



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

— March 2007 Issue —

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



NURSERY SCHEDULE

MARCH

- 04 – Linda Olive & Sonya Williams
- 11 – Kristy Hines & Jenny Lovassy
- 18 – David & Mary Alice Olive
- 25 – Jon & Tanya Amis

APRIL

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

FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF MARCH 1, 2007

Budgeted expenditures (ytd)	\$ 17,274.89
Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 14,944.57
Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 0.00
General Fund offerings (ytd)	\$ 22,388.15
Building Fund offerings (ytd)	\$ 0.00
Love offerings (ytd)	\$ 1,517.95
Total offerings (ytd)	\$ 24,037.58
February General Fund offerings	\$ 14,160.00
February Building Fund offerings	\$ 0.00
Building Fund balance	\$ 20,333.34
Missions Fund balance	\$ 12,992.30
General Fund balance	\$ 26,536.37

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



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 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

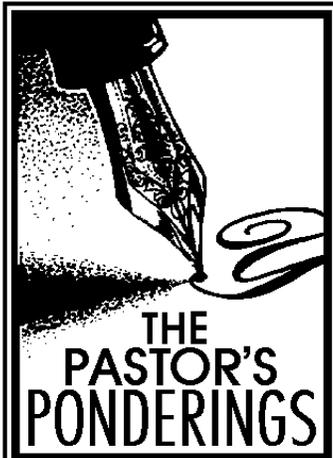
Morning Worship	9:30 AM
Sunday School	11:00 AM
Evening Worship	6:00 PM

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)	



THE LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Some years ago I preached on a Thursday evening at Zoar Baptist Church in Ipswich, England. There were approximately 70 people in attendance at the service, and one dog. The dog was a yellow Labrador; she slept at her master's feet during

the sermon. As far as I know, no one else slept during the service!

The Labrador was present because her master was blind. The dog was a Seeing-Eye dog, a Guide Dog. Her job was to lead her master about. The blind need someone to guide or lead them so they can get about without harm or injury.

God's people are in need of guidance. We are citizens of heaven living in a world of sin that pulls at us and tugs on us to follow its ways. We need someone with great power and influence to lead us forward and onward in our journey of faith.

One of the tasks the Holy Spirit performs is that of leading God's people. He is our Teacher and Comforter but He is also our Guide. Paul told the Romans, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (8:14). The word "led" means to be directed, guided, or brought. Ponder the following thoughts about the Spirit's leading.

1. ***The One who does the leading is the Spirit of God.*** The Holy Spirit "led" us to Christ in the first place and it is the Holy Spirit that leads us afterwards to live for Christ. No one is a Christian that hasn't experienced the effectual call of the Spirit and no one is a Christian who doesn't experience His leading him or her to live for the Lord Jesus. "All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (ESV), and none else.

2. ***The ones who are led are the saints.*** The Spirit leads everyone who knows Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. It isn't that some are led and others are not – all that are in Christ are led by the Spirit. There are no exceptions. One of the evidences that we are Christians is that we are led by the Spirit. We do not lead Him; He leads us. The Holy Spirit is not an instrument in our hands; rather, we are instruments in His hands.

3. ***The manner in which the Spirit leads is hinted at in this verse.*** The Holy Spirit leads the sons of God; he does not drive them. The Holy Spirit acts as a shepherd who leads a flock, not a cowboy who drives the herd. This is an

important distinction. The Spirit leads by persuasion, not by brute force. He does not work contrary to our wills but inclines us to be willing. He exerts a direct influence upon us and gently leads us in the path that we ought to go. The Spirit works mightily in us but His power is manifested in sweetness and gentleness.

4. ***The means by which the Spirit leads us is the Scriptures.*** Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit is come, "He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). Guidance into truth is guidance regarding the Word of God. The Holy Spirit is our Teacher and he teaches us the things of Christ. In John 14:26, Jesus said, "But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." Where do we find the words and teachings of Christ? In the NT Scriptures.

It is at this point that many Christians go wrong in seeking guidance. The explanation for guidance is too simplistic for them. They are not interested in the moral leading of the Spirit; they are interested in the mystical leading of the Spirit. That is, they want a leading that is subjective and mysterious. They want to make decisions concerning life's choices without anyone questioning the reasonableness of it or the Scripturalness of it – they want to be led infallibly by feelings, emotion, and sentiment.

But such an approach to guidance leaves one open to all sorts of delusions. Guidance to them is an inward prompting of the Holy Spirit apart from the written Word. Granted, we do face guidance problems that have no direct and specific answer given in God's Word (who to marry, what job to take, what school to attend and how much education to get, which church to join, etc.) but even in these choices, the Word of God directs our thinking.

This is the key to understanding the leading of the Holy Spirit. J.I. Packer says, "The true way to honor the Holy Spirit as our guide is to honor the Holy Scriptures through which he guides us." That's the key! The Holy Spirit does not prompt us apart from the Word of God. He puts pressure on our consciences so that we will conform to the teachings of Scripture. The Spirit of God inspired the men of old to write the Word of God and He enlightens us to understand it and apply it to ourselves.

The world leads its own contrary to the Word of God. The natural man is guided by his own desires, the wisdom of the world, and by his own unaided reason. The Spirit leads those who are the Lord's in accordance with the Word of God.

Thanks be to God for the blessed ministry of the Holy Spirit, who leads and guides all the saints to do the will of God.

WEB SITES

Answers in Genesis –

<http://www.answersingenesis.org/>

Baptist Studies Online –

<http://baptiststudiesonline.com/>

Illumination (blog) –

<http://www.mctswensboro.org/blog/>

Preach the Word –

<http://www.preachtheword.co.uk/>

Christian Biography Series, William Carey –

<http://www.wholesomewords.org/biography/biorpcarey.html>



March 4 – The church will observe the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper in the afternoon service.

March 11 – Paul Alexander, former pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church, now missionary to the Ukraine, will be preaching in the evening service. Daylight Savings Time also begins on this day, so be sure to change your clocks Saturday evening by “springing” them forward.

March 15 – GBC will be hosting the Sovereign Grace Baptist Pastor’s Fellowship. Services begin at 10:00 a.m. with lunch at 12:00 p.m. Jim Gables will be preaching at 10:00, Jeff Noblit at 11:00, and Mark Webb after lunch, at 1 p.m.

March 18 – Sunday Night Get-Together, featuring a film on the life of missionary, William Carey, *Candle in the Dark*.

April 15 – Sunday Night Get-Together, featuring the film, *John Bunyan: The Journey of a Pilgrim*.

April 20-22 – Spring Bible Conference with John Crofts, 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.



Puritan Gems

LABORING TO PROMOTE THE SALVATION OF THE LOST

WILLIAM CAREY

“IF CHRIST COULD STOOP SO LOW AS TO VISIT OUR... SINFUL WORLD, AND BE MOVED WITH COMPASSION UPON THE MOST UNDESERVING AND GUILTY, THE MOST SINFUL AND DEPRAVED... IN WHAT BETTER WAY COULD WE DEMONSTRATE THAT WE ARE PARTAKERS OF HIS GRACE THAN BY EARNEST ENDEAVOR TO IMITATE HIS EXAMPLE... BY LABORING TO PROMOTE THE SALVATION OF THE MOST IGNORANT AND HELPLESS OF MANKIND?”

QUESTION #85 – “What does God require of us that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?”

ANSWER – “To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requires of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption.”

SCRIPTURE – Acts 20:21; Proverbs 8:1-5, 33-36; Isaiah 55:3.

COMMENTARY – “God requires of us faith in Jesus Christ to escape his wrath and curse, because by faith in Jesus Christ we have an interest in Jesus Christ and his imputed righteousness, and the promise he hath made of remission and salvation unto us. God requires of us repentance unto life, that we may escape his wrath and curse, because the promise of forgiveness of sin is made to repentance, as a concomitant of faith; and it is not for God’s honor to pardon and save any that go on still in their trespasses” (Thomas Vincent).

ILLUSTRATION – A certain man on the Malabar coast of India, having inquired of various devotees and priests how he might make atonement for his sins, was directed to drive iron spikes, sufficiently blunted, through his sandals; and on these spikes, he was enjoined to place his naked feet, and to walk about four hundred and eighty miles. If, through loss of blood, or weakness of body he was obliged to halt, he might wait for healing and strength. He undertook the journey, and while he halted under a large shady tree, where the gospel was sometimes preached, one of the missionaries came and preached in his hearing from these words: ‘The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth from all sin’ (1 John 1.7). While he was preaching, the man rose up, threw off his torturing sandals, and cried out aloud—‘This is what I want:’ and he became a living witness, that the blood of Jesus Christ does indeed cleanse from all sin (John Whitecross, *The Shorter Catechism Illustrated*).

THEOLOGY

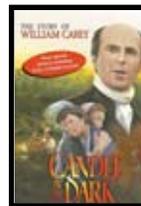


A REFORMED AND
BAPTIST CATECHISM

SUNDAY NIGHT GET-TOGETHER

MARCH 18

CANDLE IN THE DARK
THE STORY OF WILLIAM CAREY



William Carey sailed to India in 1793 to bring the message of Jesus to those who had never heard. Facing insurmountable odds, he “plodded” on in the work of preaching and translating. He is known today as the Father of Modern Missions. The film will be shown after the evening service (90 minutes). Light refreshments will be provided.

EVOLVING AGENDAS

by Ken Ham

I have to admit (yes, somewhat sheepishly) that I'm a science fiction fan. I loved the original *Star Trek* TV series. Yes, I recognized the many evolutionary statements made by Captain Kirk (and others) as they traveled through the universe on the Enterprise.

With newer *Star Trek* programs, I became disillusioned. What I noticed was not just the typical evolutionary comments, but also an agenda to promote things like "gay" marriage, the homosexual lifestyle, abortion, etc.

Over the decades, the program has changed from mainly one of entertainment to one that often promotes anti-Christian lifestyles. This trend is also being seen in many other television programs, like the hugely popular program *CSI*. I prefer the documentary detective shows (e.g., I occasionally watch *The Forensic Files*), where real-life detectives relate how they solved a particular crime. But these TV documentaries are very different from fictional forensic programs like *CSI*.

While "vegetating" right after Christmas, I happened to come across a *CSI* program—and quickly decided I wouldn't ever be watching this program again. *CSI*, a fictional program, has an emphasis on anti-Christian agendas (and they are overt about it). In the episode I watched, the issue came up of when life actually begins. A character (portrayed as a Christian) represented an organization that believed life began at conception. He was made to come across as ignorant and foolish.

A *CSI* detective rolled her eyes when she heard the Christian view,

and then made a big issue of the fact that life didn't begin until the baby *moved* in the womb. She then defended stem-cell research using cells from human embryos.

Later on, another *CSI* detective (named Grissom) quoted the Scripture verse about the life of the flesh being in the blood, to argue that a life in the womb didn't begin until blood flowed through the baby. He then made the statement that "science" basically trumps theology any way.

"As society accepts evolutionary thinking and rejects the Bible's authority, the culture itself 'evolves.'"

I point this out to remind all of us that we live in a world where even Christians can be susceptible to being influenced by the world. Many adults and children watch such programs and don't realize the effect these shows are having on molding their worldview.

As such anti-Christian propaganda pervades television (and movies), the world is influencing the church's coming generations ... rather than those in the church being the light of the world and influencing the culture.

Such programs as the one described above (and others including: *30 Rock*, *Studio 60*, *West Wing*, *Commander in Chief*, and even *The Simpsons*...) would not have been tolerated by the Christian community a few decades ago. But they are now the norm in many Christian homes—and the children in them are now accepting what appears to be the "norm" regarding

social issues that are clearly unbiblical.

In addition, as society accepts evolutionary thinking and rejects the Bible's authority, the culture itself "evolves." The secularists in Hollywood ensure that their evolving anti-Christian agendas are being incorporated into the programs and films that reach millions (including churchgoers). This is another example of the secularization of the culture—and even the secularization of the church.

Countering these things is one reason I believe the Lord has raised up Bible-upholding ministries like Answers in Genesis. We pray that through AiG, your family and mine can influence the church and world for good, and help stop (and even undo) the anti-God influence the world has had on the church. Christians are often shocked when they read in the Bible of how the Israelites adopted pagan religions and worshipped idols. "How foolish could they be to do that?" they say to themselves.

And yet, so many of God's people today are no different in the way they have adopted pagan philosophies of the age (e.g., evolution, relative morality, etc.). They fail to see that they are no different than the Israelites.

As we read in Jeremiah 10:2: "Thus says the LORD, 'Do not learn the way of the nations.'" Please pray for all of us at AiG that we, along with you, will be true salt and light in this increasingly secularized culture.

[Ken Ham is the director of Answers in Genesis, Covington, Kentucky]