

News & Notes

Sunday, August 14, 2005

Remember in Prayer: Melba Cox; Sally Etta Crawford; Lawrence Dawson; Tommy Dawson; Greg Hopper; Carolyn Jordan; Mary Sue Kidd; Deliah Mann; Howard Moody; Janet Rooker; Gabby Rutledge; Caleb Smith; Jamie Spence, father of Edna Ray; Jon Street; Austin Simpson; Ruby Street; Arthur Swanson; Chris Tatum; Calvin and Ollie Ursery; James Willbanks; Alvie and Louise Williford;

Sympathy is extended to the family of Marvin Smith.

Pantry item for the month of August is liquid soap.

The **teenagers** will be staying here at the building this afternoon to help prepare for the youth rally this coming Saturday (August 20).

The next **elder's meeting** will be today at 5:00 PM.

The **FHU Associates** will have a meeting on Monday, August 22, at 6:00 p.m. at the Ripley fellowship building. Contact Jo Martin at 662.223-5861 if you have any questions.

Sermon In Preview:

AM: The Cure for Worry (Matthew 6:25-34).

PM: The Cross Words: "Woman, Behold Your Son...Behold Your Mother"

For the Record (August 7, 2005):

Attendance: Contribution: \$.00 Budget: \$1205.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

P. O. Box 25
Ashland, MS 38603-0025
ashlandcoc@juno.com

Sunday:

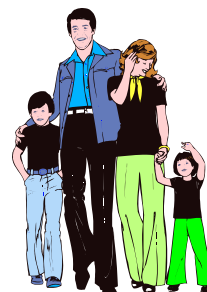
Bible Study 9:30 AM
Worship 10:30 AM
Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 PM

Shepherds:

Barney King
Junior Roberson
Carrol Street



The Ashland Announcer

*"Give to the Lord, O families of the peoples,
Give to the Lord glory and strength" (Psalm 96:7).*

Is Conversion A Miracle?

Jim O'Connor

"And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren" (Acts 15:3).

This great occasion of joy was brought about by the "conversion of the Gentiles." Such an occasion of joy should certainly be worthy of our investigation.

What Is Conversion?

Conversion is "the act of turning or changing from one state to another" (Webster). This is illustrated by those in Thessalonica who had "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (I Thessalonians 1:9). It is a change from being "without Christ" to being "in Christ" (Ephesians 2:12-13); from being lost to being saved; from engaging in the practice of sin as a lifestyle to practicing righteousness; from being in the world to being in the church.

Is Conversion a Miracle?

Is it true that a miracle occurs every time a conversion is recorded? Does the conversion process involve the



miraculous intervention of God? The answer is “no.” We certainly would not deny that something wonderful takes place at the point of conversion. Nothing could be more wonderful than forgiveness and the other blessings enjoyed at conversion. However, we do deny that a miracle takes place. The doctrine of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of sinners is Calvinistic error that denies the power of the gospel. Others who do not espouse the Calvinistic error, but still maintain that a miracle takes place at conversion, also deny the power of the gospel.

The Seed of the Kingdom

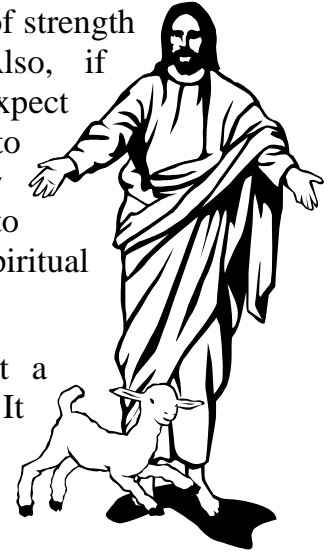
If one will “consider the lilies of the field,” and other examples from the vegetable kingdom, he will realize that the life is in the seed and that set laws of procreation are followed that produce new plants. While we do not fully understand it, we do know that a seed must first be planted before the new plant is brought forth. We also know that it is not a miracle. The same is true with the animal kingdom. The seed planted brings forth new life. The same is also true in the spiritual realm. The seed is the word of God (Luke 8:11). When the seed is planted in a good and honest heart it brings forth fruit (Luke 8:15). This truth is also pointed out very plainly in I Corinthians 4:15, James 1:18, and I Peter 1:23. Our first birth (physical) was not a miracle nor is our new (spiritual) birth (John 3:3,5). The laws of God in both realms are followed to produce the desired result. “Being born again...by the word of God” is the way the Bible explains it.

What Is Involved in Conversion?

If conversion involved a miraculous change by the hand of God we would expect to see some consistency in its fruit, yet

we know that there are varying degrees of strength and stability in new Christians. Also, if conversion was miraculous, we would expect to read something in the scriptures to prove it. Yet Jesus clearly used the law of procreation in the vegetable kingdom to illustrate the law of procreation in the spiritual kingdom (Matthew 13).

Conversion involves a power but not a miraculous power (Romans 1:16). It involves a change but not a miraculous change (Romans 6:17-18). It involves the Holy Spirit but not in a miraculous way (Ephesians 6:17). God is involved in our conversion and in our growth (Philippians 2:13) but not without means (1Thessalonians 2:13).



No, conversion is not a miracle. It is not the interruption of laws, but the following of laws which God introduced into the spiritual realm to bring about the desired effect (Romans 8:2). If you're waiting for a miracle, you're waiting for something you have no right to expect. It was not promised.

Christianity is a taught religion (John 6:45). Christians function by faith, and faith comes from hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). Every person who hears the gospel is called by the gospel (2Thessalonians 2:14). We encourage you to search the scriptures (Acts 17:11). Doing so honestly and submissively will permit the Lord to work in your life.

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16).

“And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Hebrews 5:9).