

THE FOREST HILL NEWS



Forest Hill Church of Christ

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Elders:

Anthony D. Callahan
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Harold D. Mangrum
Leonard Watson

Ministers:

Barry M. Grider, Pulpit
Matthew Martin, Associate
Douglas Alvarenga, Hispanic

VISIT US SOON!

Sunday:

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

Wednesday:

Bible Study7:00 P.M.

HOME OF THE MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING

www.msop.org

Missions Supported:

Far East/World Evangelism
Gospel Broadcasting Network
Iglesia de Cristo (Getwell)
In Search of the Lord's Way
Kakinada, India
Manila, Philippines
Murmansk, Russia
Truth for the World
Words of the Master (Memphis
Time Warner Cable ch17)

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Number 35



[Editor's Note: With the arrival of September comes relief from the heat wave of August. It is also a reminder that the beautiful season called Autumn is right around the corner. Such always provides a marvelous opportunity to reflect on the Creator's masterpiece, as does the poet below.]

GRAND DESIGN

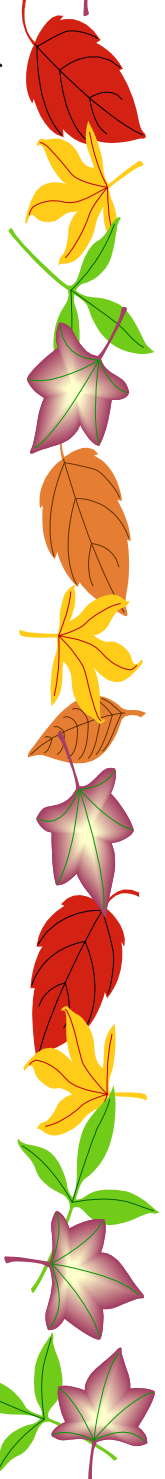
Autumn's days call out to us,
Their timbre crisp and clear
In voice akin to music,
They warn us winter's near

With golden foliage drifting
Bright pumpkins on the vine,
Soon calm will be replaced
With storms that bend the pine.

We warm ourselves with cider
And walk through wooded land
To marvel at earth's canvas
God has drawn in His freehand.

Fall's colors tint the landscape,
An artist's holy shrine.
Blessed are we, held within
The good Lord's grand design.

Lucyann Murray



THE AUTHORITY OF ELDERS

Jeff Sweeten

“Eldering” is both a blessing and burden. Many have argued (correctly, I believe) that a church rarely transcends its eldership and the apostasy churches are experiencing today reflects poor leadership. Many elders do not know their Bible well enough to “feed the flock” (Acts 20:28), “pray over” the sick (James 5:14) or, especially, “convict the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9, ASV). As memberships lose their weak for lack of pursuit and invite innovations into worship for lack of knowledge, elders abdicate their leadership responsibilities to “pastors” and “youth ministers.” Confidence levels in our elderships have dipped to an all-time low and many churches have begun to abandon them for the popular pastor hierarchy of community church models; and the “people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?” (Jere. 5:31). Faithful Christians who love the truth, however, will not accept alternatives to God’s divine arrangement for church government; and there are still “seven thousand...who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal” (Rom.11:4).

Finding good elders has understandably become increasingly difficult, especially when one considers the mood of the nation in regard to submission. Respect for authority is passé; the notion of subjecting oneself to any law other than self is mocked across the entire spectrum of our society from our institutions of “higher education” to our urban, gang subcultures. Little wonder that those few qualified men who courageously accept the responsibility of shepherding a flock do so with great trepidation. They recognize the signs of the times and steel themselves for resistance, rejection, and outright rebellion from egomaniacal members steeped in self-service. To be sure, this worldly “me-first” mentality is not new to God’s people (cf. 1 Sam. 8:5; Isa. 30:10) but the latest rash of this “my-way-or-the-highway” attitude has, in the manner of old times, seeped into the church from “all the nations” around us (1 Sam. 8:5) like a toxic sludge that poisons pure minds to the truth of an eldership’s purpose and authority.

The Hebrew writer addressed what must have been a similar and current concern in his day, and he was explicit in chapter thirteen concerning the role an elder plays when he stated: “Remember them which **have the rule over you...**” (v. 7) and

“**Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves:** for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not grief: for that is unprofitable for you” (v. 17). Peter, also an elder, calls the position one of “**oversight**” (1 Pet. 5:2, all emphasis JDS). Obviously, these three references do not allow elders to change divinely decreed, obligatory matters. For example, they cannot modify salvation to omit baptism or endorse “faith only.” However, these scriptures do make it perfectly clear in simple language that elders have divine authority in matters of expediency. Further, we are to submit to our elders’ oversight, the expression of which is specified as obedience!

The New Testament provides an example of church government and Luke records the transition from inspired apostles to authorized elderships. Official church matters were dealt with in a timely fashion with divine sanction. When physical needs arose in the church at Jerusalem, funds were “laid...at the apostles’ feet” (4:37) and when Grecian widows were “neglected in the daily ministrations” (6:1), “the twelve” called the church together to dispatch a solution. It was not long, however, before “dissension and disputation” was brought “unto the apostles **and** elders” for solution (15:2), “and the apostles **and** elders came together for to consider of this matter” (v. 6). Couriers then “delivered them (churches of Christ) the decrees to keep, that were ordained of the apostles **and** elders” (16:4, all emphasis JDS). So, the mantle of authority began to pass from apostles to elders. As persecution scattered disciples everywhere (Acts 8:4), churches planted by missionaries organized after the Jerusalem pattern and Paul’s epistles not only reference “the overseers and deacons” (Phil. 1:1, ESV), but also articulate the appointing of and qualifications of those who would carry on this noble work (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). In fact, it can be forcefully argued that a church without elders is lacking (Titus 1:5).

No one has the right to “improve” on God’s divine plan. “Elders in every church” (Acts 14:23) with members (including individual elders) in submission to the eldership (Heb. 13:7,17) is the divine pattern. Upon this, we cannot improve.

“WORDS FROM THE MASTER”

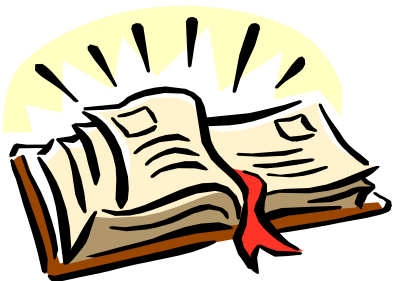
Forest Hill Church of Christ
Wednesdays: 5:00-5:30 P.M.
Time Warner Cable - Channel 17

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to the 2 and 3 year old bible school class for their accomplishments this last quarter. Emmy Pace and Hunter Pope learned the apostles' names. Arielle Evans, Vada Grider, Jordan Mangrum, and Jonathan Rickles learned the apostles and all the assigned bible facts for the summer quarter. Isabelle Dees, Arielle Evans, Vada Grider, Anna Horn, Jordan Mangrum, Emmy Pace, Hunter Pope, and Jonathan Rickles also quoted Luke 2:52. The teachers were Christa Mangrum, Mary Elliott, and Leah Connell.

Congratulations also to the 3 and 4 year old class for learning their cards and memory verses. Great job Jazmyn Howard, Miranda Grider, Conner Mangrum, and Sam Rickles!

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BIBLE BOWL BEGINS!

Monday, September 18, 7 p.m.
Southaven Church of Christ

Please be studying 1 Corinthians 1-3.

WORK TEAM REORGANIZATION DINNER

THURSDAY,
SEPTEMBER 21, 2006
6:30 P.M.

FOREST HILL FELLOWSHIP HALL

This will also be an opportunity to meet all the new students at the Memphis School of Preaching.

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