

News & Notes

Sunday, March 27, 2005

Remember in Prayer: Sally Etta Crawford; Tommy Dawson is to have tests run on the 31st; Mary Ann Duke had tests run this past week; Mary Kidd; Deliah Mann; Howard Moody; Shirley Ortiz; Janet Rooker, sister of Tommy Dawson has been ill; Diana Shaver, sister-in-law to Shawna Northrop, has slipped discs in her back; Ruby Street; Calvin and Ollie Ursery; Sharon Walker, sister of Frank Walker, is scheduled to have surgery on the 30th; Alvie Williford.

Sympathy is extended to the families of Thelma Childers and Perrine Kimery.

The **periodic singing** at Briar Crest Extended Care is today at 4:30 PM.

The next **elders' meeting** is today at 5:00 PM.

Young Adults bowling is scheduled for April 1. Please mark your calendars and plan to participate.

Sermon In Preview:

AM: Worship: My Responsibility (Acts 7:29-31).

PM: The Consequences of Fellowship (1John 5:4-21).

For the Record (March 20, 2005):

Attendance: 78 Contribution: \$980.00 Budget: \$1205.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

P. O. Box 25
Ashland, MS 38603-0025
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Sunday:

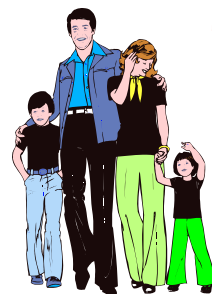
Bible Study 9:30 AM
Worship 10:30 AM
Worship 6:00 PM

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).*

"Neither Jew Nor Greek"

Jeremy Northrop

One of the more dissipating problems in this country is racism. In times past, this has of course been much worse. Some of the elderly among us can remember the time of slavery in this country. Certainly, some can remember the various civil rights issues that were dealt with in the 1960's. However, because of the history of the United States, the issue of racism is still alive and active. More than that, it is a very controversial issue. The Christian's responsibility is to look to the word of God and respond to this issue and others in a biblical way. The Bible teaches the Christian many things in the realm of the various issues that exist in this country and others.

First, the mission of the Christian is spiritual in nature. Interestingly, Christ did not focus on the social ills that existed in His life on earth. The apostles were not instructed to cure all the injustices that were present. This is not to say that Christ and the first-century church did not deal with these problems. It simply was not their primary focus. Jesus said, "...for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Jesus commanded, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20). Likewise, the disciples of the first century were commanded, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Interestingly, we never see a biblical example of a group of Christians going to a place with the primary purpose of curing social

ills. No doubt, there are numerous examples of Jesus healing the sick and crippled and this example was likewise followed by the apostles in the book of Acts (John 2:1-12; John 5:1-15; Acts 3:1-10; Acts 11:27-30;). The emphasis here is that curing social ills was not the primary or first focus of the mission efforts. It was something that was done in addition to teaching the gospel to them. The primary focus of biblical mission work is to teach the lost. It is spiritual in nature.

When one applies this principle to the issue of racism in this country, many lessons can be learned. The first—and perhaps the most important—lesson for the Christian concerning the social issue of racism is that it is not the Christian’s responsibility to directly combat racism and attempt to do away with it. One place in the biblical record where this lesson is seen is in the issue of slavery. The Bible never condemns slavery as a social injustice. In fact, God gave laws to govern slavery in Exodus 21:1-11. Paul did not condemn Philemon for owning the slave Onesimus in the New Testament letter that bear’s Philemon’s name. He pleaded with Philemon to accept Onesimus as a brother and to forgive him of the wrongs that he had done. In fact, Paul said that Onesimus was much more than a slave because he became a Christian. “For perhaps he departed for a while for this purpose, that you might receive him forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave--a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.”

Many of the social ills—like slavery—would naturally come to an end with the growth of Christianity. When the relationship of a brother in Christ is stronger than the relationship of a master and a slave, then the lesser relationship will naturally come to an end. Just imagine a male Christian owning a slave who is also a brother. The slave generally serves the master. But in this situation, the master might well have to serve the slave communion on the Lord’s day. The relationship of the master and slave would give way to brotherhood.

The thrust of Christianity is not to directly and primarily deal with social ills. However, the social ills would come to an end as Christianity grows. Hunger should not be a problem in the church of God. There should be no homeless people in the church of Christ. The first century church shared all things and had all things in common. There were no injustices in the church of the New Testament (Acts 4:32-37).

Racism is not a biblical concept. Paul said, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). However, it should not be the Christian’s primary goal to attempt to

do away with all the racism that exists in the world. Racism should naturally come to an end with the growth of Christianity. Christians need to make it their own individual goal to reach and convert the lost. This is the best thing they can do for others.

“Hats Off To The Rattlesnakes”

Leroy Brownlow

Once upon a time there was a family of wayward members of the church who had lost interest and fallen away. There was a father, and three sons, Jim and John, and Sam. The elders had talked with them about their lost condition. The preacher had done everything within reason that he could think of to lead them to repentance. Many of the brethren had tried to encourage them but nothing seemed to help in the least. One day when the boys were out in the pasture, a large rattlesnake bit John, and he became very ill. The physician was called and after an examination, he pronounced that John was in very critical condition. Said he, “About the only thing left now is prayer. You had better call the elders and your preacher at once.” Acting upon this advice, the old man called the preacher, and in tears told him of John’s condition and urged him to gather the elders and come to John’s bedside as soon as possible. The preacher arrived in due time, and was asked to lead the prayer for John’s recovery. This is what he prayed:

“Oh wise and righteous Father, we thank Thee that Thou in Thy wisdom sent this rattlesnake to bite John in order to bring him to his senses. He has not been inside the church house for years, and it is very doubtful that he has in all this time felt any need of prayer until now. Now we trust that this will lead him to genuine repentance. And now, our Father, wilt Thou send another to bite Sam, and another to bite Jim, and another BIG ONE to bite the old man? We have all been doing everything we knew for years to restore them but to no avail. It seems, therefore, that what all combined efforts would not do, this rattlesnake has done. We thus conclude that the only thing left that will do this family any good is rattlesnakes. So Lord, send us bigger and better rattlesnakes. In the name of Jesus, Amen”