

WELCOME

Rev. & Mrs. Joel Thomas
and family

Readers Are Leaders

By Sis. Gladys Stringfellow

This was a favorite phrase of the late Ms. Ruth Bolden who believed in the transforming of power of the printed word.

After reading Warren W. Wiershe's book *Victorious Christians You Should Know*, I felt inclined to borrow from him and share these thoughts with you, especially at this time, when we approach the beginning of another school year.

While Paul waited trial and certain death at Rome, he made this request to his beloved son in the faith Timothy: *The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments* (I Timothy 4:13).

We have no idea what these books were that Paul urgently requested, but we do know that they were important to him. It is possible that portions of the Old Testament Scriptures were among them.

Charles Spurgeon commented on Paul's request by saying:

He is inspired, yet he wants books! He has been preaching at least 30 years, yet he wants books! He has had a wider experience than most men, yet he wants books! He has been caught up into the third heaven, and had heard things which it is unlawful for a man to utter, yet he wants books! He has written the major part of the New Testament, yet he wants books!

I wish that this same desire for good books characterized more believers today. After all, reading is to the mind what eating is to the body: it provides nourishment. The mind grows by what it takes in, and heart grows by what it gives out. Many people are starving their minds by neglecting the nutritious volumes that are available for their reading. They try to minister to others, but they have nothing to give.

Reading is not a matter of having time, but of taking time, of making time. We always make time for things that are important to us. God gives each of us 24 hours a day and how we use those hours reveals the priorities in our lives. If you devoted only 30 minutes a day to serious reading, you could complete the average book in at least a week.

The time has come for us to lay aside our feeble excuses and come to grips with the serious business of reading for learning and living. Never underestimate the power of a book.

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What shall we read? Certainly the Bible and books that help us understand it better. But along with these we must also read books that will help us build our lives and our homes – biographies of great Christians, the classics that have endured the test of time, and those mind-stretching books that we have always avoided.

Let me encourage you today, if you have not been doing this before to visit you local library, your nearest bookstore, or perhaps borrow from a friend that book you have always meant to read and start reading now. *Remember, readers are leaders. Are you a reader?*

Did You Know...

The Community Soup Bowl opened in 1981 when five downtown churches, Christ Episcopal Church, **First African Baptist Church**, First Baptist Church, First Presbyterian Church, and First United Methodist Church got together to fight hunger in Tuscaloosa. They contributed the volunteers and resources needed to start and maintain the project. Originally, the food was prepared in the church kitchens and served in a rented building, but this was soon replaced with a permanent place to cook and serve the meals.

Through the generosity of the Home Builders Association of Tuscaloosa, the local community, and a grant from a Rhode Island philanthropist, the current Community Soup Bowl was built in 1998 at 1711 23rd Avenue, just behind Piggly Wiggly on Greensboro Avenue. The 3,500 square foot facility seats 80 people and has two handicapped accessible restrooms. Meals are cooked and served by a staff and volunteers on weekdays and by rotating teams of volunteers on weekends.

As part of a recent revitalization effort, churches from all across the Tuscaloosa area are invited to get involved in this ministry. Today, volunteers and resources come from not only the five original founding churches, but also other churches and organizations throughout the Tuscaloosa area, including: Calvary Baptist Church, First Federal Bank, First Wesleyan Church, Forest Lake Baptist Church, Forest Lake Methodist Church, Hargrove Memorial United Methodist Church, Northridge Baptist Church, Saint Mark United Methodist Church, Valley View Baptist Church, UA School of Law, and numerous other organizations and individuals.

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We Welcome our 21st Pastor *Rev. Joel Thomas*



And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding (Jeremiah 3:15)

The Community Soup Bowl has been serving lunches for 25 years.

It now serves meals from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. on weekdays and weekends.

It is open to everyone and meals are always free.

There are no requirements a guest must meet before getting a meal. No one is turned away.

The Community Soup Bowl serves about 70,000 meals each year.

On average, 185 meals are served everyday – often more on weekends.

It costs \$8,900 to operate the Community Soup Bowl each month.

Much of the funding for the Community Soup Bowl comes from churches, Sunday School classes, small groups, and individuals.

Volunteers are critical to the success of the Community Soup Bowl.

Three volunteers are needed every weekday to serve. At least eight people are needed to provide meals on weekends.

There are many ways you can be involved in this ministry.

Share your time:

- Volunteer to serve during a weekday lunch. Please call 752-2421 to sign up.
- Assemble a weekend team to cook and serve. For more information, contact Glenn Powell at cgpowell2@charter.net or at 345-3070.

Donate food:

Canned food is best, but fresh vegetables and other foods can also be used. No frozen foods please. Items can be dropped off at the Community Soup Bowl from 8 a.m. – 1 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Donate money:

If you wish to support this ministry, your gift can be given to your church's Community Soup Bowl representative or sent to: Community Soup Bowl, Inc., Post Office Box 2277, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35405. All gifts will be appreciated.

The Crusaders under the direction of Bro. Terrell Byrd volunteers at the Soup Bowl twice per month.



Echoes from the Field

By Sis. Linda Carter, Sunbeam Counselor

100th Session of the Northwest District State Convention

Abyssinian Missionary Baptist Church, Host Church

Rev. E.L. Patterson, Pastor

Ensley, Alabama

July 11-13, 2006

- ◆ Sis. Shirley E. Evans is the new Supervisor of the Sunbeams. **Taylor Long** was elected district secretary. She did an excellent job in reading the minutes before the parent body and she received a \$5.00 gift from Sis. Evans.
 - ◆ Special thanks to **Sis. Elizabeth Hargrove** and Counselors for their help with the Sunbeams. First African's Sunbeams received the third (3rd) place attendance certificate award. The seven Sunbeams registered were: **Miracle Lawson, Jonathan Lawson, Taylor Long, Tameron Long, Myles Hargrove, Ana Hargrove, and Marquis Brown.**
 - ◆ Three Crusaders were present: **Wynton Kemp, Roderick Martin, and Marlon Brown.**
 - ◆ Three Red Circles were present: **Briana Bell and Tyler Long**
-

Southwest Regional Youth Conference

Mobile, Alabama

July 25-27, 2006

- ◆ We had a blessed time and all the youth who attended did a wonderful job in their activities. **Briana Bell, Roderick Martin, and Miracle Lawson** were voted as officers last year. This year, they were each on the program to preside. Sis. Mary Hopkins, the Regional Director made them feel special by inviting them to a reception and providing a formal breakfast and lunch in their honor.
- ◆ We are especially proud of **TeLeah Byrd** who entered the Bible spelling bee contest. She won first (1st) place in her age category. She received a trophy and lots of compliments.
- ◆ All of our youth attended a workshop on *How to Pray*. In the first class, ages 1-6 were **Myles Hargrove, Ana Hargrove, Charae Carter, and Brandon Byrd**. Myles impressed the instructors by writing and saying a prayer in class. He was also the only child to remember the songs they were to sing. In the 7-8 year class were **Tameron Long and Jonathan Lawson**. **Taylor Long, Shaneqka McCollum, Miracle Lawson, and TeLeah Byrd** were present in the 9-12 age class. In the 13 and up class were **Tyler Long, Briana Bell, and Roderick Martin**. All youth ages 3-12 sang in the conference Children's choir. **Charae Carter** learned some of the Praise Dance routines and recently said, "I want to go back to Mobile."

NABD District Youth Conference
Beulah Missionary Baptist Church, Host Church

Tuscaloosa, Alabama

Rev. W.J. Long, Pastor

August 19, 2006

- ◆ Over 200 individuals were attendance and included Crusaders, Red Circles, and Sunbeams.
- ◆ **Charae Carter** won first (1st) place in the Pre-K Art Contest (age 4)
- ◆ **TeLeah Byrd** won first (1st) place in the Senior Division (age 11) Art Contest.
- ◆ The Red Circles received the third (3rd) place Attendance award.

The Illiterate's Prayer

By Geraldine Lytle (Austin, Texas)

*I hope you'll be patient, Lord
Don't know just how to start
But I have an awful burden
Down deep within my heart
Today the polls were filled with folk
Sharing in America's fame.
Guess I'm not so patriotic, Lord
Couldn't even write my name.
If I could just have voted
What a wonderful revelation!
Just knowing I had a little part
In building a better nation.
Guess folks all think I'm pretty dumb
Don't have much education
But just the same, I'd gladly die
For God, my home, and nation.
My family, too, is suffering, Lord
For work I daily plead
The answer never seems to change
"Come back when you can read."
I often dream of a better life
Of making better wages
There's not much hope. All I can do
Is stare at empty pages.*

*And letters-they're personal, most folks say
At least they're meant to be.
Not always so, for I, you know,
Must have mine read to me.
Besides, dear Lord, I'm never sure
Just what I ought to heed
Some folks say this and some say that
I'd know if I could read.
It must be granted to search God's word
I cannot really know.
The blessing it can bring to man
I cannot read, you know.
Well, Spring is here. The time is ripe
For sowing the precious seed.
T'would help so much to till the soil
If only I could read.
So many foods we could enjoy
And have upon our table.
But how can I know how to buy
When I can't read the label.
Surely someone, Lord, who's had a chance
Could take a chance with me.
Could teach me how to read and write.
This is my earnest plea!*

Church News

Jonathan Edwards has been invited by People to People and Governor Bob Riley to become a member of the official state of Alabama delegation traveling to Europe. In the summer of 2007, Jonathan will join outstanding high school students recommended by People to People delegation leaders and Alabama Student Ambassador alumni. Jonathan will experience 20 days of rewarding activities and meet the people of Europe, all while earning high school credit. The local delegation will represent the United States overseas, experience new cultures and make lifelong friends. Success and confidence await Jonathan in these and other rewarding activities. **Hats off to Jonathan Edwards for a job well done!**

In all they ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths (Proverbs 3:6). The **First African Baptist Church** observed its Annual Back-to-School program on Sunday, August 6, 2006 with a stunning program that addressed both youth and adults. **Bro. Danny Watts** was the motivational speaker for the occasion. He encouraged the youth to strive to do their best in academic and conduct so that they may become a better person. Everyone was touched by his speech.

The family of Sis. **Pinky Wade** surprised her with a celebration in her honor on July 29, 2006. The program included reflections of the honoree's life and a family tree that was illustrated on the program dating back to the year 1879.

Pray for our Bereaved Families

Memorial services for Mr. Stephan Rivers, brother of **Rev. Oscar J. Rivers III** were held on July 2, 2006 in Queens, New York.

Mr. John Byrd, Jr. was funeralized on July 21, 2006 at the **First African Baptist Church**, with **Rev. Walter L. Hawkins, Jr.** officiating. He was the father of **Bro. Terrell A. Byrd** and **Sis. Shae J. Byrd** and was a faithful member of our church.

Funeral services for Mr. Ollie S. Washington were held on August 5, 2006 at Plum Grove Missionary Baptist Church. He was the husband of **Sis. Minnie Ruth Washington**.

Mr. James Huff, the father of **Bro. Michael Brown** was funeralized on August 25, 2006 at Bethel Baptist Church.

Funeral services for Mrs. Jessie Isaac Scott, the aunt of **Rev. James Evans**, were held on August 12, 2006 at the Ebenezer Baptist Church, Forkland, Alabama.

Special prayers for **Bro. & Sis. Frank White Jr.** and family in the loss of their loved one.

Northwest District State Convention By Sis. Diana Bibb

Affiliate of the Alabama State Missionary Baptist Convention

Dr. Julius R. Scruggs, President

Abyssinian Missionary Baptist Church, Host Church

Rev. E.L. Patterson, Pastor

Ensley, Alabama

July 11-13, 2006

Panel Discussion Theme: *Implementing Mission Ministries in the Local Church*

Mark 1:17 and Acts 13:47

Sis. Diana Bibb and Sis. Edna Thompkins, Moderators

Key Biblical References

A. Mark 1:17

1. **Come Ye:** This is an imperative form of the verb which means “to be in the presence of the one calling” – Jesus
2. **After:** It suggests the believer follows Jesus wherever He went or wherever He commands Him to go.
3. **Make:** The believer is started in the present and will be completed in the future. His “to become.”
4. **To Become:** By following after Jesus, the Disciple would be made or caused to act in such a way that a change would take place in him.
5. **Fishers:** The person whose livelihood, daily task, is to catch fish.
6. **Men:** They are fishers of many human beings. They are directly supervised by Jesus Christ.



B. Acts 13:47

1. **Gentiles:** This term is inclusive of all ethnic groups beside those of the seed of Abraham. It specifically refers to the people – nations, ethnic groups, non-Jews, pagans, unbelievers in God.
2. **Salvation:** This word presupposes one being delivered from that outside control and being under the control of a power beyond oneself.
3. **Ends:** This refers to the Gospel actually being taken and shared with all races of people throughout the entire inhabited world.

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Northwest District State Convention (con't from page 7)

C. Matthew 28: 19-20

1. **Go:** This clearly means that the Mission Ministry of the church is not to remain localized.
2. **Teach:** The disciple, the Followerer, the Believer, the Missionary, never ceases to be taught or to learn.
3. **Baptize:** Cleansing takes place or to be free of impurities by submerging in a cleansing substance. The "cleansing substance" in this Baptismal Experience is the "Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Spiritual cleansing is directly based on the name of the Lord (Acts 4:12).
4. **Teach:** The content, the information being taught is clearly the teachings of Jesus (Acts 2:47).

The objectives of the Biblical Mission Ministry:

- To spread the Gospel Message of Salvation through Jesus Christ throughout the world
- To enable believers to live their faith in Christ
- To increase the ranks of witnesses
- To edify the body of Christ
- To prepare the Church for Christ's return



More Echoes from the Field

By Sis. Bernida Byrd, Sunbeam Counselor

Selma

This summer the Youth Department has been extremely busy. Beginning with our annual trip to Selma for the Women's Convention on June 14, 2006, a total of 22 persons traveled. We had 9 Sunbeams, 1 Red Circle/YWA, and 3 Crusaders in attendance. The Sunbeam Department had a good time. Our speaker for the hour was Rev. John Anderson from Fayetteville, Arkansas. He was an excellent speaker and gave a motivational speech that was broken down so that the youth could understand. His basic message was that you should trust God with all of your cares and be thankful for everything that God does for you. Rev. Anderson also donated all of the school supplies that each youth at the conference received. During the afternoon session, each group gave their presentations. The Sunbeam presentation consisted of songs, a puppet show, and a wonderful praise dance utilizing sign language. The Crusaders' presentation included a Mime presentation. These presentations were so spirit-filled that it brought many in the audience to tears. We would like to thank the following persons for their assistance with the youth: **Georgia White, Danielle Hargrove, Elizabeth Hargrove, Lillie Lawson, Frank White III, and Earnest Showell.**

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FIRST AFRICAN BAPTIST CHURCH

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NEWS COORDINATOR

Sis. Gladys Stringfellow

CHURCH NEWS

Sis. Willie M. Carter

Sis. Ida Hobson

We're on the web

www.firstafricanchurch.org

CALENDAR

September

4-7

National Baptist Convention (Dallas, Texas)

24

Promotion Day

October

17-19

Clergy Appreciation Month

31

Annual NABD Association

Fall Festival

November

13-17

Alabama Baptist State Convention

4

NABD Minister's Wives Prayer Breakfast

(Beulah Baptist Church)

12

Church Anniversary

Christian One Liners

Don't let your worries get the best of you; remember, Moses started out as a basket case.

If the church wants a better pastor, it only needs to pray for the one it has.

Some people are kind, polite, and sweet-spirited until you try to sit in their pews.

God Himself does not propose to judge a man until he is dead. So why should you?

Many folks want to serve God, but only as advisors.

Some minds are like concrete thoroughly mixed up and permanently set.

It is easier to preach ten sermons than it is to live one.

Peace starts with a smile.

The good Lord didn't create anything without a purpose, but mosquitoes come close.

I don't know why some people change churches; what difference does it make which one you stay home from?!

When you get to your wit's end, you'll find God lives there.

A lot of church members who are singing "Standing on the Promises" are just sitting on the premises.

People are funny; they want the front of the bus, the middle of the road, and the back of the church.

We were called to be witnesses, not lawyers or judges.

Opportunity may knock once, but temptation bangs on your front door forever.

Be ye fishers of men. You catch them - He'll clean them.

Quit griping about your church; if it was perfect, you couldn't belong.

Coincidence is when God chooses to remain anonymous.

Don't put a question mark where God puts a period.

Forbidden fruits create many jams.

Don't wait for 6 strong men to take you to church.