

Our mother, in her life, found contentment. Some might, and many have, become bitter from their life experiences but mother did not. Some might, and many have, given up, but mother did not. Some might, and many have, blamed others for their circumstances, but mother did not. Some might, and many have, forgotten where they came from, and who helped them get to better circumstances in their lives, but mother did not. Some might, and many would, consider mother poor, but mother did not. She, like the apostle Paul, could say, "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phi. 4:11-13).

HER LOVE

Our mother loved her heavenly Father first. She "loved God with all her heart, soul, mind, and strength" (Mark 12:30). Her love for God, and her relationship with Him, was demonstrated by her obedience to His commands: "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him" (1 John 2:3-5). "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26-27).

Our mother loved her family fervently. She took care of her family with a love that was selfless and sacrificial. She cherished every moment with her children, grandchildren, and extended family. She had a unique ability to make each of her eleven children, and their families, feel important to her, and loved by her. She was the family doctor, nurse, pharmacist, counselor, adviser, coach, cheerleader, referee, job foreman, and centerpiece. She, like the apostle Paul, strove to be all things to all people. "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:22).

Our mother loved her friends freely. She treasured her friends and had many of them. She had friends because she was a friend. "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (Pro. 18:24).

Our mother loved her new found freedom. After she retired, she had more time to do things she had only a limited amount of time to do during all the years she was employed. Mother loved to read. One of the earliest memories her children have is of mother reading the Bible. After her retirement, she spent lots of time reading. She loved reading the Readers Digest, church bulletins, and the countless books she checked out of the library. She particularly loved to read the many cookbooks she had collected. Mother developed other cherished hobbies over the years. She loved to crochet and loved to give her creations as gifts, as her way of brightening the lives of others. She especially loved to witness the fuss that was made over her handiwork at the "family auction" each year. Mother loved music. She was either singing a song, or listening to singing constantly. The inspired writer

James advised such expression of merriment: "Is any merry? let him sing psalms" (Jam. 5:13). One of the things she loved to do the most was to sit on her front porch in the early morning and listen to the birds sing. Now, she will be able to listen to the angels sing praise to God (Rev. 15:3)!

HER LEGACY

Our mother leaves a legacy of family closeness. Next to God, her family was her focus. And, she had a large family on which to focus. Since she retired, her thoughts, her conversations, her hobbies, her energy, and her constant efforts were directed to seeing that none of us forgot, or missed, the annual "Family Reunion." In an age when the members of many families lose interest in, and contact with, each other, mother refused to let us forget how important we are to each other. She was, is, and will always be the glue that holds us together as a family.

Our mother leaves a legacy of a fervent faith. She, like the mother and grandmother of Timothy, embodied and presented to her children a faith that was real and genuine. What Paul said of their influence is applicable to the influence mother's faith-filled life wields. "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also" (2 Tim. 1:5).

Our mother leaves a legacy of a finished course. She, like Paul could say, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

As expressed in the chorus of one of the songs she requested to be sung at her funeral: "When I've gone the last mile of the way, I will rest at the close of the day, I know there are joys that await me, When I've gone the last mile of the way."

CONCLUSION

Our mother's physical life cannot be extended. Her sacrificial love cannot be replaced. Her rich legacy cannot be ignored, but the lessons she has taught us can be, and should be, imitated, emulated, and implemented in our lives. The pain of this hour will lessen, the hurt will begin to heal, and the void will begin to be filled as we, like our mother, find comfort in the Lord's promises. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3). "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev 14:13).

Our mother never lived in a large or fancy house here, but believed in her Lord's promise of a mansion waiting for her there. Our mother's life here was filled with work. Now she can rest from her labors.

Rest in peace our dear, sweet, precious mother!

FOUR GOSPEL CAMPAIGNS

The week following the MSOP Lectureship, the students, as well as some of their wives and several MSOP faculty members, conducted four Gospel Campaigns. Twice each year (except in odd numbered years when the students go on a "Restoration trip"), the students, divided into four groups, travel to congregations that desire to host a campaign for Christ. These campaigns accomplish much good in carrying out the Lord's command to "preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

Campaigns are a positive force for the local congregations, as well as for the communities. Local members get involved by providing housing and food for the campaigners, and in putting materials together that will be left at doors knocked. It is not uncommon, at the end of a campaign, that members and elders ask to be scheduled for another campaign! These churches see first-hand the great good done when members of the Lord's church work together in spreading the glorious Gospel of Christ. In addition to door knocking each day, to encourage enrollment in either an in-home Bible study or a Bible correspondence course, everyone is cordially invited to come to hear the Gospel proclaimed each night.

During the week of March 29-April 3, 2008, campaigns were conducted in Lake City, FL, Jessieville, AR, Crossett, AR, and New Orleans, LA. Brethren Jim Flegert, Harold Herdon and Bud Parker, who serve as elders, oversee the **Lake City, Florida church of Christ**. Ryan Tuten and J. T. Brown (both MSOP graduates), serve as evangelists of the congregation. Additionally, the church has a good number of deacons and faithful members who worked diligently for the success of the campaign. Even before the campaign, this congregation had some twelve or more home Bible studies in progress. During the campaign, some two thousand invitations were handed out and several Bible studies were established. It was my privilege to preach the Gospel in the Lake City campaign.

The good congregation in **Jessieville, Arkansas** is a rural congregation located near the city of Hot Springs. Greg Balentine serves as its capable evangelist. Dan Cates preached the Gospel during this campaign. Being a rural area, the houses are more spread out in distance; consequently, fewer houses were contacted. However, every soul is important and great good was done in the Jessieville area. Bible studies were established and currently are in progress.

Another of the campaigns was conducted in **Crossett, Arkansas**. Brother Mark Mosher is the faithful evangelist for the congregation. Crossett is also home to faculty member Jerry Martin who preached the Gospel during this Campaign. Elders Ron Hudaba and Joe Friend oversee the Crossett church.

The DeGaulle congregation in **New Orleans, Louisiana** hosted the fourth campaign. Brethren Wes Arabie (MSOP graduate), Bill Burchett, and Howard Goodalle serve as elders of the DeGaulle congregation. Barry Grider preached in this campaign. The New Orleans area knows first hand the uncertainty

of life, as it is still recovering from the effects of hurricane Katrina. However, the Gospel was preached offering the hearers blessed assurance and eternal security for those who will obey it. Many in the area have shown an interest in the Word of God.

The next campaigns are scheduled for the Fall of 2008, and are to be conducted in the cities of **Chalmette, LA, Olive Branch, MS, Weaverville, NC, and Erwin, TN**. If you are interested in a campaign, please contact me at the Memphis School of Preaching.

Billy Bland

MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF
PREACHING
CLASS OF 2008
GRADUATES
JUNE 22, 2008

RECEPTION: 2:00 - 3:00 P.M.

COMMENCEMENT: 5:00 P.M.

FOREST HILL CHURCH OF CHRIST
3950 FOREST HILL IRENE ROAD
MEMPHIS, TN

COME AND SEE

(The following, written by Neil W. Anderson, Editor of **Gospel Advocate Magazine**, is reprinted with permission. We appreciate his remarks, and encourage you to use this great tract by brother Elkins.)

Since 1971, more than 1,140,000 copies of Garland Elkins' tract, "Come and See," have been distributed. Surely, that has to be a record!

The tract is short and easy-to-read. It invites readers to "come and see" for themselves the Bible description of the church we read about in the New Testament – and why and how to become a Christian.

Elkins, a faithful gospel preacher, has provided a great service to the cause of Christ through "Come and See." He has also helped train preachers through his work with the Memphis School of Preaching.

Send me a self-addressed, stamped envelope, and I will send you a copy of "Come and See." After reading it, you may want to put it in your Bible to have ready when talking to someone about the Lord's church. Others may want to send it to relatives or friends to encourage them to become Christians.

Neil W. Anderson