

News & Notes

Sunday, June 3, 2007

Remember in Prayer: Daryl Alberson; Mary Alberson; Steve Alberson; Emma Bennett; Vikie Cobb; Diane Cox; Melba Cox; Sally Etta Crawford; Gwynn Curtis; Janie Hurt; Robert Joshlry; Dot Ketchum; James Luna; John and Deliah Mann; Diane Mize; Shirley Ortiz; Chris Spence; Jamie Spence; Ruby Tapp; Ron Tega; Wayne Tapp; Calvin Ursery; Nancy Griffin Wamack; Alvie Williford;

Pantry item for the month of June is frosting.

Annette Street and Daisy Johnson are **collecting funds for the food** for our Vacation Bible School. If you would like to make a donation, please see one of them.

Ashland events: Beginning today: Vacation Bible School.

Area events: June 10-13: Vacation Bible School at the Beech Hill church of Christ; July 15-18: Vacation Bible School at Chapman church of Christ.

Sermon in Preview: Spreading the Good News:

AM: The Purpose of the Church (Ephesians 4:9-16)

PM: Vacation Bible School

For the Record (May 27, 2007):

Attendance: 81 Contribution: \$1311.00 Budget: \$1326.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

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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

spreading the Good News
Ashland Announcer

"GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS..." (MATTHEW 28:19)

Spreading the Good News Do I Understand Church? — Purpose

Jeremy Northrop

There is such a vast difference of opinion today about what church is and what the church should be doing. Many people fall prey to the pluralistic society in which we live and simply say that whatever people want to believe for themselves is just fine. In essence, there are no right and wrong answers to any questions in religion. This kind of thinking ultimately leads one to a scary conclusion. When there is no right and wrong, then there is no reason to practice evangelism. When there is no reason to practice evangelism, then the church does not grow.

Of course, we do not believe that evangelism is unnecessary. In fact, we believe that it is commanded. Matthew 28:18-20, our theme text for the year, says it so plainly:

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘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.’ Amen.”

It is hard to believe, but the first Sunday of the month is upon us again and we will devote our day (just half our day this time as tonight we will begin our Vacation Bible School) to the study of evangelism.

Today, we will conclude the first phase of our study this year which is *preparing for evangelism*. Before we can teach anyone

else what they need to do in terms of salvation, we must make sure that we are saved ourselves and that we really believe what we claim to believe. Thus, after our introductory lessons in January (I know that too far back for a lot of us), we began to study evidences which prove the existence of God, the authority of the Bible, the salvation of mankind, and the subject of personal commitment. Today, we want to finish up our study by spending some time talking about the church. What makes the New Testament church better than any other religious organization? Why do we choose to be members of the church of Christ? Is Christ's church really that important in terms of evangelism? These and hopefully some other questions about the church will be answered in our study today.

This morning in our Bible class hour, we will see if we can answer the question: *Am I an Encouragement to Others?* It could be the case that people think they are an encouragement when they are not. For example, if a person spends a large part of their time talking bad about the church (complaining about the elders and other people who are members of the church, always willing to offer suggestions but never willing to carry them out, and so on), that person is not an encouragement to the church nor a benefit to God. Jesus explained to Peter and to us by inspiration that He would build His church (Matthew 16:13-19). Further, inspiration tells us that the torture of Christ and the establishment of His church are connected (Acts 20:28, Ephesians 5:25). Anyone who talks trash about the church really does not appreciate the sacrifice of Christ.

The Bible further teaches us that the salvation of man is joined or linked with the church (Acts 2:47). Being called out of the world is synonymous with being in Christ or a member of His church (Colossians 1:13, Titus 2:11). Receiving all spiritual blessings means being in the church (Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 1:3). When all of this is connected to the church, then it is very obvious that the church is important to God. Further, anytime someone wants to minimize any of these things (the death of Christ, salvation, being out of the world, and spiritual blessings), that person is minimizing the church of Christ or the church which belongs to Christ. As we will see this morning in our Bible class, anytime someone minimizes the church, he is not an encouragement to the members of the church. Paul said that one of

the purposes of the church is to building one another up (Ephesians 4:9-12). We need to be people who are an encouragement to other members of the church and we need to place the same high regard for the church that God does.

There are so many people who are confused about what the purpose of the church is. These people want to make it about themselves. This is indicated by such statements like: "Well, I just don't get anything out of that church" or "That church will not help my kids, I need a place that will be beneficial to my kids." These statements and others like them indicate the wrong focus. Consider (as we will this morning in our sermon) what Paul says about the purpose of the church:

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 (Ephesians 4:11-13).

This passage teaches three purposes or works of the church. Paul explains that Jesus gave different roles to different men "for the equipping of the saints" or edification. Then, He gave them for "the work of the ministry" or benevolence. Finally, He did it for "the edifying of the body of Christ" or evangelism. In the same book, Paul talks about the church being the only group who can acceptably worship God (Ephesians 5:18-21, see also Acts 2:42 and James 5:19). Since the purpose of the church includes evangelism, edification, benevolence, and worship, then it is obvious that the church should be esteemed highly.

As we mentioned last time, next month will kick off our second phase of the study for the year — *practicing evangelism*. For our July gospel meeting this year, brother Don Underwood will be coming to host an evangelism seminar for us. We look forward to learning more about evangelism and what we can each do to further the cause of Christ.

But, let's not jump too far ahead. Today, let's sit back and enjoy the day as we learn more about the importance of Christ's church and what it is here for.