

News & Notes

Sunday, October 14, 2007

Remember in Prayer: Daryl Alberson; Steve Alberson; Tommy Alberson; Mike Carter; Vikie Cobb; Melba Cox; Charles Johnson; Aubrey Huey; Lettie Mae Hunt; Dot Ketchum; Sherry Lawrence; James Luna; John and Deliah Mann; Sue Moody; Diane Mize; Forrest Phelps; Ann Ray; Katherine Shaw; Ruby Tapp; Rural Tapp; Ron Tega; Calvin Ursery; Alvie Williford;

Pantry item for the month of October is ranch dressing.

If you would like a **set of the CDs** from our joint gospel meeting, please see Jeff Roberson.

Ashland Events: Today: Pot-luck meal after morning service, Singing at 1:30 PM, early afternoon service at 2:00 PM; There will be no 5:00 PM service today.

Area events: October 21-26: Gospel meeting at the Grand Junction church of Christ in Grand Junction, Tennessee;

Sermon in Preview: Bennie Braswell

AM: The Role of the Members of the Church

PM: Unity of the Brethren in Today's Changing Society

For the Record (October 7, 2007):

Attendance: Contribution: \$.00 Budget: \$1326.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

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Ashland, MS 38603-0025

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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)

WE WELCOME

TO OUR ASSEMBLY

ANY VISITORS AND

BENNIE BRASWELL

WHO WILL BE SPEAKING FOR OUR

JOINT GOSPEL MEETING

WE INVITE ALL TO STAY FOR THE MEAL
FOLLOWING OUR MORNING SERVICE

Unity and the Work of the Church

Jeremy Northrop

In John 17:6-18, Jesus prayed,

I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

There is no doubt that the religious division which exists in the world today is not the will of God. Denominationalism, racism, sexism and other things which cause the religious world to be di-

vided is not what God desires. While the focus of this prayer in John 17 is on doctrine, there are several passages which show that division leads to failure.

For example, in 1Corinthians 1, Paul notices the division which existed in the church in Corinth. Some were following Paul, others Peter, and still others Christ. Paul noted clearly that such division should not exist in the church and noticed the solution for such failure is to focus on Christ alone (see 1Corinthians 1:10). Paul also said, “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them” (Romans 16:17). The solution to division is the doctrine or teaching of Christ. This is why Paul urged Timothy to “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching [‘doctrine’ – KJV]” (2Timothy 4:2). When people all come to understand the teaching of Christ, they will have unity in Christ and thus unity with each other.

One of the greatest benefits of true biblical unity is that the work of the church can be accomplished. In Ephesians 4, Paul spoke of the different roles of individuals in God’s kingdom and that the different roles exist so that the work of the church can continue. He explains the work of the church in three phrases: first, “the equipping of the saints” or edification; second, “for the work of the ministry” or benevolence; and third, “for the edifying of the body of Christ” or evangelism. All of these things can be accomplished in a great and successful way when God’s people have unity and are doing what God wants them to do. This work that Paul has outlined can be accomplished in a great way only when true unity exists among the people of God.

Today, many are mistaking the work of the church for entertainment, a venue for family activities, and many other things which do not accomplish evangelism, edification, or benevolence in a direct way. The church needs to return to the doctrine of God and thereby return to her work that God has set out.

Unfortunately, current times are inundated with compromise, so-called unity movements, and other aspects of liberalism. There just does not seem to be any room for truth. Yet, it is only truth that will bring about true unity — the unity for which Jesus prayed in John 17.