

WATCH OUT FOR CHILDREN

Children held a special place in the heart of Jesus. One one occasion, He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3-4). On another occasion, he said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:14). There are special qualities in children that God seeks in those who would follow Him (i.e., humility, trust, etc.). A person who would take advantage of children at their expense brings harsh judgment upon himself. Jesus said, “But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:6). With the focus on children this week due to the beginning of the school year, let us all examine within: are we humble, trusting exemplary servants of God? Timothy was told to “be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12). All of us are to “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). Have we been converted and become as children? Let’s “watch out for children” and be like them! ❤️ *Brian*



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, September 14 will be our next Lads to Leaders day. Our young people are working on memory verses, forming Bible bowl teams, and piecing together puppet scripts. They will soon be in full song leading mode and speech writing. We have a great group of young people and adult volunteers!

Saturday, September 20 will be our next youth devotional and activity. It will be hosted by the Bingles.

“Pew Packers” will meet every Sunday evening at 5:45 to learn the Bible!

TEACHERS' MEETING

We will follow up last Sunday's Teachers meeting, with another meeting (to be announced) to finalize the schedule. We could use a few more teachers, especially men who can teach our teenagers. See Brian or Jason if you can help!



ONE

Study

**Galatians
 Ephesians
 Philippians
 Colossians**



Our youth group has begun a focused study of ONE as revealed in these epistles of Paul!

The South Florida Avenue MESSENGER

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SUNDAY SERVICES

Bible Study.....9:30a.m.
Worship.....10:30a.m.
Evening Worship.....6:00p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Ladies Class.....10:00a.m.
Bible Study.....7:00p.m.

HOME OF

Florida School of Preaching

MISSION FIELDS

Dub Hill.....Russia
Don Iverson.....India
Randy Judd.....Malawi, Africa
Graham McDonald.....Scotland
J. Paguaga.....Honduras, C.A.
Joey Treat.....Pacific Islands
Ted Wheeler.....Ghana, W.A.

EMAIL

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WEB PAGES

www.southfloridaavenuechurchofchrist.com
www.sfacc.net

ARE WE WHO WE SAY WE ARE?

By Brian R. Kenyon

In an article titled, "Lakeland Man Wasn't Who He Said He Was," *The [Lakeland] Ledger* newspaper reported on September 5, 2007, that a Lakeland man, named Bill Henry, was not who he claimed to be. For years, he claimed to be the former Major League Baseball pitcher of the same name, who played in the 1950's and 60's. Even his third wife, to whom he had been married for almost twenty years, and stepchildren thought he was actually the baseball player. When news went out about the baseball player's death, someone who followed baseball closely checked into the obituary and noticed some inconsistencies, which lead to the truth about the hypocrisy. The article ended with the Lakeland Bill Henry's wife saying, "I was married to somebody that maybe I didn't know." While this story was somewhat amusing to those not involved, it does bring up a very important question, "Are we, as Christians, really who we say we are?"

WHO IS A CHRISTIAN?

The word "Christian" occurs three times in the New Testament, and a look at each of its occurrences gives us great insight into who a Christian is. First, a Christian is a disciple. Acts 11:26 says that "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." A disciple is a follower, or learner, of someone else. Sometimes the word "disciple," especially in the Gospels, can merely refer to a "fair weather" follower of Christ. After Jesus fed the five thousand (Jn. 6:1-14), He gave the multitudes some very serious instruction (Jn. 6:53-59). Their response was, "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" (Jn. 6:60). Then, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (Jn. 6:66). These, obviously, were not committed disciples. However, in the Book of Acts and the Epistles, disciple refers more to faithful followers of Christ. To be a Christian, we must be a faithful follower, or learner, of Christ.

Second, a Christian is one who is fully persuaded by the Gospel. After teaching him, Paul appealed, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (Acts 26:28). Agrippa was "almost persuaded," despite the fact that he believed. What did he believe about the prophets? He believed "That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:23). In this context, there is a difference between believing and being persuaded. When one is persuaded, he or she believes enough to do what the Lord requires (cf. Rom. 4:16-22). A Christian, therefore, is not "almost persuaded," but, like Abraham, is fully persuaded to the point of doing what the Lord desires! *(continued on page 2)*

Third, a Christian is one who brings glory to God. Peter wrote, “Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf” (1 Pet. 4:16). In this passage, suffering persecution is the means through which Christ is glorified. However, Paul said elsewhere, “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). The Christian is to constantly glorify the Lord, which can only be accomplished by constantly living His word (cf. Col. 3:17). If we are willing to suffer harm for the cause of Christ, then we are definitely converted to Him. The crowning beatitude is “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 5:10). One will never reach the point of being willing to suffer persecution unless he or she is first poor in spirit, mournful because of sin, meek, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, and a peacemaker (Mt. 5:3-9). A true Christian will bring glory to God, even to the point of suffering persecution!

WHO IS A HYPOCRITE?

The word “hypocrite” is simply a transliteration of the Greek word *hupokrites*, which was the word the Greeks used for an actor. In other words, a hypocrite is an actor, someone who pretends to be someone else. Just as an actor on stage portrays someone he is not, a hypocrite on the stage of life portrays someone he or she is not. Jesus often called the scribes and Pharisees hypocrites (Mt. 23:13-15, 23, 25, 27, 29). Perhaps the best illustration of hypocrites is found in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus said, “Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them...²Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men...⁵And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men...¹⁶Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast” (Mt. 6:1-2, 5, 16). Did you notice something common in each of these verses? That’s right, what they did was for the purpose of being seen by men! Religious hypocrites then and religious hypocrites now act as though they are following the Lord, when, in reality, they are not.

WHO ARE WE?

A Christian is a follower of Jesus Christ (Acts 11:26); one who is so fully persuaded that he or she does the will of God (cf. Acts 26:28); and one who truly glorifies God (1 Pet. 4:16). A hypocrite is one who pretends to be a follower of Christ; one who pretends that he is fully persuaded, even faking to do the will of God; and one who appears unto men to glorify God, but in reality does not. Now, into which one of these two categories do we who claim to be Christians fit? Can we be considered true disciples if we do not even attend Bible study regularly? Can we be fully persuaded when we do not live as though God’s word is really true? Can we glorify God when we follow our own will instead of His will? Are we pretenders—actors—when it comes to Christianity? Others are watching us, and most can tell whether or not we really are who we claim to be. We may be able to fool some people, like the Lakeland Bill Henry did, but sooner or later, hypocrisy will be exposed, if not in this life, certainly on Judgment Day, for “all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:13). Let us not be actors, but let us really be Christians!

Back to School Prayers

Ready or not, school is back in session! School means different things to different people, as evidenced by their desire or disdain to be back in the classroom. Whatever school may mean to us, let us pray for all those involved: students, teachers, administrators, office personnel, and even bus drivers and crossing guards! Most are underpaid and under appreciated, yet their work can make a big difference in the lives of our children. We hear the negative about our schools quite often, but let’s pray that God’s people in our schools, whether younger or older, will stand for what is right according to God that good news may result! “Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to any people” (Pr. 14:34). Let’s pray for the proper education of our children. Our country depends on it! ♥ Brian



SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Rosalind Coleman is in LRMC, Room E633. Sharon Washington is in LRMC, Room B801. Louise Starks is not doing well. Dick & Joyce Burbage, Duane Nelson, Bill Burton, & Margaret Coone

Relatives: Eddie Richardson, Amanda Del Gado, Bob Kirkland & Wayne Hendrix.

Shut In Members: Ann Howard, Virginia Plumlee & Louise Starks.

Others: Jeanne Frye (Friend of Dottie Fife), Bill Carroll, Frank Wood, Christina Fuessner & Bonnie Hendricks

Upcoming Events

Sept. 1st: - 21st Annual Labor Day Lectureship at the 6th Street Church of Christ. Information on Bulletin Board.

Sept. 6th: - Ladies Brunch at the Central Church of Christ in Winter Haven at 9:00 am. Check bulletin board.

Aug. 29th-31st: - Seminar at the Palm Beach Lakes church of Christ. The subject will be Evolution is Unscientific.

Visitors

Christy Baltimore, Bill & Carlene Long, James Noble.

Sympathy

To the family of Vera Jackson, a long time member here, and loved by all, who passed away Saturday, Aug. 16th at her daughter Melissa's home in Greenville, SC. A memorial service will be held at So. Fla. Church of Christ, Saturday, Aug. 23rd. at 1:00 pm. Interment will be in Plant City at 4:00 PM.

Sympathy

To the family of James Wright, a former member here who passed away Aug. 14th. The funeral will be at the Lakeland Funeral Home. Visitation will be Aug. 19th from 5:00 to 7:00 pm. The funeral Service will be Aug. 20th at 11:00 am.

Birth Announcement

Kenny & Reba French became great grandparents again on Aug. 13th when Harper Rae Murrell was born, weighing in at 7lb. 8 oz & was 20 in. long. Parents are Todd & Bailey Murrell & grand parents are Bob & Teresa Murrell.

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

August

Kenny French **Table** Charles Paulin
Bob Pratt **Assist** C. J. Grimes

August 24, 2014 9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Casey Paulin
Prayer Phil Fife

10:30 A.M.

Announcements David Anderson
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Kyle Williams
Closing Prayer Tucker Sweeney

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Jim Turner
Opening Prayer Paul Romine
Closing Prayer Jeff Bingle
Greeters Fred & Kathy Strickland
Att. Cards Quadarius Askew & Antonio Martin
Open & Close Building Jimmy Sweeney

Wed. August 27, 2014

Song Leader Jim Turner
Opening Prayer Kenny French
Closing Prayer Ken Walker

*Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call **Chuck Wyatt** so he can get a replacement - 859-5231*

Sunday, August 31, 2014 9:30 A.M..

Song at Bible Class Jim Turner
Prayer Tucker Sweeney

10:30 A.M.

Announcements David Anderson
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Ken Walker
Closing Prayer Tim Croson

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Jim Turner
Opening Prayer Sam Crow
Closing Prayer Antonio Martin
Greeters The Hendrix Family
Att. Cards Ian Enamorado & Paul Sweeney
Open & Close Building Jimmy Sweeney

Wed. Sept. 3, 2014

Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Frank Hamby
Closing Prayer Kyle Bingle

~ HOW WE ARE GIVING ~

Jul 27	\$4,167.87
Aug 03	\$6,485.10
Aug 10	\$4,630.20
Aug 17	\$4,072.55
Contribution Average	\$4,516.15
2014 Weekly Budget	\$4,256.38

HEAR OUR RADIO SPOTS



This Week's Message
"Unsinkable"

1230 or 1430 on radio dial or web page
www.southfloridaavenuechurchofchrist.com