

August 2008

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You Will Be My Witnesses

Elder Charles Moore

The Book of Acts shows us how normal, authentic Christianity should be lived. We need to have our eyes, our ears and our hearts opened up to see and hear what God is doing among us. We need to realize that we are filled with the resurrected Jesus Christ; we are part of His plan of redemption, moving out into the community as salt and light, under the power and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus has given us everything we need to be fishers of men, women and children. Jesus spoke these words to the disciples just before He ascended into heaven: **"but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."** (Acts 1:8)

All who have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit, His person and His power. He was given to us to enable us to be witnesses so that other men and women can learn of this plan of redemption. We are Christians because someone, at one time or another or perhaps many times, witnessed to us about Jesus and our lives have never been the same. Now God asks us to witness too, to open our mouths to witness, but also to make ourselves available to witness

through good deeds.

In the following passage, Paul is about to set sail from Troas to Europe ("**to the remotest part of the earth.**") to witness.

Therefore putting out to sea from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and on the day following to Neapolis; and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia, a Roman colony; and we were staying in this city for some days. And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled. And a certain woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us. (Acts 16: 11-15)

Traveling with Paul to Philippi were Luke, his

physician, Timothy, whom he picked up in Galatia on this second missionary journey, and Silas, who came up from Jerusalem to make this trip. Like any tourists, they checked out the city, and discovered that there was no synagogue there. The rabbis taught that ten men were required in order to have a synagogue. Lacking that, they taught that the next step for people seeking a place of prayer was to meet by a river. That is what these four disciples did; they went outside the gate of the city to a river.

But if they went expecting to meet God's men there, they were surprised instead to find a group of women. As they spoke to the women, we can only suppose from Lydia's response that they told her about Jesus the Messiah, the Holy One of Israel. Lydia, a business woman from Thyatira, in Asia Minor, listened intently to what Paul was saying, and, the text says, "The Lord opened her heart." That's a key phrase. We are called by God to simply teach and preach the Word and tell our story when an opportunity arises. We do not have to open the hearts of the people to whom we are speaking the Word. That is not our responsibility. We never have to manipulate or force the message. We don't have to go to sleep at night worrying if the seed of the Word of God had taken hold. Our business is to show up and like a farmer, plant the seed, go to bed, and let the ground produce the crop (how, we do not know). The Lord Himself opened Lydia's heart and the hearts of her household

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and all of them were baptized.

God is calling out a people and He wants to use you and me. I don't know why He does so; He could do it all without us, without our complaining, without our excuses. "I don't want to show up. I hate going to church. That guy is making me nervous by asking me to go out there and talk to real people about Jesus. I'd rather stay home and watch "Deal or No Deal." But God has a wonderful plan of redemption and he wants us to be involved in it, simple as that.

God says to us through Paul, **"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."** (2Corinthians 5:17-21)

God has made us His ambassador's to the lost world, committing to us the 'word of reconciliation', that is, the good news that Christ died for our sins. May we be found faithful to the work that He has given to us to do.

Michigan Report

Aurine Moore

The days have been warm and the nights cool. It was a nice month and not one when it was miserably hot. The month of August has been a slow 'news month' in some years – but not in 2008. People took vacations, visited church, got jobs, were ill and were blessings to others.

The church enjoyed some special Variety Time presentations by members. Nate Valentine shared, among other things, the wonder of growing up from infancy to high school graduation in Kentucky without electricity except for the two short years he lived with his Uncle Nate in Royal Oak, Michigan. Dave Fedor shed light on dinosaurs and the Bible (not speaking from his personal experience, of course, but from his research on a great web site at clarifyingchristianity.com). The person who went the furthest to bring us Variety Time material however was Katie Begeman, who traveled to help out at a Lakota tribe in Manderson, South Dakota. The population there is 626 and the average household income is \$8,229. By contrast, Monroe Michigan has a population of 146,000 and a median household income of \$51,743. Volunteers from West Ida Emmanuel Lutheran Church took a group of students in two vans on a week long journey (with a sleep-over at

a hosting church). When they arrived for their week long mission trip, they worked with 20 to 30 children each day. Katie and the others from their group fed them, played games with them and read to them. They also took time to build a cabin and took quilts to them, donated by Monroe Quilters Guild. Katie, says, she learned a lot and she shared slides and stories of her time spent there.

We have been blessed to have Marshala Goins, her son James, and her daughter Jamesha with us at worship services. The care facility that James stays at is wonderful. They send a staff member to accompany him to church and we are greatly enjoying getting to know each of the workers who come. James recently had surgery to relax some of his muscles and it went very well. We've made a wheelchair ramp to help him get into our building.

Jean Lane recently had a fall that left her face looking painfully sore, but she has continued to smilingly insist she feels just fine. Of course, we make jokes about how bad the other guy must look. Her daughter, Terrie Fedor, says it was frightening to watch but she coped admirably and got her mother the help she needed. The fall occurred while Jean was still healing from cataract surgery, so we were thankful when the doctor confirmed Jean's eyes as well as her face had not been damaged.

Several of our members had notably good trips this month. Jeff, Melinda, Katie and Sydney Begeman (daughter of Jim and Tisha Begeman) have been on a grand circle tour to and from the Western states. Kathy and Joe and Ben Smeltzer and Carrie and Joel DeHaan were off for a trip to Florida and had some good fun family times there.

Kathy has returned to serve as an Algebra instructor at Monroe County Community College for two nights a week in her 'spare time' following her full time day job at Jefferson High School. Let's all sign up for algebra and see why she is an acclaimed instructor! The local church chipped in to help a number of students attending area schools to purchase their back to school supplies. We gathered items and dropped them off to the local Salvation Army who saw that supplies were distributed to kids in need.

When it becomes back to school time, it's also time to begin saying farewell for a time to our outlying members and friends who return to warmer climates. This month we said farewell to David and Ruth Charles, but not before wishing David Charles' a very happy birthday.

Karyn Zajackowski has been very ill in the hospital and out of the hospital. LeRoy Fruchey's wife, Sally, passed away after a long illness. On the last day of the month, Bosco Moore, brother of Elder Moore, also died after a five year illness that followed a car accident. Please keep all of them in your prayers.

August is typically a vacation month and this was no different this year, many folks were out and about this month.

David, Ruth Charles, Lynn and Rob Vaughn spent a week in Branson, Missouri enjoying each other and the many shows there. They came back to the Vaughn's in Howell and the family had a birthday party for David. All the Charles clan was there except Joshua Nevil who is still stationed in Jacksonville, Florida and unable to travel so far. The Charles' went home to Florida at the end of the month and David had a physical check up with his doctor. He is sending him for a stress test as he has some chest discomfort when he exerts himself. He has assured me that we are not to be concerned as he feels fine most of the time. Our prayers are with you, David.

Dorothy Layton and I spent some time on the phone and she is in good spirits. She can drive and go where she wants to as long as the walker comes with her. So many stores have the electric carts now and that is a wonderful help to our folks who have difficulty walking a distance.

Deborah and Jim Stoner were getting ready for a gang of people to come for a cook out to celebrate the end of summer, I think. I am sure they had a great time. It is too bad we don't all live close enough to attend their great parties!

The Phoenix folks (Kane and Jennie Begeman and the Jon Lanes') enjoyed having Jeff, Melinda, Katie and Sydney Begeman for guests on their trip west. I understand that Kane still knows how to throw paper wads. They had a great time together. They all attended a hockey game of Scott's, which the team won and then went on to win the tournament! Melinda remarked how wonderful the ice rink felt as it was 110 degrees outside.

Leslie and Tom Miller sent an update on their daughter. All is well with the Millers in Kansas.

Please remember to send me some notes, so I can catch everyone up on how you are doing. Fall is here and I would welcome some first day of school pictures. May God bless you and yours.

Summary of My Last Year on the Computer

I must send my thanks to whoever sent me the one about poison in the glue on envelopes because I now have to use a wet towel with every envelope that needs sealing.

Also, now I have to scrub the top of every can I open for the same reason.

I no longer have any savings because I gave it to a sick girl (Penny Brown) who is about to die in the hospital for the 1,387,258th time.

I no longer have any money at all, but that will change once I receive the \$15,000 that Bill Gates/Microsoft and AOL are sending me for participating in their special e-mail program.

I no longer eat KFC because their chickens are actually horrible mutant freaks with no eyes or feathers.

Thanks to you, I have learned that my prayers only get answered if I forward an email to seven of my friends and make a wish within five minutes.

If you don't send this e-mail to at least 144,000 people in the next 70 minutes, a large dove with diarrhea will land on your head at 5:00PM this afternoon and the fleas from 12 camels will infest your back, causing you to grow a hairy hump. I know this will occur because it actually happened to a friend of my next door neighbor's ex-mother-in-law's second husband's cousin's beautician...

**CHURCH OF THE
LORD OUR
RIGHTEOUSNESS**

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