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GOOD FOUNDATIONS

B. J. Clarke

INTRODUCTION

At the Memphis School of Preaching our primary work has been, is, and always shall be, training men to “preach the Word” (2 Tim. 4:2). On June 15th, 2014, eighteen new graduates went forth to sow the seed of the kingdom into the hearts of men (Luke 8:4-15). In the meantime, a new group of students arrived, and more are coming soon, to begin their studies to become gospel preachers.

As invested as we are in training men to preach, we are also concerned with the crucial need to ground our young people in the faith, and to equip them to serve the Lord effectively – both now, and in the future. So many great elders and preachers have passed on to their reward, and many others soon will join them on the other side of the vale. Who will take their places in leading the church, and preaching the Word?

Near the close of His great “Sermon on the Mount,” our Lord emphasized the importance of laying a good foundation ahead of time in order to be prepared for the storms of the future (Matt. 7:24-27). With this principle in mind, the Lord’s church cannot afford to wait until later to prepare men and women to do the work of the church. The time to lay a good foundation for men to lead the church as godly elders is right now. The time to lay a good foundation for the perpetual preaching of the saving gospel is right now.

With this emphasis in mind, in 2007, brother Bobby Liddell, then Director of the Memphis School of Preaching, asked if I would be willing to coordinate a training program designed to help young men begin preparing right now to lead, serve, and teach in the future. I was more than happy to do so. I have always enjoyed working with young people, perhaps in part because it was a teenage boy whose words became the genesis of my sin-sick father’s conversion to Christ.



YOUNG LADIES ATTENDING “FOUNDATIONS 2014”

In thinking of a name for the program, I came across Paul's emphasis in 1 Corinthians 3:10, wherein he wrote that he had laid the foundation and another had built thereon. This vital need, for others to keep building on solid foundations already laid, is the very reason we chose the name "FOUNDATIONS."

THE FIRST FOUNDATIONS

The very first FOUNDATIONS camp took place June 22-27, 2008. There were 28 young men (between the ages of 13-18) who participated in that first training camp. They stayed in the student housing located on the MSOP campus. It was a great week and there was a positive attitude that generated excitement about the future of the program. Each year the number of campers grew, until last year (2013) we had 58 young men in attendance. That number grew even more when 73 young men attended this year's program (June 21-27, 2014).

GOOD FOUNDATIONS FOR BOYS

The 2014 program for the boys did include classes on how to prepare and deliver a sermon. In fact, they were provided a textbook written on this subject. However, FOUNDATIONS is more than just a preacher training camp. These young men also learned what the Old Testament is all

GOOD FOUNDATIONS FOR GIRLS

From the very beginning of FOUNDATIONS, there was discussion of the need for a program specifically designed for girls. Although God does not authorize women to serve as elders/preachers (1 Tim. 2:11-3:7), all must admit that women are a vital part of the work of the local church. If you doubt this, imagine for a moment the sudden removal of all of the hard-working women of local congregations from the work of the local churches. The loss would be enormous.

Of course, while the earth stands, there will be no instant removal of all the female workers of the local churches, but we must not forget that the natural passage of time will eventually remove all of the hard working sisters from the local churches where they attend. Who will take their places? The time to lay a good foundation for godly women to do their part in the work of the church is right now.

This is the very reason we announced last year that the first annual FOUNDATIONS for girls would begin at this year's 2014 training camp. As noted above, the hope to have such a program for girls has been there since the early years, but it was easier to hope for it than it was to plan it. With the boys' program demanding great time and resources, we did not want to "bite off more than we could chew." We did not



YOUNG MEN ATTENDING "FOUNDATIONS 2014"

about as they engaged in a survey of the Old Testament. They also took a journey with Joshua and learned lessons from him, both in his youth, and in his later years. They received several hours of instruction on how youth can evangelize the world around them. They were taught about the need for, and qualifications of, elders and deacons. Another of their classes was entitled "Don't Just Tell Me No...Tell Me Why." The purpose of this class is clear enough from the title. Young people are sometimes told "No," without being told why the answer is "No." This class was designed to give a reason for some of the moral rules young people are taught to observe. Additionally, these young men received a healthy dose of teaching on Christian Evidences.

Each of the boys worked on and delivered a short sermon. The 73 campers were divided into two groups and delivered their sermons on Thursday and Friday of the week. They also were given the opportunity to film a one-minute TV spot, called "A Moment Of Truth." On Wednesday evening the young men conducted the services at Forest Hill, and at four other area congregations (Getwell, Highway 77 in Marion, AR, Olive Branch, and Southaven). It was such a joy to watch these young men grow right before our very eyes!

want to sacrifice the quality of the boys' program by devoting overmuch time to the development of the girls' program. Neither did we want to sacrifice the quality of the girls'



JONAH WOOD, LEADING SINGING AT THE CLOSING BANQUET ON FRIDAY NIGHT



**CHAPERONES WAYNE AND CINDY RODGERS
WITH THEIR FOUNDATION GIRLS**

program by rushing something into place, just so we could say we had a program for girls.

My dear and supportive wife (Tish) agreed to work with me to coordinate a program for girls. In concert with a number of other Christian ladies, she put together a marvelous and meaningful program, specifically designed for young ladies. They learned about prayer. They spent time learning from the lives of ladies like Eve, Deborah, Ruth, and Vashti. They learned that even today every girl still can make a difference. They learned of how to find true beauty in a world of false messages. They learned about the look of a Christian woman. They learned how to find true fulfillment in their God-given role. They learned the basic principles for how to spread the gospel. They learned about how to find true happiness. They learned about how to have a heart for God. They learned of the importance of sending cards and making hospital visits. A number of lessons equipped them to know how to create and use visual aids in the classroom.

They were given the opportunity to ask questions to elder's wives and preacher's wives, and to ask mature Christian women for dating advice. They even learned how to make communion bread in case they ever attend a congregation where they are asked to do so. A number of these young ladies conducted a special, ladies only, Wednesday night program at the Forest Hill congregation. Several ladies commented about what an amazing job these young ladies did.



**AFTER A WEEK OF WORK, IT IS TIME
TO ENJOY THE BANQUET**

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

It was very encouraging to host 130 teenage boys and girls for a week of specialized training. There were 73 boys and 57 girls in attendance. Many of these teens came from Tennessee and bordering states of Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia. However, a good number of these young souls came to Memphis from towns all over the United States. They came from the Mid-western states of Oklahoma and Missouri. They flew in from places as far West as Arizona and Nevada, and as far to the East as Virginia and Delaware. They came to us from places as far to the North as Indiana and Wisconsin, and as far to the South as Texas and Florida.

*It truly was a great week of learning and growing. We are already looking forward to **FOUNDATIONS 2015**, which is scheduled for June 27-July 3, 2015.*



**ETHAN LIDDELL, OF BRANDON, MS,
PREACHED HIS FIRST SERMON
AT "FOUNDATIONS 2014"**

CHINA, SINGAPORE, VIETNAM

Billy Bland

On November 16, Tim Burroughs, Tim Hayes, and I departed for visits in the countries of China, Singapore, and Vietnam. Each year, Four Seas Bible College, located in Singapore, hosts the Annual Four Seas Lectureship. Just prior to the Lectureship, the College has its graduation. As Chairman of the Board, it is my privilege to attend the Graduation Ceremonies. For the past two years, I have participated in handing the diplomas to the Graduates. This year, I delivered the sermon prior to graduation. Previous to traveling to Singapore, Tim Burroughs and I visited China for a week, and Tim Hayes visited Vietnam. Four Seas Bible College has graduates in both of these locations.

The theme of the Sixth Annual Four Seas Lectureship was "Who Is Jesus?" In my opinion, this was one of the best lectureships that FSC has hosted. It was well attended, with brethren from many different countries present. Various details of the roles and person of Jesus Christ were discussed. In addition to the Lectureship conducted in the daytime, the Jurong and Lim Ah Pin congregations hosted Gospel Meetings in the evenings. It was my privilege to speak several times during the Lectureship and also to preach at Lim Ah Pin.

What a tremendous work Four Seas Bible College is doing in training Christians from places like China, India, the Philippines, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Indonesia, Vietnam, etc. in the Word of God! Graduates return to their homelands to preach the Gospel of Christ. Peter Chin (MSOP graduate), President of Four Seas Bible College, is doing a great work.

Four Seas Bible College needs your support. What better way to spend money in mission work than to be involved in a work that is actually reaching many countries? Consequently, your support would go to help preaching the Gospel in many countries where billions of people are living. If you would like to support this work, you may send support to the Coldwater Church of Christ, P. O. Box 437, Senatobia, MS 38668. Also if you would like a presentation of the Four Seas Bible College and the many opportunities it affords, you may contact Billy Bland at BBland1000@aol.com or by calling Memphis School of Preaching at 901-751-2242 and asking to speak to Billy Bland. Likewise, if you would like to be on the mailing list for updates (and more thorough reports by email newsletters), you may request these at the same email address (BBland1000@aol.com).

We returned to America on December 4, greatly encouraged by the Lord's work in the Far East. We are grateful to God for the open doors He has given us.

NEWSLETTER FROM MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING
Under the Oversight of the ELDERS
FOREST HILL CHURCH OF CHRIST
Bobby Liddell, Editor

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