

# Evangelistically Speaking

Volume 15, Issue 5

May 2006

## Update your prayer list:

- Please remember Marty and Robert Swain as they travel to and work in Romania on May 4-16.
- Ted and Barbara will also be in Romania for about three weeks beginning May 11. They covet your prayers.
- Ask God to bless these efforts with hearts open to the gospel of Christ.

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## From Ted's Pen

Paul reminded the Ephesian Christians of the importance of "redeeming the time" in Ephesians 5:15. When I consider the conditions that exist in our world today and the brevity of life, I feel a tremendous sense of duty to redeem the time. Already four months of the year 2006 are history and I find that hard to believe. We must apply ourselves with wisdom and consider with great seriousness the task of taking the gospel to the world.

We began the month of April with the church at Mammoth Spring, Arkansas. This has long been one of our favorite places and a special congregation. Barbara spent a lot of time there as a youngster and I have been preaching there in gospel meetings since 1974. These

good brethren help to support the work that we do and we are thankful for their commitment to serving the Lord faithfully.

One of the very special times of the year for the past seven years has been the Evangelistically Speaking Lectureship which is conducted annually at the Mars Hill congregation here in our county. This lectureship is dedicated to providing motivation, instruction, and methods of building an evangelistic church.

This year we had some great sermons preached by Evert Huffard, Theotis King, David Riley, Robert Swain, and I even gave it my best shot as well. All of these are men who have long been involved in mission work and evangelism and everyone



could benefit greatly by hearing these lessons. This lectureship needs to be repeated in congregations throughout our brotherhood. I regret most of all that so many seem to think that this lectureship is something for the Mars Hill brethren and that they feel no real need to attend for their own benefit. The elders at Mars Hill have set the dates of the 2007 lectures and they are April 13-15.

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## Marty's Thoughts

thousands of people over the course of the last 60 or so years. I marveled at the fact that he was able to inspire as many as 75,000 people at a time to come and hear his message. However, as I listened to the content of the message, my heart began to break. I went to bed with many thoughts going through my mind.

One question in particular stuck with me: how can a person read the account in Acts 2 of the first gospel sermon being preached and arrive at a conclusion *other* than baptism being a pivotal step in becoming a Christian?

So, here it is the next morning and I've departed from my regular Bible reading in order to go back and read that chapter. I tried my best to read it as if it

were the first time. Still, I can draw no conclusion except this one: Peter instructed those on that day to be baptized and it was at that point that they were forgiven of sins.

The message is not nearly as complicated as some men make it out to be. Yet, in all it's simplicity, it's become distorted.

I don't know Billy Graham and I never will. I won't doubt the fact that he is an honest man with integrity and character beyond question. There is no arguing the fact that he has broken down barriers and taken stands against injustice. Yet, I cannot forget the void that I heard in the message he delivered to those masses.

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## From Ted's Pen (Continued)

We beg of the area congregations not to schedule other programs that will conflict with this series and to make every effort to be a part of this lectureship.

Barbara spoke at a special Ladies Day at Dover, Arkansas on Saturday, April 8. Their theme was, "As For Me and My House, We Will Serve The Lord." She was excited when she got home and told me about the wonderful group of ladies from several congregations who assembled that day for a time of study, prayer, singing, and fellowship.

On Sunday, April 16 I preached at the Woodrow congregation near Vilonia, Arkansas. These good brethren have been going through some difficult times and the attendance is down considerably and their contributions are suffering as well. But, they are working diligently to strengthen the congregation and reach out to others with the gospel of Christ. We love and appreciate them.

On Thursday, April 20 we left home and went to Lake City, Arkansas where I spoke on a lectureship there on the subject of "Agnosticism." From there we went to Paducah, Kentucky and then to Morley, Missouri for a special day that they call "Friends and Family Day." They had a great number present and hopefully some of them will begin to attend the services regularly.

Brother Ralph Evans has been a Christian for many years and worshipped at Morley. When we would go there his little red truck was always sitting in the same place and he was about the first one to arrive for services. He led the singing even though he was more than 90 years of age. When we arrived at the building on Sunday, April 23 and his truck was not there we were very concerned. When we went in we learned that Brother Ralph had died about three months earlier. He was such a fine man and is sorely missed. We closed the month of April with the congre-

gation at Formosa, Arkansas where I gave a report on our work and preached during the worship hour. We always love to worship with these wonderful Christians.

The month of May will find us traveling to Craiova, Romania for most of the month. Barbara and I plan to spend the entire time with the church at Craiova, except for one Sunday morning when I will preach at Pitesti. We will also teach in the villages in the district of Dolj where four congregations meet. We will be going to them on Sunday afternoons and at night during the week. Barbara will also have some special ladies classes in the evening a couple of times and I plan to have something special for the young people.

We certainly have a lot of work to do and we look forward to working with these brethren in Christ who enjoy so much the efforts that are made by so many Americans to help them come to a knowledge of the truth. Harvey Starling is presently in Romania where he lives most of the time and has spearheaded the efforts to establish and strengthen the churches in the districts of Arges and Dolj.

We are thankful for the efforts that he makes to prepare for our arrival each time for studies and other work in those districts.

### THANKS FOR PRAYERS

We want to express our special thanks to so many of you who have prayed for my brother, Charles Knight, for the last couple of months. He had triple bypass surgery on March 3 and everyone thought that he would be just fine in a few days. He has had very serious complications and remained hospitalized for more than 40 days.

He is now at home and improving and we praise God for that. Your prayers certainly helped him a great deal.

- Ted

## Marty's Thoughts (Continued)

Our society places a greater emphasis on tolerance than ever before. In some ways, that is a very good thing.

While that desire to be more tolerant has led us toward great social change, it has also come with a price. It seems that many have lost the ability to recognize the difference between absolute right and wrong. With the best of intentions—just like Graham—many within the church have abandoned the message of the cross.

Countless sermons can be delivered on what it takes to have a great marriage. You can read dozens of books about how to become successful in life. We can dedicate our Bible classes to addressing topics that are socially relevant. But, without the **gospel of Jesus Christ**—preached in the same manner as it was delivered by Peter on the day of Pentecost—we miss the point! Let me encourage you to go back and read the first two chapters of Acts. Read them as if you were discovering them for the very first time.

This wasn't the most pivotal point in human history—that had happened weeks earlier. However, this moment in time was certainly one of the greatest in the history of the world. Notice the message that Peter delivers and ask yourself this question: how can I repeat that very same message?

You see, that's our **purpose** in life. We must take the story of Jesus, His life, and His death to as many as we can. We must pray that they respond to that message by asking, "what shall we do?" **And we must be prepared to deliver the same instructions that Peter delivered!**

Regardless of our intentions, failure on our part to deliver the proper instructions will result in dire consequences for so many. It is that message that we are eager to share with the people of

Romania in the coming weeks! Next week, I will leave for Romania along with Brother Robert Swain of Winona, Mississippi. Please join Robert and I in praying for hearts that are open to the gospel! Pray that we can water the seed that has been planted by others! Pray that God will give the increase!

I am deeply thankful for those of you who send me to do this work. It is a grave responsibility to go out into the mission field on behalf of others and I want you to know that I do not take that responsibility for granted.

During our two weeks there, we will be working with three of the congregations in the district of Dolj. The largest of those congregations is the church in Craiova. God has blessed me with the opportunity to work with these brethren on about a dozen different occasions and I am eager to see them again. There are very few congregations of the Lord's church that are more dear to me than the one in Craiova.

I also look forward to visiting the city of Moreni while we are there. Lord willing, I will spend some time making preparations for the team of workers who will be leaving on July 27 to work in Moreni. I ask that you remember that effort in your prayers as well. The July/August team will consist of Justin and Emily Taylor of North Little Rock; Ron Boatwright, Debbie and Hannah Moreland all of Conway; Camellia Jackson of Texarkana, Texas; Lisa and Kyndall Knight of Vilonia, Arkansas; and myself.

We still have need for one more male teacher to join us! If you're interested—or know of someone who might be—please have them contact me as soon as possible.

Details regarding the trip can be found on the Operation Outreach website (listed below).

- Marty

<http://www.operation-outreach.com>

# GO PREACH THE GOSPEL: TO WHO?

By Ted Knight

The debate has been going on for decades about where we should expend our efforts in preaching the gospel. Some of our brethren declare that we should focus almost all of our efforts in teaching the gospel to the people in the United States. Others are as strong in their conviction that we should be making greater efforts in preaching the gospel to the entire world. This debate should not even exist.

Brethren, this is not an either/or proposition. In Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15, the Lord plainly charged that we must preach the gospel to "every creature" and "all nations."

There is not one passage of scripture that indicates in any way that we should make a greater effort in one place than in any other place.

Wherever there is a lost person there is a need for the preaching of the gospel of Christ! Every person that you see on the street, at the ball game, or anywhere else, is either a Christian or needs to be a Christian.

There are some things that really frustrate me when I think about them. We live in a world of 6,513,047,982 people. In

the United States there are 298,588,999 people. Far more than half of the congregations of the church of Christ in the world are located in the United States. The population of the United States represents 4.58% of the entire world's population.

Now, look at this seriously. Approximately 80-85% of the preachers of the gospel in the world (including me) are preaching in the United States to 4.58% of the world's population. Only 15-20% of the preachers in churches of Christ in the world are preaching to 95.42% of the rest of the world! The population of the U.S. represents a very, very, small percentage of the world population and yet that is where our greatest efforts are made.

Here is something else that I think about when this debate goes on: "If the early Christians had not believed in foreign evangelism, we here in our country would have never heard the gospel! Brethren, the preaching of the gospel did not begin in New York City or Bay, Arkansas. It began in Jerusalem just like it was planned by God Himself.

Beloved, there is no reason for the debate to go on. We need long-term missionaries, short-

term missionaries, Christians who will teach their families and friends across the street, people who will go into all the world, and people who cannot go, but can and will send those who can. We need church planters in every State in America and every Nation on earth. There isn't even a hint in the scripture that one nation, one city, or one person, has the right to hear the gospel FIRST!

I pray that God will help us to do everything that we possibly can to take the gospel to every person in the world just exactly like Jesus told us to do.

YOU are needed to help in this endeavor in whatever way that you can help. Time is running short and there is much to do. Let's all pray and work and fight that the lost might be won to Christ.

## THANKS!

To all who attended the 7th Annual Evangelistically Speaking Lectures!

We pray that God will bless the collective efforts of His saints as we go about sharing the message of Christ!

Remember to mark your calendars now for next year's lectureship!

APRIL 13-15, 2007  
Mars Hill church of Christ  
Vilonia, Arkansas

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