and should experience the "happiest day" in his life.

For more information on how people were saved by Jesus, back in the first century, I ask that you prayerfully read and study the book of Acts. Consider each account of conversion recorded in this inspired book. By so doing, you can know for sure God's plan for salvation. If you have not so demonstrated your faith in Jesus as Saviour, you can and should do so without delay. Humble yourself, obey the gospel of Christ and experience true salvation and you can forever say with thanksgiving, "The day I was saved was the happiest day in my life on earth."

A. L. Franks; P. O. Box 1578
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601-668-3344

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speaker

June Franks

Kosciusko, Mississippi

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Monday & Tuesday: 7:00 P.M.

Evangelist

A. L. Franks

Church of Christ

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(Charles Jones, local preacher)



Spring Class of Fulton Bible Institute; Fulton, Mississippi

58 Students from 19 congregations throughout NE Mississippi Participated in the Spring Term which ended April 3. The next course on the Book of Hebrews is to begin on August 21, 2012.

Russ Crosswhite, local evangelist at Fulton, is the institute director

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PLURALISM (Continued from page 13)

anywhere in the world, no democracy has ever thrived successfully for any period of time outside of Christian influence; without the quality of mercy and forgiveness, there is only logic and reason to guide a state, and these guarantee no freedom to any man" (Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President 1960*, p. 285).

Mercy and forgiveness—secular pluralism has nothing in its nature concerning those two virtues; it knows only tolerance since tolerance believes that people's differences in morality were not sinful in the first place. Mercy and forgiveness only have relevance and meaning in the context of the Christian pluralism in which people have been forgiven, have turned from their way to the way of Christ, and thus, the differences of race, gender, and socioeconomic status do not determine our relationship and how we act toward other in that relationship. We are the unity of the hand, the foot, the eye in the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:12-27).

Third, what does this Christian pluralism mean for our participation in the public arena, including politics and voting? Generally, it means that the secular society should not be permitted by Christians to bifurcate our morality into Christian issues and public issues. Public issues are Christian issues; others do not define the issues and how Christians should view

them. The principles of Christ do the defining. Abortion, gay rights, the role of government in the lives of individual citizens must all be exposed to the light of the gospel in our lives. If human agendas resist this light, that is to be expected since the light shined in the darkness and the darkness could not understand it (John 1:5) and that the world hates Christ, the light, because its works are evil (John 7:7).

Too often, Christians have kept their Christianity apart from the practical application in our society. We let others tell us what the issues are, and we cannot simply put our rubber stamp to them. The rulers of this world perish and so do their plans, yet even Christians, if they are not aware, will make decisions based upon the words and personalities of people instead of making them based upon the lordship of Christ.

We need to impress upon our national leaders that it is God who receives the praise by our public policies and not politicians. We elect people to office, but as Christians, we need to ask ourselves whether we are electing them to meet our personal expectations or to meet the expectations of God's righteousness. Do we seek to meet the expectations of Christ when we take a stand for particular issues in the public debate? When we say "whatever you do in word or deed do all in the name of the Lord" (Colossians

3:17), are we limiting this expression of faith to the worship services, or are we expanding it into the totality of our lives?

Finally, the goals and agendas of secular pluralism are driven like the chaff which the wind drives away (Psalm 1:4). They are rooted in the authority of humans who cannot give happiness, hope, and truth. These things only God can give. They cannot be legislated; they cannot be bought with government programs no matter how much money is thrown at the problems.

Even elections are not to exalt the goodness and wisdom of the elected, but elections are reminders that people are limited and that their policies are relative driven away with the winds of time. Policies change and candidates are always trying to take us somewhere to find that happiness that they can never give us regardless of people and systems. We are not going forward into some nebulous human paradise nor are we evolving to understand what is right.

Only the oneness of Christ can make us strong. Only the oneness of Christ makes our differences, which are impotent to save, unimportant. Only the oneness of Christ makes sense of *e pluribus unum*.

Roger Hines, former Instructor at MBC, presently preaches for the church in Canton, MS. Address: Roger Hines; 305 South Huntington St.; Kosciusko, MS 39090

hroger819@yahoo.com

SPIRITS IN PRISON

(Continued from page 10)

tion, as they do the other Scriptures" (2 Peter 3:16).

Dealing with the disobedient, whether in Old Testament time or New, "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient (*makrothumia*) toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Saved By Water

Peter then adds regarding the ark, "in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved by water" (1 Peter 3:20). The eight were, of course, Noah and his wife, his three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, and their wives.

When I first noticed that, decades ago, I remember pondering, why does it say "saved by water"? At first thought it seemed it was the ark which saved them from the water rather than the water which saved them. However, on further reflection I realized the Bible was right (as it always is!). God was not primarily concerned with saving them from the water. He sent the water. His concern was to save them from the wickedness and violence that was corrupting the world (Genesis 6:11). It was the waters of the flood that accomplished that. It lifted them above the earth and the iniquity that filled it, destroyed the sin and corruption, and set Noah and his family down onto a cleansed and purified earth. They were saved by water.

Antitype, Saved by Baptism

That thought fits exactly the analogy Peter went on to make: "Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21-22).

"Baptism . . . corresponds to this." Peter used the Greek word *antitypos*, saying "baptism is the antitype." In biblical studies a "type" (*typos*) is a picture, a sample or shadow. That which it depicts is the true, the "antitype," the reality which stands over against ("anti") the type, and which the "type" foreshadows. Using that biblical meaning we say Moses was a type of Christ, Christ was the antitype; Elijah was a type of John the Baptist, John the Baptist was the antitype.

So Peter says here that Noah's

family saved by water is the type; baptism saving us is the antitype. As we are buried with Christ in baptism, the water of baptism separates us from the sin and guilt of the "old man" and we are raised with Christ to walk in a new life with him (compare Romans 6:3-6).

A faithful preacher and good Bible student wrote, "Baptism does not save you; there is no magic in water and no merit in the act. Baptism is the point at which you are saved, but Christ saves you." In the context of his article, what he intended to convey is true, but his wording was unfortunate. I wrote him to say, "It is always a mistake to deny something the Bible explicitly states. You said, 'Baptism, does not save you.' The Bible says, 'Baptism now saves you.'"

The points the writer was making are true. Peter made the same points. Preacher, "There is no magic in the water;" Peter, "Not as a removal of dirt from the body." Preacher, "No merit in the act;" Peter, "an appeal to God for a good conscience." Preacher: "Christ saves you;" Peter, "Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We should always be careful to note, as the Bible does, that no one earns forgiveness by being baptized. Being baptized is a demonstration that faith is living and effective (James 2:18, 22). The power and efficacy of baptism is in the death of Christ (Romans 6:3-4), as validated by his resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:4; 1 Peter 3:21). But we should also be careful not to put a "not" where God has put a "now." God's word says, "Baptism . . . now saves you."

Throughout Scripture, one element of a person's obedience to the gospel is often used comprehensively, implying the whole process.

Paul and Silas told the Philippian jailor, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:31). They did not mean, however, and the jailor and his household did not understand them to mean, "without repentance and baptism." The text of Acts goes on to show the jailor both repented and was baptized, and only then does it say that he had believed (Acts 16:31-34).

Jesus commissioned his disciples that "repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations,

beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). But he did not mean repentance without faith and baptism. When Peter began at Jerusalem to fulfill that commission, he told those who believed, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

Similarly, when Peter says, "Baptism saves you," or when Ananias tells Saul, "Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16), neither is overlooking the need for faith and repentance.

Salvation is by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). The only faith that counts for anything is "faith working through love" (Galatians 5:6). Baptism, combined with penitent faith in the atoning death of Christ for our sins, cleanses us from sin and makes us by the power of God new creatures, freed from bondage to sin.

Your Bible Questions Are Invited

(Address on Page 3)

Brandon, Mississippi (Associate Minister)

The North Brandon Church of Christ in Brandon, Mississippi, is looking for an associate minister to work with our youth and younger adult families and singles. He must be able to teach and preach as needed. He must be married and be scripturally sound. Please send a resume to:

The Elders
North Brandon Church of Christ
P. O. Box 251
Brandon, MS 39042

Reform, Alabama (North Pickens)

The North Pickens Church of Christ in Reform, Alabama, is seeking a sound, dedicated gospel preacher to serve an area where the church has existed for many years, but needs to grow in faith and number. The congregation will be able to provide a residence located on church property and a small salary. Please send resume and references to

Jerry Sparks
P. O. Box 181
Millport, AL 35576
or contact by phone at
205-662-4256
(Date: 3-12)

Churches Looking For Preachers

Notice: We are pleased to run ads for congregations seeking to find preachers to work with them. Please mail your request to: "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 ad not more than one or two times unless a specific request for extension is received from the congregation looking for a preacher. There is no charge for this service. Thank you for asking!
Editor**

Hemphill, TX

The Hemphill Church of Christ is presently seeking a gospel preacher for a small but dedicated membership of 40 individuals. Average attendance runs 50 to 60.

Hemphill, Texas is located 10 miles from Toledo Bend Reservoir, on the east, and 30 miles from Sam Rayburn Lake, on the west, in east Texas. We enjoy a church-centered family membership which is active in the excellent school system and community activities of its multi-cultural citizens.

We furnish a 3 bedroom, 2 1/2 bath brick home located about one mile from the church building and a really nice office in the building. Applicants are asked to submit a complete resume and tape or video to our committee.

Salary is negotiable. Please send information or questions to:

Hemphill Church of Christ
P. O. Box 1923
Hemphill, TX 75948

For more information contact:
Max Boone 409-625-0626 or Max Goodart 409-787-2323.

(61 South) Natchez Preacher Needed

Attendance: 25 -30
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Contact
John Seyfarth, Jr.
139 Upper Kingston Rd
Natchez, MS 39120
601-442-6503

This church is seeking a man with some experience, who loves the Lord and His Word, who truly cares for others and is ready to "speak the truth in love."

Remember the
Magnolia Messenger
in your prayers.

**Thank you for thinking of
the Magnolia Messenger
when you
remember and/or honor
Friends and Relatives
(See Page 12)**

Waynesboro, MS

The Waynesboro church of Christ, located in southeastern Mississippi, is seeking to fill the pulpit with a sound New Testament minister.

Our congregation was established in Waynesboro in 1952 by only a few faithful Christians. Present attendance runs about 50-55 each Sunday morning with a weekly budget of \$1,700. The population of Waynesboro is approximately 6,500. The church building is located on Hwy 145, North.

Those applying for this position should be well-rounded in all areas, a leader, and exhibit a desire to help the congregation to grow.

The responsibilities of the minister should be considered traditional — preaching and teaching the whole truth, greeting and following up on newcomers, working to restore the unfaithful and visiting the sick and shut-ins.

Contact:

Terry Heathcock
(after 6:00 PM) 601-735-2288
cbheathcock@yahoo.com

Jamie Heathcock
601-735-3014 or 601-410-5591
snookiejam@hotmail.com

Mail Your Resume to:
**Waynesboro Church of Christ
Preacher Search**
P. O. Box 94
Waynesboro, MS 39367

Bartlett, Tennessee (Ellendale)

We at Ellendale are in a search for a minister of the Gospel who is enthusiastic and eager to work for the Lord's Church, one who is sound in the faith and willing to be the motivator for this group of people who are striving to please God in everything we do.

We believe there is an exhorter of people, like Barnabas, who will be willing to work with the Church at Ellendale so we can grow in number and in spirit, spreading the Word of God first in the Church, then in the community around us. We are a sound congregation, with good people who want to see many people in this area be obedient to Christ.

Salary and large 3 bedroom home provided.

Ellendale Church of Christ
7365 U. S. Hwy. 70
Bartlett, TN 38133
(901) 386-5008

A Sad Day In America

May 9, 2012

Wednesday, May 9, 2012 may be viewed in different ways by different people. It may be remembered as the day of *birth*; the day of *death*, or the day of *marriage*. The memory of certain days often brings joy; other days, when recalled, often produce sadness.

It may very well be that May 9, 2012, will go down as one of the "*Sad Days in America*". On this date, the president of our country removed all doubt as to where he stood and what he thought. He made clear his *approval* of "gay marriages".

The President's public statement was preceded, just a few days earlier, by the vice president of the United States who stated on national TV that he felt "*completely comfortable*" with men marrying men and women marrying women.

In contrast to our president and vice-president, God-fearing, Bible believing Americans do not approve "gay marriages" and can never feel comfortable with such corrupt conduct. God's word clearly teaches that such perversion of His "gift of sex" is sinful and is an abomination. So teaches the unchanging Bible. And, that's the way it is -- *has been* and *will always be* -- no matter what national leaders (political or religious) may say about their "*evolving beliefs*."

We earnestly encourage all who would follow the Lord Jesus Christ to never forget that one of the main reasons **God destroyed Sodom** (and the other cities) was "*men choosing to be with men*." The Bible declares and they gave "*themselves over to fornication*" and went "*after strange flesh*". (Study Gen. 19:1-13 and Jude verse 7.)

Please remember that the inspired apostle Paul plainly warned against the sin of **women** who would change the "*natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet*" (Romans 1:26,27). Sexual relations -- "**Men with men; women with women**" -- violates the will and the plan of the Loving and Gracious Creator.

God has spoken. His laws remain in force. Let God and His Word be true and all who conflict with Him and contradict His Word, be considered dangerous leaders. (Editor)



President Barack Obama

PLEASE Pray For Our President

Please pray that President Obama may come to realize his **approval** of "gay marriages" is in stark contrast with **God's disapproval** of such sinful conduct.

Pray that the teachings of the Bible (God's word) may penetrate deep into the heart of Mr. Obama, resulting in genuine repentance and confession of sin for his misdirected leadership as president of our nation. Likewise, as Scripture enjoins, pray for all others in authority and for our nation. (Read I Tim. 2:1,2; I Peter 2:13-17.)

Please Read on this Page
Homosexuality
Is NOT the
Only Sexual Sin!

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Homosexuality Is Not the Only Sexual Sin

Cohabitation

- Eric Welch -

On April 14, 2012, an interesting piece appeared in the *New York Times* about cohabitation, "*The Downside of Cohabiting Before Marriage*" by **Meg Jay**, a clinical psychologist. The article reports that in 1960 nearly 450,000 unmarried couples lived together, but today the number is over 7.5 million, a 1500% jump. Cohabitation now precedes more than half of all marriages. The author lists several reasons why this change has taken place, the sexual revolution, birth control availability, finances and even the prevention of disease.

True to her calling, she remains committed to passing no judgment on the matter: "*Cohabitation is here to stay, and there are things young adults can do to protect their relationships... I am not for or against living together, but I am for young adults knowing that, far from safeguarding against divorce and unhappiness, moving in with someone can increase your chances of making a mistake — or of spending too much time on a mistake.*" Thus, the problem, according to Ms. Jay, is not so much cohabitating as much as it is doing so with the wrong person.

However, make no mistake. Almighty God has judged clearly on the matter: it IS a mistake. Period. "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous" (Hebrews 13:4). "But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband" (1 Corinthians 7:2).

Paul tells the Corinthian Christians that those who engage in sex without marriage will not go to heaven (1 Corinthians 6:9; cf. Galatians 5:19, 21). That is why he tells them in verse 18 to "flee sexual immorality." However, they were not without hope. He reminded them that they had repented (changed) and were washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:9). If you have



Eric Welch

committed sexual immorality, forgiveness and hope are waiting for you!

Love is often a reason given for living together. However, cohabitation is not love but lust. It actually violates love (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). It says, I don't want to commit myself to you. "As long as you make me happy, I'll stay."

Lust treats the other person as an object to fulfill pleasure. True love is never a motive to engage in sexual intimacy before marriage, but the primary motive to abstain. Love is patient and kind to the future husband or wife and is willing to wait for marriage to fulfill its emotional and physical needs. Love is not selfish nor acts rudely. True love never rejoices in wrongdoing. It never seeks the spiritual fall of another.

Marriage and family are the foundation of society, but cohabitation weakens them. It is a back-room deal with no public or official pronouncement of commitment and responsibility or a promise of a future together (as vowed at a wedding).

Studies show that cohabiters who eventually marry are less happy in their marriage. Dr. Laura Schlessinger, radio personality and marriage therapist, cites a 1997 *Washington Post* article that

reported how cohabiting couples are more likely to approve of divorce and the longer they stay together without marriage, the less desire they have for a family (jewishworldreview.com).

Not only does the lack of commitment harm adults, the instability that it brings puts children born into it in grave danger of physical abuse and even repeating the behavior as adults. Dr. Laura Schlessinger continues, "How is any of this (cohabitation) in the interest of American society and its children? I hear a lot about gunlocks to protect children from shooting one another. I don't hear enough about behavior locks on adults to protect their children from instability, loss, chaos, abuse and death. I guess that's because we're in the era of doing whatever pleases each and every one of us — and if it hurts someone else, well, too bad. Unfortunately, that attitude doesn't just hurt. It kills children's spirit and well-being" (jewishworldreview.com). Well said.

Teaching our children the sacredness of marriage to a Christian, doing our best to have marriages that please God, and supporting laws that favor and strengthen marriage and the family will help us fight this plague on society.


— — — —
Eric preaches for the Vicksburg Church. His article was first published in the church bulletin. At our invitation, he revised his article and submitted it to be published in the MM. Thanks, brother Eric. His address:

Vicksburg Church of Christ
3333 North Frontage Rd.
Vicksburg, MS 39180
erwelch_2000@yahoo.com

Sin is Still Sin!

14th Annual
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(More information, next issue)

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"SALT" is no ordinary weekend. It is a weekend about encouraging teens to seek after the truth of the Scripture. So many people today get caught up in the pleasures of this life that they forget about the true and perfect message of God's word. We hope that each of you will join us this year and many years to come.



**A "Drop-in" Wednesday Morning Visit
Columbus; 7th Street**

On a rainy Wednesday morning in March, 2012, my June and I stopped by the assembly place for the 7th Street church in Columbus. We were blessed to enjoy a pleasant visit with **Billy Ferguson**, the "preaching minister." Billy has served the Columbus congregation for the past eleven years.

Billy and the youth minister, **Paul Bennett**, work under the oversight of the three elders of the church -- **Don Cole, Wade Ward and Les Chaffin**. Presently the 7th Street church brings together 300 to 350 or so each Lord's day.

Billy seemed very pleased to tell us about the special emphasizes the church places upon

ministry. He said that the leadership of the church encourages each member to find his/her area of ministry for which each is best suited. He added that all members were challenged to know God and Jesus and to learn what it means to actually follow Jesus.

Brother Billy also stated that their youth program was "very strong" and that the church gives special attention to needy children in the community and presently serve 30 to 40 kids who are at "at risk". The church also has an active "day-care" program that benefits many in the community. Thanks, Billy for letting us just drop in on you and taking time to visit with us. Thanks also for your good directions to the park.



Home of the 7th Street Church of Christ in Columbus, MS



Prince Lewis
(Preaches at DeKalb, MS)



Brad Adcock
(Preaches at Oak Ridge)

Attala County, MS
**Joint 5th Sunday
Evening Service Brings
Churches Together**

For the past several months congregations in Attala County have been meeting together for services on 5th Sunday nights. On April 29, it was time for the Oak Ridge church (about 14 miles north of Kosciusko) to host the quarterly meeting. Scores of Christians from area congregations filled the new building of the Oak Ridge church and joined their voices in singing praises to God.

Among the many men who led singing were several who serve or have served as preachers in the area. Among them are the men pictured on this page. In addition to the preacher/song leaders, several other very capable men took turns directing the spirited congregational singing of the evening.

It was a delightful gathering. A very special thanks to the Oak Ridge church for hosting the event and furnishing refreshments after the singing service was concluded. Attala County churches participating were South Huntington Street and Tipton Street in Kosciusko, along with the Oak Ridge congregation.



Ben Jackson
(Preaches at Lexington)



Leroy Watson
Interim Preacher at Tipton Street

Bible Says: "...teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs..."



Enjoying Fellowship Outside the New Church Building at Oak Ridge

**Do You Have
Family & Friends
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**Send us their names
and addresses.**

NO CHARGE

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Invites Your Suggestions**

Watch DIRECTV®
"Getting To Know Your Bible"

Monday - Friday
DIRECTV Channel 377
9:30 p.m. CT
3:30 a.m. CT

**Billy Lambert
Speaker**



“Healing Servants Mission”

Luke 9:6: *And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where.*

- Mark Landis -
Medical Missionary

It is our purpose to spread the Gospel in Alabama, the Marshall Islands and wherever the door of opportunity for spreading the gospel is opened to us. It is our first duty to help others spiritually by encouraging everyone to turn to the Word of God as their sole standard of authority. It is also our purpose to help people medically within our abilities in order to share the love of Christ.

Mark Landis has been doing medical missions since his Senior year of Medical School when he went with Dr. Henry Farrar to Nigerian Christian Hospital for a one month rotation. Because of his father, who was a missionary, he has been involved with foreign missions most of his life starting at 18 months of age. He has done mission work on every continent except for Antarctica (where there is no permanent population of people).

Mark and Rose [his wife] went on their first long term mission work together to Guyana, South America in 1996. They went back on the foreign field in 2005 when they moved their family of seven to the Marshall Islands. The work there was very successful with over 60 baptisms so far, but was severely limited by a lack of funds. They returned to the US in 2007 and moved to Erin, TN where Mark served as not only a physician, but also as the sole minister at the time for Erin church of Christ. A number of people were baptized as a result of the family's work in Erin.

In 2010, Mark returned to the Marshall Islands where he held a successful Gospel meeting with 9 baptisms and the brethren there begged him to return. He brought most of the family back for a survey trip that same year and found a great need for his return to the islands.

In order to meet the needs of mission work on the islands, they purchased a sail boat. In taking it down the inland waterways, however, several things happened which seemed providential. First, they encountered many difficulties on the journey making the ocean voyage appear too fraught with danger to continue. They also happened on Aliceville Church of Christ along the way and were persuaded by the

brethren there to stop for at least a few months and try to ship the boat. Since it would take a few months to sail to the islands anyway, they agreed to this. Later, they found out it would be nearly impossible to ship the boat.

The church work in Aliceville, Alabama is already off to a good

Aliceville, AL and the Marshall Islands

start with baptisms as a result of the combined effort of the church and the Landis family. The elders there have asked the Landis family to stay and make Aliceville their base while they continue to go back and forth to do mission work in the Marshall Islands and other needy places. After much prayer and consideration, both parties have come to an agreement on this.

It is hoped that the work in the Marshall Islands will be at least as productive if not more so with this arrangement. When a long term mission is undertaken in a third world country, it often seems like there is unlimited time to get things done and things are put off by brethren and missionaries alike. When the time is limited, however, everyone knows they have limited time to get everything done, so more gets done faster.

Danny Jim, a local minister, leader and educator in the school system there has agreed to stop his paying job of being a principal for an elementary school. He will then start to work full time with the church in the Marshall Islands both in Majuro and in Kilange with the understanding that he will have periodic support from Mark and his family in the form of short term trips to the island.

Danny's salary and working fund will be paid for through this mission effort. Danny has already spent years working for the church asking for no pay at all and, in fact, has given up offers of better paying jobs in order to continue doing church work. He has proven himself a reliable partner in the work over and over again.

It is our goal that the Word of the Lord will be magnified and that the church will grow in Aliceville and surrounding areas.

We will strive to continue to help the church in the Marshall Islands to grow in number and in understanding of the Word of the Lord.

We will also reach out as opportunities present to aid other

missions areas such as the Philippines where we have been asked by the church to come and help support their long term work with Medical Missions.

Because there are those who are turning away from the purity of the word of God to follow doctrines that add to it or take away from it, we also have it as our goal to influence the church in the United States and beyond. In addition, we see that church growth has needlessly slowed down as some abandon the Word as the basis of our faith.

It is our goal to restart the restoration movement as a powerful force in our Nation and in our world. We will make an appeal to return to reason away from baseless emotion. We urge everyone to return to the scriptures as the sole source of authority rather than follow the various branches of the wisdom of men.

Contact:

Aliceville Church of Christ
P. O. Box 317
Aliceville, Alabama 35442

Elders

Jim Presley -- 205-373-3821
Tommy Blakney -295-399-0466

Minister/Missionary

Mark Landis - 205-399-1137

News Note

TUPELO

The North Green Street Church of Christ is hosting a free seminar for married couples. The date is Thursday-Saturday, June 21-23 from 9:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.

Readers' Response

Thank you for the MM and for your great work. May God bless you and this great work. (Darrell & Beverly Moody, Abilene, TX)

“Our First Ladies’ Day”

Saturday,
September 22, 2012

Beginning at 9:00 a.m.

Speaker

Joyce Maranto

(Rolling Fork, MS)

Midway Church of Christ
1005 Midway Road
Utica, Mississippi

Please call for directions: Tonia Odum
(601-529-8476) or Dawn
Hartley (601-636-3861)

“Looking Forward to Seeing You There”



A Family Dedicated to the Lord and His Great Commission
Mark Lanis (a physician.) and his wife, Rose, and their five children:
Hannah, Tabitha, Sarah, Elizabeth and John

THANK YOU

Receiving & Reading

Magnolia Messenger

The Question Box

(Answers: Last Issue -- All Answers in Matthew)

Jesus and the Inspired Old Testament Scriptures

Old Testament Women in the Genealogy of Jesus

The genealogy of Jesus (Matt. 1), going back to Abraham includes the names of four Old Testament women. (Match the woman in column one with the most appropriate phrase in column two.)

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. Tamar (Tamar) | <u>3</u> Solomon's mama |
| 2. Rachab (Rahab) | <u>1</u> Mother of twins (Phares & Zara) |
| 3. "Wife" of Urias (Uriah) | <u>4</u> David's great grandmother |
| 4. Ruth | <u>4</u> Jesse's grandmother |

Old Testament Men Mentioned in the Teachings of Jesus

(Match the OT person named by Jesus and the most appropriate phrase connected with each.)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Solomon (Matt. 6:29) | <u>5</u> Jesus called him "righteous" |
| 2. Moses (8:4) | <u>2</u> Commanded the offering of a gift. |
| 3. David (Matt. 12:4) | <u>1</u> Wore glorious apparel |
| 4. Jonas (Jonah) (Matt. 12:41) | <u>3</u> Ate food that was "off-limits" |
| 5. Abel (Matt. 23:35) | <u>4</u> A preacher in Nineveh |

Jesus Used Old Testament Scripture to Defeat Satan

(Match the Old Testament reference (left) with the teaching stated by our

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1. Deut. 6:13 | <u>3</u> "...Live... not by bread alone..." |
| 2. Deut. 6:16) | <u>2</u> "Shalt not tempt the Lord..." |
| 3. Deut. 8:3 | <u>1</u> "... worship/serve God only." |

Quotations from Isaiah Associated with Jesus.

(Match the statement made by the prophet Isaiah {Esaia} [right column] with the correct reference.) which is partially provided in the left column.)

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1. Matthew 15:9 | <u>2</u> "...The voice of one crying in the wilderness..." |
| 2. Matthew 3: 3 | <u>4</u> "...people... in darkness saw great light..." |
| 3. Matthew 13:15 | <u>5</u> "...Himself took our infirmities..." |
| 4. Matthew 4: 16 | <u>6</u> "A bruised reed he shall not break..." |
| 5. Matthew 8:17 | <u>3</u> "For this people's heart is waxed gross..." |
| 6. Matthew 12:20 | <u>1</u> "But in vain do they worship me..." |

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

A Plea For Commitment (Part II)



June Franks

In the January/March issue of the Magnolia Messenger an article was published entitled, "A Plea for Commitment". This article primarily focused on being committed in one's marriage.

In the previous article it was noted that commitment is defined as *the act of binding yourself (intellectually or emotionally) to a course of action*. Traits of commitment are being sincere and steadfast with fixity of purpose.

It is my observation that one of the biggest problems we face in the church is finding those who are steadfast with fixity of purpose.

As Christians, we should be totally committed to the Lord and His church. It seems that we often see just how little we can do to get by and, as a result, we miss out on great blessings by not being faithful.

We hear every day that the church and its assemblies are not all that important, and that one can worship God anywhere.

The Bible teaches that the church that Jesus built is important. Consider the words recorded in Matthew chapter 16.

"He [Jesus] saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee but my Father which is in heaven.

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 16:15-19)

The sermon preached by Simon Peter on the day the church was established is recorded in Acts 2. Even as Peter continued His preaching about Jesus, many of those who were listening, were pricked in their hearts and said unto Peter and the rest of the

apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2: 38,38)

The Bible continues, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2: 41,42)

After they were baptized the scripture says, "... And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47)

People may not openly say that the church is unimportant, but by their actions they prove their belief that "the church is not important."

The Bible teaches right the opposite. The **church is important** because the Bible says that Christ gave himself for it. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the saviour of the body. Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." (Ephesians 5:23,25)

Furthermore, the Bible declares, "For he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." (Col. 1: 18)

We can now begin to see the importance of the church and reasons why we should be totally committed to the Lord and His church. We have learned from these verses that Christ died for the church, the saved have been added to the church and that Christ is the head of the church.

As a dear brother, Ray Gilbert, (now deceased) would always say, "I am so thankful to be in the church." He would often continue by saying, "The church here in Kosciusko is the best church in the world."

We should not be among those church members who have to always be pampered or always be thinking how the church can serve us. However, we should ask ourselves *what can we do for the church; not what can the church do for me?*

I love the church for all the above reasons and hopefully you do as well.

We should also be steadfast with fixity of purpose. The Bible admonishes, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (I Corinthians 15:58)

Mrs. A. L. Franks

P. O. Box 1578

Kosciusko, MS 39090

franksmm@aol.com

Introducing An All New Ladies' Bible Study Book by Ruth Ann Howell

Ruth Ann Howell is a member of the Summerdale Church in Summerdale, Alabama, and is the author of a new book entitled, "Blessed Assurance, Hope: An Anchor of the Soul." (Hebrews 6:19)

Ruth Ann spent many hours in an indepth study, searching for answers to questions she had in regard to her own salvation. According to Ruth Ann, her main concern was the assurance she needed, as a child of God, to know *without a doubt* that she was saved.

"Blessed Assurance" has thirteen chapters and is suitable for a ladies' Bible class study. I found the book to be very informative, written with a love for what the scriptures teach, coupled with a balance in regard to works and grace.

Billy Lambert, preacher for the Summerdale congregation, wrote the forward for Ruth Ann's book, "Blessed Assurance". Brother Lambert said, "No one is more interested in the saving of souls than Ruth Ann. She has conducted classes for women of the Summerdale church on personal evangelism. Souls have been saved as a result. One time she met a man in a doctor's office. She set up a study and the man obeyed the gospel.

POEMS

By

Barbara

Barbara Cagle Ray

bcagleray@comcast.net



Remembering When

*Sometimes my mind goes wandering back
To an old familiar country road.
I can smell sweet honeysuckle blooms
Beside a creek that gleamed as it flowed.*

*Mom and Dad leap into my mem'ry,
Also barefoot kids and fishing poles,
Inner tubes from old discarded tires
Floated us downstream to deep blue holes.*

*I recall blackberries and zinc pails,
The sound of rain on a roof of tin,
Hand-sewn quilt tops and Sunday dresses—
Sometimes it's sad "remembering when."*

*I can't forget kids' pattering feet
Or a home where love grew ev'ry day.
Things that shaped the person I've become
Are memories I can't cast away.*

The Prayer Garden

*Sometimes I meet God in the garden,
And we commune in sweet silence there.
Butterflies dance among the lovely blooms,
Creating a ballet in the fragrant air.*

*Flowers are kissed with a golden glow,
And sunbeams lightly touch my face.
Bright rose petals tinted with crimson hue,
Spill their sweet perfume with royal grace.*

*I kneel to pray beside the flower trellis
And thank God for this tranquil repose.
He gave me the gift of a garden of prayer,
And for the bow—a crimson rose.*

"While she is concerned for the salvation of the others, she has had a struggle with her own "Assurance of Salvation". This has been a journey of many years. Finally, she is at peace. Now she wants to share that peace with others.

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(Review prepared by
June Franks)

Need a Preacher?
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See Page 18

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THANK YOU!

(See Question Box)

These Sent In Answers

(Turn to Page 24)

THANK YOU FOR SENDING IN ANSWERS
by doing so
You Encourage Others to Study the Bible!
plus
You May Be Our Next Bible Winner!

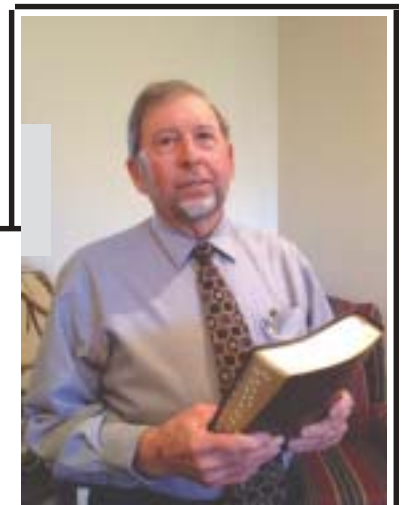
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The Question Box

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Rich Folks in the Bible

“Not all Rich People were Bad”

In a recent daily devotional Bible study I read about Joseph of Arimathea (Matt. 27:57). I found it interesting that the Scriptures stated that he was a “rich man” and also a “good man”. I began thinking...

Rich men/women get our attention. As a child, I can recall my dad speaking about rich folks who were of great influence in America in the first half of the 20th century. I remember especially his mention of the Rockefeller family.

Today’s wealthiest include William Gates III, Warren Buffett and the Walton family. Gates, said to be the richest (57 billion dollars) and the Walton family with combined assets of approximately 100 billion. (Think of your part in their wealth each time you visit Walmart and/or Sams.)

The Bible mentions several rich people. Each instance sorta gets my attention -- perhaps yours. This

month’s study reminds us of some of those rich people named in Scripture and also warns us of the grave dangers of trusting in earthly wealth.

Please take a few precious moments and complete each section of the study on Riches and the Bible. You will find it interesting and beneficial. You also will encourage others by sending in your answers to this edition of “The Question Box.” Your efforts will also be recognized in the next issue of the MM (see page 23), and you also may be rewarded with a beautiful new Study Bible. (Each issue we award, by random drawing, a new Bible to one student who completes the “QB” and sends in answers.) This time, you just may be that one!

Thank you for your interest in Bible Study and for answering this month’s Question Box.
(alf, editor and author of QB)

THE ANSWERS: Below are listed 13 “rich people” mentioned in the Bible. In parentheses, following each person, you find the book and chapter (s) where each is identified. Please **match** the number by each person’s name with the appropriate phrase that follows in the next section. **NOTE: In some cases, more than one phrase will match the same person.**

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Adam (Gen. 2, 3) | 6. Solomon (I Kings 3,10) | 10. Rich man of II Sam. 12 |
| 2. Shunammite (2 Kings 4) | 7. Rich man of Luke 16 | 11. Rich Farmer (Luke 12) |
| 3. Zacchaeus (Luke 19) | 8. Rich Young ruler (Luke 18) | 12. Jesus (2 Cor. 8) |
| 4. Job (Job 1, 42) | 9. Boaz (Ruth 2,4) | 13. Joseph (Matt. 27; Luke 23; John 19) |
| 5. Abram (Gen. 13) | | |

- | | |
|--|---|
| ___ He was the “greatest of all men of the east” | ___ He married a Moabitess |
| ___ He was “perfect and upright” | ___ The Lord called this man a “fool” |
| ___ A rich man who was said to be “a good man” | ___ He was rich but, for you/me, he became poor. |
| ___ He was “very sorrowful” and “very rich” | ___ He was rich; but lost it all; then regained double! |
| ___ He was “a mighty man of wealth” | ___ A secret disciple of Jesus who gave up his tomb |
| ___ He was the richest man in the whole world | ___ A short, tree climbing man in Jericho |
| ___ He was richer than any other king of his time | ___ He was assisted by Nicodemus in burying Jesus |
| ___ He “fared sumptuously every day” | ___ He was the great grandfather of King David |
| ___ He was “very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold.” | ___ In his reign, silver became as common as stones |
| ___ He “gave half of his goods to the poor” | ___ He was rich in life; poor in death |
| ___ He took a lamb from a poor man | ___ “A great woman” who added a small room to her |
| ___ He lived in a paradise with a perfect wife | house for the prophet Elisha. |

WARNINGS: The Danger of Riches

(Fill in Missing Words and Numbers. Use KJV)

- “Charge them that are rich in this _____, that they be not _____, nor _____ in uncertain _____, but in the _____ God, who giveth us _____ all things to _____.” (I Tim. 6:___)
- “There is that maketh himself _____, yet hath _____: there is that maketh himself _____, yet hath great _____.” (Prov. 13:___)
- “...It is easier for a _____ to go through the _____ of a _____, than for a _____ man to _____ into the _____ of _____.” (Matt. 19:___)
- Jesus declared, “...You _____ serve _____ and _____.” (Matt. 6:___)

Please Send Your Answers To Us

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State _____
 Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Notice: Each person who sends in answers will be recognized in the next issue of the “MM” (see page 23). Also, by random drawing, the name of one student will be selected to receive a beautiful New Study Bible. **You may be the one.** Please send your answers to:

The Question Box
P. O. Box 1578
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