

Joy IN THE JOURNEY

Activities & Service Opportunities of Mayfair Church of Christ

Scattered Abroad!

By Don Gardner

Between His resurrection and His ascension into heaven, our LORD told His apostles to remain in Jerusalem (Acts 1:4). Luke's narrative in the book of Acts, tells us that the activities of the first-century church did remain centered around that city as the number of disciples grew greatly in Jerusalem (Acts 6:7).

The early Christians faced persecution as the apostles were arrested and imprisoned for teaching the gospel (Acts 5:17-18). Later, a disciple named Stephen was brought before the council where false witnesses testified against him (Acts 6:12-14) and he was stoned as a result (Acts 7:58-60).

A man named Saul ravaged the church, dragging Christians to prison. This persecution could have been damaging to the Lord's church. Instead, the Christians were "scattered abroad" (KJV), preaching the word (Acts 8:1-4).

We later learn of believers like Ananias in Damascus (Acts 9:10), Tabitha (Dorcas) in Joppa (Acts 9:36), and Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth (Acts 18:2). The growth of the Lord's church beyond Jerusalem seems to go back to the day Stephen was stoned and the ensuing persecution, which led to a dispersion of the Christians throughout the land.

Does the Lord still work in this way today? If we want to see an example, we need to look only as far as one of our mission points, Cumbernauld, Scotland, where we find many brothers and sisters who made their way to that congregation because of war, economic necessity, job opportunities, marital relationships, or the desire to pursue new adventures.

Hanna Zubova (Ukraine)

On February 24, 2022, Russia invaded Hanna Zubova's homeland of Ukraine, so Hanna and her mother Nelia left their home in Kramatorsk, in Eastern Ukraine. Hanna says, "The decision to move away from Ukraine was difficult because we believed



The Brothers and Sisters in Cumbernauld, Scotland

that the war would end soon."

The two ladies spent two months in Romania, where Hanna made contact with a Church of Christ where she was taught the gospel and put on Jesus Christ in baptism. "I found a church in Romania by accident," she shared, "all the way from my home here I felt God's care for me."

Meanwhile, her brother, living in Northern Ireland, told her about a United Kingdom program for Ukrainian refugees. Hanna had been to Scotland before and liked the country. She contacted a friend who lived there and decided that was where she and her mother wanted to relocate. With the help of the church in Romania, Hanna was able to locate the congregation in Cumbernauld.

"I had the church and my volunteering in Ukrainian Information Centre. It helped me. I'm happy to visit the Church of Christ in Cumbernauld and I'm happy that I met people I love," Hanna shared.

Hanna summed up the importance of the support of the LORD's church in Scotland by saying, "I don't think you can find a better place than church to help you cope with depression due to the war in your country."

Louella and Paulo Budlong (Philippines)

Louella Budlong worked as a hospital nurse in the
(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

Philippines for 15 years. In 2002 she sought better financial opportunities by working abroad to help her Filipino family back home. When she learned the United Kingdom was hiring nurses she prayed for guidance.

Her prayers were answered, and she left her job in the Philippines and accepted a job in Scotland. There she met Filipino colleagues, one of whom was a Christian, and they began looking for a church where they could worship.

Ten months later, her husband Camillo joined her in Glasgow. They began attending a Baptist church but struggled with getting to worship due to the Sunday bus schedule and having to work periodically on Sunday. Meanwhile, their youngest son joined them from the Philippines where he had been active in church. He was invited to attend worship at the Church of Christ in Cumbernauld by a Filipino family that were their neighbors in Glasgow. Louella says, "The hope we have been searching has found us." They have been blessed to worship with the Church of Christ at Cumbernauld since November 2011. She and her son were baptized, and as she says, "And the journey begins."



Paul and Felicia Offin (Ghana)

Paul Offin applied for a job in the UK in 2003 when the National Health Service was experiencing a massive shortage of nursing staff.

"I was offered a job in a nursing home in Glasgow, Scotland," he says. "I applied for a working permit visa and moved to Scotland in October 2003. Because I was already a member of the Lord's church, I looked for the church in East Kilbride and

placed my membership with them."

Eight months later, his wife and three children joined him in Glasgow. They worshiped with the East Kilbride congregation for about nine years and later joined the brethren in Cumbernauld where they continue to worship today.

Adama (Gambia) and Paulina (Poland) Mendy

Adama moved to Poland to study at the university where Paulina was also a student. They met and began a relationship during which he introduced her to the Church of Christ, and she was eventually baptized.

After they married, they decided to move to another country. She says, "The idea of moving to a country where my husband can better utilize his skills was always at the back of our minds, as the aerospace industry in Poland does not offer a lot of job opportunities."

A fellow Christian who worshipped with them in Poland told them about Scotland. He told them how beautiful Scotland was and about the Lord's church. This friend had visited Cumbernauld Church of Christ in Scotland and was happy to introduce them to the preachers at the congregation via a video call.

While researching Scotland, they discovered that one of Adama's relatives lived there. They stayed with this relative for several months after arriving. Paulina says, "After all these years we are happy to call Scotland our second home."

Adama is happy with his work and Paulina has completed her early year practitioner at the college and is now caring for their baby girl born in Scotland. She adds, "Having a place where we can worship every week was very important for us as a family and we are so grateful we can worship at Cumbernauld Church of Christ. We do not regret relocating to Scotland at all because we found the Scottish people very friendly. We are equally grateful for the wonderful church family at Cumbernauld. The members have been so helpful and caring since we moved over six years ago."

Belinda Bullen (Waco, Texas)

Belinda's journey to Scotland began with reading a book series called "Outlander," the majority of which

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

takes place in Scotland. She says, “I became absorbed and intrigued with everything Scottish. At the encouragement of my daughter, I started a trip to Scotland and in 2015 my mother and I traveled to the Isle of Sky and had a grand time.”

Brenda didn’t think she would go back to Scotland, but she found an Outlander tour and returned in 2016. Then in 2017, she returned for a tour with the Scottish music group Albannach.

In February 2017, she was the administrator of a Facebook group that posted photos of Scotland and started chatting with Gary, one of the members. When she was in Scotland, he offered to take her around Edinburgh. She says, “We met at St. Giles, and had a fantastic day wandering around The

Royal Mile. After I returned to the States, we continued to communicate with each other and he came to visit me. In 2018, I visited him in Scotland and he proposed to me.”

She continues, “In 2019, we were married in Louisville, KY in a beautiful chapel that looked like it was transported from Scotland.” Due to several factors, including the COVID pandemic, it took five years to get her visa approved, but she finally moved to Scotland in March of last year.

She checked online to see if there was a Church of Christ near Kilsyth, but instead found the one in Cumbernauld. After contacting Adam Barr and Graham McDonald, they began attending soon after she arrived and are happy with their decision to worship with them. Her new husband Gary is currently involved in a Bible study with Adam Barr.

“Age-Friendly” Care: What Is It All About?

Linnea Pepper, MD

Most (if not all) of us have interfaced with the healthcare system as a patient, loved one, or caregiver. In my work as a geriatrician, I see first-hand how the healthcare system sometimes falls short in the care of older adults—despite the healthcare team’s genuine efforts to deliver the best care they know how. Some of you may have experienced this—for example, you may have seen a loved one admitted to the hospital for what seems like a straightforward procedure, only to suffer complications such as a decline in physical stamina or a deterioration of their mental state that leads to increasing dependence. You may have felt that you or your loved ones’ healthcare team was losing the “big picture” of what really mattered most to you or your family. Especially for those who are aging, you may have wished someone would simplify your care rather than refer you to yet another doctor!

In response to the growing realization that older adults in the U.S. deserve “better” care, the Age-Friendly Health System movement began in 2019 as an initiative of the John A. Hartford Foundation, in partnership with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI). I was privileged to first learn about this movement at the American Geriatrics Society meeting in Portland, Oregon in the summer of 2019.



Since that time, the movement has grown rapidly with over 5,000 health care organizations recognized by IHI as of August 2024.

Principles of Age-Friendly Care

According to the IHI, Age-Friendly Health Systems follow a set of “best practices” known as the 4Ms.

The first of the 4Ms is “What Matters”: this, I tell students, is the “big picture” goal of the patient and their loved ones; everything we do as healthcare providers should be to support and preserve this vision. As a simple example, for a patient who says “What Matters” most to them is being able to get into their car and go to church every Sunday, but who is strug-

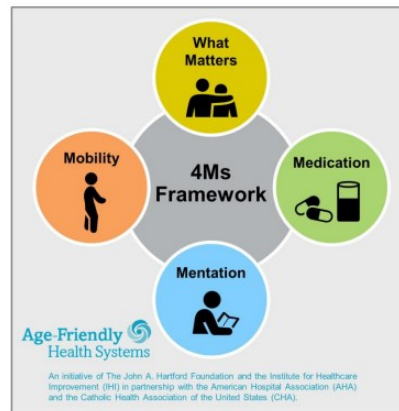
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(Continued from page 3)

gling with mobility due to end-stage osteoarthritis of the knee, I might urge that patient to proceed with a knee replacement sooner rather than later (presuming no medical contraindication), so that they can preserve their physical function and keep doing what brings them joy and meaning. Of course, helping patients and their loved ones select medications and interventions that are likely to achieve a given goal can quickly become complicated in the face of multiple chronic conditions, cognitive impairment, and/or functional decline. I often must tell patients and their loved ones that I simply don't know if a given intervention will achieve what they're hoping for. As such uncertainty is commonly faced as we age, it is extremely important that older adults discuss and document their wishes in the form of an advanced directive ideally *before* a health crisis occurs.

The next of the 4Ms is "Medication." Our bodies experience age-related changes in organ (liver, kidney, skin) function and body composition that affect the way our bodies handle medications. Particularly when older age combines with geriatric syndromes such as frailty and dementia, patients are more likely to experience harm from a given medication than their younger, healthier counterparts. Thus, thoughtful prescribing is key to optimal health care for older adults. Many medications that are relatively safe in younger patients commonly cause balance problems, falls, cognitive decline, and even increased mortality in older adults. Some examples of such medications include benzodiazepines* and first-generation antihistamines (e.g. diphenhydramine [Benadryl]). In addition to prescribing thoughtfully, the Age-Friendly Health System needs to help ensure that medication changes are consistently applied across settings of care. In other words, all the patient's providers need to be aware of any and all medication changes to minimize the risk of medication errors or adverse effects.

"Mentation" is the next of the 4Ms and is a particular passion of mine. "Mentation" includes the "three D's": dementia, delirium, and depression. All these conditions are common among older adults, but *not* to be considered a normal part of aging. Dementia is a clinical syndrome of cognitive decline that leads to



What Matters

Know and align care with each older adult's specific health outcome goals and care preferences including, but not limited to, end-of-life care, and across settings of care.

Medication

If medication is necessary, use Age-Friendly medication that does not interfere with What Matters to the older adult, Mobility, or Mentation across settings of care.

Mentation

Prevent, identify, treat, and manage dementia, depression, and delirium across settings of care.

Mobility

Ensure that older adults move safely every day in order to maintain function and do What Matters.

functional impairment (i.e., the inability to perform activities of daily living [ADLs]). Delirium is a state of sudden onset of confusion that is usually due to an underlying condition or cause and is *usually* reversible. Depression has many causes and is often characterized by changes in mood, motivation, mental clarity, sleep, eating patterns, and day-to-day functioning. Unfortunately, all three of these conditions are often underdiagnosed in older adults. The Age-Friendly Health System has structures in place to better identify and treat patients suffering from one or more of these conditions.

"Mobility" is the last of the 4Ms. As a geriatrician, I know that mobility is a "final common pathway" of many disease processes. Often, we as physicians erroneously focus on fixing a number while inadvertently neglecting our patients' mobility and function. You may have had a loved one treated in the hospital with their admitting diagnosis "resolved," but while in the hospital, they became profoundly weak and left the hospital unable to walk. The Age-Friendly Health System aims to address potentially reversible contributors to this cascade of debility.

In Psalm 71, the writer (presumably David) pleads with God, "*Do not cast me off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength is spent*" (Psalm 71:9 ESV). My hope is that healthcare providers, patients, and their families alike become champions of Age-Friendly principles so that our older adults—in whom is wisdom (Job 12:12)—receive the best possible care.

***Despite their risks, benzodiazepines should never be abruptly discontinued due to the risk of severe withdrawal symptoms, which can be life-threatening.**

“Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life” (Proverbs 16:31 ESV)

In this issue of “JOY in the Journey,” we continue our series on Mayfair’s Senior Members, who truly wear a “Crown of Glory.” As members age, they are often unable to meet with us due to health issues but are still near and dear to our hearts. This month, we learn more about one such member, Cassie Schade.

Cassie Schade

By Tim Brumlow

Cassie J. Power was born in Huntsville, Alabama on October 31, 1932. Her parents, Mandred and Julia Power, welcomed baby Cassie into the world at their home on Meridian Street – not the local hospital. While the house no longer stands, Cassie Power Schade is still going strong!

Cassie started school at West Clinton Elementary, however, she was sick so much in her first year of school, that she was required to repeat the first grade. At the time Cassie was in elementary school, the city of Huntsville was growing very quickly with the establishment of Redstone Arsenal. As a result, Cassie was moved to East Clinton Elementary in the fourth grade. Due to the increasing population of the city, both the 4th and 5th grades shared classrooms at East Clinton. The teachers noticed that Cassie was always finishing her work more quickly than her fellow fourth graders, so they recommended that Cassie skip the fourth grade! So, she was placed back with the class she started in first grade! The next year, Cassie and her original classmates were sent back to West Clinton Elementary, where she completed the sixth grade. Cassie and her family attended Central Church of Christ as she grew up.

After attending Huntsville Junior High School for 7th and 8th grade, it was on to Huntsville High – Class of '51! In high school, Cassie told her parents that she was “going to marry one of these soldiers coming to Huntsville.” She also started working at the Lyric Theater, seven days a week! She worked each day after school and every Saturday and Sunday. Cassie was promoted from being an usher to working in the ticket booth. That ended up being life-changing.

In March of 1950, a young Military Policeman was transferred to Redstone Arsenal along with the arrival of Werner Von Braun. This young fellow, Bill



Cassie Schade

Schade, met Cassie at the ticket booth at the Lyric Theater. A courtship soon began. Cassie said their dates consisted of Bill walking her home from her shift at the theater each night at 10:30 p.m. In May of 1950, Bill gave Cassie an engagement ring. In September of that year, they were married.

Cassie never met her in-laws until a month after they were married, when in October of 1950, Bill took a 30-day furlough to his family home in Maryland. Cassie said “They were the sweetest family, they loved me, and I loved them. They were good, good, good to me! You would have thought they had known me forever.” For the record, Cassie said her family loved Bill and said, “They could not have picked a better husband for me.”

In September 1951, on their first anniversary, Bill left for Korea, where he was deployed for 22 months. Cassie started to work for the telephone company but quit when Bill returned in 1953. He was trans-

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

ferred to Dothan, and Cassie went with him. However, Bill had requested a transfer back to Redstone and received it after only 6 weeks in Dothan!

Cassie never left Huntsville again after returning from Dothan, however, Bill was again sent to Korea. In 1956, Bill left the military police and returned to Huntsville. He briefly started working as a mechanic, but the Huntsville mayor, Speck Searcy, contacted Bill and asked him to join the Huntsville Police Department. That started his 31-year career with HPD. The next year, Cassie started her career, with Thiokol. Cassie started in the accounting department, then she was promoted to the controller's secretary and when the controller was promoted, she was promoted with him. Cassie and Bill retired together on the same day in 1987! He was 58 and she was 55. He was a Major, with HPD and Cassie was the Executive Secretary for the Director of Finance and Administration at Thiokol. Cassie said, "Thiokol was a wonderful place to work."

Cassie and Bill visited Mayfair occasionally throughout their marriage. April 29, 1979, things changed. Cassie and Bill attended the first service ever of Twickenham Church of Christ. They quickly became involved in the congregation. Bill Schade was the first person baptized at Twickenham's new building (he had been raised as a Lutheran).

On May 6, 2001, Cassie and Bill placed membership at Mayfair. They worked and helped with various ministries until Bill passed away on December 5,



Bill & Cassie Schade

2010. Cassie has had health issues that have prevented her from regularly attending worship services since 2018, exacerbated by the pandemic in 2020. Cassie is not able to attend in person, but regularly watches services every Sunday and said she "misses badly" in-person worship. When asked about her favorite verse from the Bible...Cassie responded without hesitation, "'I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears'" Psalm 34:4 (NIV).

Personal note: Since April 29, 1979, Cassie and Bill were regular fixtures in my life. No significant event occurred in which they were not present. Graduations, weddings, some vacations, it did not matter.

Hear Jezreel

By Dick Savage

²¹ And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; ²² And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel (Hosea 2:21-22 KJV).

If there is any chapter in the Bible that expresses the heart of God, it is Hosea 2. We have a picture of Hosea who was married to an unfaithful woman and yet he deeply loved her and longed for her to return, not just to fulfill her duties as a wife and mother, but to return to a love relationship. God told Hosea to



(Continued from page 6)

marry this unfaithful woman, and He put a deep love in Hosea's heart for her so that he could prophesy about God's love for us.

How often do we give our heart to God and then chase after other gods: gods of money, employment, or earthly pleasures? We are much like Hosea's wife in our relationship with God. Yet, in Hosea 2 we see the deep love of God, the longing and desire for His people to return to him and not just to call him "baali", or "my master", but to call him "ishi", or "my husband."

Amid this declaration of love where God speaks of betrothing us to Him again as a young love, He starts to talk of the earth hearing the corn and the wine and oil and then hearing from Jezreel. While declaring His love He starts to talk about agriculture. That seems strange to me.

First, we must look at the word "hear." The word used here in Hebrew is "tanah" which has the idea of "recounting, telling again." This is a wonderful poetic expression with a double meaning. First, it is a reference to corn which is symbolic of prosperity. He then speaks of the wine which is often represented as a symbol of joy. When He speaks of oil, He uses a unique word for oil in Hebrew, it is "Yashar" which is a pure, shining oil. It is an anointing oil. It is not olive oil used in ceremonies, but a pure oil used to anoint a wound.

Here God shows us that His heart has been deeply wounded by our unfaithfulness, yet He is not only saying that He will restore us to our former prosperous position with Him, and restore our joy in Him, but He will heal us. When we wander away from God, we also suffer a wounded heart for our sinfulness. Rather than thinking of His own hurt, He is thinking of the hurt we feel when we have been wounded. We can see a picture of this by looking at Hosea. He has been deeply hurt by his wife's unfaithfulness, he has a broken heart and yet as he says these words to express the heart of God, he is also expressing his own heart for his wife. To this woman who has brought him so much pain and heartbreak, he is thinking only of the hurt she must have experienced and is longing to heal that hurt.

Then God says that we will hear Jezreel. "Jezreel" in the Hebrew means "God sows." That

21 And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; 22 And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel (Hosea 2:21-22 KJV).

is fitting for this poetic expression where He is using an agricultural picture to express His desire to restore us, but by using the word Jezreel, He is saying that He will be the one to give us our prosperity, joy, and healing, no one else, especially not those phony gods we pursue. It will not be our money market accounts, our jobs, or our material possessions. We will find it all in Him for He will do the planting.

But there is a secondary meaning here in the use of Jezreel. Jezreel is where Gideon defeated the Midianites, where Saul defeated the Philistines, and it was in the city of Jezreel that Jehu ordered Jezebel to be tossed out of her window. Jezreel is a picture of victory and deliverance from our enemies, from idolatry. God will restore our victory over all these phony gods that we pursue, and we will find our complete and total joy in Him.

This passage is not saying this will happen, it is only expressing the heart of God. When we find ourselves in a weak moment, we give in to sin, we blow it. We come crawling back to God, thinking He must really be angry with us, expecting Him to take the whip to us. So, we bravely face up to the music and wait for him to punish us. That is what we would think because that is what we would do in the flesh. But if we can just catch a glimpse of the heart of God as shown in Hosea 2, we find that even in our worst backslidden condition, He is longing to restore us to His prosperity, His joy. He wishes only to heal our wounds and forever remove those false gods from us.

I desire to be cleansed and healed by God. He loves us so much and wants us to be with Him forever. We should seek to return His love and seek to never disappoint Him or cause Him pain.

(Adapted from a devotional by Chaim Bentorah).

Getting to Know Your Elders

We continue our series on getting acquainted with our Mayfair elders by learning about John Porter and his family, their history, and how they came to be at Mayfair.

John Porter

My faith walk is entirely unremarkable, except as a testament to God's enduring patience with a sinful young, now old, man. There was no burning bush moment, no Pauline revelation on the road to Damascus. I was never an agnostic or unbeliever. I always believed. He was always in my life, just not very prominent for a good bit of it. God used his own time of almost 72 years to gently mold me into the servant he wanted me to be, and I expect he is not finished yet. I confess to being sometimes resistant to his guidance.

I was born in Ft. Sill Oklahoma, the second of five children, while my father was in the Army. After he returned from Korea, when I was about four, our family moved to Baltimore, Maryland where my father enrolled in the physics doctoral program at Johns Hopkins University. We attended the Methodist Church, where I remember the wonderful spaghetti fellowship suppers. There I experienced the good, openhearted hospitality of Christian people. In the first grade, we moved out to the country to an old farmhouse, where I was free to roam the fields and woods at my pleasure. My memories of attending the little Grace Methodist Church were of the Christmas season celebrations and vacation bible school. At Grace Methodist, I became aware of the simple joy found in knowing Jesus.

In 1966, our family moved to Huntsville where my father took a position on the faculty at UAH. On a beautiful fall day in that year, I met a bonny young lass who took my breath away and I have not recovered it to this day. That moment changed the direction of the rest of my life. Shortly after we met, Jan invited me to go to church with her, and her mother, Harryette Slayden, said that would be fine. I was eager to go, not for some higher reason seeking spiritual truth and enlightenment, but just so I could be with her. We continued to date through high school, and I continued to attend Mayfair services with her family. For some reason, we generally attended adult bible classes, and I absorbed what was discussed. From a class on Biblical Anthropology, I



John & Jan Porter

learned that science and the Bible are compatible and not oppositional. From another class on 1st and 2nd Kings, I learned to appreciate the rich history of God's chosen people as described in the Old Testament. From my future mother-in-law, Harryette, I observed the true dedication of a believer as she got three children (and one boyfriend) to church every time the doors were open, with no encouragement or support from her spouse. On a Sunday night, Valentine's Day 1971, I walked down the aisle to "Oh Why Not Tonight" and was baptized into Christ by Bob Anderson. It was not planned. I just could not give a reason not to obey. I was compelled to walk down the aisle and confess the name of Christ.

Jan and I went off to the University of Alabama after graduating from Huntsville High and were married after our freshman year at the age of eighteen. While at the University we attended the University Church and then the Central Church. Jan graduated early with a degree in Elementary Education and went to work teaching. In May 1975 I earned my bachelor's degree in business. That Fall I entered Cumberland School of Law at Samford University, and we moved to Birmingham. While in Birmingham we attended the Homewood Church of Christ where we observed how enthusiastic a congregation could be for serving others in the name of Christ. I did not know it at the time, but Denton and Martha Kimbrough were also attending Homewood while he was in Dental School.

I was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Air Force when I graduated from the University. The Vietnam War was over by then and due to the mili-

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

tary draw down I could not serve on active duty, but spent 22 years in the Air Force Reserve, retiring with the rank of Major.

Upon graduation from law school, I was selected as Law Clerk for Judge John David Snodgrass, Madison County Presiding Circuit Judge, while Jan taught at Athens Bible School. Toward the end of my clerkship year, I was offered a position to practice law in Scottsboro which I accepted and where I have been practicing for the past 46 years. I had the pleasure of having my daughter Claire practice with me for seven years until her illness with persistent Long COVID symptoms prevented her from continuing to practice. In my practice, I have had what could be considered a small-town practice, representing people and their businesses with real-life problems. I now spend most of my time as an attorney for Jackson County, the Jackson County Board of Education, the Scottsboro Electric Power Board, and various businesses. The highlight of my legal career was arguing and winning a case before the United States Supreme Court involving gender discrimination.

Our first son, John, was born shortly after we moved to Scottsboro. Andrew was born three years later, and Claire was born three years after that. They all grew up in the Broad Street youth program and were baptized there. John now lives in Idaho with his wife Toni. Drew lives in Hawaii where he practices law. Claire lives in Rainsville, Alabama with her husband, Albert, and the absolute light of my life, Johnnie Claire Grace, aged 6 months.

After moving to Scottsboro, Jan and I joined the Broad Street Church of Christ where we continued to worship for the next 31 years. The first time we visited Broad Street we were met by Brother Albert Parks, one of the elders. In him, I observed the genuine warmth of Christian fellowship. It was in his face, his smile, and his words of welcome. First greetings do matter. During our time at Broad Street Jan and I taught classes and served in various functions. With Jan's help, I served as the Youth Deacon for 10 years before becoming an elder where I served for another 10 years. While at Broad Street I witnessed people's sincere desire to study the scripture, to glean the truth found there, and to abide by those convictions. I also became aware that even Christians with

a genuine desire to do good still have faults and prejudices. I believe the Lord allowed me to grow and mature as a Christian and elder during those years. I was in charge of organizing a Men's Retreat when I met Gary Bradley for the first time. His lesson, which many of you have probably heard, was about meeting people where they are in life. His overriding message was "You never know what load of rocks that person is carrying." It transformed my perception of how to effectively deal with those who need Christ in their life: pray with them, don't preach at them.

In 2010, Jan and I realized that we wanted to use our time, talents, and resources toward foreign missions and made a very difficult decision to leave our congregation at Broad Street. We ended up at Mayfair because of its dedication to taking the gospel to the world. We went on our first mission trip with Mission Lazarus even before we placed membership at Mayfair. It was transforming for both of us. With just enough time to wash our clothes, we went to Belize for the first time and made many trips to Belize to work with the congregations there until COVID hit in 2020. I have had the privilege to also make trips to Cuba, the Baja, and Mission UpReach in Honduras. Each trip has taught me more about people's relationships with their savior and the struggles individuals have maintaining those relationships.

So, my faith walk involved the influence of many individuals and groups of people along the way. The lesson for all of us is that we never know how our words and actions will influence another person in their service to the Lord. I do suspect that of all the young men in the youth group at Mayfair back in the late 60s and early 70s, I would not be at the top of the list of those who would end up as a shepherd at Mayfair 50 years later. I am sure that no one is more shocked than Harryette Slayden Lang. God truly works in mysterious ways.

It is an honor to serve the Lord along with my fellow shepherds, who continue to guide and influence me on my walk. However, it is still my wife of 52 years who provides inspiration.

My favorite and guiding verse, because of its simplicity, is "*He has shown you O mortal what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and walk humbly with your God*" (Micah 6:8 NIV).

Wisdom to Transformation

By Scotty Sparks

Can I Become

Do I listen?

Do I learn?

Am I wise?

Am I listening for Wisdom?

Why is it hard to see

How I need to live

How I need to share?

Will it ever become easier

To listen, to learn, to see?

Am I as disappointing to Him

as I am to myself?

Can I become wise?

In the Fall, the Hebrew culture celebrates The Feast of Booths, Sukkoth, which was first instituted in Leviticus 23. It's a weeklong celebration that reminds the Israelites of the temporary nature of their homes as they journeyed toward the promised land of Canaan. On one of the days of that week, the entire book of Ecclesiastes is read out loud at the temple. Now if you have read the book of Ecclesiastes, you know that that book is difficult to read - almost a depressed narrative from the wisest man in the world. Why did they do this?

The crucifixion of Jesus, while not directly tied to wisdom scripture, can be seen as the ultimate expression of themes spoken of in wisdom scripture. Jesus is often portrayed as embodying divine wisdom. His teachings echo the moral, ethical, and spiritual teachings found in wisdom literature, emphasizing justice, humility, and the fear of God. His crucifixion is viewed as a profound paradox where the righteous sufferer, who embodies wisdom, undergoes the ultimate act of injustice, leading to redemption and the fulfillment of God's plan.

The crucifixion can be seen as the culmination of the wisdom writers' reflections on these themes, revealing a deeper understanding of God's wisdom and purpose through the sacrificial act of Jesus.

There is a relationship between this wisdom and the cross. Most believe that Proverbs 8 is directly drawing the relationship from Wisdom to Jesus, *"The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; I was formed long ages ago, at the*



very beginning, when the world came to be" (Proverbs 8:22-23 NIV). Paul in 1 Corinthians 1 speaks of Jesus as fully embodying the wisdom and power of God - and this truth transcends human understanding, "But we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:23-24 NIV). Paul again addresses this relationship in his letter to the Colossians as treasures hidden within Jesus and the cross, "...that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:2b-3 NIV).

What a wonderful gift that has been given to us. 1 Kings 4 speaks of how God gave wisdom to Solomon, *"Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt" (1 Kings 4:29-30 NASB). The greatest wisdom in the world. In like manner, we have been*

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

given the gift of the Spirit who intercedes for us through Jesus to the Father - the greatest gift in the world.

The fear of God and keeping his commandments is the wisdom that leads to our growth, to transformation. Just as Sukkoth utilized Ecclesiastes to rightly point out the temporal and fading nature of our lives - it also nudges us to properly appreciate the

blessings that God provides for us every day. Yes, there will be times that we will struggle on our journey but we need to train our ears to listen to this gift of wisdom. As Christians, we clearly see Jesus as the full embodiment of the wisdom scripture. We all benefit from the gifts revealed in wisdom scripture as they challenge us, as they spurn us, and as they lead us to become more like Jesus in our spiritual transformation.



By David Thomason

What on earth is 2820? Odd name for a Christian mission effort. In simple terms, 2820 is a God-given opportunity to reach out to the homeless and underprivileged of Huntsville. Through worship and various Bible study opportunities, we reach out to the community with the Good News!

When you encounter a homeless person, how do you normally respond? For me, I immediately thought of them as failures, losers, people who made choices that resulted in where they ended up, on the street, dirty, poor, and rejected by most people. I offered no compassion. No understanding. If I helped them at all it was when I was cornered or when I inadvertently felt some compassion ... didn't happen often! I now regret that response.

What changed? The first time I visited 2820, I met a homeless man I'll call Bill. Bill happened to be sitting at a table all alone, so I introduced myself and sat down with him. Looking at me from across the table was a dirty, smelly, weather-beaten shell of a man. I know that my expression was one of veiled disgust But I pressed on. After 15 minutes of meaningful conversation, I got up from the table a changed man. I had to admit to myself that Bill "owned" me that day. Under all my superficial judgments, I found a likable human being who needed hope, direction, and most of all to know Jesus. I will never look at the

homeless the same again.

How does 2820 engage the community? The homeless will tell you that finding a place to attend church services in Huntsville is difficult at best. At 2820, we welcome EVERYONE. No matter what your background, washed or unwashed, rich or poor, no matter your church affiliation, everyone is welcome. We try to give the homeless a sense of community, of belonging, something that is missing in the homeless lifestyle. BUT most importantly of all, we seek to

(Continued on page 12)



A homeless man finds many services as well as a community at 2820 Governors Drive.

(Continued from page 11)

introduce them to Jesus Christ. Creating community based on faith in the Lord Jesus is the foundation of the ministry at 2820.

Why volunteer at 2820? What makes 2820 an exceptional place to serve and grow? Remember the calling of Matthew (Matthew 9)? Matthew was a Jewish tax collector for the Romans. He was a hated, reviled person in Jewish society. One day as Jesus was passing by, He invited Matthew to “follow me.” Matthew immediately closed his booth and followed Jesus. The hated tax collector was now a disciple of the Messiah, Jesus. But that’s not all: Jesus intended to go to Matthew’s house for dinner! Along the way, a crowd followed Jesus, not just any crowd but a crowd of sinners - Jesus didn’t chase them away. Instead, He ate with them, fellowshiped with them, and possibly even taught them. When Jesus’s followers were called into account for their teacher’s actions of fellowship with sinners, Jesus defended himself saying that *“He was not needed among the healthy, but among the sick”* (Matthew 9:12 paraphrased). That is why we do 2820. **2820 is a place where sin and the Good News meet.**

2820 is not only a place where you can make a difference, but where you can learn a lot about yourself and grow. Teamed with the Living Room, ShowerUp, His Way, and many other community organizations and volunteers, 2820 offers a multi-pronged approach to ministry with many ways to serve.

How can you help?

Volunteer – We need people who are willing to engage the community. A smile, a conversation, a shared cup of coffee - the invisible becomes visible, and doors open.

Financial – Any effort like 2820 needs funding for food, clothing, or other supplies. Your donations would be invested in the lives of those most in need.

Teach – Most of our week-to-week regulars attend one of the Bible studies offered. We hope to increase Bible study opportunities to help create community and stability. We need people willing to teach.

Mentoring – One of the greatest needs in the community is for people who care.



These five souls put on Christ in baptism at 2820 Governors Drive.

Meals – We are always needing help in providing breakfast or ShowerUp meals. If your Sunday School Class, Life Group, or social circle is looking for a way to be of service, providing meals would be really appreciated.

I hope you understand 2820 a little better, but most of all I hope God leads you to get involved. The doors are open! Come join us!



ShowerUP Huntsville offers mobile hygiene services to those who don't have a place to call home.

Mayfair Assistance Helpline

If you require assistance with home maintenance, automotive repairs, or transportation needs, please call the phone numbers below and leave a message and you will be contacted for details:

**256-881-4651 (during office hours)
256-704-3384 (nights & weekends)**