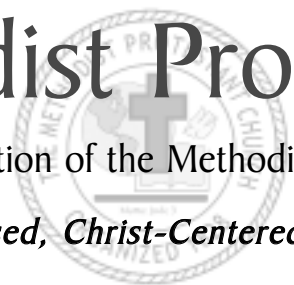


The Methodist Protestant Faith

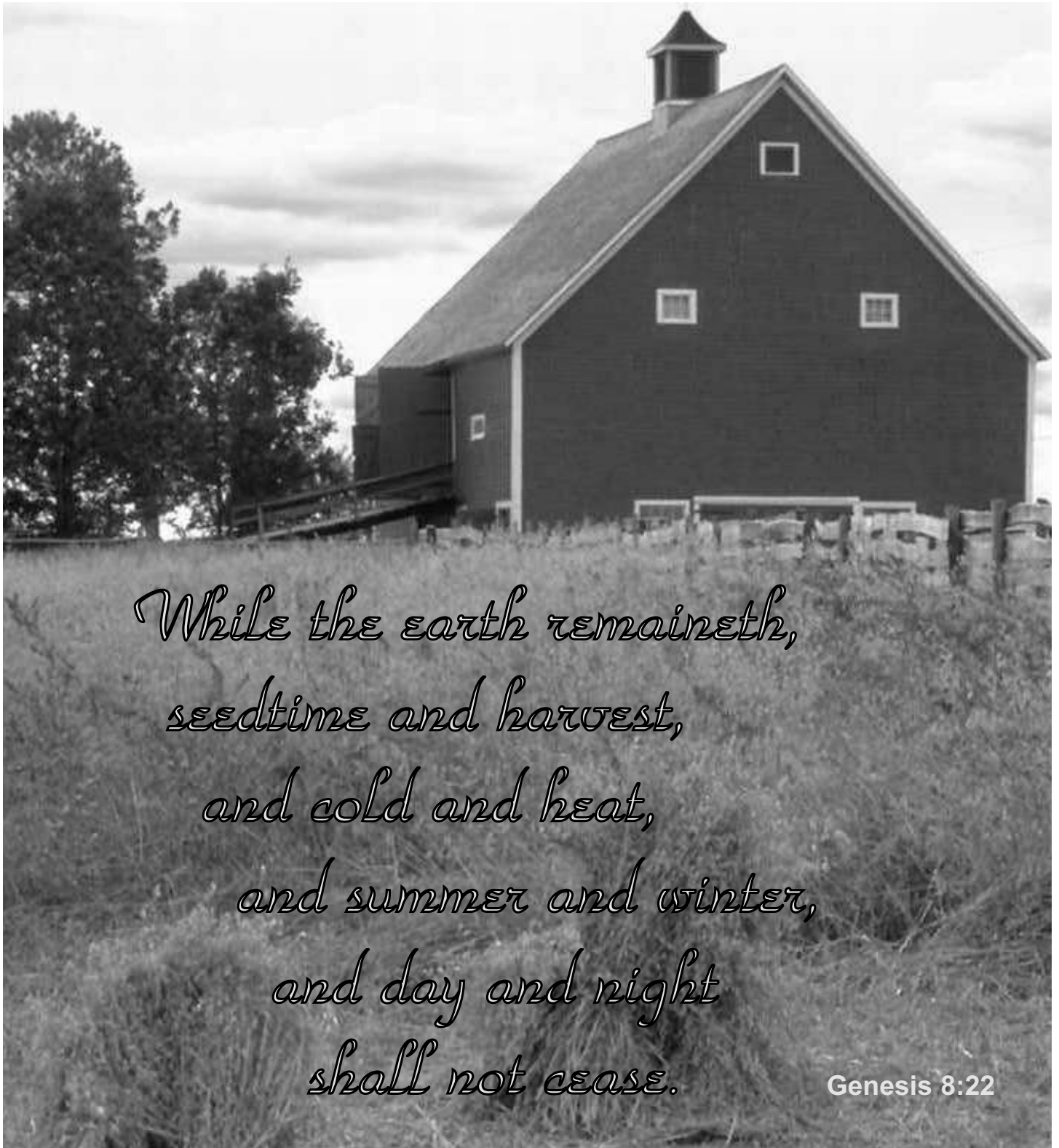
The Official Publication of the Methodist Protestant Church

Providing Bible-Based, Christ-Centered, Holiness Material.



Volume LXII/Number 8

October/November 2008



*While the earth remaineth,
seedtime and harvest,
and cold and heat,
and summer and winter,
and day and night
shall not cease.*

Genesis 8:22

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The Methodist Protestant Church
Organized 1828

Our Motto . . .

Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. Jude 3

We Believe . . .

. . . That God created the Heavens and the Earth

. . . That the Bible is the inspired, infallible, and inerrant "Word of God"

. . . That Jesus Christ is the Virgin-born Son of God

. . . In the divine nature of Jesus Christ

. . . In the atoning blood of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sins

. . . In Sanctification as a second definite work of grace

. . . That believers may know the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit

. . . In the bodily Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ

. . . In the soon return of Jesus Christ in power and great glory

. . . In an actual heaven, the reward for the saints, and an actual hell, a place of eternal punishment for the wicked

. . . In the sanctity of life

. . . In holy matrimony between man and woman

President's Message -



Rev. LaDon Dawson, General Conference President

Psalm 133 -- *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.*

This is such a beautiful time of the year. The leaves are turning different colors and what a beautiful landscape they paint. The farmers and gardeners are harvesting the last of the crops they have grown over the summer. They didn't get sidetracked with just planting, or weeding or harvesting. Notice how they worked in unity with the rain and sunshine God provides to reach this time. Now the harvest is being reaped.

How it reminds us of God's blessings He wishes to pour out on His people. How great it is to dwell together in unity. God wants us to plant seed, He will send the rain and sunshine for those seeds to germinate and grow. I just heard from two churches that have baptized eighteen older youth just in the past few Sundays. Praise God for His blessings and for you and your work with our young people.

You may contact me by calling 601-587-4147, writing to 4 Divide Road, Monticello, MS 39654, email: ladondawson@bellsouth.net or calling General Conference Headquarters 601-765-0029 on Tuesdays - 9 AM-5 PM.

PLEASE NOTICE!

Send all articles and correspondence to:

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Phone: 601-765-0029 or 601-517-5208

Email: mpfeditor@bellsouth.net

Articles must be received by 20th of month

for next issue or will be held

for the following issue.

Marriage Enrichment Seminar

Marriage is in crisis in our country. For the last century, the sanctity of marriage has been eroded with multiple attacks: divorce, adultery and materialism. Now we are facing a full on frontal assault: cohabitation, same sex marriage and illegitimacy. We Christians must raise a godly standard of righteousness through our marriages. Marriage is God's template on earth for us to understand the "mystical union" which Christ, the Groom, desires with His Bride, the Church.

Twenty-five years ago, Dr. John E. Neihof, Jr and his bride, Beth, married. They are still crazy about each other. Dr. John is professor of communications at Kentucky Mountain Bible College in Vancleve, Kentucky. Beth works in Jackson, KY, as a library media specialist. Dr. John is also a well-known minister and evangelist. He possesses a doctorate of philosophy in communication from the University of Kentucky specializing in interpersonal communication and relationships. His research, combined with Biblical teaching on marriage, points the way toward a godly union that is fulfilling on earth and prepares the couple for an eternity with Jesus in heaven.

On Saturday, January 24th, 2009, Dr. John will present a Marriage Enrichment Series in three sessions titled: **What Is Marriage Really About?** One attendee at a seminar wrote, "This series is the new *Focus on the Family*. Dr. Dobson restored common sense and practical psychology to child rearing. Dr. John Neihof brings a clear, cogent, compelling and biblical perspective to marriage and family."

Session One: Marriage Under Attack, investigates contemporary attacks on marriage and God's plan for how we should live our married lives in such an age.

Session Two: Holiness And Marriage, explores the broader, eternal purpose that God is working in and through us in marriage. Dr. John challenges couples to learn God's lessons in marriage: learn to submit to authority, to love, to live as one, to prepare for heaven and to understand the importance of holiness.

Session Three: Christian Marriage, challenges husbands and wives to live up to the high Biblical standard that God's Word establishes for us.

This Marriage Enrichment Series will be presented at the Mississippi Campgrounds and Headquarters in Collins, MS on Saturday, January 24, 2009.

The schedule for that Saturday is:

8:30 -- Continental Breakfast

9:30 -- Session One: Marriage Under Attack

10:30 -- Break

10:45 -- Session Two: Holiness and Marriage

12:00 -- Lunch

1:15 -- Session Three: Christian Marriage

2:15 -- Break

2:30 -- Wrap Up/Q&A Session

On Friday night, January 23, we will have an introduction and time of fellowship together beginning with a Steak and Baked Potato Supper at 6:30 PM. **Pre-Registration is required to participate in the supper.**

DEADLINE TO PRE-REGISTER FOR SUPPER: January 16, 2009 - Complete the enclosed registration form and mail to: Rev. Bobby Dawson, 923 Forest Grove Road, Jayess, MS 39641 or you may register online at www.themethodist-protestantchurch.net.

Calendar of Events

Dec 6	MS Pastor's Luncheon	Campground
Jan 17	Board Christian Education	Headquarters
Jan 23-24	Seminar	Campground
Jan 23	Executive Committee	Headquarters
Jan 31	Board of Publication	Headquarters
Feb 6	Youth Praise & Worship	Campground
Mar 21	WMS Convention	Headquarters
Mar 27-28	Gen Conf Annual Boards	Headquarters
Apr 4	MS Youth Retreat (details later)	
April 11	AL WMS Branch	AL Campground
April 18	MS WMS Branch	Campground
April 25	LA WMS Branch	Yeager MP Church

Deaths

Oct. 8, 2008 - Rev. Elton Brand, Stonewall MP Church - Minister in the MS Annual Conference

Oct. 8, 2008 - Ms. Gwen Martin, Clear Creek MP Church, Brooklyn, MS - Deaconess in MS Annual Conference

Nov. 3, 2008 - Rev. Kenny Robbins, Divide Memorial MP Church, Monticello, MS

(You may send tributes and memorials which will be included in the May and June issues.)

LA Conference Ordinations

Rev. Allen Mitchell

Allen D. Mitchell, Ph.D., CLU, FLMI, was ordained as Elder on August 1, 2008 in Stillwater, OK. This is the first ordination of an elder of the Methodist Protestant Church in Oklahoma since 1939. In September 2007, The Methodist Protestant Church of Oklahoma was reorganized and incorporated with Bro. Larry Devers, a local pastor, as president.

Rev. LaDon Dawson, General Conference President, Rev. Bill Hearne, Louisiana Conference President, and Rev. Donald Smith conducted the ordination service. Rev. Dawson delivered the message.

Bro. Mitchell has served several Methodist and United Methodist Churches on both a part time and full time basis. He has also served as Interim pastor for other denominations and spent several years working for The Presbyterian Ministers' Fund. He is past president of the Stillwater Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors and past president of the FLMI for the state of Oklahoma. He has taught in the University of Central Oklahoma, Midwest Christian University, Southwestern College and Friends University. He has been active in civic affairs in the Stillwater area and presently serves as the vice president of Payne County Oklahoma Farmers Union.

Bro. Allen and his wife, Shirley, live near Glencoe. Shirley is active with him in the operation of Mitchell Agency, Insurance and Real Estate. Both are graduates of Glencoe High School. Shirley received her BA from Oklahoma State University. Bro. Allen took part of his graduate and undergraduate work at OSU but received his doctorate from National Christian University of Missouri. He has served several years on the board of regents for that school.

The Oklahoma Church is part of the Louisiana Conference. It is truly a blessing and answer to prayer to have Bro. Mitchell, Shirley, and all of the members of the Oklahoma MP Church in the conference. We look forward to many years of fellowship and for the time that there will be additional churches in Oklahoma.

Rev. Jimmy W. Williams, Jr.

Bro. Jimmy Williams was born in Marion, LA, January 15, 1965, and presently resides in West Monroe, LA with his wife, Doris, and their daughters, Courtney

and Kristin. Bro. Jimmy is employed by Pitney Bowes and presently serves as Associate Pastor for Yeager MP Church in West Monroe. Doris is head of Yeager Church's children's ministry, and serves on the Board of Missions and the Board of Publication for the General Conference.

Bro. Jimmy, after high school, served ten years in the marine Corp before a motorcycle accident cut short his career. As a recruiter for the Marine Corp, he saw first hand the struggles young people face and developed an ability to assist them in their difficulties without condemning them or compromising the truth. This has helped Bro. Jimmy in his effectiveness in his ministry to young adults, but has also guided him in teaching all ages.

His call into the ministry came in 1999, at the Nazarene District Campground. A scripture he was given to read, Luke 12:48, spoke to him with the assurance of his call to the ministry. In preparing for ministry, Bro. Jimmy entered the Church of the Nazarene Course of Study, completing three years, and entered into the fourth year before transferring into the Methodist Protestant course. His training and studies, in addition to the MP Course, have been as a student at University of Louisiana, Monroe, and online studies through nazarene College courses.

He accepted the position as Associate Pastor of yeager MP Church in 2007, and serves as Chair of the Education Committee, and oversees the evangelistic endeavors of the Church. He also serves on the newly formed Home Missions Committee of the General Conference.

Ordination service was held November 15 at the Yeager MP Church. Rev. Harold Jackson spoke concerning the call of God for the minister, and Rev. Bill Hearne spoke comparing the Ministry and the Marine Corp. Mrs. Carolyn Jackson, LA Conference secretary, presented Bro. Jimmy for ordination. She also told how God had led when she and Jimmy and Doris met at Walmart in West Monroe and she invited them to services at Yeager MP Church in April 2006. Rev. Donald Ray Smith assisted in the Ordination Ceremony.

A beautiful reception was held following the service. The Yeager MP Church is pleased to have Jimmy and Doris as members and grateful for their many areas of ministry in the church.

(See pictures on page 10)

Youth Praise & Worship Concert

February 6, 2009 • 7:00 PM

MS Campground • Collins, MS

Special Guests

Broken Vessels

2008 Worship Artists of the Year

Whether it's leading worship in their home community, the jungles of Brazil, or on a Saturday evening at a music festival, Lake Charles, LA- based Broken Vessels desire only to share the love of Christ with anyone willing to listen. "This band is really an offspring of what that Lord has led us to be," Sonny Dardar, former keyboard player and current band manager, states enthusiastically. "We are called to present a gospel message to all. He gave us a vision for mission work, both here and abroad, so that is what we dedicate our lives to."

Formed in the early days of the new millennium by Sonny and his brother, Tory (lead vocals, guitars), Broken Vessels is a vertical worship band that seeks nothing more than to go where the Lord leads them. Rounded out by drummer, Bill Loftin, and bass player, Jace Verdin, the now threesome go forth, ready, willing, and able. Having born witness to over 10,000 conversions over the last eight years, Broken Vessels believes that people should not simply hear stories of what God has done, but instead see His divine hand move before them.

Concert is FREE - an offering will be taken.

Sponsored by the Mississippi Council of Religious Education

He Waited Forty Years

Adapted from an incident as told by a missionary to India.

The bridge over the Ganges Canal was being repaired, which meant that the missionary had found it necessary to take a long detour. His bicycle ride over the twenty miles of India's alternate trails and his preaching in three villages on the way - all in one morning - had left him hot, dusty, and very tired. Coming upon a mango grove by the roadside, he yielded to its invitation to rest awhile in its cool shade. He walked well into its depths, leaned his bicycle against one tree, and lay down beneath another with a book for his pillow.

Just as he began to doze off into a restful sleep, he heard a dull tap-tap close by. Opening his eyes, he saw a blind man coming through the grove tapping his bamboo staff on the path before him. This was such a common sight in India that the missionary decided to let him pass

by without speaking to him. But as he watched, his interest was awakened. This was no beggar. He was an old man, well-dressed with a long, white beard. There was definitely an air of respectability about him. Moreover, the missionary could hear that with each tap of his staff, the sightless man was repeating some Indian words: "Ai hamare Bap! Ai hamare Bap!"

Why, he was saying, "Our Father! Our Father!" That was strange! The missionary was fully alerted. What was the meaning of it all?

Just then the old man's staff struck the missionary's bicycle, causing it to fall over with a loud noise. Terrified, the wayfarer cried, "Our Father! Our Father which art in heaven!"

The missionary sat up, amazed.

(Continued on page 7)

Regret

Rev. Jimmy Williams, Jr.

Associate Pastor Yeager Methodist Protestant Church, West Monroe, LA

A woman was putting on a few pounds. One day, while feeling exceptionally self-conscious, she asked her husband, who was watching football and only half-listening, "honey, am I fat?" Any man knows the right answer to that question, so without much thought, He says, "no, you are not fat" and turns back to the game. After muttering a few more incoherent words, she says, "I'm starting to look like my sister." Now, her sister was quite large. Without thinking it through, the man replies, "no, honey, you are nowhere near that big yet."

Have you ever said or done something that as soon as you do it, you regret it?

Regret

Regret: a troubled feeling or remorse over something that has happened, esp. over something that one has done or left undone.

The greatest challenges we face in our relationships are regrets. They interfere with our happiness. Sometimes, our regrets get in the way of God.

When we face our regrets and overcome their shame, we can find healing. Two men in the Bible who show us two different responses to regret.

The Prophecy

Matthew 26:20-25. When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me." They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely not I, Lord?" Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born." Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you."

Matthew 26:31-35 Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will." "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same.

Notice the difference in Judas and Peter's answers.

Judas asked a question - he knew the answer. Peter makes a bold statement, and responds proudly. He was clueless.

There are two words that should leave your vocabulary-always and never.

The Sin

Matthew 26:47-50 While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him. Jesus replied, "Friend, do what you came for." Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him.

Is it possible that Judas thought he was doing the right thing? Could he have been trying to force Jesus to stand as the messiah that the Jews expected?

Our best intentions, when not guided by God, can result in the most devastating consequence. We may do what we think is the right thing, only to discover we were clueless, and we can do nothing to change the results.

Matthew 26:69-74 Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said. But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said. Then he went out to the gateway, where another girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth." He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!" After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away." Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowed.

Now Peter, we know he was a hothead. He was always making statements he couldn't back up. Peter acted impulsively. Impulsive statements got the man in trouble with his wife Peter's impulsive statements brought shame and guilt.

Are there things in your past you have done that have left permanent damage that you don't know how to fix?

Are there relationships that are strained or broken because you acted poorly, and don't know how to take it back?

The Response

Matthew 27:3-5 When Judas, who had betrayed him,

(Continued on page 17)

(Continued from page 5)

The old man knelt beside the bicycle. He folded his hands and lifted his sightless eyes in prayer. "Forgive us our trespasses," he pled in a trembling voice. Consternation and perplexity clouded his face. What had he done, and how could he repair the damage? His fingers groped over the wheels, the handlebars, the seat.

Then, as though someone were by his side, he asked in troubled tones, "What is it? Our Father, what is it? I am old and blind. I'm only an ignorant villager. How should I know what to do with it?" Suddenly, his words took on a zest of hope. "No man could have made this!" he said in wonder, his hands fingering the spokes. "Is this the answer? For forty years I have been hungry, Oh so hungry. I have prayed morning and night, 'Give us this day our daily bread' - bread to satisfy my hunger here," and he laid his still trembling hand on his heart. "Will this somehow bring the bread? This is the handiwork of God. This was not made by man. Surely I have found the answer." His face fairly shone with expectancy.

At this, the missionary leaped to his feet. The blind man heard the noise and turned toward him, the tense expression on his face revealing his struggle to know what had broken the silence. Was it an animal, a man, an angel? Could it be God himself?

The missionary spoke softly and slowly. "My dear brother, your prayer is heard indeed. Those wheels brought me here. I am sent with bread for thee - not the bread of earth, but bread come down from heaven."

"Oh, it's **You** - the one who forgives us our trespasses?" It was half belief and half question.

"No, dear brother, it is not **I** who forgives."

Perplexity again stole over the blind man's face.

"Then who are You? What shall I call you?"

"Just call be Padri Sahib. I am a missionary - one whom our Heavenly Father has sent this way."

Radiance broke over the venerable face. "It is the answer!" he cried. "It was a Padri Sahib who taught me the Lord's prayer forty years ago. I haven't been able to find him since. Nearly every day I have gone through this grove and sat beside the path, hoping he or some other Padri Sahib would pass this way and speak to me." The old man laid his forehead on his folded hands. "This day my prayer is complete. 'Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory.'"

For three long hours the missionary talked to his blind brother about the Saviour and His love. Then he rose to leave. "The sun is half down in the heavens," he said. "I have been long with you. I have bread that I must break

tonight to other hungry ones. They will have waited hours when I reach them. I must go."

"Hours, Padri Sahib? What are **hours**? I have waited forty **years**. I am not yet filled - so great is my emptiness."

"Remember what I have told you today, my brother," the missionary admonished. "That will give you light along your path when I am gone. I have many others - "

"When you are gone? Oh, Padri Sahib, there is a story - how often I have tried to tell it to others, but I never heard its ending. It is about a lamb lost in the darkness. Tell me, was it ever found? Did the man whose lamb it was feed it and leave it there, saying he had other lambs to feed and could not stay longer? Did the lamb bleat after him in the darkness after he was gone? Tell me the story, Padri Sahib."

How could the missionary leave one who was pleading so pathetically? He couldn't. He sat down and told the simple story, while tears rolled down the blind man's cheeks. When the messenger of God told that the Shepherd lifted the lamb and laid it on his shoulder, the other broke into sobs and stopped him.

"So the lamb was found and lifted from the darkness! For forty years I have prayed that might be the ending of the story. Oh, Padri Sahib, it is enough!"

His heart was full. But he had one more question.

"The Shepherd didn't set the lamb down again, did He?"

"No, my brother. He kept it on his shoulder until He got it to the fold. And He will keep you on His shoulder until He gets you home - to your heavenly home."

"Oh, Padri Sahib, if I had only known the ending all these forty years! For forty years I feared the lamb was lost."

The missionary bade the blind man farewell, promising to send someone to feed his spiritually-hungry fellow-villagers and to return again himself within a year.

It was all the sightless man could contain, and almost more than he could comprehend. "Those words give me strength now to let you go," he finally said. "Farewell, good Padri Sahib. Blessed is this day that brought you to me."

With his forehead on his folded hands, he stood until the sound of the missionary's bicycle died away far down the path.

As the latter rode off, he heard in the distance behind him a glad, loud voice call again and again to some toiler in a nearby field, "Ram Lal! Ram Lal! the lamb was found. Oh, Ram Lal! The lamb of the story was found!"



God vs. Science

'Let me explain the problem science has with religion.' The atheist professor of philosophy pauses before his class and then asks one of his new students to stand.

'You're a Christian, aren't you, son?'

'Yes sir,' the student says .

'So you believe in God?'

'Absolutely.'

'Is God good?'

'Sure! God's good.'

'Is God all-powerful? Can God do anything?'

'Yes'

'Are you good or evil?'

'The Bible says I'm evil.'

The professor grins knowingly. 'Aha! The Bible!' He considers for a moment. 'Here's one for you. Let's say there's a sick person over here and you can cure him. You can do it. Would you help him? Would you try?'

'Yes sir, I would.'

'So you're good...!'

'I wouldn't say that.'

'But why not say that? You'd help a sick and maimed person if you could. Most of us would if we could. But God doesn't..'

The student does not answer, so the professor continues. 'He doesn't, does he? My brother was a Christian who died of cancer, even though he prayed to Jesus to heal him. How is this Jesus good? Hmmm? Can you answer that one?'

The student remains silent.

'No, you can't, can you?' the professor says. He takes a sip of water from a glass on his desk to give the student time to relax. 'Let's start again, young fella. Is God good?'

'Er..yes,' the student says.

'Is Satan good?'

The student doesn't hesitate on this one. 'No.'

'Then where does Satan come from?'

The student falters. 'From God'

'That's right. God made Satan, didn't he? Tell me, son, is there evil in this world?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Evil's everywhere, isn't it? And God did make every-

thing, correct?'

'Yes.'

'So who created evil?' The professor continued, 'If God created everything, then God created evil, since evil exists, and according to the principle that our works define who we are, then God is evil.'

Again, the student has no answer.

'Is there sickness? Immorality? Hatred? Ugliness? All these terrible things, do they exist in this world?'

The student squirms on his feet. 'Yes.'

'So who created them?'

The student does not answer again, so the professor repeats his question. 'Who created them?' There is still no answer. Suddenly the lecturer breaks away to pace in front of the classroom. The class is mesmerized. 'Tell me,' he continues onto another student. 'Do you believe in Jesus Christ, son?'

The student's voice betrays him and cracks. 'Yes, professor, I do.'

The old man stops pacing. 'Science says you have five senses you use to identify and observe the world around you. Have you ever seen Jesus?'

'No sir. I've never seen Him.'

'Then tell us if you've ever heard your Jesus?'

'No, sir, I have not.'

'Have you ever felt your Jesus, tasted your Jesus or smelt your Jesus? Have you ever had any sensory perception of Jesus Christ, or God for that matter?'

'No, sir, I'm afraid I haven't.'

'Yet you still believe in him?'

'Yes'

'According to the rules of empirical, testable, demonstrable protocol, science says your God doesn't exist. What do you say to that, son?'

'Nothing,' the student replies. 'I only have my faith.'

'Yes, faith,' the professor repeats. 'And that is the problem science has with God.. There is no evidence, only faith.'

The student stands quietly for a moment, before asking a question of His own. 'Professor, is there such thing as heat?'

(Continued from page 8)

thing as heat?'

'Yes.'

'And is there such a thing as cold?'

'Yes, son, there's cold too.'

'No sir, there isn't.'

The professor turns to face the student, obviously interested. The room suddenly becomes very quiet. The student begins to explain. 'You can have lots of heat, even more heat, super-heat, mega-heat, unlimited heat, white heat, a little heat or no heat, but we don't have anything called 'cold'. We can hit up to 458 degrees below zero, which is no heat, but we can't go any further after that. There is no such thing as cold; otherwise we would be able to go colder than the lowest -458 degrees. Everybody or object is susceptible to study when it has or transmits energy, and heat is what makes a body or matter have or transmit energy. Absolute zero (-458 F) is the total absence of heat. You see, sir, cold is only a word we use to describe the absence of heat. We cannot measure cold. Heat we can measure in thermal units because heat is energy. Cold is not the opposite of heat, sir, just the absence of it.' Silence across the room. A pen drops somewhere in the classroom, sounding like a hammer.

'What about darkness, professor.. Is there such a thing as darkness?'

'Yes,' the professor replies without hesitation. 'What is night if it isn't darkness?'

'You're wrong again, sir. Darkness is not something; it is the absence of something. You can have low light, normal light, bright light, flashing light, but if you have no light constantly you have nothing and its called darkness, isn't it? That's the meaning we use to define the word. In reality, darkness isn't. If it were, you would be able to make darkness darker, wouldn't you?'

The professor begins to smile at the student in front of him. This will be a good semester.. 'So what point are you making, young man?'

Yes, professor. My point is, your philosophical premise is flawed to start with, and so your conclusion must also be flawed.'

The professor's face cannot hide his surprise this time. 'Flawed? Can you explain how?'

'You are working on the premise of duality,' the student explains... 'You argue that there is life and then there's death; a good God and a bad God. You are viewing the concept of God as something finite, something we can measure. Sir, science can't even explain a thought. It uses electricity and magnetism, but has never seen, much less fully understood either one. To view death as the opposite of life is to be ignorant of the fact that death can-

not exist as a substantive thing. Death is not the opposite of life, just the absence of it. Now tell me, professor. Do you teach your students that they evolved from a monkey?'

'If you are referring to the natural evolutionary process, young man, yes, of course I do.'

'Have you ever observed evolution with your own eyes, sir?'

The professor begins to shake his head, still smiling, as he realizes where the argument is going. A very good semester, indeed.

'Since no one has ever observed the process of evolution at work and cannot even prove that this process is an on-going endeavor, are you not teaching your opinion, sir? Are you now not a scientist, but a preacher?'

The class is in uproar. The student remains silent until the commotion has subsided. 'To continue the point you were making earlier to the other student, let me give you an example of what I mean.' The student looks around the room. 'Is there anyone in the class who has ever seen the professor's brain?' The class breaks out into laughter. 'Is there anyone here who has ever heard the professor's brain, felt the professor's brain, touched or smelt the professor's brain? No one appears to have done so. So, according to the established rules of empirical, stable, demonstrable protocol, science says that you have no brain, with all due respect, sir. So if science says you have no brain, how can we trust your lectures, sir?'

Now the room is silent. The professor just stares at the student, his face unreadable. Finally, after what seems an eternity, the old man answers. 'I guess you'll have to take them on faith.'

'Now, you accept that there is faith, and, in fact, faith exists with life,' the student continues. 'Now, sir, is there such a thing as evil?'

Now uncertain, the professor responds, 'Of course, there is. We see it everyday. It is in the daily example of man's inhumanity to man. It is in the multitude of crime and violence everywhere in the world. These manifestations are nothing else but evil.'

To this the student replied, 'Evil does not exist sir, or at least it does not exist unto itself. Evil is simply the absence of God. It is just like darkness and cold, a word that man has created to describe the absence of God. God did not create evil. Evil is the result of what happens when man does not have God's love present in his heart. It's like the cold that comes when there is no heat or the darkness that comes when there is no light.'

The professor sat down.

The student was Albert Einstein. Albert Einstein did write a book titled *God vs Science* in 1921.

Jimmy Williams' Ordination



Jimmy & Doris Williams



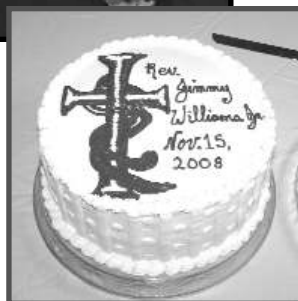
Harold Jackson & Jimmy



**Rev. Bill Hearne,
Rev. Donald Smith,
Rev. Jimmy Williams,
Rev. Harold Jackson**



**Praying
and
Laying
hands on
Jimmy &
Doris**



**Delicious
Cake
at Reception**

Allen Mitchells' Ordination



Allen & Shirley Mitchell



**Rev. Bill Hearne,
Rev. LaDon Dawson,
Rev. Donald Smith,
Rev. Allen Mitchell**

Church Interior



**Church attendees
from Grace Living Center
with Rev. Mitchell**



Rev. LaDon Dawson



Progresso, Belize New Church



Old Church at Progresso

New Church at Progresso



Church Interior



Mariella Carrillo, San Lazaro Pastor, Mauricio Sedacy, Progresso Pastor, Claudio Leal, Sand Hill Pastor and Belize Conference President, Emmanuel Viaimill, Hattievill Pastor, Mark Lambert and Donald Smith in front of new church

New Church in Sand Hill, Belize



The batter boards were set up for the footings on Monday and Tuesday morning, local laborers from Sand Hill and San Lazaro began digging the footing with shovels.



Claudio, along with the Sand Hill Mens club and several paid laborers poured approximately 35 yards of cement the Belizean way – by hand.



The Missionary Record

Mrs. Jane Boyd, Woman Executive Secretary, Editor

SECRETARY OF THANK OFFERINGS

Florene Carlisle

At this time of year when much emphasis is placed on **Thanksgiving** we should do a reality check to see if we really do express our gratitude to God for all of His blessings. Psalm 100:4 says, **be thankful unto him, and bless his name.**

Oh, we love the family gatherings, the fun, the fellowship and stuffing ourselves with fabulous food until it looks a lot like gluttony (which none of us want to think about nor admit). Do we spend much time reflecting on the many times God's love and faithfulness has brought us through difficult times, comforted us in our grief, and blessed us with a measure of good health? Or does a dead turkey get more attention than the great God of the universe? We're not really a bad lot, we are grateful, we just don't tell God that very often. Maybe we think, "well, He knows I am thankful - He surely understands". What if He were to deal with us in the same way? I think that God must groan and grieve at our lack of real thankfulness.

Read Luke 17:11-18. Here we have the account of Jesus healing ten lepers and only one came back and glorified him loudly and humbly gave thanks. Jesus asked, "Were not ten cleansed? But where are the nine"? The one who showed his gratitude was sent on his way with Jesus' blessing. Only one tenth of those whom Jesus healed thanked him. Do you suppose the percentage is any better among modern-day man?

Survey your gratitude level and pour out your heart in humble praise and thanksgiving and "...**be thankful unto him and bless his name**".

Auxiliaries, don't forget to receive the November Thank Offering. Also, now is the time to send in a 'love gift' for the National Pastors in Belize for Christmas. Provide a special Thanksgiving service in your church.

Louisiana Annual Conference & WMS Branch builds new church in Progresso Village, Belize

Rev. Donald R. Smith

Shortly after Pat and I went to Belize as missionaries for the Methodist Protestant Mission of Belize, we visited all of the villages and made evaluations of each church. We found so many needs with most of the churches that we could not do everything at once. Certainly we would like to solve all of the needs immediately, but we knew that was impossible. We went to Progresso Village and visited and had prayer with some of the people of the church. The church at Progresso did not have a pastor. Some of the ladies were having Sunday school and keeping the church going as best they could. We made arrangements to start having church services on Saturday nights as long as they would do their part. For four months we went to Progresso and had services every Saturday night. The church was doing well and Brother Nicklos Carrillo and I continued to preach every Saturday night. Some time later Brother Mauricio Sadassy felt the call to go back into the ministry and pastor the church. He works at San Pedro Island and cannot be there but half of the time. I thought well, half of the time is better than no pastor at all. I talked to Brother Claudio Leal (Belize An. Conf. President) and we decided to allow him to come back into the conference as the pastor of the Progresso church.

The doors on the church were all rotten, and some of the windows. After evaluating the building, I decided it was in too bad condition to rework. The only thing to do was tear it down and start all over. The walls were rotten and the building was in danger of falling down. Of course, the same old problem is always present. - no money. After much prayer about the project, I felt led to move forward. We

(Continued on page 13)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Secretary of Thank Offering:

Promote/present November Thank Offering Program;
Special programs and love gifts.
Gifts to Missionaries for Christmas

WMS PRAYER CALENDAR

NOVEMBER - Psalm 2:11-12

- Secretaries of Thank Offering
- Thank Offering Program

(Continued from page 12)

came home for a visit and went to the LA Annual Conference. I stood on the floor of the conference and poured my heart out for funds to build a new church. That day the Board of Church Extensions met and agreed to give \$7,500.00 (US) for the church at Progresso. After a few tears and a lot of joy we went back to start the building. I went to Rev. B.F. Gerald with my plan, and the Board of Missions gave permission to build the church. Before we could start the building we attended the church camp in Belize. During the camp, the Lord changed my mind as to the kind of building we should build in Progresso. It was a little larger than the original plan but most of all it was a different shaped building - six sides with a stage, windows all around, and a cupola in the roof - different than any building we have in Belize. A building that would catch the eyes of the people of Progresso and one that the people would like to be a part of. Again, more prayer had to be offered because I knew it would cost more money than had originally been raised. But I knew within my heart that God had placed that plan on my mind. So again, I moved forward with the building through faith that God would supply the funds. I went back to the LA Conference with my plea for more money. They gave me more money and the church was started. God works in mysterious ways to say the least. A little church in South Arkansas, that I did not even know, heard about us building the church in Belize, They called and asked me if they could help, and if Pat and I would come over to their church and give a mission program about our mission in Belize. We went and they took up a love offering that night - \$2,606.00. We were overwhelmed by what God was doing. We serve a BIG GOD - one who can supply all our needs even when we don't know what we need. That offering allowed us to finish the church with plastered walls, two bath rooms, (men and women), lights, fans, burglar bars and screens for the windows. We purchased a new pulpit and communion table - paid for by Brother Buddy Burton and his wife, Carolyn. After they bought the pulpit and table, Carolyn has gone on to be with the Lord. She is missed by Brother Buddy and family, and others who knew her, but we have peace knowing that she is in the arms of Jesus.

The Louisiana WMS Branch gave \$2,000.00 to complete the building. This truly has been a blessing to the people of the Louisiana Churches to be able to provide the funds for such a beautiful church for the people at Progresso, Belize. May God bless them as they serve Him!

I would like to give a big thanks to **Men With A Mission**, (Tony, Kenny, Winston & Thomas) for a job well done putting on the odd shaped roof. The MWM are doing a good job and a lot of work in Belize for our mission. Also, the men that work for the mission in Belize (Galo,

Armando and Mr. Heliberto Cowo) for working on the church when we were not there. I want to thank my friend, Frank Robinson, who went with me and worked. Frank hurt his shoulder and had to have surgery after returning to the States. Mauricio and some other men from the village helped put in the foundation and pour the beams. We could not have done it without the hard work of these men. Also, some of the people from Arkansas, Frank Robinson, Danny Morrison, Brad Lemons, and the Arkansas team - Pat Smith, Dena Robinson, Mary Morrison, and Tammy Clark who went and taught Bible School while the men worked on the building. Rev. Wayne Sellers worked for a couple of days while he waited for his Blitz Team to arrive. Thank you, Wayne! I thank the little widow lady that did all she could (pray). It took a lot of people doing a lot of work and donating a lot of money to see this project complete and I Praise God for everyone and I say a big thank you for all you did. May God bless you in a special way.

The people of Progresso are appreciative of their new building and Mauricio said new people were coming to church. One couple came by and asked if they could be married in the new church. Another man came by and said that his daughter came to Bible school that week and he wanted to attend church there. Mark Lambert and I went to help Rev. Claudio Leal and the Belize Conference dedicate the new church. Several of the pastors and church people were there to help in the dedication ceremony. The ladies of Progresso church prepared about two hundred Tamales to serve the people who came. They were delicious!!!!

(See pictures on page 11)

Sand Hill Church Building Project Belize, Central America

Tony Russell, Men With Mission

Men with Mission (MWM) is working with the Sand Hill Church on the construction of a new church at Sand Hill in Belize, C.A. Sand Hill has out grown the present church building. The present church building has no class rooms. They have been using the Sand Hill School class rooms for Sunday School classes. The Sand Hill Church has an average of 135 in attendance each Sunday; of which 50 percent are young people. The church has shown a steady increase for the past two years. [The Sand Hill Church Ministries includes a mens group, ladies group, youth, care, prison, funeral, Scholarship program,

(Continued on page 14)

(Continued from page 13)

Evangelism Committee, Fund raising committee and of course a Building Committee.] The new church will be 50 by 141 feet. The building will consist of a sanctuary and class rooms. The new church will be built in phases with Phase I being to construct the foundation and slab. Additional phases of construction will be implemented as funds become available. A MWM work team will begin work in November laying out the foundation and helping the Sand Hill building committee lay out plans to get foundation and slab work completed.

This is a major undertaking for the Sand Hill church. With gas at an all time high of \$11.48/gallon (\$5.75/gal US\$) and other costs on the rise, you can see how this affects their pocketbooks. We here in the U.S. are seeing the same financial impacts to our wallets. However, there is a big difference between Belize and U.S. Their per capita income is significantly lower than ours and costs still continue to increase. It takes two Belize dollars to equal one US dollar. The Sand Hill Church is doing what they can with limited funds. The access road for the new church building has been constructed which cost \$7000 (US\$).

The first phase requires approximately 175 yards of concrete for the foundation and slab. With concrete costing \$174.35/yard (BZE\$), the foundation and slab will cost over \$30,000 (BZE\$). Since the property is approximately five miles from the coast line, the floor of the building will be elevated three feet above ground surface. To raise the floor three feet requires 1000 yards of backfill material (sand). With sand costing \$7.00/yard (BZE\$) delivered to the site, the backfill material will cost approximately \$7,000 (BZE\$).

The concrete blocks for the project cost \$1.50 (BZE\$) a piece. The foundation work requires approximately 3820 blocks. The church building exterior wall requires approximately 3570 blocks. The interior walls requires approximately 3250 blocks. The total number of blocks required for the project is over 10,000 blocks.

What can you do to help with the project? Join one of the work teams that will go down in the future on different phases of the project. Make a donation toward purchase of materials such as donate so many blocks, or donate so many yards of concrete or donate so many yards of sand. Maybe you can't go on a work team but know someone who can go but can't afford to go; how about buying their plane ticket or making a donation toward the plane ticket. Ask the Lord for guidance in what he would have you do. It will take all of us working together to get this project completed. Work Team members are required to fund their own plane ticket. However, food, vehicle and shelter are provided through voluntary donations made to MWM.

Building Project Begun!

Praise God, Praise God, Praise God

We didn't think we were going to be able to go to Belize due to the recent rains. Water was everywhere. The road into Belize was under water, the main road north of Sand Hill was under water, the Sand Hill School yard was under water and the new road to the construction site was under water BUT Not the site location for the new church. Praise GOD, the Lord intervened and the water went down so we could access the construction site. The batter boards were set up for the footings on Monday and Tuesday morning, local laborers from Sand Hill and San Lazaro began digging the footing with shovels.

The laborers almost finished digging the footing for the front half of the building the first day. They finished the front half and began working on the back half while they waited on steel (rebar) to be delivered on Wednesday. By end of the day Wednesday, they had dug about three fourths of the back half. Thursday and Friday – the laborers tied rebar and placed it in the footings.

Saturday was the big day. Claudio, along with the Sand Hill Mens club and several paid laborers, poured approximately 35 yards of cement the Belizean way – by hand. They worked long and hard and their labor paid off; at 6 pm they completed the 'pour'.

FUTURE PLANNED WORK - Laborers are working on finishing the back half of the footing, then rebar will be tied and placed in footing ready for cement to be poured. Blocks have been ordered for the foundation to raise the slab 3 feet above the ground level.

Donations are desperately needed. The price of steel for the rebar has tripled in price this summer. Since the church is only about 5 miles from the coast, a lot of steel is required to reinforce the building against hurricanes.

Please mail donations for the Sand Hill Building Project to; Byron Carlisle, Treasurer, General Conference MP Church, 31 Cammack Drive, Grove Hill, AL. 36451. If interested in going on a work team or willing to help to purchase air fare for others, please call Tony Russell at 601-587-0061 or email: tonyrussell@bellsouth.net.

Send me your email and I will keep you abreast of the project as it moves forward. Please continue to pray for the progress of this building.

(Please see pictures on pages 19)

St. John's Church, Baltimore, MD

Rev. Ken Renfroe

Chairman of the MS Conference Historical Committee

There is a place which should be sacred to the memory of every member of the Methodist Protestant Church. It is St. John's Church of Baltimore, Maryland. It has not always been a Methodist Protestant Church, then it was, and now it is not, but this does not diminish her place in the minds of those who love her.

Recently, while on vacation, I had the privilege to be within thirty miles of Baltimore, and St. John's Church gave me an incentive and a reason to visit that city where American methodism and the Methodist Protestant Church had their beginning. It was here at Lovely Lane Meeting House in 1784 that Dr. Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury assembled the Methodist ministers, and they, being empowered with a letter from Rev. John Wesley, organized the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Church was unique in that it continued the European model of episcopacy to the complete exclusion of the laity, and they did so among American freemen who had just fought and won a revolution, setting them free from the English hierarchy, in which the state had a king and the church had a bishop. Protest was soon heard, and St. John's Church became the seat of dissatisfaction that led to the organization of Representative Methodist in the Methodist Protestant Church. The history of St. John's Church is provided on the Church's web page: www.stjohnsbaltimore.org/ourhistory. For those without internet, I give to you a summary of the history of St. John's Church from 1815 to the present

1815-1820 - Old St. John's Methodist Episcopal Church was built on Liberty Street. Through financial failure, the property reverted to Mr. John Clark, who not only held the mortgage, but was a liberal supporter of the church. (In the picture, the cornerstone was placed in the wall of the new sanctuary on St. Paul Street) Mr. Clark offered the church as a meeting place, and the property was later bought from him by the Associated Methodist Reformers.

April 17, 1828 - Articles of Incorporation for the Associated Methodist Reformers was adopted.

November 12, 1828 - Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church who disagreed with the church's refusal to grant voting rights to lay members formed the Associated Methodist Church (AMC) at a meeting in old St. John's Protestant Episcopal Church on Liberty Street in Baltimore. St. John's became the Mother Church of the AMC and the center of the Reform Movement. Having abandoned hope for the recognition of lay rights by the mother church, it became apparent to the Reformers who wished to continue as Methodists that a new organization

was necessary. So a meeting was called on Nov. 12, 1828 for those in sympathy with Methodism as a democracy rather than an episcopacy. The reform had begun with the publication of *Mutual Rights* published by William S. Stockton, a layman. The paper devoted its columns to a frank discussion of layman's rights. Soon Union Societies were formed to promote discussion, but the MEC put an end to "such agitation." Rev. Dennis B. Dorsey, "a frail, sickly, young man" but one of the most brilliant and courageous, was tried and expelled from the MEC. resulting in other ministers and laymen being charged with *inveighing against the discipline of the Church.*"

November 1830 - St. John's hosted a convention where the name was changed to The Methodist Protestant Church (MPC).

1843 - St. John's Methodist Protestant Church withdrew from the MPC in protest against the appointment, rather than the calling, of pastors and against arbitrary limits of a pastor's service to his church. Changed name to St. John's Independent Methodist Protestant Church of Baltimore.

St. John's owned a burial ground on East Monument Street near the present site of Johns Hopkins Hospital. There was also a vault built in the cellar of the church and the sexton allowed "fifty cents for opening the vault to receive or deliver a coffin."

December 18, 1899 - With the encroachment of the business section, the work as a downtown church became very difficult, and with losses of membership through death and removal, the congregation decided to seek a new location. The property at 27th and St. Paul Streets was purchased for \$12,000 and a contract for the new building, which cost \$38,620. was signed. This is near Johns Hopkins Hospital.

December 8, 1900 - The present building was dedicated.

1908 - St. John's returned to the MPC and once more became St. John's Methodist Protestant Church.

November 1928 - The General Conference of the MPC met at St. John Church, Baltimore to celebrate 100 years of ministry in the denomination. The historical materials donated to the General Conference contains a large picture taken in front of St. John's Church on St. Paul Street, along with the delegates and visitors in attendance. This picture can be seen at the General Conference Headquarters, Collins, MS.

(Continued on page 19)

What Do You Think About Jesus?

Rev. Brian Pennington

In Mark chapter eight, Jesus asks the disciples, “Who do people say I am?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” And then Jesus changed the question and asked, “But what about you? Who do you say I am?” Peter answered for the disciples saying “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” And Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.”

If you go to any city and conduct your own survey, asking those who pass by, “Who is this Jesus?” you will receive many different answers. Some would say He is a prophet. Others might say a great teacher. Yet others might refer to Him a good moral example. I am sure that the people giving you those answers would be sincere in what they are saying. But also, they may be sincerely wrong.

Is it really important who we think Jesus is? Does our own opinion change who He is in reality? Is He something different from what He really is just because we think He ought to be? No! Jesus is THE Christ, the Son of the Living God whether we want to believe it or not.

Notice what Jesus says about Himself. He says “I am the Bread of Life.” In others words, He is THE source that can satisfy the spiritual hunger in a person’s soul.

Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Jesus is the eternal God. He said, “I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born, I am!” When God spoke to Moses from the burning bush, He identified Himself to

Moses as “I am who I am.” So here Jesus clearly identifies Himself as being the Eternal God when He said, “before Abraham was born, I am!”

Jesus said, “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.” Jesus is the door to salvation. He is the door by which you and I must enter. He even said, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live.” “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” If you want to go to the Father, if you want to inherit eternal life, there is only one way to do it, and that is by accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior.

You and I can believe all sorts of different things about Jesus. But we will miss the truth unless we come to understand that he truly is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

In *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis wrote, “A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said wouldn’t be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic on the level with a man who says he’s a poached egg—or else he would be the devil of hell; you must take your choice. Either this was, and is, the Son of God, or else a mad man or something worse. You can shut Him up for a demon, or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But don’t come up with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great moral teacher. He hasn’t left that alternative open to us. He did not intend to.”

So the question for you today is, “What do you think about Jesus? Who do YOU say He is?”

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(Continued from page 6)

saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility." So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

Things didn't turn out the way Judas planned. Judas realized his mistake-but too late. He couldn't face his regret, but he couldn't let go of it, either.

If we hold on to regret, it will destroy us-our happiness, our families, even our very lives.

Matthew 26:75. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Things didn't turn out the way Peter thought. He faced his regret and wept.

The Restoration

John 21:7. Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water.

Unlike Judas, Peter seems to have at least faced his guilt. He may have repented, and sought forgiveness-scripture doesn't say. But Peter still needed one more step.

What is the difference between Judas' response and Peter's response? Judas sought relief-Peter sought restoration.

John 21:15-17 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus told him, "Feed my lambs." Then he said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus told him, "Take care of my sheep." He said to him a third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was deeply hurt that he had said to him a third time, "Do you love me?" So he said to him, "Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you!" Jesus told him, "Feed my sheep.

Peter knew his sin immediately. That's why he wept. Somewhere along the way, Peter sought Jesus instead of hiding in shame. His confession of love restored a relationship that regret could have destroyed.

Regret is a harsh reminder of our weakness. Regret makes us feel like failures all over again.

Many of us are walking around today miserable because of regrets. Regrets about what we did - regrets about what we let others do to us. Peter was hurt by Jesus' question a third time. Could it be that Peter had tried to put his sin behind him, without facing the regret?

Sometimes, we ask forgiveness from God, and even ask

forgiveness from others, yet fail to forgive ourselves. We fail to face our regrets. We will never forget our failures-but when we face our regrets, they lose authority in our lives and control of our hearts. When we give them to God, He takes their power to control us away. They may linger as a reminder, but they do not control us.

1. If you want to move beyond regret, you must exercise Faith. We must have faith in God to change us from the inside out.

2nd Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

2. If you want to move beyond regret, you must learn to Forget. If God can forget our mistakes, we can too.

Psalms 103:11-12 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

3. If you want to move beyond regret, you must learn to Focus on the future.

Philippians 3:13-14 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

You may have forgiven others. You may have sought forgiveness from others. But, you have never faced your regrets-you have never forgiven yourself. God has declared you not guilty by the blood of Jesus. See yourself through His eyes. Allow the Holy Spirit to cleanse every part.

"Though no one can go back and make a new beginning - anyone can start from now and make a brand new end." Carl Brand

A fresh start does not mean everything will be "back to normal" - sometimes that's just not possible. But, we can move past the hurt, shame, and guilt, and move forward. All it takes is placing it all on the altar. Make the best of where you are now, and God will see that that is enough.

A man opened his wife's drawer and picked up a silk paper wrapped package: "This, - he said - isn't any ordinary package." He unwrapped the box and stared at both the silk paper and the box. "She got this the first time we went to New York, 8 or 9 years ago. She has never put it on. Was saving it for a special occasion. Well, I guess this is it. He got near the bed and placed the gift box next to the other clothing he was taking to the funeral home, his wife had just died. He turned to me and said: "Never save something for a special occasion. Every day in your life is a special occasion."

Do not let the past keep you from your future in Christ. You were created for a purpose in God's kingdom. Like Peter, you have a job to do. But until you see yourself as Jesus sees you, your heart won't be ready for that job.

THE SCARS OF LIFE

'Love is when God became man.'

Some years ago, on a hot summer day in south Florida, a little boy decided to go for a swim in the old swimming hole behind his house. In a hurry to dive into the cool water, he ran out the back door, leaving behind shoes, socks, and shirt as he went. He flew into the water, not realizing that as he swam toward the middle of the lake, an alligator was swimming toward the shore. His father, working in the yard, saw the two as they got closer and closer together. In utter fear, he ran toward the water, yelling to his son as loudly as he could. Hearing his voice, the little boy became alarmed and made a U-turn to swim to his father. It was too late. Just as he reached his father, the alligator reached him. From the dock, the father grabbed his little boy by the arms just as the alligator snatched his legs. That began an incredible tug-of-war between the two. The alligator was much stronger than the father, but the father was much too passionate to let go. A farmer happened to drive by, heard his screams, raced from his truck, took aim and shot the alligator. Remarkably, after weeks and weeks in the hospital, the little boy survived. His legs were extremely scarred by the vicious attack of the animal and, on his arms, were deep scratches where his father's fingernails dug into his flesh in an effort to hang onto the son he loved.

The newspaper reporter who interviewed the boy after the trauma, asked if he would show him his scars. The boy lifted his pant legs, and with obvious pride, he said to the reporter, 'But look at my arms. I have great scars on my arms, too. I have them because my Dad wouldn't let go.' You and I can identify with that little boy. We have scars, too. No, not from an alligator, but the scars of a painful past. Some of those scars are unsightly and have caused us deep regret. But some wounds, my friend, are because God has refused to let you go. In the midst of your struggle, He's been there holding on to you. The Scripture teaches that God loves you. You are a child of God. He wants to protect you and provide for you in every way. But sometimes we foolishly wade into dangerous situations, not knowing what lies ahead. The swimming hole of life is filled with peril - and we forget that the enemy is waiting to attack. That's when the tug-of-war begins - and if you have the scars of his love on your arms, be very, very grateful. He did not let you go.

Please pass this on to those you love. God has blessed you, so that you can be a blessing to others. You just never know where a person is in his/her life and what they are going through. Never judge another person's scars, because you don't know how they got them. Also, it is so important

that we are not selfish, to receive the blessings of God, and not to share them with someone.

Right now, someone needs to know that God loves them, and you love them too - enough not to let them go.

'A righteous man may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all' Psalm 34:19.

~ Submitted by Rev. Jimmy Williams

Our Thanks To You!

The last few years have been so wonderful for us. God has blessed Don and me in such a wonderful way. It has been a dream come true for us. Thanks to everyone who has been a part of our ministry. It has been such a pleasure to be a servant of the Lord. We have felt your prayers and loving support. Belize has always been a part of our lives. We have loved the people and the country from the first day we set foot there in 1988. We knew at that moment that our lives would be changed forever. Having the opportunity to go there and minister was beyond our wildest dreams. We met so many people and were a part of so many things. They will always a part of our lives. There is not a day that we do not think of the friends we made there and the work that the Lord has started, and we feel will endure to the passing of time.

It has been good to be home with friends and family. God has given us a work here among people we love. We are very grateful for that. Our ministry will go on in different directions, but Belize was a great part. We still plan to go and work in Belize along with the Arkansas team, whose lives would be empty without it. I don't believe that God is finished with our ministry there. Thanks again to the Board of Missions for allowing us to go. We appreciate those who paid shares so we could be there. Also Bro. Billy Frank Gerald and Mrs. Faye, who were such a great support to us. They had us in their home many times. We love and appreciate them so much. Brother Mark Lambert was very helpful as we came off the field and started a new direction in our lives. We are grateful to Union MP Church for supporting us for 3 years and sacrificed without a full-time pastor. We will always be grateful to the LA Conference for their financial support. We were truly blessed by the teams that came and supported financially and physically while we were there. Thanks to those who prayed for us without ceasing and paid shares for us to be there. We will always be grateful. We will always love you.

Your servants in Christ,
Rev. Donald and Pat Smith

(Continued from page 15)

May 10, 1939 - The Uniting Conference of the MEC, MECS, and MPC Churches merged to form the Methodist Church (MC), taking with it the Maryland Conference and St. John's Church. In 1968 the Methodist Church merged with the United Brethren to form the United Methodist Church (UMC).

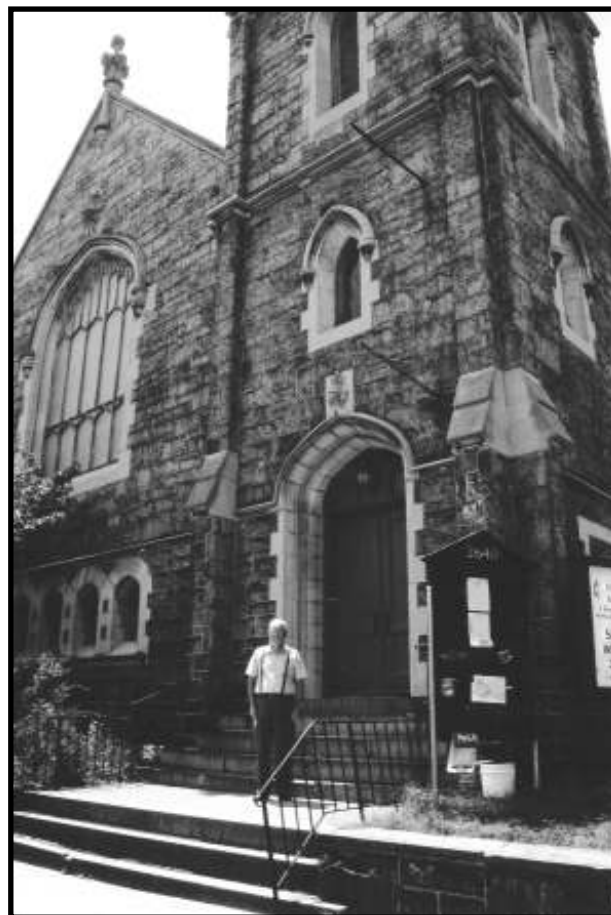
December 16, 1981 - St. John's Church was seriously damaged in a five-alarm fire, requiring extensive restoration. The area where it is located has ceased to be the plush, garden district to which it relocated in 1899, and has disintegrated into an inner city ghetto. The church's attendance had decreased to fifty, but was home to a second congregation called the Metropolitan Church, consisting of many gays and lesbians. At that time the United Methodist Church considered closing St. John's, but since it has become an integrated, mixed racial congregation, in an urban area, with many small groups meeting in the sanctuary, the doors have remained open.

Fall 1987 - St. John's served as a "sanctuary church" to house undocumented persons (illegal aliens) from El Salvador.

As I approached the building, I saw a stately sanctuary (as you can see from the pictures), but one whose lawn was overgrown with shrubs and the grass had not been cut. I did not go inside, but stood on the steps where saints of God had tread to go into the house of the Lord, and I recalled how the merger had brought so noble an edifice down to the ground. My findings left me saddened and depressed as I remember the battles fought for holiness and the wholesome government of our Church, and those of the MS delegation who stood against the merger and preserved the Methodist Protestant Church.

We have a rich heritage and history. Let us uphold the truth and strength of the Discipline of the Methodist

Protestant Church, which is based on the Word of God. Our motto *earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints* (Jude 3) directs us in the last days. Soon the Son of God will appear, and all those who "play church" will play on, and those who are born again and a part of the Bride, the Church redeemed by Jesus' blood, will be taken up and so shall they ever be with the Lord.



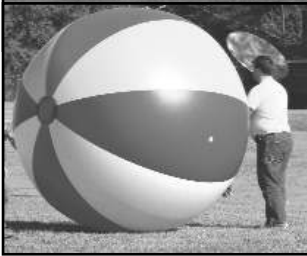
MS YOUTH RETREAT - Held on November 21-22 at the MS Campground, was a great success and blessing to all who attended. There was a total of 119 people who attended some part of the retreat. Young people came from Mississippi and Alabama - Methodist Protestant, United Methodist, Nazarene, and Baptist - all learning about **His TRUTH endureth to all generations.**

Richard and Renea Smith were Praise and Worship leaders. Rev. Robert Andrews, Pastor of First MP Church, Vicksburg, MS, was the evangelist. The MS Council of Religious Education worked hard to plan this event which was filled with music, praise, evangelism, classes, games, food and fellowship.

Rev. Robert Andrews



“Bring Home The Bacon”



Prayer Time Before Going Home



Winning Teams!

Scavenger Hunt



Bring Home The Bacon



Best Christian Spirit



Best Christian Spirit



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