

News & Notes

Sunday, August 21, 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; Calvin and Ollie Ursery; James Willbanks; Alvie and Louise Williford;

Jon Street came forward Wednesday evening asking for forgiveness and prayers.

Pantry item for the month of August is liquid soap.

All are invited to the home of the Northrop's tonight after services for dinner and fun.

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: Dealing With Pain and Suffering.

PM: The Cross Words: "My God, My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me?"

For the Record (August 14, 2005):

Attendance: 85 Contribution: \$1421.00 Budget: \$1205.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

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

Sunday:

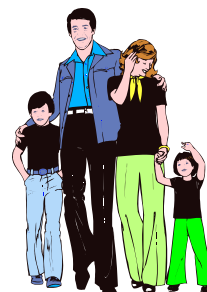
Bible Study 9:30 AM
Worship 10:30 AM
Worship 6:00 PM

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).

The Future of the Church

Jeremy Northrop

Many in the religious world today are advocating change. They say that the church of the New Testament must be changed if it is going to exist in the 21st century. The cry that change must take place is the church is to have a future. Some are binding where the scriptures do not bind while others are loosing where the scriptures do not loose. Some want to incorporate the mechanical instruments of music into the singing of the church. Others want to do away with the preaching or even replace it with some sort of drama or play. Still others are advocating there be no church at all and simply let people worship God in their own way and at time convenient for the given individual. The Christian has a responsibility to examine these new trends and make sure they are in harmony with the word of God.

In Matthew 16:13-20, the Bible says,

"When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, 'Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?' So they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My

church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.’ Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.

Among other things the text teaches the precept that the church will never die. This is what is meant by Jesus saying the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. There are a lot of implications from this statement. One is that those who are changing the New Testament church are, in essence, creating a new organization of their own. They are doing this only to their own demise. Jesus promised that His church would never die. Second, those wanting to destroy the church are involved in a futile cause. Again, Jesus promised that His church would never die.

When one considers the future of the church, one of the first observations that could be made is simply that the church has a future. Jesus promised that it would exist forever, it would never die. It may shrink. It may become small in number. One may have to travel a great distance to be a part of it. The hardships the church does and might in the future go through are great and vast. The encouraging thing is it will never cease to exist.

Another aspect of the future of the church is found in young Christians. The young Christians today are the leader of the church tomorrow. This is why the Proverb writer exclaimed, “Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). This is part of the reason the preacher said, “Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say, ‘I have no pleasure in them’” (Ecclesiastes 12:1). One of the patterns of the Bible is the fact that Christianity is a taught or learned religion. Paul exhorted Timothy to share the information that he had given him (2Timothy 2:2). Jesus instructed all Christians to teach the gospel to every person (Matthew 28:18-20). As much as one might like the idea of God miraculously giving His will to mankind through some kind of out-of-body experience, it simply is not going to happen in that way. The design of God is that men learn His will by the teaching of other men. Thus, the future of the church depends in a large way upon

the status of the church today. If the church of today is working like it should, then the church of tomorrow will not be involved in apostasy.

Finally, the true church of the future is the same organization as the church of the past. It may change in terms of the technology that it uses and the advancements of society. There are some fundamentals precepts of the church which will never change. The church will always be the blood-bought institution of Christ (1Peter 1:16-21). The church will always be a group of recovering sinners (Romans 3:23, 6:23). The church will always be a group of people who strive to worship God in an acceptable way (John 4:24). The church will always look for Bible authority for all they say and do (1Peter 4:1). The church will always be looking for way to help the poor (James 1:27). The church will always be in the primary business of saving souls (Matthew 28:18-20). As long as the church is doing these things, she will have a future. The day she stops doing these or any other biblical mandates, she ceases to be the church.

Such departure from the faith did not take long as one can see examples of it in the New Testament. In the book of Galatians, Paul deals with one such departure. He said,

“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.”

Paul was striving to press upon the Galatians the importance of remaining true to God. The same principle must be emphasized to Christians in the 21st century. Christians today must strive to remain true to God and His book and never make a departure from the faith. The risk is has eternal consequences. If some have already made such departures, then the admonition is for that person to return to the church which will save—Christ’s church.