



M Grace Messenger

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

122 Walnut Street
Madison, AL 35758
256-837-8821

GBC HOMEPAGE

<http://www.gracemadison-al.com>

"Preaching the free grace of God which brings a change of lifestyles, masters, and destinies."

DEAN OLIVE, Pastor

— April 2007 Issue —

"We should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:6).



NURSERY SCHEDULE

APRIL

- 01 – Nellie & Hannah McFadden
- 08 – Troy & Jessica Moseley
- 15 – Bob & Faye Williams
- 22 – Vicki Johnson & Sharon Bagley
- 29 – Linda Olive & Sonja Williams

MAY

- 06 – Kristy Hines & Jennifer Lovassy
- 13 – David & Mary Alice Olive
- 20 – Jon & Tonya Amis
- 27 – Nellie & Hannah McFadden

FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF APRIL 1, 2007

Budgeted expenditures (ytd)	\$ 25,987.34
Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 24,355.00
Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 1,200.00
General Fund offerings (ytd)	\$ 32,303.65
Building Fund offerings (ytd)	\$ 0.00
Love offerings (ytd)	\$ 1,517.95
Total offerings (ytd)	\$ 33,821.60
March General Fund offerings	\$ 9,915.50
March Building Fund offerings	\$ 0.00
Building Fund balance	\$ 20,137.14
Missions Fund balance	\$ 13,066.75
GENERAL FUND BALANCE	\$ 26,996.34

SPRING BIBLE CONFERENCE – 2007

APRIL 20-22

GUEST PREACHER - JOHN CROTTS
PASTOR OF FAITH BIBLE CHURCH
SHARPSBURG, GEORGIA

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

FRIDAY 7:30 PM

Holiday Inn, Guntersville

SATURDAY 9:30 & 10:45 AM

Holiday Inn, Guntersville

SUNDAY 9:30 & 11:00 AM and 6:00 PM
Church



The Theme of the Conference -- Your Family in God's Family:
How the Doctrine of the Church Applies to the Home

Pastor Crotts has been pastor of Faith Bible Church for 10 years. He is a 1997 graduate of The Master's Seminary. He is author of, *Craftsman: Skillfully Leading Your Family for Christ*, by Shepherds Press. John is on the board of directors of the Fellowship of Independent Reformed Evangelicals.

Reservations need to be made for a room at the Holiday Inn. Special services will be conducted for children, ages 4 through 9 on Friday and Saturday.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

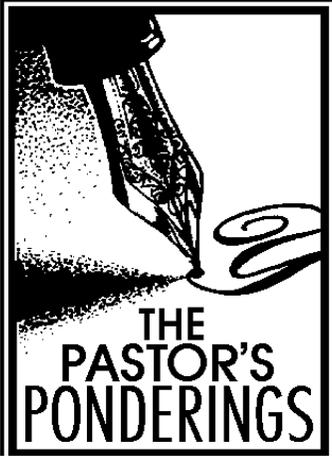
Morning Worship	9:30 AM
Sunday School	11:00 AM
Evening Worship	6:00 PM

WEDNESDAY EVENING

Bible Study and Prayer Meeting	7:00 PM
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FIRST SUNDAY SERVICES

Morning Worship	9:30 AM
Sunday School	11:00 AM
Dinner at the Church	12:00 Noon
Afternoon Service	1:30 PM
(No Evening Service)	



GOD IS LOVE

There is no greater passage in the entire Bible about love than 1 John 4:7-21. Not John 3:16; not 1 Corinthians 13. No other passage handles the subject of love in such depth. It is here that we read the grand and glorious truth that “God is love” (8, 16).

Love is not just a gift that comes from God to us; rather, in the very essence of his being God is love. When John says, “God is love,” he means that love is his nature. Carl F.H. Henry said, “Love is not accidental or incidental to God; it is an essential revelation of the divine nature, a fundamental and eternal perfection” (*God, Revelation and Authority*).

Yet there probably isn’t anything so misunderstood as the words, “God is love.” These words are often uttered by people intent on doing their own thing under the guise that God approves of their reckless and immoral lifestyles because he is love. But what they call love bears no resemblance to the love of God.

We must remember that love is not all that God is. Certainly, to say that “God is love” is one of the most comprehensive and sublime affirmations that can be made about God, but it isn’t the only characteristic or perfection of God. It is not “the complete truth about God so far as the Bible is concerned. It is not an abstract definition which stands alone...” (J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*). All of God’s attributes work in harmony together.

We have a tendency to think that each of God’s attributes is independent and bears no relation to the others but that is not so. Robert Reymond calls this, “erroneous thinking in the extreme.” He says most people’s idea of God is like pins in a pin cushion. Each pin has a nature of its own and may be added or removed from the pin cushion, which also has a nature all its own, without changing in any way the essential nature of the pin cushion. But God’s attributes are not like that! Reymond says:

“It is precisely in the sum total of his attributes that his essence as God finds expression. With them he is distinguished as God from all other entities. Without them, either collectively or singly, he would simply cease to be God.”

We must never add or subtract attributes with reference to God. If anything is taken away, we lose sight of who God is, and nothing can be added to his character without corrupting his glory.

Also, it isn’t wise to select one of God’s attributes and make it more important than the others. In his book, *No Other God: A Response to Open Theism*, John Frame has a chapter entitled, “Is Love God’s Most Important Attribute?” The average man on the street thinks it is, and he mis-defines it; and the liberal theologian thinks it is, but he misunderstands it. Frame makes this observation:

“Rather than making any single attribute central, classical theology teaches that all of God’s defining attributes are ways of describing his simple essence. So God’s attributes are not parts or division within His nature, but each attribute is necessary to his being. Each is essential to him, and therefore his essence includes all of them. God cannot be God without his goodness, his wisdom, his eternity, or his love. In other words, he is necessarily good, wise, eternal, and loving. None of his attributes can be removed from him, and no new attribute can be added to him. Not one attribute exists without the others. So each attribute has divine attributes; each is qualified by the others. God’s wisdom is an eternal wisdom; his goodness is a wise goodness and a just goodness.”

Love is an essential part of God’s essence but it is not more fundamental than any other attribute which depicts His nature. We cannot say that love is more important than any of God’s other attributes. If we want to know God as He essentially is, we must take the whole picture that Scripture gives.

We must never, therefore, seek to understand God’s love apart from His other attributes. Every defining attribute of God includes all the others. That means God’s love is an omnipotent love, it is an unchanging love, it is a sovereign love, it is a gracious love, it is a just love, and it is a holy love!

So when we assert that God is love, we must not ignore or exclude His other attributes. We must avoid the temptation of selecting one attribute of God and putting it forth as though it is the complete revelation of God. It is very important to hold the biblical assertions about God together. All of his attributes together “comprise the characteristics of God which distinguish him as God” (Reymond).

WEB SITES

BIBLE GEOCODING –

www.openbible.info/

BLUE LETTER BIBLE –

www.blueletterbible.org/

MONERGISM –

www.monergism.com/

THE 9MARKS –

www.9marks.org/

TYNDALE HOUSE –

www.tyndale.cam.ac.uk/Tyndale/Doorway.htm



APRIL 15 – Sunday Night Get-Together, featuring a film on the life of missionary, William Carey, *Candle in the Dark*.

APRIL 20-22 – Spring Bible Conference with John Crotts, pastor of Faith Bible Church, Sharpsburg, Georgia. Services will be at the Holiday Inn in Guntersville on Friday

and Saturday and we will return to Madison for Sunday services.

MAY 3-5 – True Church Conference at First Baptist Church, Muscle Shoals, Alabama. The theme of the conference is “the Miracle of Conversion.” Preachers are Voddie Baucham, David Miller, Russell Moore, Paul Washer, and Jeff Noblit. Brochures are available.

MAY 6 – Observance of the Lord’s Supper in the afternoon service.

MAY 13 – There will not be a Sunday Night Get-Together in May, so we are going to watch the film that was scheduled, *John Bunyan: The Journey of a Pilgrim*, during the Sunday School hour.

MAY 19-20 – Tom Wells, pastor of Kings Chapel, West Chester, Ohio, will be speaking on Saturday morning on the subject of New Covenant Theology, and will be preaching in both services on the Lord’s Day.



Puritan Gems

TRUTH IS TRUTH

RICHARD SIBBES (1577-1635)

“Truth is truth, and error, error, and that which is unlawful is unlawful, whether men think so or no. God hath put an eternal difference betwixt light and darkness, good and ill, which no creature’s conceit can alter, and therefore no man’s judgment is measure of things further than it agrees to truth stamped upon things themselves by God.”

QUESTION #86 – “What is faith in Jesus Christ?”

ANSWER – “Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.”

SCRIPTURE – Hebrews 10:39; John 1:12; Isaiah 26:3-4; John 6:40; Philippians 3:9; Galatians 2:16

COMMENTARY – “Paul gladly shed the threadbare robe of his own righteousness and stretched out his empty hands

to receive the glorious royal robe of God’s righteousness in Christ. This doctrine is at the core of the gospel. On the cross, God judged Jesus as if He had personally committed every sin ever committed by every person who ever truly believed. When a sinner embraces Jesus as Lord and trusts only in His sacrifice for sin, God treats that sinner as if he lived Christ’s sinless life” (John MacArthur).

ILLUSTRATION – Dr. John Mitchell Mason, of New York, was requested to visit a dying lady who, together with her husband, openly avowed infidel principles, though they attended his ministry. On approaching her bedside, he asked if she felt herself a sinner, and her need of a Savior. She frankly told him she did not, and that she believed the doctrine of a Mediator to be all a farce. ‘Then,’ said the doctor, ‘I have no consolation for you, not one word of comfort. There is not a single passage in the Bible that warrants me to speak peace to one who rejects the Mediator provided; you must take the consequences of your infidelity.’ He was on the point of leaving the room, when one said, ‘Well, if you cannot speak consolation to her, you can pray for her.’ To this he assented, and kneeling down by the bedside, prayed for her as a guilty sinner just sinking into hell; and then arising from his knees, he left the house. To his great surprise, a day or two after, he received a message from the lady herself, earnestly desiring that he would come down and see her, and that without delay. He immediately obeyed the summons. But what was his amazement, when, on entering the room, she held out her hand to him, and said with a benignant smile, ‘It is all true—all that you said on the Sabbath is true. I have seen myself to be the wretched sinner you described me to be in prayer. I have seen Christ to be that all-sufficient Savior you said He was; and God has mercifully snatched me from that abyss of infidelity in which I was sunk, and placed me on that Rock of Ages. There I am secure: there I shall remain—I know whom I have believed.’ The minister’s prayer, through the divine blessing, fastened on her mind; she was convinced of her guilty state, and enabled to rest wholly on the Savior; and after solemnly charging her husband to educate their daughter in the fear of God, she died in peace (*The Shorter Catechism Illustrated*, by John Whitecross).

THEOLOGY

CORNER



A REFORMED AND BAPTIST CATECHISM

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS SCHEDULE

APRIL 01 – The Death of Christ, Fred Smith

APRIL 08 – The Resurrection of Christ, David Hoos

APRIL 15 – The Ascension of Christ, Bob Marsh

APRIL 22 – Guest speaker, John Crotts

APRIL 29 – The Session of Christ, Dean Olive

MAY 06 – The Intercession of Christ, Mike McFadden

SEND IN THE CLOWNS

BY BRIAN ROBINSON

Send in the clowns! Trinity Episcopal church on Wall Street, New York, had a 'clowning' good time at a Sunday worship service. The congregation was encouraged to come as clowns, red noses and all, while the choir and clergy all wore clown outfits with oversized shoes and painted faces. The whole service was done in mime so one could only hope to guess the message. The lady who read the Scriptures, or I should say mimed the Scriptures, turned pages and found something quite hilarious. The most amazing thing of all, as far as I could see, no one had red faces and no one walked out.

And so this is what it has come to in the West as we face the biggest threat to civilization as we know it — we send in the clowns. We, who are the church, entertain the masses while the structures of a once great civilization are dismantled from within and without. It reminds me of the circus trick. The clown runs toward the crowd with a bucket full of water, and everyone ducks, only to find it empty. We fiddle while New York (or Toronto) burns! What a contrast to that of a Muslim quoted in *Time* magazine who said, 'We know who we are; our religion is holding its ground; you don't have one any longer' (*Time*, November, 27, 2006).

Suddenly I feel like a voice crying in the wilderness. In my lifetime I have seen a once great civilization reduced to impotency, confusion and shame. And where is the church in all this? Busy, sadly, sending in the clowns...

In his book *'Twilight of a Great Civilization'* (Crossway, 1988), the author, Carl F. Henry writes, *'The Church of Jesus Christ is here: in a*

world halting between pseudo-lords and the Lord of lords, here with a specific message to proclaim, not merely a mission of projects and methods to probe. She is entrusted with God's truth, not with man-made theories: our mandate is his Word. The late twentieth century is bone-weary of the indefinite, the inconclusive and the indecisive: what it needs is the sure Word of God. A Church that forsakes the truth of revelation, soon yields to the detouring modernity of the youngsters, or to the crippling tradition of the elders, and will "teach as doctrines the commandments of men" (Mk.7: 8).'

Here is no clown.

Preaching to my own congregation a few Sundays ago I said the following: 'Listen closely, my brothers and sisters in the Lord. Did you know that this is the only spot in the world you will ever hear the Truth, here in the Church? Did you know that the Church is "*the pillar and foundation of the Truth*" (1 Tim.3: 15)? You won't get the Truth in the universities of the land, nor in our Parliaments (what a laugh that is). You will not get the Truth in our public schools or in our great social welfare and justice systems. You will not get the Truth in a mosque, or a synagogue, or in a Buddhist temple, or in churches where God's glory has long since departed. Only here, only amongst the elect, the redeemed of God, only amongst Christ's sheep who are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. So you had better treat God-fearing, Bible-believing churches with respect and honor and serve them, otherwise the Truth will disappear from our land, and we will be in greater darkness than we are now.'

Is it not time for parents to stop pandering to their youngsters? You who come

to pastors in struggling works (often because they are trying to be faithful to God's Word) and piously say that your children need programmes and music so you will need to move down the road to the biggest show in town - isn't it time to sit your youngster down and re-enforce in his or her mind that the Truth is too valuable to sacrifice to the entertainment crowd and the clowns masquerading as God's spokesmen?

Just as men and women across the ages have shed, and still are shedding their blood for the Truth, so we pray that you as a family will stand by the Truth, support the Truth, and pay whatever price necessary to see that its flickering light burns in the darkest days of the coming holocaust when waves of vileness and violence sweep across the nations.

Now is not the time for clowns, but 'men of God' like the prophets of old to stand and say, 'Thus saith the Lord'. And now is the time for all good men to stand up and be counted, standing with their pastor and facing the onslaught that is about to descend upon the decadent West.

Brian Robinson is pastor of the Reformed Baptist Church in Pickering, Ontario, and editor of the *Sovereign Grace Journal*, from which this article is taken (www.sgfcanda.com).

