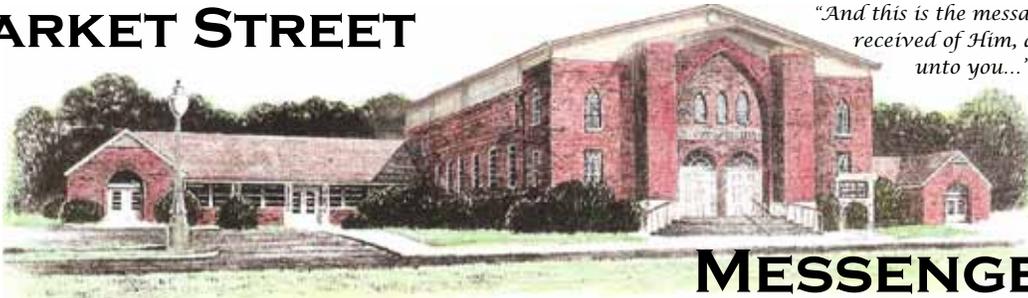


MARKET STREET

"And this is the message we have received of Him, and declare unto you..." (1 John 1:5)



MESSENGER

**Market Street
church of Christ**
514 West Market Street
P.O. Box 388
Athens, Alabama 35612
Phone (256) 232-1525

Volume VII

March 8, 2015

No. 10

How Do Churches Grow?

Paul Earnhart

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship..... 10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Elders

Jerry McGlocklin.....(256) 232-7620
Kenneth Smith.....(256) 777-6737
Bonnie Sutton.....(256) 233-2081

Deacons

Marty R. Adams.....(256) 233-5147
Tommy Coblentz(256) 232-3312
Joel Hamm.....(256) 278-1977
Larry Mitchell(256) 230-0185
Russ Wulfekuhl(256) 683-9396

Evangelists

David A. Cox(256) 233-8910
Cell: (256) 614-3757
Jordan Lovell.....(256) 777-8998

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MARKET STREET MESSENGER

*is published in the interest of New Testament
Christianity and to enhance the work of the
Market Street church.*

David A. Cox, Editor

There is a great need today for Christians to remember what their business is in the world. You would think it impossible for disciples of Jesus Christ to forget that He *"came into the world to save sinners"* (1 Timothy 1:15), *"to seek and save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10) - but it has been managed. Local churches now, as of old, can fall prey to a sterile orthodoxy that lacks both passion and compassion (Revelation 2:2-5). Christians who do not 'live for the lost' in both their individual and collective lives have become as useless as road dust and can no longer justify their existence. The Lord has not been unclear about that (Matthew 5:13).

It is for this reason that my heart has thrilled at what seems to be a resurgence of evangelistic fervor among the disciples I know. It may indeed be yet no larger than a man's hand, but it is there and it is filled with promise. This is as it should be, for there is a desperate need for us to be about our Father's business both at home and abroad, remembering all the while that this will be accomplished not by some institutional scheme, but by the awakened concern of individual saints who have come to know their Savior better and to love Him more.

Given the fragile infant nature of this new evangelistic stirring among us, it may be premature and even risky to be issuing warnings, but memories of the past serve to edge with concern the joy I feel at this emerging sense of compassion for lost souls. I can still remember the ground swell of missionary zeal that arose in the churches following the upheaval of a world war which scattered Christians from their previously narrow circles to new places in their own country and abroad. A rising post-war prosperity joined with a new awareness of the size of the world produced an explosion of evangelism. The churches grew in numbers and wealth, and a heady spirit of self confidence took hold of many disciples as they moved from their modest meeting houses on 'the wrong side of the tracks' into larger and more impressive buildings.

It was an exhilarating time, but it was also a dangerous time. From

people compelled by humble circumstances to trust in the Lord, we were transformed into a proud-spirited institution that gloried in its new-found social status. Even as men were fanning out across the world to tell the story of a simple undenominational discipleship, the gospel was in the process of being lost to presumptuous pride. Human wisdom introduced 'better methods' of accomplishing God's purposes and accommodations were made with the society to which the churches were more closely linked. It didn't have to happen and it shouldn't have happened, but we do well to note that it did happen.

My present joy at every new manifestation of zeal for perishing sinners is undiluted, but how bitter it would be to see this godly earnestness subverted by a repetition of old folly. So, while we are calling our brethren to the harvest field, let us give equal attention to the soundness of our faith and lives. This will happen as a matter of course if we maintain the humble spirit of our Savior and continue to know that the "*victory is of the Lord*" (Proverbs 21:31). As we enlarge the place of our tent and lengthen its cords, we need to remember to strengthen its stakes (Isaiah 54:2) by speaking "*the things which befit the sound doctrine*" (Titus 2:1) and holding fast "*the pattern of sound words[...] in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus*" (2 Timothy 1:13).

The last thing I intend to suggest by all this is that we become paranoid about numerical growth. Sometimes I think there are as many Christians who take pride in being few as there are that grow puffed up by being many. It is not the number that is significant but the people. People are lost one by one and they will be saved the same way. If we succeed in recovering every lost person we can, our numbers will of necessity increase, but it will still be the individual souls that are important and the glory and power will still be the Lord's.

A friend of mine recently asked me why I was so skeptical of numerical goal-setting in promoting growth in local churches. It was a new question for me, but he had read me accurately. I have an uneasiness about any great emphasis on statistics in measuring the growth of churches. I am skeptical because numbers can so often mask what is happening to people. The ultimate goal of our Father for His children is both spiritual and personal. He wills that we be "*conformed to the image of His Son*" (Romans 8:29). Success or failure in this enterprise cannot be measured by mere statistics. A far more important question to raise as numbers change is

how individual saints are faring in their effort to be more Christ-like. Churches only truly grow as the individual members of those assemblies grow. What is the glory of our numbers if people are not prepared to go to heaven?

There are no ultimate concrete number goals to be set. God is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9). If our numbers increase, and God grant that they shall, let it be because we have shown compassion to one more lost soul who needs the gospel with its saving and transforming power, and not because we are trying to build 'great churches.' This whole thing is about people going to heaven. May we never forget that.

-via *Cyfair News & Notes*; Cypress, Texas.



Stop The Madness!

Chuck Bartlett

Obviously we will never be able to stop people from teaching error. However, what we can do is make sure we don't believe error? How do we do that? We simply need to think for ourselves. Here is a case in point. I was in my car yesterday and I heard a preacher who uttered these exact words, "Only the saved can understand the Bible because they have the Holy Spirit in them to help them understand." What? Do people actually believe this stuff? According to the broadcast, some do.

This illustrates clearly that there are individuals who claim to believe in God and His word, who have stopped thinking for themselves. How do I know this? Look back at that statement, reread it. Now think about it for a minute. Now consider this, if only the saved can understand the Bible, how can people, who are not saved, get saved?

Consider the words in Acts 11:14. This is where Cornelius was told to send for Peter, "who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved." What words was Peter going to preach? They would be inspired words, the gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:40; 2 Peter 1:21). Yet, according to the preacher on the radio, we have a problem. If the gospel message is what saves people (Romans 1:16), and since people

cannot understand the message in the Bible until they are saved, how can they understand the message to be saved?

The man may have come across as so wise, but Paul addressed that when he wrote, "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" (1 Corinthians 1:20). Man may come across so smart and clever, but human reasoning can see right through those empty words.

Now, before someone tries to backtrack and suggest that mankind can understand the fundamentals of the gospel, but the rest can only be understood by the saved. As much as I want to deal with the misunderstanding about the Holy Spirit in all of this, there is plenty of other ways we can see the fallacy of this false doctrine. Getting back to understanding the fundamentals. Who can do that? Can anyone hear and understand? The Biblical answer is yes, for the simple reason everyone will be held accountable for their actions (2 Corinthians 5:10).

The truth is, not everyone will accept the gospel of Christ. Not because they can't understand, it's because they don't want to. In Stephen's sermon in Acts 7, he told the people there that were rejecting the teachings of Christ, they were resisting the Holy Spirit (vs.51). Now wait a second. Were we not told that only saved can understand the truth because they get the Holy Spirit to help them? So how can anyone, that is not saved, resist that which they can't have in the first place? This whole issue is getting sillier by the minute.

Again, if this claim is true, that only the saved can understand the word of God, then what is the explanation of Galatians 1:6-9? This is where brethren were rebuked for believing another gospel, because some had troubled them. Did the Holy Spirit let them down? We know it isn't the Holy Spirit's fault. The fact is, the Holy Spirit is also called the Spirit of truth for a reason (John 16:13). Since He guided the apostles into all truth, anyone can know the truth, Christians or not, if they desire it (John 8:32).

Folks, please go back and read Acts chapter 2. Read where the Holy Spirit gave the apostles utterance and everyone heard the message in their own language. It was a message that was accepted by three thousand, but rejected by many more. Yes, the Holy Spirit is

responsible for people understanding the word of God, because it is understandable (Ephesians 3:3-5)!

-via *Pepper Road Bulletin*; Athens, Alabama.

News & Notes

THE SICK:

Shelia Barrett	Lona Killen
Ruth Legg	Sarah Collier
Irene Inman	Marjorie Dunnivant
Patsy Thomas	Joe & Mary Hinkle
Gilbert Hardy	Carl Hargrave
Buddy Pepper	Robert & Mot Beasley
Essie Hardison	Gwen Bullock
Al Pollard	Michael Vaughn
Matt Poff	Charles Burns
Ann Bush	Gabriel Brown
Helen Rushing	Ava Brooke Campbell
Dan Williams	Anita Willis
Pat Goodin	Analynn Tegg
Gene Carpenter	Una King Carrier
Irene Mitchell	Elizabeth Kate Miller
Eli Williams	Phillip Harwell

In The Hospital:

Wayne Vaughn; Athens-Limestone Hosp. – rm. 312

Athens Rehabilitation & Senior Care:

Nelva Reed, rm. 111	Grady Tomerlin, rm. 102
Valeria Dalton, rm. 7	Evelyn Hogan, rm. 39
Robert Johnson, rm. 18	Dorothy Draper, rm. 97
Matty Murray, rm. 2	Gayle Mills, rm. 15
Mable Crafts, rm. 100	Mildred Frantz, rm. 31
Judith Groce, rm. 42	

Limestone Health Facility:

Albert Norton, rm. 36 Geneva Davis, rm. 14-E

Limestone Lodge:

Yvonne Sherbert, rm. 11

Limestone Manor:

Mary Ruth Gardner, rm. 86

Jerry Gilbert, rm. 84

Floyd E. "Tut" Fann Veterans Home - Huntsville:

Albert Bowers, rm. 115-C

Shut-In:

Wynell Casteel, at home

Ruby Jean Tinnon, at home

FOURTH ANNUAL SINGING CD: If you would like a CD of the Fourth Annual Singing, please note that on the member's card that you fill out this morning.

SYMPATHY: We want to express our deepest sympathy to **Tommy Burns** and all the family in the passing of Tommy's daughter-in-law, **Linda Yarbrough**. She passed away on Monday. Her funeral was on Saturday at Limestone Chapel... We want to express our sympathy to **Larry Mitchell**, in the passing of his cousin, **Dan Mitchell** on Wednesday. His funeral was Saturday at Spry Funeral Home... We express our sympathy also to **Dan and Doris Lovell**, in the passing their cousin, **Lena Mae Kilgo** of Cullman on Wednesday.

GOSPEL MEETINGS: The **Pepper Road church** will be having a gospel meeting this week through Wednesday. **Dennis Allan** will be the speaker in this meeting... The **Brookhill church** will be having a gospel meeting through Wednesday evening. **Johnny Felker** will be the speaker in this meeting... The **Westview church** in Hartselle will be having a gospel meeting this week through Friday night. **Gary Patton** will be the speaker in this meeting.

WORK GROUPS: Work Group two will be meeting this evening after our evening service. If you are in group two, remember to meet with your group tonight.

SUNDAY EVENING SERVICE TIME: Remember our service time will be at 5:00p.m. this evening.

THE RECORD: Attendance for week of March 1st

Sunday:	Bible Classes.....	134
	Morning Worship	179
	Evening Worship.....	119
Wednesday:	Bible Classes.....	91

Gospel Meeting

April 26-30, 2015

(Sunday through Thursday)

Schedule of Services

Sunday 9:30 a.m; 10:45 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.
Monday through Thursday- 7:00 p.m.

Bill Hall, Speaking

Market Street church of Christ

Men Privileged To Serve:

Sunday, March 8th:

Morning Worship

Announcements	Terry Andrews
Song Leader	Stefan Fudge
Prayer	Bonnie Sutton
Preaching	David Cox
Lord's Supper	
Presiding	Norman Brown
Assisting	Tommy Coblentz
Serving	Keenon Currier
.....	Bart Brown
.....	Jason Conn.....
.....	Heath Dollar
Closing Prayer	James Johnson

Evening Worship

Announcements	Terry Andrews
Song Leader	Tommy Burns
Prayer	Marty Adams
Preaching	David Cox
Lord's Supper	Norman Brown
Closing Prayer	Landon Adams

Other Assignments for Sunday, March 8th:

Usher	Ronnie Locke
Work Sound System	Nathaniel Adams

Wednesday, March 11th:

Song Leader	Joel Hamm
Bible Reading.....	Romans 15:1-13
.....	Steve Usery
Prayer	Dan Reed
Invitation	David Cox
Closing Prayer	Mot Dollar

Sunday, March 15th:

Morning Worship

Announcements	Tommy Coblentz
Song Leader	Tommy Burns
Prayer	Hunter Cox
Preaching	Jordan Lovell
Lord's Supper	
Presiding	Keith Hinkle
Assisting	Ronnie Locke
Serving	Tony Thomas
.....	Danny Johnson
.....	Cody Kennedy
.....	Kenneth Adams
Closing Prayer	Norman Brown

Evening Worship

Announcements	Tommy Coblentz
Song Leader	Stefan Fudge
Prayer	Joel Hamm
Preaching	Jordan Lovell
Lord's Supper	Keith Hinkle
Closing Prayer	Mike Ogles

Other Assignments for Sunday, March 15th:

Usher	Heath Dollar
Work Sound System	Terry Andrews