

News & Notes

Sunday, December 28, 2008

Remember in Prayer: Daryl Alberson; David Anderson; Arland Anderson; Mary Bailey; Mary Childers; J.C. Enlow; Lettie Mae Hunt; Dot Ketchum; John and Deliah Mann; Diane Mize; Wayne Orman; Ann Ray; Brandon Ray; Austin Robinson; Katherine Shaw; Gary Spence; Jamie Spence; Calvin Ursery; Joan Wilkerson; Alvie Williford;

Sympathy is extended to the family of Bobby Byrd.

Pantry item for the month of December is trash bags.

The newest edition of **House to House/Heart to Heart** has been mail out to the community. For those not on the mailing list, copies are available in the foyer.

Ashland Events: Today: Elder's meeting at 4:00 PM; Wednesday (the 31st): New Year's Eve get-together after Bible study;

Sermon in Preview:

AM: Guest Speaker: Rodney Hilliard

PM: Last-Sunday-of-the-month Singing

For the Record (December 21, 2008):

Attendance: 89 Contribution: \$1833.00 Budget: \$1452.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

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Ashland, MS 38603-0025
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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
Jeff Roberson
Carrol Street

Romans 11:33

ASHLAND ANNOUNCER

Increasing in the Knowledge of God



Growth versus Gospel

Dan Winkler

As God's people, we find ourselves in competition with the world and denominational circles. The conflict is serious for the salvation of souls and the expansion of our spiritual kingdom are at stake. We want to succeed! But should we succeed at any cost?

A subtle danger faces us, which might be called the "growth syndrome." Without care, "Will it help us grow?" will become the criterion by which we measure success and the standard by which we live.

With a pen of balance and a heart of loving concern, might we suggest some terrifying consequences of this danger?

First, if growth is our main emphasis, we could be encouraged to shift our "mission." Jesus said, "*Go into all the world, and preach the gospel*" (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19). As a church, we exist to walk in the steps of Jesus who "*came to seek and save that which was lost*" (Luke 19:10). Without care, our mission can subtly shift from "*going into all the world,*" to "*growing before the eyes of the world.*" God forbid!

Second, if growth is our main emphasis, we could be

encouraged to weaken our “message.” Again, Jesus said, “*Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel*” (Mark 16:15). As a church, we exist to “*preach the word*” (2Timothy 4:2-4). Without care, our message can become slanted, weakened, or even compromised out of a desire to be less offensive/controversial and more appealing to the masses for which we compete God forbid!

Third, if growth is our main emphasis, we could be encouraged to pursue an improper “metamorphosis.” Christians are to be “*transformed* [literally undergo a spiritual metamorphosis] *into the same image*” of Jesus (2Corinthians 3:18). As a church, our goal is to think and feel the way Jesus thought and felt (Philippians 2:5), as we attempt to follow His example (1Peter 2:21). Without care, we can subtly become more interested in “our image” than we are in “*the image of Jesus.*” God forbid!

Fourth, if growth is our main emphasis, we could be encouraged to weaken our “missionary” thrust.” We are to “*go...make disciples of all nations*” (Matthew 28:19). In Paul’s day, the gospel “*was preached in all creation under heaven*” (Colossians 1:23). Can we say the same? Without care, we can easily become imbalanced, pressing for a strong home base with numbers funning over to the neglect of souls elsewhere who are starving for the good news of Jesus. God forbid, for both are important!

May our hearts pulsate with a desire for the church to do well! At the same time, may we press forward to a greater future, refusing to compromise our mission, our message, nor our God-given quest to be like Jesus and share Him with others! After all, spiritual growth is the secret to church growth. “*So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily*” (Acts 16:5).

“I Told Her Not To Tell You I Told Her”

Dalton Key

Under the curious heading, “Have Tale — Will Tattle,” I found the following imaginary (?) exchange: One woman charges, “She told me you told her what I told you not to tell her.” To which her friend replies, “Why that mean thing! I told her not to tell you I told her!” The first woman pleads, “Well, I promised her that I would not tell you she told me, so don’t tell her I told you!”

Sound familiar? Though a convoluted conversation like this may hint at humor, a more serious and deadly problem lurks beneath the surface. As you read the few words on this page, families are being divided, friendships are being destroyed, brethren are being alienated; and all because of nothing more than wagging, too-busy tongues.

Solomon wisely observed, “Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; And where there is no talebearer, strife ceases” (Proverbs 26:20).

Gossiping talebearers are the emotional vultures of the human race. They pass over all that is good and positive and true in their insatiable hunger for the putrid. They revel in the wrongs of others, whether real or imagined. Though Christ-like love “thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth” (1Corinthians 13:5-6), these prating parasites do just the opposite.

Let’s resolve neither to join their number nor lend an eager ear to their gossip.