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NEWSLETTER FROM MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING
Under the Oversight of the ELDERS
FOREST HILL CHURCH OF CHRIST
Bobby Liddell, Editor

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YOKEFELLOW

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FIVE YEARS AFTER KATRINA

Mark Lance

The Gulf Coast was severely ravaged by hurricane Katrina on August 29, 2005. While most of the attention from the news media focused on the city of New Orleans, St. Bernard Parish, which is thirty minutes away, took the brunt of the storm. Virtually every house and business was destroyed. It appeared at first that Katrina had passed without an extreme amount of damage, but the levees soon gave way, and the entire area was under water. Things people had worked for all their lives were suddenly taken away. Those from the community, including members from the Chalmette church of Christ, were scattered all over the country. In such a short period of time, life had been changed so drastically. It has been five years since what everyone around here just calls “The Storm,” but with the help and care of a loving God we have made a lot of progress.

With thousands of Christian volunteers from around the country, we were able to dig out our houses and what remained of the old church building. Since there were so many that came to offer assistance, we were also able to help many families gut their houses and make needed repairs. This also provided the opportunity to pray and teach others about Jesus Christ. It makes you think of the apostle Paul’s words to the churches at Galatia: “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10).

On November 20, 2005 the congregation met in a makeshift room that had been cleaned out and covered in blue tarp, to be forever more known as the “Blue Room.” **The Lord’s church was the first religious group to begin meeting in St. Bernard Parish since Katrina hit.** We first met only on Sunday morning, because there was a curfew after dark. It is difficult for most to imagine how much devastation there really is with a storm of this magnitude, but with God’s help, the rebuilding of the church building and members’ houses was moving forward. Building materials were hard to come by for a long time since all the stores had been destroyed as well. Finding skilled builders was an even greater challenge, with so many in the process of rebuilding at the same time. I am very thankful to say we are meeting in a new and larger building than before. God has blessed us so much that the building is completely paid off.

We went through a period of time when it looked like there was no way things would ever be better, but we learned what really matters in life. It is not the material things in life that are the most important, but it is the spiritual blessings that are found only in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3). This world was never meant to last for ever: “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Pet. 3:10). The Chalmette congregation is blessed once again to be supporting good works that are spreading the gospel around the world. The brethren here are involved in radio and TV work, as well as supporting preaching students. We are helping to support missionaries in other parts of the world.

We have seen an enormous amount of change take place in these last five years. Some that lived and worshiped here have moved away. We miss them dearly, but we look forward to the day when we can all gather around God’s throne and worship Him together never to have to part again. We have fifty-five to sixty-five meeting on a regular basis—not as many as we had before the hurricane, but getting close. We have had the privilege to watch twenty-nine souls be baptized into Christ, and many others that have asked for the prayers of the church. We have had different congregations come and help us conduct Vacation Bible School each summer, as well as go out into the community and knock on thousands of doors and hand out literature about the church of Christ.

The community still has a long way to go in its recovery. There are a lot of empty houses and a lot of houses that have been torn down, but with the help of our Father in Heaven, we will continue to spread the word of the Lord in our neighborhood and around the world. I pray “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen” (1 The. 5:28).

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Jadon Davis Memorial Scholarship

Joey Davis

On January 8, 2009 our son Jadon was born into this world. We were already aware of his having a life threatening heart condition that would require immediate surgery. The outlook was hopeful and promising. Unfortunately, due to complications, Jadon died on February 7, 2009 having never left the hospital. His life was so short, yet the impact of those few days on our family and friends was overwhelming. In fact, this whole ordeal has been such that Jadon's cardiologist has asked us to select a college of our choosing where a scholarship could be initiated in Jadon's honor. Others, ourselves included, are interested in contributing to it as well. We are excited to select MSOP as the school for this memorial.

We anticipate that this scholarship will, at least at the outset, provide \$300.00 per month in financial support to one student or family enrolled in MSOP. Those who contribute to this memorial scholarship should earmark donations "Jadon Davis Scholarship," and send them directly to the school.

Potential recipients will be considered for this scholarship based on the following criteria, of which the candidate must meet only one:

1. A student himself or one who has a child with a diagnosed heart condition
2. A student himself or one who has a child with a diagnosed medical disability of any nature
3. A student who has served in the United States Military
4. A student who is married with children

These criteria are meaningful to us and we have asked that the awarding of this scholarship be reviewed on an annual basis (coinciding with the regular enrollment period) and that it be awarded or reassigned based on the aforementioned criteria which are prioritized numerically with one (1) being the top qualifying criteria.

We love the Memphis School of Preaching and had high hopes that our son would one day desire to be trained there to preach the Gospel. We painfully realize how the uncertainty of life affects our earthly hopes. However, our son's short life was still a very influential one and we desire, to the best of our ability, to continue that positive influence. We hope to accomplish that through the Jadon Davis Memorial Scholarship.

Editor's Note: Joey and Pamela Davis are a great and godly couple, and we are honored indeed that they would establish such a scholarship in memory of their son. We trust there are many who will want to join with them, in this way, to remember Jadon, with a lasting memorial.

AN AMAZING MAN, AN URGENT APPEAL!

Garland Elkins

Brother Bob Spurlin is a veteran gospel preacher, faithful and able. He has preached the gospel of Christ for many years, when he was healthy, and also since he has become ill. Fifteen years ago, he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, and four days later, Bethany, brother and sister Spurlin's precious sixteen-year-old daughter, died in an automobile accident. In spite of all they have suffered, both Bob and Beverly have been faithful to God. Their medical expenses are tremendous. Bob is unable to make phone calls, or write books as he has done in the past. Now, he must have twenty-four-hour care. This increases their already great expenses.

I have known, loved, and respected Bob and Beverly Spurlin for many years. In my view, both are heroes. In spite of serious health problems, Bob has continued to preach the gospel and write, and his work has been superb. It is both encouraging and amazing just how well Beverly has fulfilled her role. Brethren, I encourage you to send a contribution to the Spurlins to help defray his medical expenses. The church at Stanton, Tennessee has sent money to help with his medical expenses in the past, but we have sent another \$1,000.00.

Won't you also as a congregation, or as an individual, send a contribution to help this truly worthy Christian family? Send your generous help to: Bob Spurlin, 2101 Glenwood Drive SW, Hartselle, AL 35640.

After writing the above, I learned from brother Spurlin that a small congregation in Georgia has decided to defray the expenses for one week of his special care, which is \$500.00 per week! Are there three other congregations, each willing to be responsible for one week of the month for the cost (\$500.00 per week) for brother Spurlin? We pray that generous brethren will respond to this need.

FALSE PROPHETS OF "THE LAST DAYS" (II)

Bobby Liddell

Setting Dates For "The Rapture"

In the last issue, we looked at statements of false teachers who set dates for Christ's return. This month, we shall consider specific cases of those who set dates for the "Rapture" (there is no "Rapture" in Scripture). In 1988, I moved to Pensacola, Florida. Shortly after arriving, I learned Joe Civelli, of Pensacola, had written a booklet stating the Rapture would take place in September 1988. I called Mr. Civelli to inquire of his reasons for believing so. He eagerly explained how he had mathematically

calculated Bible prophecies and dates to arrive at his conclusion. He was confident he was NOT wrong.

When I quoted Jesus, concerning His return: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Mat. 24:36), he replied, "We can't know the day or the hour, but it doesn't say we can't know the month and the year." So, in keeping with his view, he knew the month to be September, and the year to be 1988. He was wrong.

At about the same time of Mr. Civelli's writing, Edgar Whisenant wrote "88 Reasons Why The Rapture Will Be In 1988," which was printed with another booklet, "On Borrowed Time." Concerning Matthew 24:36, Whisenant wrote:

Man can know every event of the end-time to the very second except for the day and hour of the Rapture. That is the only mystery in the whole thing. Isn't that just like God. He said day and hour. He didn't say week, month and year (On Borrowed Time, p. 20).

Mr. Whisenant stated, God uses the dates of the last three Feasts of Israel in the years 1988 through 1997 to begin and end the counts of days given in the Old and New Testament books of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation. The lunar dates of the last three Feasts of Israel, which begins and ends the counts of days given in Ezekiel, Daniel and Revelation will only fit 1988 through 1995. At no other time in history or the future will these Bible counts fit. This is unfakeable and undeniable proof that the 70th week of Daniel, called the Seven-Year Tribulation, starts in 1988 (On Borrowed Time, pp. 6-7).

He figured the Rapture would take place between September 11-13, 1988, Armageddon would start on October 4, 1995, and the supposed earthly, millennial reign of Jesus would begin on December 23, 1995. And, of course, according to him, eternity begins on Tuesday, January 1, 3000! He was wrong.

Notice, according to Mr. Whisenant, there is "no other time in history or the future," other than 1988 through 1995, when these "Bible counts fit." Since Mr. Whisenant knows this to be the case, and Christ did not come between 1988 and 1995, then the conclusion, from the above, must be that Christ is never coming back! (cf. John 14:1-4). After his 1988 prediction failed, he came out with a subsequent book, "89 Reasons Why The Rapture Is In 1989." He missed it, again.

Mr. Whisenant, as do other end time prognosticators, misuses Daniel's seventy weeks to try to prove his case. He wrote, "...from the Day of Atonement 1988 to the Day of Atonement 1995 is the Seven-Year Tribulation called the 70th week of Daniel" (88 Reasons, p. 17). (In the next issue, we will plan to consider Daniel's seventy weeks.)

Alumni Chapter Update

Mike McDaniel

As Alumni Liaison, recently I have been working to organize chapters in Alabama and the Florida Panhandle. We are excited to report four new chapters that will give assistance to the large number of alumni within this area. Here is the current list of alumni chapters and their respective coordinators.

1. Northwest Tennessee - Larry Powers (1988)
2. Northern Georgia - Lee Davis (1985)
3. Southwest Arkansas/Northeast Texas - David Williams (1999)
4. East Virginia/Delaware - Gerald Reynolds (1973)
5. Western Virginia/Eastern West Virginia - Eddy Gilpin (1985)
6. Central Arkansas - Greg Balentine (2000)
7. Southern Louisiana - Mark Lance (1998)
(See meeting announcement below.)
8. Southeast Texas - Jamie Beller (2003)
9. North Central Texas - Todd Crayton (2004)
10. North Alabama - Stanley Ryan (1979)
11. Central Alabama - Ronnie Hayes (1978)
12. Lower Alabama - Terry Claunch (1984)
13. Florida Panhandle/ Alabama Gulf Coast - Preston Silcox (1995)

If you are an alumnus living in one of these areas, you should expect to hear from your coordinator in the near future as to the time and place for your first meeting. It is our prayer that these chapter meetings will edify and encourage our alumni.

It has been a delight to speak with our alumni in the field, to learn of the health of their families, and to hear of their steadfast efforts for the Lord. It is such an encouragement to the faculty of the Memphis School of Preaching to hear of the great work in which alumni are engaged. "Ye are our glory and joy" (1 The. 2:13).

One great brother, who graduated from the Third Year program, emailed that he prayed for the faculty of the School every day. We appreciate that more than words can express. "Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving; withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ" (Col. 4:2-3). "But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing...Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all" (2 The. 3:13, 16).

Just in from Mark Lance: "The Southern Louisiana chapter will meet October 19, at 11 A.M., at the Chalmette building, followed by lunch at Cafe Roma. Hopefully we will have 100% participation. Thanks for giving me the opportunity to serve in this capacity."