

ROCKY MOUNT CHURCH NEWSLETTER

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What's the Attraction?

There was a time that the gospel was the main attraction at church. Is the message no longer enough? Must we add all other sorts of methods to attract a crowd and activities to maintain our interest? If we must, what then becomes the main attraction? The gospel describes our lost condition and our need of a Savior. The gospel convicts the heart made alive by the Holy Spirit and points us to the One who redeemed us from our sins. The gospel tells us about the wrath to come but also the Redeemer that has washed us in his blood. The gospel describes man as nothing and God as everything. The gospel shows us our sinful nature and reveals God's holy righteousness. The gospel tells us about the curse of sin but also the everlasting mercy of the Lord. The gospel tells us what God has graciously done for us and what we ought to do to honor him. Since the days of the Apostles, the gospel has been sufficient for young and old alike. It still is! Come and experience the simplicity of the New Testament Church. **Matt Jordan, pastor**

A Bit of History in this month's edition... What an encouragement it is to know that our practices today still resemble practices observed by the church down through the centuries. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Elder Walter Cash, from Messenger of Peace, 1927

An answer to a sister who asked about our churches having prayer meetings and Bible discussions: The Baptists, in the early days of this country, had prayer meetings, but of late they have been discontinued with few exceptions. It would be better if they were kept up. There are so few members in our churches who can lead in prayer in the introduction of service. It is in agreement with the Scriptures that teach much about prayer and the obligation to pray with and for each other. To be engaged in prayer would be much better than repeating gossip and talking foolishness. The prayer meeting might be combined with reading the Bible. As to Bible readings, I have had them in my churches for twenty-five years. When we meet, we read as many chapters as we can and talk about the passages as we read them, thus, having many profitable times together.

I have heard objections to our meeting together to read the Bible by Baptists who probably read very few chapters at home the entire year. What we need is to read the Bible more. The members would understand the preaching better if they were informed on the teaching of the Bible. In the time of the Saviour, the people gathered in the synagogues to hear the Bible read, for they did not have the books as we do now. Jesus went there and read, and then would take occasion to tell what the passages meant. Read Luke 4:16-21. It is alright to read the Bible at home, but the trouble is that people let other things engage their attention and neglect the reading of the Bible. I have known preachers who have objected to Bible readings (discussions) when they themselves would have been benefited by such gatherings: their sermons showed they were not familiar with the reading of the Bible.

Reading leads to investigation, which is what the Bereans did. See Acts 17:10-11. They were commended for this searching of the Scriptures. It is better to read the Bible in company with others, for the exchange of thoughts helps us to an understanding.

Justin Martyr, First Apology, 156 A.D.

Chapter 67, Weekly Worship of the Christians

And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word, takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration.

Elder Wilson Thompson, Autobiography, 1801

Chapter Four, Impressions to Preach and First Public Exercising

In those days it was common to hold prayer meetings among the Baptists; and in that church a portion of every Sunday and Wednesday was devoted to the prayer meeting, at which we attended to the reading of the Scriptures, giving short exhortations, singing, and reading select sermons and commentaries of some approved authors, and generally someone would propose a text, and those present would give their views on its meaning. I am sorry the Baptists have so generally ceased to sustain this useful practice. I have been as much edified by the exercises of the members as by any sermons I ever heard. And then all the different gifts of the members were brought out; and, being so often together, and religious worship being the object of their social meetings, their confidence and brotherly attachments were cultivated and confirmed. One great advantage was derived from this constant exercise of the brethren's gifts, and it was this: When anything prevented the preacher from filling his appointment, the assembly did not disperse without a religious service, for the brethren would proceed with the meeting by prayer and exhortation, etc. As it is now, when a minister fails in his engagement, no member can be prevailed upon even to pray, and all assembled disperse without worship.

Church Conference, Saturday, July 5, 1902

The Primitive Baptist Church of Christ at Rocky Mount, after preaching by the Brethren Childers, Taylor and Sparks, the Church met in Conference:

1. Invited visiting Brethren and Sisters of our order to seats with us.
2. Called for the Peace of the Church. In Peace.
3. Opened the door for members.
4. Called for reference. None
5. Miscellaneous. Moved and in order that we accept the petition of the two wings of the Mt. Zion Association to come together as one body.

Done in Conference and signed by order of Same,

Elder M. Sparks, Moderator

W. J. Thompson, Church Clerk

Note: The petition was as follows: "Moved that we, as a church, accept the proposition for peace between the two wings of this Association, known as the Ballew and Shelton wings. Proposition that each lay down all

unscriptural phrases that are hurtful and be as one; receiving a work each other had done, except where one brother has been excluded for a personal offense, as they are required to make satisfaction to their own church."

The Lord Does Provide!

About 12 years ago, after having retired from my place of employment, I developed a progressive muscle disease called Inclusion Body Myositis. This disease affects the extremities of the body, i.e. arms and legs; my hands and fingers are affected, and I can no longer write, button a button or zip a zipper and I cannot lift much more than a cup of coffee and am in a wheelchair.

Prior to becoming disabled, I worked for the US Army at Redstone Arsenal for 37 years; and also retired from the Alabama Army National Guard. So, He has allowed me to provide for my material needs! I served for about ten years as Assistant Clerk and Clerk of the Mt. Zion Primitive Baptist Association until I became unable to carry out the duties.

During a recent visit to the doctor, he asked me if I became bored just sitting at home. I told him that I did not become bored, because I did not just sit; I keep a project to work on. The question also caused me to think about my situation, and how blessed I really am.

I have a program, given me by my daughters, on my computer, which allows me to talk to the computer and it types as I dictate, thus enabling me to communicate and also research with the computer, so He has not left me unable to work and communicate!

He has provided me with a wheelchair with lift which raises me to a standing position, allowing me to move from the wheel chair to my lift recliner so that I can sit and recline in comfort and also move between my chair and my bed. I cannot get up from a regular bed, so He has made a hospital type bed available for my use and comfort! He has also made a handicapped van available to me so that my wheel chair can be lifted into the van and I can be transported to my destination. I am able to attend church services and also to visit friends and relatives. He has not left me immobile!

Several years ago when Elder Hall became unable to publish the Rocky Mt. Church Newsletter, I assumed the duties of assembling, printing and mailing the newsletter. By allowing me to do this, He allows me to do my duty of providing service to the church!

He has also provided me a wonderful wife who assists me in bathing and dressing and attending to my various needs without complaint. I also have two wonderful daughters, sons-in-laws and five grandchildren who assist me in any way possible. I also have a wonderful extended family who are always available to assist and carry me anywhere I want to go or meet any of my needs. Example: A niece who is a Physical Therapist Assistant helps me with conditioning exercises. She and a nephew recently carried me to the Orthotics and Prosthetics Doctor to be fitted for leg braces.

I am almost 82 years old, and I pray that the Lord will allow me to continue for a few more years; but if not, I am ready to bow to His will. What more could I ask for or need? I am not handicapped but richly blessed!

He Does Provide!! Willard Evans, Rocky Mt. Church

Rocky Mt. Church Charter Members

My current project is to develop a list of everyone that has ever joined Rocky Mount Church, to include the date they joined the church, the method by which they joined, i.e., by letter or by experience and baptism; when and how they left the church; by exclusion, dismissed by letter or by death; if by death, where they are buried. Hopefully this will prevent the necessity of people, when doing research from searching through several books of church minutes to locate an individual. This may not be of benefit to anyone else, but it has kept me occupied. This project is almost complete, and as a final part of the task, I decided to research and learn more about the seven charter members of the church and the following is the result of that search:

1. **Clarissa Ridgeway** was born in 1812 in South Carolina. Husband was Elijah B. Ridgeway, born in 1806 in South Carolina and moved to Alabama prior to 1840 and in 1870 lived in Township 8, Range 3, Warrenton Beat of Marshall Co., AL. Her husband, Elijah B. Ridgeway was buried in the Ridgway Cemetery, off Aldridge Gap Road at Beech Creek. There are many unmarked graves in this Cemetery and possibly one of these belong to

her. She died while a member of Rocky Mt. Church. She was the great-great grandmother of Sister Betty Sartin, a present member of the church.

2. **Sarah Ridgeway** was born in Alabama on 22 April 1840 and died on 26 Oct 1920 and is buried in the Ridgway Cemetery. She died as a member of Rocky Mt. Church. She was never married. She was the daughter of Elijah B. and Clarissa Ridgeway.

3. **Prudence Willis** was born about 1810 in Tennessee. Her husband was Philip Willis, born in Tennessee about 1793. In 1860 they lived in the Western Division of Marshall Co. Their family consisted of nine children. In 1880 she is shown as a widow, and lived with her son Henry and family. Church fellowship was withdrawn in 1885 for non-fellowship. I have no record where she is buried.

4. **Jessee Young** was born in 1832 in Tennessee. In 1860 he was living with the Phillip/Prudence Willis family in the western Division of Marshall Co. In 1880 he was living in Twp 8, Rng 2E, Beat 14 of Marshall Co. Church Fellowship was withdrawn in 1885 and I have no record where he is buried.

5. **Martha Young** was born in Tennessee in 1832 and was the wife of Bro. Jessee Young. She was living in Twp 8, Rng 2E, Beat 14 of Marshall Co. Church fellowship was withdrawn in 1885 and I have no record of where she is buried.

6. **Lorenzo Thompson** was born in South Carolina in 1811 and in 1880 lived in Twp 8, Rng 2E, Beat 14 of Marshall Co. He died as a member of the Church but I have not found his burial site.

7. **Mary J. Thompson** was born Georgia in 1840 and lived in Twp 8, Rng 3E, Beat 2 of Marshall Co., AL. She was a daughter-in-law of Lorenzo Thompson. Her husband, William J. Thompson served as Church Clerk Pro-Tem for several Church Conferences before joining Rocky Mt. Church by letter on 4 Aug 1883. I have not been able to find a burial site for either.

Willard Evans, Rocky Mt. Church

Please pray for these dear families...

Mrs. Wanda Fay Waldrop, age 79 of Arab died Sunday June 12, 2011 at her residence. Mrs. Waldrop was retired after 35 years at Wrangler and worked with Community Action in Arab for several years. She was married to Noah Waldrop who died in 1991. She was a member of Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church.

Mrs. Waldrop is survived by Daughters: Elaine (David) Smith of Somerville and Jane (Tom) Ellenburg of Arab; Grandchildren: Jana (Greg) Sweatmon, Mandy (Jason) Warnix, Corey Barnes, Lauren Ellenburg and Luke Ellenburg; Great Grandchildren: Ethan Sweatmon, Jordan, Kara and Erin Warnix; Sister: Merida (Jack) Morgan of Ringgold, GA; Brothers: Garlon Waldrop, Doyce (Margaret) Waldrop, Lynn (Sara) Waldrop, all of Arab and a host of nieces and nephews.

Funeral Service was Tuesday, June 14, 2011 at 2 PM at Gober Funeral Chapel with Elders Herbert NeSmith and Matt Jordan officiating. Burial was in Corinth Cemetery. Pallbearers were: Greg Sweatmon, Ethan Sweatmon, Jason Warnix, Luke Ellenburg, Corey Barnes, Tom Ellenburg and David Smith

Gwendolyn Hales Phillips, age 64, died Friday, June 24th surrounded by her family. She was a devoted wife of 38 years and a loving mother and grandmother. She is survived by her husband, Mitchell Phillips; son, Matthew Phillips; daughter, Kathryn Thigpen; brother, Amos Hales; and grandchildren Mary Elizabeth Thigpen and Edward Phillips. Gwen loved her Lord and her family, and she was a faithful member of New Hope Primitive Baptist Church. She was known for her extreme kindness, love, and also her many talents which included smocking, tating, cooking, sewing, and taking pictures. Gwen was born to Horace and Sadie Pearl Hales in Alexander City, AL. She graduated from Benjamin Russell High School in 1965 and Blue Mountain College in 1969. She became a junior high science teacher and later a 4-H Agent before dedicating herself to full-time parenting and homemaking.

Funeral services were held at New Hope Church in Boaz, AL on Tuesday, June 28 at 11:00 a.m. In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (www.lls.org) in honor of Gwen.