

THE FOREST HILL NEWS

Published weekly by the Forest Hill church of Christ

Visit our Website at www.foresthillchurch.org

Forest Hill

Church of Christ

3950 Forest Hill-Irene Rd.
Memphis, TN 38125

Office: (901) 751-2444
Fax: (901) 751-9711
Info Line: (901) 392-2449

Elders:

Anthony D. Callahan
Floyd M. Hayes
Harold D. Mangrum
Leonard Watson

Minister:

Barry M. Grider

VISIT US SOON!

Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:30 A.M.
Morning Worship..... 10:30 A.M.
Evening Worship..... 6:00 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 P.M.

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Iglesia de Cristo (Getwell)
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In Search of the Lord's Way
Truth for the World

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Number 17

WHAT IS MAN – AS SHOWN BY THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

(Part Three)

Barry M. Grider

[Editor's Note: This bulletin continues the article that began several weeks ago. The last bulletin ended and this bulletin begins with brother Rice relaying his 1961 layover in Calcutta, India, which resulted in this efforts to persuade the Canadian J.C. Bailey to go to India for long term mission work.]

What shall we say. Did all of this come about merely by an accident or was it the Providential hand of God that took control? Just consider for instance the combination of events that had to take place for all of this to happen. First of all, if I had not been on that bus, I would have not heard those two talkative women; therefore, we would have never know that Canadians could come into India to preach without missionary visas. If I had not previously taken ill on the plane, I would not have been on the bus. But if I had not promised to meet brethren Gurganus and Larsen in Kabul, Afghanistan, I would not have been on that plane. If I had not, before that, made a vow to God that I would go anywhere with anyone to do anything to advance His cause among men, most likely I would have not responded to brother Gurganus' invitation. Also, if brethren Gurganus and Larsen had not invited me to go to Kabul, I would not even have considered it in the first place.

No matter what others may think or say about this, to me there are *too many coincidences* that had to happen for all this to be merely an *uninspired accident*. My believing this, does not, of course, make it so; but down deep in my heart, I have the unwavering conviction that it was *God himself* that *stepped into the affairs of men and brought all these events to come to pass* in order that I would *be on that bus* to hear *that* conversation. Thus, I came into possession of the information that turned out to be the key to the door to the *evangelization of a country of 450-million people!*⁴

(It should be noted that now over 1 billion people live in India and over 1 million souls have been baptized into Christ.) If one believes in the providence of God, he must believe the events that brought about the conversion of so many who heard and obeyed the gospel, was indeed providential.

General Providence

The general providence of God is clearly seen in nature. God is in control of nature. After having set his natural law into motion, His law is upheld by His providence. Jesus said, "...for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). Consider how God sent rain when Elijah prayed for such.

Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (James 5:17,18).

Now was the rain sent by God? Yes! But not miraculously.

And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, go again seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the meanwhile, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel (1Kings 18:43-45).

Where did the wildflower get its beauty? It was not planted in a garden to receive special care and attention. Yet, "...consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (Matt. 6:28,29). Remember when the angel of the Lord stayed the hand of Abraham and prevented him from sacrificing Isaac, "And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold him a ram caught up in a thicket by his horns: And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son" (Gen. 22:13). Did God have anything to do with the ram getting caught in the thicket? Of course he did! But he accomplished something through his providence, not the miraculous. Only the God who controls nature and can see beforehand can say, "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Gen. 8:22).

Just as God controls nature, He providentially rules nations, even evil rulers. If not so, how could the following be true? "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psm. 9:17).

When King Nebuchadnezzar lifted himself up with pride, God said,

And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws (Dan. 4:32,33).

Nebuchadnezzar, like Cyrus (Isa. 44:28), was God's servant, though neither had such realization. Joseph knew that God, not Pharaoh was sovereign. All political and civil rulers today should understand that the power they assert is from God and can quickly be taken away. Just because God does not work miraculously today, does that mean all those who believe in him are deists? Has God just wound up the world like a clock and left it alone? No! God is working through His divine providence.

(To be continued.)

RELIGIOUS DEBATE

MAY 13th—14th

7:00 pm each night

The Bible teaches that a penitent believer must be baptized in water in order to receive the remission of sins.

Affirmed by Scott Ferguson, Preacher for the Macon Church of Christ

Moderator-Jason McDade, Preacher for the Grand Junction Church of Christ

Denied by Mike Choate, Preacher for the Calvary Baptist Church

Moderator-Cass Choate, Calvary Baptist Church

MAY 20th—21st

7:00 pm each night

The Bible teaches that justification is obtained by faith alone.

Affirmed by Mike Choate

Denied by Scott Ferguson

The Debate will be held at the Somerville Church of Christ located just off Hwy. 64 in Somerville, Tennessee.

2005 YOUTH DAY A GREAT SUCCESS!

Matthew Martin

Last month, the Forest Hill Church of Christ hosted the annual Youth Day, with the theme: “The responsibilities of youth.” It was a great success. Being the first youth day of which I was a part, I was very nervous to help coordinate. Thankfully, I had many people working with me and helping me make sure everything went smoothly (and barring a few microphone problems, it did). The real credit to the success, though, was the four outstanding Gospel sermons that were preached.

Brother Michael Cortez, a 2004 graduate of Memphis school of Preaching, and currently on faculty with Apologetics Press, spoke on “Youth’s responsibility to their bodies.” As expected, he did a fantastic job. He dealt with evolution’s view of the body, as well as how God would have us treat our bodies. Michael did a good job setting the pace for the rest of the speakers.

Brother Wayne Jones, associate preacher of the Southaven congregation, and a MSOP graduate, spoke on “Youth’s responsibilities to their friends.” Brother Jones dealt with two simple points: responsibility to Christian friends, and responsibility to non Christian friends. He did a great job and really kept the audiences attention.

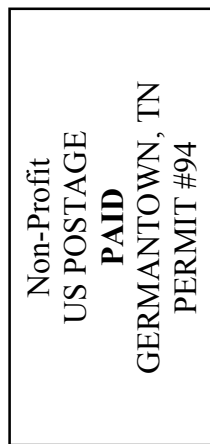
After lunch Scott Perry, also a graduate, spoke concerning “Youth’s responsibility to their parents.” Brother Perry is currently working with the Mabelvale congregation as their associate preacher. It is a testament to his ability and to the power of God’s word, that a man with no children can speak so ably concerning responsibility to parents.

All sermons were outstanding, including the last, as Barry Kennedy, also a 2004 graduate of MSOP, preached on “Youth’s responsibility to their God.” Barry is a campus minister in Jacksonville, Alabama. Brother Kennedy always did a good job preaching while in school and has only gotten better since he began full-time work. While brother Cortez did a good job introducing the over-all topic, brother Kennedy did a good job bringing everything to a close.

Another highlight of the day was the fantastic singing that we had. Brother Steven Sutton, a second year student in the school, who also is the full time song leader at Forest Hill, led the nearly 250 attendees in great singing. Special thanks to Helen Newsom and Keith McAlister for their special assistance.

All in all, the 2005 Forest Hill Youth Day, like the 2005 MSOP lectureship was a great success. Here’s to next year! Also remember the four sermons (along with the MSOP lectures) are available at:

www.oabs.org/archives/lectures/msop2005.htm



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Forest Hill Church of Christ
3950 Forest Hill Irene Road
Germantown, TN 38125
Address Service Requested