

News & Notes

Sunday, October 1, 2006

Remember in Prayer: Sandra Alberson; Michelle Allen; Vikie Cobb; Diane Cox; Sally Etta Crawford; Tommy Dawson; Marylyn Hubbard; Carolyn Jordan; Bill Kelly; Dot Ketchum; Sam Kidd; John and Deliah Mann; Helen Miller; Diane Mize; Baily Presitge; Lillie Mae Shelby; Chris Spence; Calvin Ursery; Fredrick Walker; Alvie Williford;

Sympathy is extended to the family of Charles West.

Pantry item for the month of October is juices.

Ashland events: October 8-11: Joint-Gospel Meeting; October 21: Hayride at Daisy Roberson's.

Area events: October 1-5: Gospel meeting at the Theo church of Christ with W. E. Hamblen; October 7: Ladies day at Chapman with Cynthia Guy. October 13-14: North Mississippi Ladies Retreat at Tishomingo State Park.

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

AM: Benevolence

PM: What Does Benevolence Accomplish?

For the Record (September 24, 2005):

Attendance: 69 Contribution: \$1411.00 Budget: \$1352.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

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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

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

May We Help You? — Servitude

Jeremy Northrop

Once again, the first Sunday of the month is upon us and we turn our attention to our theme for the year — pressing toward the upward call of God — taken from Philippians 3:14. In this article, we will again briefly review what we have studied so far this year, discuss what we will spend today studying, and then bring this article to a close by looking at what we have planned in the remaining two months of the year.

Way back in January (do you remember that far back or have you slept too many times since then?), we began our study of the upward call with some introductory lessons of what, why, and how we intend to spend 2006 pressing toward the upward call. In February, we turned our attention to the concept of 'reaching in.' Over the course of February, March, and April we examined the idea of 'reaching in' by discussing such things as humility, acceptance, and spirituality. That brought way to the second phase of our study — 'reaching up.' During this phase, we examined in more detail what God wants from His children, how God communicates with people, and obeying what God said no matter the consequences. During, May, June, July, and August, we studied such things as dedication, allegiance, obedience, and growth. Finally, last month we began the third and final phase of our theme for 2006 — 'reaching out.' We began this phase by examining the topic of fellowship or the edification of the saints. There are limits to the fellowship that God wants us to have and a plan as to how we are to have fellowship.

This brings us up to this month — October — where we will turn our attention to the concept of servitude. The life of the Christian can be divided into two areas — worship and service. The second phase of our study — reaching up — was really dedicated to the concept of worship and pleasing God. The third phase of our study will be on the other part of the life of a Christian — servitude. We have already discussed edification. Today, we will discuss benevolence. In our Bible class lesson this morning, we will start with the broad topic of what the church's responsibility to the world and then narrow it down to one specific responsibility, that of benevolence. Our sermon this morning will discuss the biblical authority and purpose of benevolence and then tonight, we will look at the consequences of benevolence by discussing the question: What does benevolence do?

In Ephesians 4:11-13, the Bible says,

“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;”

From this passage, one can see the work of the church divided into three areas: First, the equipping of the saints which would be edification. Then, the work of the ministry is benevolence. Finally, the edifying or building up of the body of Christ or evangelism. One more purpose or work of the church would be the worship of God which is regulated in John 4:24. One might also consider James 5:16 where we can learn that the only people who can worship God acceptably are Christians, thus showing it to be a purpose of the church. That is another lesson for another day. Today we notice that one or purpose of the church is benevolence.

What is benevolence? What does benevolence do? Who would be included in benevolence? Why should the church practice benevolence? Consider some other scriptures which will help us to answer these questions.

One person said that benevolence is simply helping the poor and less fortunate. James 1:27 says, “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in

their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” In Acts 5:15, the Bible tells us people brings those sick and in need to the apostles for healing. Peter did not reject them but in verse 16 it says that all were healed. Benevolence shows the world that the church cares. The cliché is true: they will not care about how much we know until they know how much we care.

Another passage worthy of consideration is Acts 6 where the widows were being neglected in the daily distribution (6:1). The apostles asked for other men to look to this matter to see that their needs were being met. It is noteworthy that these widows were apparently part of the church. Thus, it is the church's responsibility to help those in need in the church. Another example of this would be 1 Timothy 5 where Paul says, “Honor widows who are really widows” (5:3). He goes on to discuss some prerequisites to helping the widows of the congregation but in the end makes it clear that using church funds to help these women in need is certainly God's plan.

From these passages, one might conclude that the work of benevolence is to be for the saints only. However, another passage needs to be taken into consideration before we make that conclusion. In Galatians 6:10, the apostle Paul said, “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” To whom are we to do good? All men. Not just those of the household of faith but to ALL men, especially to those who are of the household of faith. All would include those who are of the household of faith and those who are not. This passage also teaches us when we are to do good to all and that is ‘as we have opportunity.’ It is not when it is convenient or easy but when we have the opportunity.

In November, we will look at another work of the church — evangelism. Then, in December, we will bring all of this work to a close with some concluding lessons that will deal with the application of our theme for the year. It is amazing just how quickly the year is going by but one will readily recognize that knowing all of this information is of little value. One must also use the information. All that that is in the months to come. So, before we get too far ahead of ourselves, let's sit back and enjoy the day as we learn more about the work of the church and her responsibility to the world.