

Psm. 11:3

Baptists For Liberty

Prov. 29:2

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Gal. 5:1

NEWS LETTER

Issue #5

February 2013

Monthly verse: "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." I John 3:18

"Your Ministry Is No Accident"

by Bro. Todd Bryant

"Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 'Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.'" - Jeremiah 1:4-5

These words spoken to Jeremiah must have been extremely comforting to him. God informs Jeremiah that nothing about his ministry is accidental. Our Heavenly Father had a plan for Jeremiah before he had ever taken his first breath. In fact, the Lord tells Jeremiah that He formed him in the womb with the purpose of one day raising him up as a prophet. The word "sanctified" means "set apart". So, God actually set Jeremiah apart for this work before he was formed in his mother's womb. Surely, he must have received much encouragement in his ministry from these words.

Paul used very similar language to Jeremiah when he said, *"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles..."*. Paul's ministry was no more of an accident than Jeremiah's ministry was. Though Paul was *"breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord"* (Acts 9:1), God had a purpose for him. God had separated (sanctified) him from his mother's womb just as He had done in the case of Jeremiah.

You may recall, Paul was immediately sent to Ananias following his conversion on the road to Damascus. Ananias was quite concerned that this man whom he knew had persecuted the Lord's people so much was now coming to him for guidance (Acts 9:13-14). The Lord calmed his fears by telling him, *"Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before the Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel"* (Acts 9:15). Paul had been chosen by God specifically for this purpose. Though he was once a persecutor of Christians, God had ordained to stop him on the road to Damascus, bring him to faith in Christ and send him on his way preaching the Gospel. Nothing about this was chance. Surely, Paul must have found as much comfort in these things as he endured many trials for the cause of Christ.

Child of God, you may often wonder if you have a place in the family of God, in the kingdom of God and in His New Testament church. I assure you, the Lord doesn't call His children without a purpose. Your salvation wasn't accidental and your ministry isn't either. As surely as God sets on His throne, He brought you to faith in Christ in a miraculous manner. Just as well, He has a purpose for you - a way to serve Him - that is just as personal as the ministry of Jeremiah and Paul. Surely, God isn't speaking audibly as He was in their day. However, that doesn't mean we can't find out our purpose. The Holy Spirit of God leads believers

(Romans 8:14). Follow His leadership and find your purpose. Surely, we, as believers, will stand at the judgment seat of Christ for our service to our Lord (2 Corinthians 5:10).



"My prayer returned into my own bosom!" Rom. 35:13

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Editor's comments

It's February, which means love is in the air! Yes, the month in which people are thinking about romance & happily ever afters! Why should a political newsletter even care? Love in the Biblical sense is so much more than fairy tales & warm fuzzies. Jesus loved those the Father had given Him so much he died on the cross for their sins, love is the fulfillment of the law, and love is the mark of a true believer. You see in all three of these examples love is a verb and motivator and that's why it matters in a political discussion. Politics isn't just about who rules us, but how we interact with our neighbors and how we govern ourselves. No amount of state force can compare with the motivating factor of love to do good and seek the good of our neighbors. And if we're going to make any kind of difference in this world it will have to start with us individually working in our families and communities. So this month isn't just about love in some kind of abstract meaning, but love taking action. Action in our walk with God, our homes, & our communities. But before we can get busy we must clear the "rubbish" from our lives as Bro. Green's sermon points out there is a lot of things that get in our way of serving the Lord, and our Historical Marker this month is another article by C. H. Spurgeon on Columbus I hope encourages everyone to stand against conventional dogma and conformity as they move forward.

On the news front, there is so much going on it makes my head spin to try to keep track of it all! Sorry I couldn't put together an original page of news this month, however I highly recommend checking out The Tenth Amendment Center (tenthamendmentcenter.com) for all news relating to state nullification legislations. There is quite a bit going on from gun rights, banning drones, TSA, Obama care, drug prohibition, food freedom and NDAA (indefinite detention)

The State of the Union Address was this month among other things, it is tempting to write my own take on it as well as all of the responses to it: GOP, Tea Party, Constitution Party, Libertarian Party, The Heritage Foundation, ect ect. But then I would have to not only listen to the speech by President Obama but all the subsequent speeches, and there's just not enough hours in a day for me to do that this week. So honestly if you have a written response you'd like to share send it my way and may be we'll publish them in next month's issue. (worksjoanna@yahoo.com)

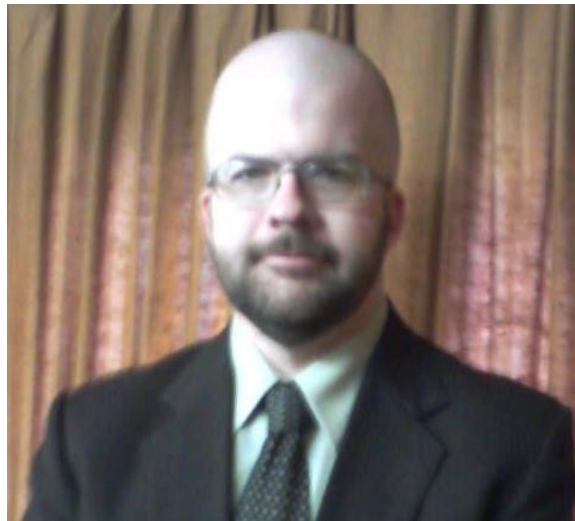
Lord willing we'll have more information on USA/Russian relations and relife effects of the Russian band on USA adoptions in next month's issue along with more news & events.

- Joanna Works

Book Reviews: Due to things that take higher priority the book review segment of the website & newsletter is on hold till further notice. (Seriously if any one would like to help out by writing book reviews once a month that would be fantastic!



"MUCH RUBBISH"



by Bro. David M. Green

"But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, *Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall. Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity: And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders. So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work. But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, and conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it. Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them. And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall. And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease.*" (Nehemiah 4:1-11)

Here we find a passage of scripture telling of a time when God's people had a mind to work, but there was much rubbish. (Rubbish – waste, garbage...not useful at all. Something that needs to be thrown away.) Is it not the same today? Every time that God's servants have a mind to work, Satan throws the rubbish in our way! Let us notice some of the rubbish we have to deal with today.

THE WORLD'S RUBBISH

"Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia." (II Timothy 4:9-10)

Demas was a man who could have been a great help to Paul

the Apostle. Yet, he enjoyed the world's rubbish too much. Does not this hinder the Lord's work today? Far too much of the world's rubbish has entered into the Lord's churches and it gets in the way of those who have a mind to work!

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (I Corinthians 6:14-18)

The Bible teaches a life of separation for the child of God. I know, we are in the world. Thats a fact, but we are not of the world! Unfortunately, we live in a day and age when people will come to church and sing "Just As I Am" only to go to live just as they were! What agreement do we have with the world? What fellowship can we enjoy? On what grounds? We're as different as night and day!

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 12:1-2)

We are warned not to be conformed to the image of this world. To conform to something means we are like them. When we learn to live by these verses, the rubbish of the world will be greatly reduced and we can concentrate on the Lord's work so much better!

INTERNAL RUBBISH

"And the sons of Eliab; Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. This is that Dathan and Abiram, which were famous in the congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against the LORD: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign." (Numbers 26:9-10)

Dathan and Abiram were troublemakers against Moses and Aaron. They caused much rubbish to come in. Yet, in this text it says "when they strove against the Lord." When you rise up against someone who has a mind to work for the Lord, you had better be careful. You do something against one of God's servants it is the same as if you are doing it against the Lord!

"I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not." (III John 9)

Diotrophes loved to have the preeminence. He was the type of man who wasn't the pastor, but loved to make people think he was in charge. He obviously did his best to undermine the church and the church's stand. This is pure rubbish!

"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took

him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." (Matthew 16:21-23)

Notice the rubbish the Lord had to deal with here, coming from Peter. Satan can so influence people that a servant of God can be, at least for a time, the servant of the Devil. He still does this today. Oh, the times when a church has been split because of internal rubbish! When a member of the Lord's churches is influenced by Satan, very bad things will happen and there is much rubbish!

"But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." (James 3:14-16)

Church disagreements, arguing and bickering are all forms of internal rubbish we often have to deal with. It is not from God, but is very much from Satan. God is not the author of confusion! Let us watch out for such garbage!

"Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve." (John 6:70-71)

Sometimes a lost man will get into the church and even become a member. Nothing good comes of that, and much rubbish can come as a result.

PERSONAL RUBBISH

"For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." (Romans 7:14-25)

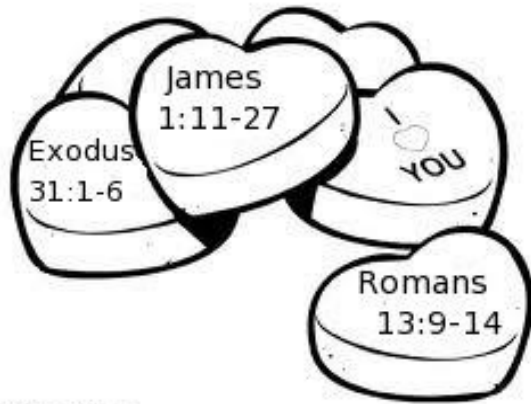
The biggest pile of rubbish that Satan uses in our lives is right between our two ears, for this is where he can hit us the hardest! In every child of God there is a battle of two natures. Temptations and memories from your old nature will come at those times you have a desire to work for the Lord. Your mind is like a video camera always recording and it will often bring up images from your past that will cause harm to your work for God. We need to watch out for this rubbish!

CONCLUSION

"So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days." (Nehemiah 6:15)

In spite of all the rubbish we have to deal with, the Lord's work should still be done! The work of God must continue!

Labor In Love



Our Newest Segment: "Labor In Love" will focus on various brothers and sisters in Christ and how the Lord is using them either in a career, volunteering, or in their families in fields that are entangled with politics and gives them a chance to witness to those around them. Originally intended to be a large article for this issue, however there are so many people to talk to, so we're going to make this a semi regular segment.

No one person is gifted or called to take on every single task that needs to be tackled, however we're all gifted and called to do something. What ever talent the Lord has blessed you with or material goods, pray that God will help you use it for His honor and glory. Perhaps you can donate to a cause, or give of your time to you local school or a local charity, or may be God is leading you to a career in the public sector. As Baptists we know the church is tasked with the feeding of God's sheep and worshipping God, however as His people are are to live in this world and care for our fellow man. What ever God is leading you to do please keep the brothers and sisters in these columns in your prayers at the very least.

Karen Power Burford: Married to my pastor, Donnie Burford at South Irvine Baptist in Irvine, KY. I am a stay-at-home mom/church secretary. I have 3 daughters, and am still home-schooling the youngest. I have one grandson. I have always been broken over abortion, but have never done anything about it. When our church received a letter about the initial meeting, I felt it, was time to do something tangible. We can no longer just talk about how terrible it is. We must do something.

Tell us about Family Life Resources:

Our ministry is to the unborn, the newly born, and the yet to be born again.

We will offer free pregnancy testing, and will progress with the client from there. If the test is positive we will show the mother what her baby looks like, and encourage her to choose life, then offer support.

If the test is negative, we will talk about abstinence. We will offer abstinence education to any groups who invite us, as well as in the local schools, if they will allow it. Many schools will. We also plan to offer post- abortive counseling. Everyone who walks through the door will hear the Gospel, and receive a Bible. That is the primary goal.

As support, we will try to pair up each client with a volunteer to act as a mentor, following the mother throughout her pregnancy, and up to 2 years after birth. Many girls have never seen good

parenting and have no idea how to do the most basic things: rent an apartment, keep house, prepare healthy meals, keep a budget, balance a check book, care for a baby or toddler. We hope to help in these areas.

We will have the information available to refer the clients to other services they may need, such as drug or alcohol counseling, housing, food, etc...

How did it start and who else is involved?

A group of people interested in the possibility of starting a center met last summer and began the process. The idea began with Sandra Wilds, who is currently the administrative director at a center in Richmond, KY. She believes God has called her to stand in the gap and speak for the children who have no voice. We have a temporary board, (I am on the board) a building which will be available in April, and we have just finished our bylaws, and are applying for our non-profit status. We received the initial letter from Sandra in June, I think, of 2012, and had the initial meeting around then. She sent it to all the churches in the community. The center in Richmond is called Pregnancy Resource Center, but they don't have the facilities to offer the Earn While You Learn curriculum. That center has been open a long time. I don't know how long, but Sandra has been there 8 years. We may change the name. Not sure yet. We currently have 8 temporary board members, formed to lay the groundwork for the center, adopt by-laws, and file for 501-c status. We will appoint a permanent board soon. We plan to open in April, and are trusting that God will provide the funding.

About Funding Needs:

We currently have about 3/4 of the money needed to order the curriculum, but need a lot more to pay our expenses. People are slow to support things like this, while thousands of babies are being slaughtered daily.

Our biggest expense right now is \$5,000 to purchase a curriculum called Earn While You Learn. It consists of up to 2 years of modules teaching the mother all of the things mentioned above, as well as supporting her through her pregnancy. The client will come in 1-3 times a week, watch the dvd, do a worksheet, and earn "mommy money" to spend in our baby boutique. This allows her to earn the things she needs for her baby, and not just receive another handout. Our operating budget will be about \$40,000 a year. That's a lot of money, and will be entirely supported by individuals and possibly some local businesses. No government funding is available for faith-based ministries.

Tax deductible donations can be made to:

Family Life Resources
PO Box 592
Irvine, KY 40336
familyliferesources40336@gmail.com

We are working on a web site.

How many volunteers do you currently have? How can others help?

I don't know the number of volunteers, since they serve in different ways. I have a basement full of donated clothes waiting to be sorted, and put in the Baby Boutique when we occupy the building in April. Ladies from our church will do that. Others, including myself will receive training, and will work in the center. Some will help with building maintenance, professional services, etc....I'm guessing 8 or so regular volunteers will be needed, with the full-time Director being the only paid position, when the budget allows. Until then, Sandra will continue to work at the Richmond center 2-3 days a week and volunteer her time at our center. When the center is able pay a salary, she will come full-time. (Only because she can't afford not to work.) This is typical, although most centers have 2-3 paid employees. Apart from funding (monthly or one-time gifts), and volunteer work, people can donate Bibles and people can commit to pray.

These centers face constant threat of break-ins, (since many clients are drug-dependent, and know where our electronic equipment is), and bureaucratic intervention. Also, we need constant prayer for the souls of these mothers.

Any obstacles so far?

So far, we haven't encountered any serious issues. Just the challenge of funding. God has provided us with a building, owned by one of the churches in town. It is a house they have kept for emergency situations, but their board has agreed to let the center have it. We haven't heard yet if there will be rent charged, but the Pastor is recommending they donate use of the building. That is a HUGE help! It is in an ideal location, just off a main road making it accessible yet private. We still need portable dvd players, filing cabinets, clothing racks, furniture, etc....

This ministry is so needed. Our hope is to not only save babies from abortion, but teach the mothers how to change the downward spiral their lives are often in through the power of Jesus Christ, and through practical teaching and mentoring. So many have never seen responsibility in action. They just follow the path they've seen. We hope to break generational habits and start new lives.

Bro. Jason Smith:

My parents are Rex & Connie Smith (My Dad is the Pastor of Midland Missionary Baptist Church in Franklin Furnace, OH). I have two sons Jacob age 15 & Noah age 10. I am a member of Midland Missionary Baptist Church for the last 2 1/2 years. I currently am the principal at Greenup County High School. I was Assist Principal last year, and Principal this year.

I got into education about 13 years ago mainly because of my love for history and government. I figured that it would be a great career to wake up everyday and get to teach two subjects that I had a passion for. I also spent about 10 years coaching high school basketball. I started out as a boys Junior Varsity coach and eventually coached boys & girls varsity basketball. I was the coach on two district championship teams. I think the Lord placed me into education because I seem to excel in having a great rapport with kids and also, or so I have been told, I have very good leadership qualities and/or skills.

What are some of the governmental obstacles you face?

Typical paperwork/bureaucracy/compliance issues. For example, just because someone has a piece of paper that says they are a "teacher" doesn't make them a good one. Often times there are quality people that don't have the correct certification or license that are much better for kids than the person with the piece of paper.

What is hindering the right people from being allowed to teach?

Basic state certification laws. For example, I couldn't have a retired M.D. come in and teach an Anatomy class without him having a "certificate" to teach.

What are some of the social politics you have to deal with because of your job?

There are always "social politics" whenever there are people involved. While it's difficult separating the political from the moral issues, I try very hard to do that particularly at school. There could be teachers and/or students who are homosexual for example. While I morally and spiritually vehemently disagree with their "lifestyle", I try not to treat them any different professionally. We live in a FREE country where people have the choice to make certain decisions. If they make those that are contrary to the Bible, then they will have to answer to God. I try and respect them as people and privately pray for them to make better choices.

You show grace in your dealings with people, do you feel this is a two way street or are some people judgmental toward you because of your personal beliefs?

I haven't had anyone be judgmental toward me and my beliefs. Most people are respectful and often share the same values, just maybe disagree on certain "doctrine".

What kind of changes (good or bad) have you seen in the public education system?

I see many more people (parents) who are depending on the everyone else to care for their children. Schools are being asked to do too much. While I consider it a moral obligation to do as much as we can, the increase in this way of parenting is becoming disheartening at times.

What's the main driving force for this pressure, parents making demands on the school system or the system makes it easier for parents to neglect their responsibilities?

Yes....but I feel as though myself and my staff have moral obligation to help those who need it regardless of who is to blame for neglecting their responsibilities.

As far as the improvements in public education is concerned I think accountability on the students, teachers, schools, and parents is rapidly improving. At my school we are responsible and held accountable for student achievement. That is a very good thing!

Who is holding your school accountable, is this community, state, federal level?

ALL THE ABOVE! More importantly my school is holding ourselves to a higher standard than even those.

What are your thoughts on schools being "gun free zones"?

I think schools should have certain, unnamed personnel armed at all times. I don't think anyone should know who they are, and they should be very well trained. For example, I have 2 retired marine corp ROTC instructors in my building. They both have had fought in 2 wars. I think we should have the option of arming them if we went through the right procedures to make that happen.

About School Safety and threats:

We had a bomb threat and a armed gunman threat in consecutive days. These threats were done via text message using a free app that gives the sender an out of state number. As a precaution we did a lockdown until it was determined that the building was safe. Kentucky State Police along with local Emergency Managements team gave us the all clear in both instances. While the threat was in reality minimal, we had to take them very serious considering the recent events in Sandy Hook. Our staff and students did a terrific job handling the situation.

Our biggest issue was probably misinformation getting out to the parents and community. Students were texting parents inaccurate information which created some panic and excitement that wasn't necessary. We'll learn from this and improve our procedures and protocols.

I would love for increased parent presence in our building! Parents could volunteer to help with day to day tasks and help with student achievement in many different ways. The more parents we have volunteering the more they can share what a great and safe place for kids that GCHS really is!!!

What do you think of bills such as "No child left behind?"

NCLB did have some very good qualities. It increased school accountability and brought awareness to the fact that school had to be responsible for student achievement. At the same time, it had some deficiencies as well. It did require some mundane reporting that adds to the work load of schools that really is unnecessary.

Believe it or not, President Obama's views and policies on

education have been much more reasonable. It still remains to be seen whether or not these ideas bare fruit, but I philosophically I tend to favor them.

What are some specific education policies that Obama have been more responsible then Bush?

Obama has relied less on test scores as a source of accountability. His administration has taken a more holistic approach. For example, we are now held accountable for test scores, student growth, reduction of achievement among certain sub-groups in our school, graduation rate, and college & career readiness.

What are your thoughts on teacher unions? (Are principles in some kind of union?)

Teachers unions in Kentucky are very weak at the school level. They have representative power, but not much muscle. Principals do not have a union per say, but I am a part of a professional development/networking association called the Kentucky Association of School Administrators.

Thoughts on charter schools and home schooling?

Charter Schools are not legal in Kentucky, part of the reason we did not get the "Race to the Top" education grant from the Obama Administration. I'm not opposed to home schooling at all. I am, however, a proponent of public education. In my opinion, a student who attends public school gets an education from school and parents. I worry that strictly home-schooling might be unbalanced. It eliminates the social interaction that everyone has to deal with (good and bad) when they are adults. *Have there been attempts to allow charter schools in Kentucky?* The attempt was made to allow charter schools, yes. However do to the Kentucky Education Association (Teacher's Union) pressure.....the state legislature wouldn't pass the needed legislation to make that happen in 2009. If Kentucky would have done this.....they would have been a prime candidate to receive President Obama's "Race To The Top" funding for school improvement. 19 states applied, 6 received the funds.

What are some ways the Lord has blessed you through this career?

The Lord has blessed me because of the people I have encountered during my career. The students that I have had always have taught me more than I have taught them. I have also made life-time friends of some of my colleagues.

What are some ways the Lord has opened doors for you to witness to others through your job?

I usually take the "route" of making decisions about what we consider right and wrong. This usually leads to conversations about church, morals, family, and godly living.

What advice or warnings would you give to any one considering going into public education as a career?

You better have a tremendous work ethic. The era of high stakes accountability forces all educators to work year around. Summers off, weekends, etc.....are not times to take it easy. Great teachers work at their craft during these times. Also, you have to absolutely love kids. If you do, you will find a way to help them achieve. In the end, that's all we are simply trying to do.

If someone isn't a parent but would like to help their local schools what are some great ways they can get involved, some volunteering options may be?

EVERY SCHOOL NEEDS VOLUNTEERS!!! There are so many things that they could do. Schools provide Academic, Co-Curricular, and Extra-Curricular activities.....all of these need responsible adults who are good people to help with these type of things.

"Walk Through The Door"



by Bro. Todd Bryant

"For they all were trying to make us afraid, saying, 'Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done.' Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands" - Nehemiah 6:9

Nehemiah had been given an opportunity to do the Lord's work. A door had been opened for him to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1-3). Certainly, the providence of God had opened this door and Nehemiah was faithful enough to walk through the open door. However, this effort was not without opposition. Sanballat, the Samaritan leader and official of the Persian Achaemenid Empire, opposed the mission of Nehemiah, the faithful servant of God.

After Sanballat heard that the rebuilding of the walls had been completed (with the exception of the hanging of the gates), he sent word to Nehemiah that he opposed it. Actually, the word he sent was full of falsehoods. He even falsely accused Nehemiah of rebellion to which Nehemiah responded, "No such things as you say are being done, but you invent them in your own heart" (Nehemiah 6:8). Certainly, Sanballat had not heard there was a rebellion. He, along with other Middle Eastern leaders, opposed anything and everything that the Jews ever did positively. The same is true today.

Nehemiah did not, however, get sidetracked by the falsehoods that were being spread. Certainly, he said they were inventions of Sanballat's depraved heart. However, he recognized the real reason for the dishonesty. "For they all were trying to make us afraid, saying, 'Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done.' Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands" (Nehemiah 6:9). All of Sanballat's idle chatter could be traced to one motive - he was opposing the door that God had opened to Nehemiah. The persecution by Sanballat did not thwart God's work. Nehemiah faithfully stayed on track and the walls were completed and the gates were hung (Nehemiah 6:15). When the enemies of God's people heard that the work was completed, they "were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God" (Nehemiah 6:16).

As was the case with Nehemiah, the Lord has left us with a wide open commission (Matthew 28:18-20). We do not have time to get sidetracked. Opposition to the Lord's work is not new. Certainly, Noah was opposed and mocked when he was

building the ark. Pharaoh opposed the liberation of the children of Israel during the Exodus. In our text, Nehemiah was opposed. Our Lord and Savior was opposed at seemingly every turn. Certainly, the early churches received much opposition and were greatly persecuted. You can never enter into a door God has opened without expecting opposition. Though we certainly must always be glad that the Gospel is being preached even if it's done for the wrong reasons (Philippians 1:12-18), we cannot expect that from those outside.

Children of God, let the example of Nehemiah be an encouragement to you. You may be opposed even by your own family (Matthew 10:35). But as long as the Lord is on your side, what do you have to fear (Romans 8:31).

Historical Marker: "Columbus before the Council at Salamanca"

by C. H. Spurgeon
From the January 1867 *Sword and Trowel*

OUR FRONTISPIECE REPRESENTS an interesting scene in the life of the discoverer of the New World. A plainly-attired, earnest-looking mariner, with that steady determination which characterises all true men whose convictions are strong and whose faith is steady, is meeting the objections of a number of learned professors of the sciences, dignitaries of the Romish Church, and learned friars, and defending the theory of the rotundity of the earth. An obscure navigator, strong in his belief, scouted by the illiterate, seeks in the Dominican convent in Salamanca, the great seat of learning in Spain, the sympathy and co-operation of the most erudite assembly his country can muster. Does he gain either sympathy or help? History answers, No. In the first place, anything new, however true, was stigmatized as heresy in those Inquisition times, and Columbus might well fear the consequences of indulging any thought that savoured of heresy. Priestcraft, that great curse of mankind, was sure to oppose a new theory which overturned the testimony and traditions of the Church. Then, too, the scholastic body had too much learned pride to yield to a simple navigator. "It was requisite," says Las Casas "before Columbus could make his solutions and reasonings understood, that he should remove from his auditors those erroneous principles on which their objections were founded;" which Columbus could not do, as the Ptolemaic plan had not yet been reversed, Copernicus not having at that time discovered the true theory of the solar system. Very small hope for Columbus to convert so stubborn an audience!

It is noteworthy how admirably Columbus replied to his objectors. He combated the fancies of the philosophical world with great ability. "Las Casas," says Irving, "and others of his contemporaries have spoken of his commanding person, his elevated demeanour, his air of authority, his kindling eye, and the persuasive intonations of his voice. How they must have given majesty and force to his words, as, casting aside his maps and charts, and discarding for a time his practical and scientific lore, his visionary spirit took fire at the doctrinal objections of his opponents, and he met them upon their own ground, pouring forth those magnificent texts of Scripture, and those mysterious predictions of the prophets, which, in his enthusiastic moments, he considered as types and annunciations of the sublime discovery which he proposed." Notwithstanding the dense bigotry and stupidity of his audience, a few were

convinced of the reasonableness of the new theory, and these converts, doubtless, shielded Columbus from the ecclesiastical censures of the prejudiced. But the greater number doggedly persevered in their old opinions, and the poor navigator, as our readers well know, had to fight an uphill battle for years, and had to conquer many adverse circumstances before he saw the "Land of the Free." The nobility of genius is often best seen under the most disadvantageous circumstances, and with the spiritual life the same thing holds good. Columbus braves the ridicule of the learned and the bigotry of the ecclesiastics, because he is convinced of the truthfulness of his position. So the jeers, taunts and reasonings of an ungodly world, though unpleasant and grievous, are to the Christian things to be borne with calmness and magnanimity, because his faith is in the ultimate realization of the hopes which the world derides. The deep convictions of his heart are not to be disturbed or uprooted because others will not be convinced of the superiority of the future life to that in which they now grovel. Whoever prefers to follow the theories and practices of the "old man," the godly man aspires after a perfect knowledge of the "new life." With him old fancies have passed away, and behold all things have become new. The enmity and ridicule created by this antagonism between the conventionalities of life and the earnestness and devotion to the prospects of the more glorious future are intensely strong. A teetotaler was struck down a few days ago and killed merely because he would not treat some rascals to a drop of beer; and many a man has been slandered simply because of the distinguished purity of his character and life. Nevertheless, if we believe in the world to come, and feel its power, we must not be slow to declare our convictions at all hazards, and, like Columbus, play the man.

That which many learned philosophers may not perceive, the simplest Christian may discover. True, it takes a wise man to be a Christian; nevertheless, the most advanced in worldly wisdom are dull in spiritual things. Columbus ultimately gained the object of his ambition, and his name continues to be honoured as one of the greatest benefactors of his race, while for his opposers naught is reserved but the ridicule which their own foolishness has heaped upon their memories. And the man possessed of even the mustard-seed of divine grace shall yet find his way to the kingdom above, where honour and renown shall through the eternal ages attend him; while those who sympathized not with the aspirations of his heart, but scoffed and ridiculed his godliness, shall yet learn the emptiness for good of everything that is not based upon the truth of God. Courage, persecuted comrade, truth's victories are slow but sure.

Point of View

This month instead of just hearing from one person we have the pleasure of hearing from a husband & wife team, Bro. Raul and Sis. Miriam Enyedi.

Bro. Raul: "My name is Raul Enyedi, I am 30 years old and I live in Bocs, Romania. I am married to Miriam since 2010. The three of us [Raul, Miriam & Aurel Miclea] work full time in the print shop, translating, producing and distributing dozens of titles in hundreds of thousand of copies that reach Romanian speaking people in many parts of the world. I graduated college majoring in English and my minor is German language and literature. I also keep honey bees, together with my father."

Miriam: "I am Miriam Enyedi, I am 24 years old and I live in Bocs, Romania. I am married to Raul. Aurel Miclea is my older brother. I work in the print shop here, but I also help in the office, with the book keeping and the lay out of the publications. I learned English in school. English is now the no. 1 foreign language taught in schools. It was not taught at all during the Communist regime. Romania is a

constitutional republic since 1990. The legislative power belongs to the Parliament while the executive belongs to the prime minister and his cabinet. The cabinet and the prime minister must be approved by the president. We're in the European Union since 2007. We have noticed a general improvement of the standard of life and corruption and bureaucracy are on the downhill. But prices are very high (EU standards), with an average wage that is 5 times smaller than in Western Europe. Romania's economy did not crash like that of Greece and Spain, but this is partly because of immense loans granted by the World Monetary Fund, which will take decades to pay back. "



(Sis. Miriam & Bro. Raul)

Bro. Raul, My testimony:

"I was raised in a Baptist home, with sound Christian values. From an early age I loved reading books and especially the Holy Bible. Under communism, I participated in the underground meetings of fellowship in our home, and my father used to take me with him in the mission trips. He had built for me a hard wooden seat, with no padding, and fastened it up on the rod of his bicycle. I rode on it many times, sometimes up to 60 miles/Sunday. But the Lord saved me after I turned 16, showing me my sinfulness and then the wonderful and perfect Savior. At the age of 17, I met Brother Curtis Pugh who just moved to Romania, and I started translating for him.

The Lord used him to help me understand grace and church truth (I believed most of these truths before, just by studying my Bible, though the church I grew up in did not believe these doctrines). I was scripturally baptized by Bro. Curtis in 2002, at the age of 20. This was the first baptism Bro. Curtis performed in Romania.

After that we started meeting regularly, and others came to meet with us. In 2002 we bought the first printing equipment, and we started printing our own materials at the end of 2002.

Both the printing and the mission outreach increased continually since then, and in 2009 we asked our church, Grace Bible Baptist Church of Denham Springs, LA to dismiss us and be organized in a distinct congregation. With their approval, Sovereign Grace Baptist Assembly came into being as a sister church (and the only one of our faith and practice in Romania, as far as we know). The brethren elected me to serve as their pastor, which I do to this day. Some of the people in the church that you know are Aurel Miclea, Aurel Munteanu, George and Lili Vladu."

What is the religious atmosphere like in Romania?

Sis. Miriam: "The Orthodox Church is the majority church (around 85% of the population). More than 99% of the citizens declare to be Christians. But this is just nominal Christianity. The Pentecostals are the largest body that baptizes adults. Ecumenism is flourishing, and even nominal Baptists are much involved in it. The vast majority of the Baptists are Arminians and believe that you can lose your salvation. There are only a handful of Independent Baptists, the rest are in the Baptist Union."

What, if any, problems or dangers to being a genuine Christian do people face in Romania?

Sis. Miriam: "Right now there is no danger of persecution from the State, but most of the churches here are apostate, and they will raise trouble to anyone who wants to separate and live according to the Bible. The pastors, just like the priests, try to keep the people into submission using fear. For example, one threat they use is: "Nobody will bury you after you die!"

Is Islam or any other religions a threat to christians in Romania?

Bro. Raul: "Not really. The Muslim percentage of the population is less than 0.5%. But since Romania is active on many war fronts in Africa, Iraq and Afghanistan, we are threatened, but there was no terrorist attack, and we're not afraid of any yet. The Muslims in Romania are for the most part Turkish and Tartar minorities that remained here since the days of the Ottoman Empire, and they live peacefully and in good relations to Romanians.

I should also say that under the Communist regime, Romania was in good terms with the Arab countries, to the point where the communists were supporting terrorist organizations like Hamas. But after the Communist regime fell and Ceausescu was executed (December, 1989), Romania changed 180 degrees and it has good diplomatic relationships with Israel and USA."

What kind if any government regulations try to hinder the Lord's work in Romania?

Bro. Raul: "We enjoy a lot of religious freedom now, for which we are very thankful. Romania has no State Church, even though the Orthodox Church was and is still pushing for this. Our church is not recognized by the state as such, but we care not about this. The Constitution guarantees us the right to freely assemble, and this is enough for us. We ask for no more."

Is Romania very nationalistic?

Bro. Raul: "Yes and no. Depends in what part of Romania you find yourself. Almost the entire bad nationalistic spirit died away. By "bad" I mean the spirit that incites to violence and intolerance to people of other nationalities. You can still find some general animosity against the Hungarians, due to their harsh rule over Transylvania in the time of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but this animosity is entertained usually by those who never had any direct contact with Hungarians.

And then there is an anti-gypsy feeling. Some call it a racial discrimination. I am sure this is true in many cases, but I think it rather to be a social discrimination (not because of the race, but because of social or rather anti-social behavior)."

What if any thing about politics do you say behind the pulpit?

Bro. Raul: "We don't take political stands (pro or against any party) in the church. While we believe that we have to be responsible citizens and active in performing our civic duties, we believe that the meeting of the church should focus on the glorification and promotion of our King, and not

of Cesar, whoever he may be. I may use examples from the political life in the sermons, but I will never promote a party in one."

What is the news & media like there? Is it censored much?

Raul: "Most of mass media is very biased and subjective, because the press thrusts are run by a handful of people, each with their own agenda. I would say that the most neutral and objective source of information is the independent media and, believe it or not, the National TV station. Yes, there is censorship, but not nearly as much as before. As far as the Internet is concerned, I don't think we're affected by any censorship."

What are relations with your neighboring countries like?

Sis. Miriam: "Romania's neighbors are Hungary, Ukraine, Moldova, Bulgaria and Serbia. Hungary and Bulgaria are part of the EU and the relationship with both is good now. Moldova was part of Romania until WW2, when it was taken by the Russians and made a Soviet. We share the same history and language, and many Moldavians come to Romania to work or study and have Romanian citizenship. There are some tensions with Ukraine due to some territorial claims. Things got hot between us and Serbia during the war there, but it is much better now. There are Romanian minorities in all these neighbor countries."

Thoughts on NATO, the EU, or other international organizations?

Bro. Raul: "I better measure my words when I talk about the international organizations. So, to put it kindly, NATO is a joke that gives us the illusion of safety against Russia. The EU is not a joke, things are very serious with it. It is actively working toward diminishing the sovereignty of the member states and it gradually enslaves them to the Central European Bank. Yes, there are advantages of being an EU citizen. We enjoy a common currency, and work market, freedom to travel, better protection and better services than before (education, healthcare, etc.), but I am confident that the final price we'll pay will exceed by far all these advantages."

Regarding the other international organizations, I stand against globalization, be it political, economical or religious. But from the biblical stand point, I believe this must happen, and is nothing but the erection of the stage where the Antichrist will perform its act. And this stage is being erected as we speak.



(Bro. Raul & Bro. Aurel Miclea)

Any thing the church is in need of?

Bro. Raul: "Since you asked me about needs, I will share something with you. Through the literature work we came in contact with many people, all over Romania. And not only

that, but we have invitations in Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Austria and Germany. The Lord is opening doors, people want to start Bible study groups, and to meet with us on a regular basis. We came to a point in which I feel that Aurel Miclea and I cannot cover all these places by ourselves. We need more men."

Brothers Aurel Munteanu and George Vladu are licensed preachers in our church. They could do a lot to enhance the work, but the time they can spare is limited, as they have to work long hours to provide for their families. Nevertheless, they help me with the preaching, make mission trips together, distribute literature (Aurel M. went in more than 120 villages, towns and cities in the Southern part of Romania), spread our publications on the Internet, he is maintaining the blogs and stay in contact with many people.

I would say that the greatest need we have now is a monthly support for these two men. I am confident that this is the answer for the future advance of the work. This would triple our missionary efforts. Aurel Miclea and I could focus on doing mission work in Bocsca, Timisoara, Cluj and other parts of Transylvania while Aurel Munteanu and George would cover their own communities, as well as the South and the East."



(One of their wedding pictures!)

You can find Adunarea Baptista Harul Suveran (Sovereign Grace Baptist Assembly) on facebook at [facebook.com/page/Adunarea-Baptista-Harul-Suveran](https://www.facebook.com/page/Adunarea-Baptista-Harul-Suveran) They also have an English language website for those who can't read Romanian.

http://www.abaptistvoice.com/English/Enter_English.html

“Works of the Flesh”



by Bro. Steve McCool

Galatians 6:19-21 *“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

We see today everything Paul has listed in the verses above taking place all around us. Sins of the flesh are in everything we see whether it is at work, on the street, on television and movies, and even in churches. We are living in the last days and this world is getting more evil everyday just as our Lord told us it would.

More than ever before men are calling “good evil and evil good”. We are seeing a complete reversal of the godly morals our country was once proud to say we upheld. Humanism, Paganism, Communism, Liberalism, and a thousand other “isms” have taken our nation by storm while God’s people set back and watched in disbelief. Many people today claim to know the God of the bible but refuse to live according to His commandments. Now I understand that we are not saved by the commandments. Our salvation is the gift of God, Jesus Christ and His redeeming blood saved us from our sin. Jesus told us that if we love Him we would follow His commandments. In 1 John 2:3 John tells us the same, “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.” 1 John 5:3 “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.” Ever notice how the commandments of God are “grievous” to those who are of the world? Ever notice how a child of God is at peace with His commandments?

So many people have the works of the flesh instead of the works of God. So many proclaim to be living the Christian life and yet they are living the works of the flesh. I have written and spoken many times on the worldliness of the modern church. Most churches today care little for the will of God but rather seek the will and admiration of man. It’s all about appearance. Build a nice new building, let the children play ball in the gym while the parents attend a class with a false teacher, or maybe have pizza and ice cream to draw in the masses.

Instead of teaching on sin and hell most large churches have counselors to help the people understand their problems or to show them that their problems are not their fault but the fault of our society. Christian psychologists have led many a stray with philosophies and deceptions. Teaching and preaching on the topic of sin has become very unpopular and will have a preacher run off if caught preaching it at most churches today.

“Works of the flesh” have engulfed so many today that they

don’t see their folly. Sin has become such a common place in our society that crimes that once warranted corporal punishment now get a simple slap on the wrist or in some cases public praise. Liberal judges and juries have turned their backs on the laws of our land (which were founded on the laws of God) and have rewritten the laws as they see fit. Praise God we are in the last days and we will soon be going home!

“Love Never Fails”

by Bro. Todd Bryant

“And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love” - 1 Corinthians 13:13

The apostle Paul has written a letter to a church full of divisions (1 Corinthians 11:18). Every person was interested in his own well being. No one was exhibiting love for their fellow believer. They were even treating the gifts of the early church as an opportunity to be in the “lime light”, so to speak. In the middle of instructing them about the proper use of these gifts, we find this great “love chapter”.

In this chapter, Paul makes it plain that all things must be done out of love. We can have gifts, faith, knowledge and many other things. However, if none of these are motivated by love, we are not doing God’s work and we will not be rewarded for it. The church at Corinth had gotten herself in a sad state because she was motivated by anything and everything except love. Love (for God, for Christ, for fellow man) must be our starting point. The greatest gift is love.

When Jesus was questioned as to what the greatest commandment was, He replied by saying, *“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets”* (Matthew 22:37-40).

The entire Law hangs on the concept of love? Absolutely! If we all loved one another as our own selves, would we even need laws? No. We would always consider our neighbor in all things.

Jesus even said that we are to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44). This is unnatural to us. The natural man immediately dismisses such instruction because he is unable to do this. However, the Holy Spirit that abides in a child of God enables us to do this very thing. In this life, we still battle with the flesh and that makes this instruction difficult. But, we must ever strive to starve the carnal man and feed the spiritual man!

How much easier is it for us to share the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ with one whom we love? Obviously, we are naturally more interested in the eternal abode of the souls of our loved ones than we are others. However, it is a tragedy for any to leave this life apart from knowing Christ as Savior. The unbeliever is condemned *“because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God”* (John 3:18). The condemnation spoken of here is eternal torment in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:14-15). Surely, if we consider that our fellow man will spend eternity in such a place, and if we love him, we will share the Gospel with him! Paul said, *“Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men”* (2 Corinthians 5:11). Oh, that we would all have the love for our fellow man that Paul did!

Child of God, Jesus set the ultimate example of love for us when He laid down His life for us, His friends (John 15:13). May we ever strive to show forth just such a love!