



## PRAYER REQUESTS

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 12

MARCH 18, 2012

- Continue to keep **Pam Richards'** parents in your prayers.
- **Reagan Kenyon, Sasha Tompkins & La Donna Gammill** all need your prayers as they continue to seek great results.
- Beverly and Clifford Gunn, Judy Roybal, JO Vick, Dick and Judy Bird, Belle Yokum, Willie Johnson, Bobby Wright, Larry Reeder, Koben Puckett, are all in need of prayers.

## Announcements

- Keep the families of **Zell Gammill, Dolores Gonzales** and **Alice Cleaver** in your prayers since adjusting to the loss of these deeply loved ladies will be hard for them.
- On **Wednesday** evening we will meet at **6 PM** for a meal and then to write notes of encouragement for our monthly *Working for the Master*. There is a sign up sheet in the back for the meal.

## Benevolence Update

We are collecting **cereal** for the Portales Christian Children's Home this month. Our goal is fifty boxes and while we are a small congregation, the children are even smaller..... We know we can do this for the children :-)



**Silas Shotwell** will bring the lesson today

### Men Serving this Month

- **Announcements:** Tom Oliver
- **Scripture:** Bob Addison
- **Song Service:** Mark McCollum

### Happy Birthday

March 25— Charlie Overton

### Anniversaries—

None this week

### Calendar of Events

**March 21**— Working for the Master

**April 1**— Potluck Sunday

**April 18**— Working for the Master

**May 6**— Potluck Sunday

**May 16**— Working for the Master

**May 20**— Baccalaureate, 6 PM

**May 25**— Graduation, 7 PM

## CHRIST AND CULTURE: BUILDING ON BROKEN FOUNDATIONS BY BY LYNN ANDERSON

A scene from a movie brought my friend Ivan to his baptism. Folks these days sure seem wired up differently from my early years. Back in those days, baptism usually followed teaching. I'd open a Bible and logically lay out the facts, commands and promises of the gospel. That's how I lead them to the cross. Then, I'd explain from scripture the meaning and urgency of baptism. And it worked -- then -- in a 'modernist' world.

But Ivan is the child of a 'postmodern' world. He is a 39-year-old husband and father of three who heard plenty of Bible facts as a child in church. But those gospel 'facts' didn't 'take' and Ivan lived most of his adult life away from church. Not long after the birth of their second child, Ivan and his wife began attending church again. Then one night came that pivotal moment in the George Clooney movie, *Oh Brother, Where Art Thou* when Ivan decided to be baptized. At one point in the film, three jail-birds on the lam stumble into the middle of an out-door religious gathering where dozens of other-worldly figures move through the woods, to be baptized in the river. All the while Alison Krause sings a haunting melody, *Down to the River to Pray*. The movie quotes no scripture. It advances no doctrine. Raises no warnings of coming judgment. Yet, somehow, that Hollywood baptismal scene touched Ivan's heart -- like logic never had. As soon as the movie was over he tracked down someone to baptize him. Worked for Ivan -- in a 'postmodern' world.

Seems like everywhere we turn these days, new forces shove modernist minds out into the unnerving turbulence of postmodern culture where we may tumble for decades. Some say this new worldview began with European existential philosophers. Some blame Einstein's theory of relativity for the first crack in our foundations. Others trace post-modernism to the counter-culture of the 1960's (See Gene Edward Veith, Jr., [Postmodern Times](#), Crossway, 1994). Still others say old thought categories fell with the Berlin wall.

Some see democracy as an accessory after the fact. At first democracy meant: one person, one vote. Now it means: don't ask God about right and wrong. Ask George Gallop. "The voice of the people is the voice of God." But let me shout: "these are not days for Christians to huddle in fear and bash the culture. This generation is not the enemy." Oh no, never. In spite of the fact that, "this is a generation with many needs" yet, thoughtful believers see "...each of these needs is an opportunity for God and his Son." As Paul Ramsey reminds us, "The Christian pilgrim, therefore, should pass from one age to another with the ease and serenity of freedom, assisting the new which is always struggling to be born, because in every age he loves not the times or some abstract truth but the neighbor" (Paul Ramsey, [Basic Christian Ethics](#), New York: Scribner, 1950).

The early church flourished best in times much like these. In some significant ways our world looks more like the world of the New Testament than any era between the two. In fact, the Generation X or Generation Next worldview may share more Biblical values than does the Boomer worldview. And if we keep preparing for the future of the Church, these may well turn out to be some of the best years in the history of the faith!

The gospel, however, will enter postmodern hearts best through new doors. We must rethink how we define, defend and spread faith where rationalism is outdated and where people see no 'true truth, no absolute values. Our day calls for persuasion, which transcends rationalism. 'New' persuasion may need to be more like the 'old' persuasion of the New Testament. (In some of the following observations I am influenced by Kevin Ford, [Jesus for a New Generation](#), InterVarsity, 1995).

Continued on page 3 —>

### Leadership of the Fort Sumner Church of Christ

#### Elders

Tom Oliver 355-2591

Les Miller 575.760.3833

#### Deacons

Pow Carter 355-2998

Gary Good 355-6426

**Silas Shotwell: 575.512.4400**

#### Supported Ministries

Miguel Garcia Zaragosa, Mexico

Satish Bontha Chennupali, India

Check out our web site for electronic versions of the newsletter and other resources to support your walk with Jesus—

<http://fortsumnerchurchofchrist.com>

Continued from page 2

First, these times call for a new apologetic. My old apologetic is passé. Reason and logic will not easily convince post-modern people neither toward 'absolute truth' nor toward faith in Jesus. Remember what moved my friend Ivan to baptism? We do not suggest that a new apologetic should be irrational or anti-rational. Of course the mind must stay in the game. But rational thought is not the only player on the field.

And words carry much less freight in this new world than does an 'embodied message.' The old saw was never more timely: 'I'd rather see a sermon, than hear one any day.' For example: Milton Jones says that, "15 years ago, we could walk through a university dorm and organize a Bible study, any day of the week. That won't work now. But today we can walk and recruit a service project team any day of the week."

Second, Story: Now generation hearts sing, 'tell me the story of Jesus.' This is actually not a new approach, but a return to a biblical apologetic. The Bible is itself a sweeping of story with God at the center. Jesus mostly told stories, rather than 'exegeting' text or positing airtight propositions.' And the book of Acts is a story. Even so today, hearts are moved when we authentically tell how The Story intersects with Our Story.

These times also call for fresh strategies. Fresh, however, does not mean 'new.' Most strategies of the first-century church fit the twenty-first century culture. The more biblical the strategy, the more effective it may be today. The more authentically we 'be the church' and 'love our neighbor' the better we will connect with a postmodern culture.

These times, for instance, are post-rationalistic. There are more ways of knowing than the 'head' way. Today's world has little trouble accepting the supernatural. It has more appetite for the transcendent and the mystery than yesterday's world. Great! The Christian story is of course a story of supernatural events and intervention.

And these times definitely seem post-denominational. Hallelujah. Isn't that what we in the restoration movement have always wanted? Here is our opportunity to 're-join' the movement toward non-denominational Christianity, which seems to be going on all around us.

Many postmoderns feel betrayed: the Christian story restores broken trust especially when embodied in people who "will never leave you." Even before the terrorist attack September 11, and certainly after the assault, people feel vulnerable and insecure: the Christian story, however, brings a sense of safe protective, healing, community, in the arms of a loving God. In our day many lack a sense of identity: in the Christian story, on the other hand, our identity is clear. Jesus is our identity "...Christ lives in me" ([Gal. 2:20](#), NIV).

Are these days post-individualistic: Ian Forester in the epigram to Howard's Inn tersely captures this longing, "only connect." The Christian story is about real community. Not just rhetoric. Nor virtual community. Nor merely finding a group "I feel good in." Rather, real community covenanted together on what and whom we are willing to suffer for. This is the Christian story.

Like their first century counterparts, many people today feel alienated. The Christian Story is about reconciliation. It takes at least two things to communicate the gospel: hearing the word and experiencing the message in real 'one another' relationships.

And postmoderns respond to good mentors: they do not believe in authority figures. But they seem drawn to wisdom figures. Great! Spiritual leaders lead by example, not position, and the Christian story introduces them to a safe and healthy Father and a loving servant Lord who will be 'the same yesterday, today and forever.'

We have glimpsed at just a few ways the first century apologetic and strategies can impact the 21st century. To summarize: Possibly best thing the twenty-first century church can do to reach its world is to be the 1st century church. Not the medieval church. Not necessarily the Reformation church. Nor the 19th century church. Rather, as Tim Woodruff reminds us, we must recover not ancient forms, but Biblical functions of the early church (Tim Woodruff, *A Church that Flies*, New Leaf Books, 2000). We must 'take from the altars of the past the fire and not the ashes.' Are post moderns pessimistic: The Christian story brings hope – now and forever.

So, What shall the righteous do when foundations fall? Real foundations never fall! Fifty years ago, toward the end of modernism in the western world, pundits proclaimed, "modernism will defeat Christianity." But Christianity is still here, and flourishing, while modernism is dying. Now, some futurists are suggesting, "Christianity won't survive the post modern period!" But don't you believe it -- all the momentum is to the contrary.

Our God is an unchanging God! Jesus the Christ is "the same yesterday, today and forever!" The Bible is an unchanging word! And, as the Psalmist reminds us, "The Lord is in His Holy temple; the Lord is on his heavenly throne" ([Psalm 11:4](#)).

With these eternal foundations and faithful promises we are confident people of hope.

URL: [http://www.heartlight.org/articles/200201/20020124\\_culture.html](http://www.heartlight.org/articles/200201/20020124_culture.html)