



# South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST MESSENGER



1807 S. Florida Ave.,  
Lakeland, FL 33803

Vol. 77 No. 38 September 19, 2023

## ELDERS

David Anderson  
Brian Kenyon  
Bobby Sheumaker

## DEACONS

Tyler Anderson  
Jason Hendrix  
Stacey Paulin

## MINISTER

### ASSOCIATE MINISTER

Vince Daugherty

### OFFICE PHONE

(863) 682-4702

### EMAIL

[SFA.church@gmail.com](mailto:SFA.church@gmail.com)

## SUNDAY SERVICES

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

## WEDNESDAY

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

## WEB PAGE

[SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com](http://SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com)

## Find us on

YouTube & Facebook

## HOME OF

Florida School of Preaching  
since 1969

Missionary - Huron, SD  
Casey & Emily Paulin

## MISSION FIELDS

Dub Hill ..... Russia  
Don Iverson ..... India  
Marc Veary ..... Malawi, Africa  
Graham McDonald ..... Scotland  
J. Paguaga ..... Honduras  
Ted Wheeler ..... Ghana, W.A.

# THE INFLUENCE FACTOR

Brian R. Kenyon

A few weeks ago, I was blessed to attend and be able to say a few words at Mike Elledge's memorial service in Lake Tarpon, Florida. Throughout the service, the name Ed Duffy, or sometimes just Eddy, came up often, not just by me, but also by others who gave their reflections of Mike in the time allotted during the service. Ed Duffy, a graduate of the Florida School of Preaching and SFA member, was very instrumental in bringing Mike to Christ and encouraging him to attend FSOP. Mike's influence was far reaching in its own right, but what really dawned on me was that Ed Duffy passed away over twenty years ago, yet people were still bringing up his name, and many (if not most) of the people present knew him! Ed was a big part of getting Mike on the right track where Mike could have the good, Christian influence that was memorialized. We must realize our influence is far more reaching than we might think!

## WE ALL HAVE INFLUENCE

In Romans 14, Paul discussed how Christians should not condemn others because of their scruples. Scruples are strong opinions about scripturally indifferent matters, but matters that mean much to the people who hold them, so much so that the scrupulous person would consider participation in the matter to be sinful (Rom. 14:1-4). Concerning esteeming one day above another or eating certain kinds of food, Paul wrote, "For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself" (Rom. 14:7). While the thrust of the context is that Christians live and die to the Lord (Rom. 14:8-9), there is certainly a principle that includes influence. Like yeast in dough, all of us have a leavening influence on others to some degree, whether good or evil. Jesus said of the Pharisees and Sadducees, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees," explaining that He was not talking about bread but about "the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (Mt. 16:6-12). Their doctrine influenced others for the worse. On the other hand, Jesus gave a parable, "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened" (Mt. 13:33). This, obviously, was a good influence that started out small but permeated the whole loaf (cf. the parable of the mustard seed right before it, Mt. 13:31-32). We all have influence!

## OUR INFLUENCE MUST BE GOOD

Since we all have influence, we must make it good for the gospel of Christ's sake. The realm of influence is probably no more obvious than in being a parent. No one has more influence on a small child than his or her parents (or parent in single parent homes). We must always realize little eyes are watching and little brains are cataloging their parents' attitudes and behaviors. As a parent, one of

the most powerful verses in Proverbs states, “My son, give me your heart, And let your eyes observe my ways” (Pr. 23:26). Parents with “wisdom from above” (Jas. 3:17) will want to live in a godly way so their children learn to imitate Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 11:1). Parents, can our children know Jesus by the way we speak, live, and aspire? If not, we must repent and live for Jesus!

All Christians, whether they are parents, must have the kind of influence Jesus desires. First, as a preserving flavorful influence, Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men” (Mt. 5:13). Second, as a guiding influence, Jesus said, “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house” (Mt. 5:14-15). Light is self-revealing (Jn. 1:5 cf. 1 Jn. 1:5). Everyone notices light, especially the darker the surroundings when it is revealed! Nobody can miss a lit up city on a hill while traveling a pitch-black countryside! Third, as a glorifying influence, Jesus said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Mt. 5:16). If that salt has lost the essential quality that makes it a flavorful preservative, or if the light is hid under a basket that others cannot be guided by it, or if Christians do not do good works that reveal the Father, they can *never* accomplish what God intended! When we digress to lose our good influence, we fit the description of the “unprofitable servant” and can only expect severe consequences (cf. Mt. 25:30). It is imperative that our lives on this side of eternity reflect Jesus and the good influence God intended!

## **OUR INFLUENCE OUTLIVES US**

Concerning the first person murdered, the Hebrews writer declared, “By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks” (Heb. 11:4). Much can be said about the influence of Abel (as well as Cain, 1 Jn. 3:12; Jude 11), but for this point, note the statement, “through it he being dead still speaks.” Although Abel was murdered a long time ago, his good influence will remain as long as this world stands (cf. Mt. 24:35). Consider also the woman who poured the “very costly fragrant oil” on Jesus’ head (Mt. 26:6-13). Even the disciples were angry, thinking she had wasted something valuable. However, Jesus said, “Why do you trouble the woman? For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always ... Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her” (Mt. 26:10-13). Again, as long as this world stands, her influence will remain (cf. Mt. 24:35). By the same token, evil influence will also live long after someone is dead. Consider Jeroboam. Over and over again, he is referred to as “Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin” (2 Kgs. 3:3; 10:29, 31; 13:2; 15:9; 23:15 cf. 1 Kgs. 16:2, 19, 26). Why? Because Jeroboam invented the false system of worship the Northern Kingdom never abolished (1 Kgs. 12:25-33). Of course, it is only when people follow the sins of another that the other can be said to cause them to sin (cf. 2 Kgs. 10:29-31), but without the initial influence, people would never have followed Jeroboam’s sin! Our influence living long after we are dead is another reason why perfect justice cannot be rendered until this world ends (Heb. 9:27-28). Hitler, for example, cannot be fully judged until there is no more possibility that others can be influenced by his evil deeds!

## **CONCLUSION**

What will people say at our memorial services? Will our names be brought up during memorial services of others, even though we may have preceded them in death by many years? We cannot know, but one truth is certain: a standard by which we will be judged by God is the influence we rendered while living in this world (cf. Mt. 18:6-7; 25:31-46). We all have influence. Heaven or hell will be our eternal home, in part, because of our influence. Thus, we must make sure our influence is as Jesus described and commanded, “salt of the earth ... light of the world ... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Mt. 5:13-16).

### **“Pardon Our Dust” & Pray for Our Progress**

As we are in full construction mode, let us be mindful of our safety in parking and entering/exiting the building. Let us also be mindful of those with mobility challenges, and help maximize their ability to come and worship God, even if it means offering them a ride to services. Let us also pray the work can be done by FSOP lectureship time, Jan. 15-18, 2024!

## PRAYER LIST

**Current** Rachel Zapata is sick at home,  
**Continual:** Wayne Shearer (heath); Declan Potvin (eye); Debbie Bush (struggles); Brian Smith (heart health); Antoine & Marcella Swain (health); Geny Johnson (health); Bill & Carlene Long (health & strength); Ron & Judy Ford (health); Bobby Simpson (health); Annett Phillip (health); Janie Wise (health); Jim Turner (health); Margaret Coone (health); Kathy Nester (health); Melody Baxter (health), Beverly Adams (health), Melissa Craft (health) Charles Paulin (health)  
**Shut-ins:** Joyce Burbage, Carol Eason, Kenny & Reba French

Also continue to pray for those on the extended family and friends list!

*Ladies Day at Orange Street church of Christ  
 September 23, 2023 9:00 am - 12:00PM  
 "Her Growth, Her Glory"*

## Gospel Meeting

**Central Church of Christ, Clearwater**

**October 1-5**

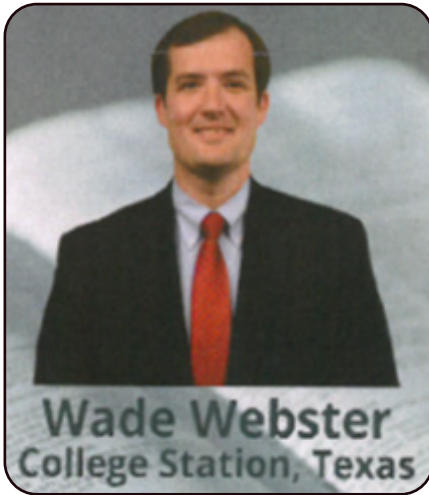
**"Tell Us Plainly"**

**Sunday: 9:30 am; 10:30 am  
 5:00 pm**

**Monday -- Thursday: 7:00 pm**

*"That your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:5).*

**1454 Belleair Road  
 Clearwater, FL 33756**



## Join Us for Bible Classes!

**Cradle Roll** (behind tech booth) **Upper Elementary** (Room 17)

Sundays: Nikki (Bible basics)      Sundays: Kathy (EHT)  
 Wednesdays: Jagie (Bible basics)      Wednesdays: Marion (EHT)

**2-3 Year-Old** (Room 18)

Sundays: Marissa (EHT)      Sundays: David A. (EHT)  
 Wednesdays: Becky (EHT)      Wednesdays: Vince (Romans)

**Lower Elementary** (Room 7)

Sundays: Anna Clair (EHT)      Sundays: SFA men (Prophecies of Christ)  
 Wednesdays: Olivia (EHT)      Wednesday: Brian (Revelation)

**First Principles Class** (Fellowship Room, any aged adults)

Wednesdays: Rick

## SCHEDULED TO SERVE

### September

Designated Elder..... Brian Kenyon

### Wednesday, September 20, 2023

Announcements.....Frank Hamby  
 Song Leader/prayer.....Tucker Sweeney  
 Devotional.....Wadi Khoury  
 Prayer.....Kyle Bingle

### Sunday, September 24, 2023

#### 10:30 A.M.

Sermon..... Rick Kenyon

#### 6:00 P.M.

Sermon.....Brian Kenyon  
 Bible "Bad Guys"  
 (2 Thes 2:3; 1 Jn 2:8; Rev 13:1)

### Those to Serve

#### 10:30 A.M.

Song/Prayer before class.....Tucker Sweeney  
 Song Leader (both services).....Kyle Faneuf  
 Announcements(both).....Bobby Sheumaker  
 Scripture reading/Prayer.....Steve Tydings  
 Lord's Table (both).....Wayne Shearer  
 Closing Prayer.....Jimmy Sweeney  
 Open/Close bldg (both).....David Deal  
 Greeters.....D&N Williams  
 Attendance cards (both).....Payton/Landon  
 Sound Booth (both).....Paul Sweeney

#### 6:00 P.M.

P.M. Song Leader ..... Kyle Faneuf  
 Scripture reading/Prayer.....Tyler Anderson  
 Closing Prayer.....Roberson Louissaint-  
 Greeters PM.....Bea/Jeanelle

### Wednesday, September 27, 2023

Announcements.....Rick Kenyon  
 Song Leader/prayer.....Frank Hamby  
 Devotional.....Landon Willcutt  
 Prayer.....Matt Willcutt

## Upcoming Events 2023

### September

23 Ladies Day at Orange Street  
 24 Fellowship In Service in library 5:00 pm  
 29 Singing Night at Orange Street 7:00 PM  
 30 Bonfire at the Daugherty's

### October

3 Senior Saints meeting at 10:00 am  
 8 Elders/Deacons/Preacher meeting  
 21 Men's breakfast Orange St church of Christ

### ~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Sep 03.....	\$7,697.00
Sep 10.....	\$8,067.10
Sep 17 .....	\$5,934.50
Contribution Average.....	\$7035.54
Weekly budget .....	\$7,410.00



## My Everything

*Resting in his bosom  
 Confiding in his love  
 Leaning on his everlasting arms  
 My peace comes from above  
 My vision is much clearer  
 The path is straight and plain  
 He dries the tears from my eyes  
 And eases all my pain  
 He silences my regrets  
 He encourages my soul  
 He helps me conquer fears  
 Holds secrets I've never told  
 Surely he is my friend  
 My bestie, my brother  
 My king, my savior  
 He's like no other  
 He intercedes for me  
 Utters words when I can't speak  
 Carries my heavy load  
 Strengthens me when I get weak  
 Jesus is everything to me  
 So glad God sent his son  
 No man could do what he's done for me  
 Jesus Christ's  
 The Only One  
 John 8:12, Colossians 2:9*

## Christian Apologetics

### What is Apologetics? (1 Pet. 3:15)

When we think of the term apologia, we may think it is the modern idea of apologizing for some wrong we have done. This is not the case in defending our faith. The term "apologetics" is taken from the Greek word apologia which means "to give a defense, or an answer." In scripture the term is found in various passages. First Peter 3:15 states, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense [apologia] for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." From the idea of being ready to give a defense we can conclude: (1) the faith is defensible, and (2) we can articulate a defense. So what about you? Can you defend your faith? If I asked you, could you give three to five reasons why? If you can, you are well on your way in the knowledge of Christian apologetics.



[www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com](http://www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com)

Email us: [SFA.church@gmail.com](mailto:SFA.church@gmail.com)

For sermons and podcasts, find us here.



**"Weeping may endure  
 for a night,  
 But joy comes  
 in the morning."**

Psalm 30:5

### South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST

1807 South Florida Avenue  
Lakeland, FL 33803-2653

Return Service Requested



If you prefer to receive the bulletin via email, contact us.