

## News & Notes

**Sunday, December 3, 2006**

**Remember in Prayer:** Alton Lee Alberson; Daryl Alberson; Sandra Albertson; Tommy Alberson; Jerry Bennett; Vikie Cobb; Tyler Curtis; Diane Cox; Sally Etta Crawford; Ashley Davis; Linda Hopkins; Zach Hopkins; Carolyn Jordan; Francis Joyner; Bill Kelly; Dot Ketchum; John and Deliah Mann; Helen Miller; Diane Mize; Barbara Morgan; Shelby Rowland; Bill Taylor; Calvin Ursery; Roger Winstead;

**Sympathy** is extended to the families of Johnny Akins and Willie James Hampton.

**Pantry item** for the month of December is 40 and 60 watt light bulbs.

The **periodic singing** at Briarcrest Extended Care will be this afternoon at 4:15 PM.

There will be a **men's breakfast** Saturday, December 9 at 9:00 AM at the South Ashland dining hall.

### **Sermon In Preview: Pressing Toward the Upward Call of God:**

AM: 10 Ways to Press Toward the Upward Call of God  
PM: Where Do We Go From Here?

### **For the Record (November 26, 2006):**

Attendance: 61    Contribution: \$993.00    Budget: \$1352.00

### ***The Ashland Church of Christ***

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

[www.ashlandcoc.org](http://www.ashlandcoc.org)

[acoc@ashlandcoc.org](mailto:acoc@ashlandcoc.org)

#### **Sunday:**

Bible Study 9:30 AM  
Worship 10:30 AM  
Worship 5:00 PM

#### **Wednesday:**

Bible Study 7:00 PM

#### **Shepherds:**

Barney King  
Carrol Street



# ASHLAND ANNOUNCER

**"I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14)**

Pressing Toward the Upward Call of God

## **What Now? — Application**

Jeremy Northrop

It is hard to believe the last month of the year is upon us. 2006 is just about to come to close. Thus, this is the last time that we will be discussing our theme for the year — pressing toward the upward call of God — taken from Philippians 3:14. It has been a good year and a good theme to have for the congregation here. However, any lesson learned is only as good as the application of the lesson. Hence, today we will be studying how to apply the lessons we have learned this year. Consider some of the highlights of our year together.

Way back in January (I know I have slept too many times since then), we began this theme with some introductory lessons. We discussed what pressing toward the upward call of God is, why we should do it, and finally, we put in place a plan that will help us accomplish the goal. The plan consisted of three phases: reaching in, reaching up, and reaching out.

In February, we began the first stage of our goal to press toward the upward call of God. This was the stage of **reaching in** or introspection. We began by studying the topic of humility wherein we discussed such passages as the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, Jesus command to become as little children, and 1Peter 5:6 which reads, "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."

Next, we discussed the idea of acceptance. One must first be humble and then one must accept God's will. People often have a hard time accepting the fact that God can really forgive them and, often times, people ask why wanting to completely understand

God. The goal for any Christian needs to be to simply accept what God says and obey it because He said it.

This led our study to the bigger picture or the topic or concept of being spiritual. Martha was noted for not being spiritual and Mary was spiritual (Luke 10:38-42). Many are guilty of doing things that might have the appearance of being spiritual or may seem spiritual but in actuality they are not. Noticing the big picture helps one to see things that are really important.

Next, in May we began the second phase of our study together — **reaching up**. This study began by an examination of the Bible. Many people believe the Bible but are hard-pressed to explain how or why they know it is the article it claims to be. Only then can one be dedicated to the word of God.

This study then led to the topic of allegiance. Once a person has a degree of allegiance to the Bible, he or she can have allegiance to God and His will. The Bible teaches that one is either on God's side or the person is against God (Matthew 12:30). If one does not have allegiance to God, then the person has allegiance to the world. One must walk in the light or he or she is walking in darkness (1John 1:7).

Then, we studied what it means to obey God. This included a greater understanding of what Jesus meant when He said "not my will, but yours, be done" (Luke 22:42). When one obeys God by doing what He said to do, then one learns that God makes rules in order for our lives to be better. They are not because God wants us to have miserable lives. He creates rules so we can have great lives. Thus, all one needs to do is trust and obey.

After one has dedication to the Bible, allegiance to God, and obeys God regardless of the consequences, then one can grow spiritually. Our faith is either growing or it is dying. The Hebrews were a group of people who were not growing like they should have been (Hebrews 5:12-6:2). One must be better tomorrow than he or she is today by growing in God. God will accept you right where you are but He does not want you to stay there.

Finally, our study brought us to the topic of **reaching out**. This included the purpose of the church or the fellowship that we can have with one another. In the first century, the church had all things in common (Acts 4:32). Today, the church needs to have the same kind of dedication. Individuals in the church need to have the

same kind of commitment to one another and make sure that the basic needs of others are being met. God's plan for fellowship is that we can find strength in our common goal together (1Corinthians 1:9). Also there are lines or barriers of fellowship that must be drawn (Ephesians 5:11). The church has a responsibility to acknowledge those who have chosen to break fellowship.

Then, the church has a responsibility to the world and specifically to those who are less fortunate. The church needs to help the poor. Some have called this benevolence. The church has a responsibility to provide benevolence for people that are unable to fulfill their own needs. This is the responsibility that the church has to the physical needs of man. However, as you well know, the church must not provide for the physical needs of man only.

Also, the church has a responsibility to help the spiritual needs of mankind or evangelism. Jesus said,

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).

No doubt, the greatest help one can provide for another is spiritual deliverance. Jesus demands it and we must not fail the Lord who sends us or the world who needs us.

Now comes the hard part. Studying and learning about something is relatively easy. Putting what you know into practice is the difficult part. James said, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22). Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). Knowledge of what it is to press toward the upward call of God is of little value unless one actually presses toward it. Where do we go from here? Each one of us needs to strive to press toward the upward call of God throughout our entire lives.

"I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).