

Blue Ridge Brandmarks

“...I bear on my body the brandmarks of Jesus” - Gal. 6:17

Volume 4

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Number 8

Three Good Years

It's hard to believe that just three years ago I began my work as an evangelist among you. When my family and I arrived we were a smaller family, I was a very inexperienced gospel preacher, and none of us really knew what to expect as we began a new chapter of our lives in Christ together.

Much has happened since then: a great deal of joy and sorrow, learning and growing, working and waiting, sowing and reaping, teaching and being taught. From the very beginning, you welcomed me and my family as members of your family and provided so much support, love and encouragement. Though many of you had to have reservations about whether such a young and inexperienced preacher could make a contribution to the work here, you hoped and prayed for the best and worked hard to create an environment in which the congregation would have the best possible chances of success.

Three years later, we are knit together in Christ with the bonds of love. My

family and I feel like we belong here and couldn't imagine being anywhere else at this point in our lives. That closeness is the result of what we have experienced together in the Lord.

The Lord has given and He has taken away. Two babies have arrived in our home and I have shared in the grief which those of you who have lost a parent know so well. New souls have been added to the Lord while others have fallen by the wayside or moved away. Through all of these changes and many more, my brothers and sisters have worked together for Christ, the church and for each other.

I am delighted to see what God has done for us and through us as a congregation, and I am very eager to see what He still has in store for us. God has equipped our local church with a good eldership, diligent deacons, a generous quantity of faithful, mature and active brothers and sisters, many new Christians and little ones to grow and develop into the church leaders of the future, as well a large community in which to proclaim the good news. I thank God that He has

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Another Slice of Pi

A few years ago I read an article by Ed Harrell about a fellow named Rajan Mahadevan, a scientist who devoted years to studying and memorizing the digits of "pi". As you will recall, "pi" is that infinite number that states the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter. What Ed was not so clear about is exactly why Mr. Mahadevan chose to exercise his mental acumen in that particular manner. I am a little fuzzy on that part myself. Nevertheless, Mr. Mahadevan memorized quite a few numbers and formally recited several of them back (31,811 to be exact) before missing one. It took him three hours and forty-nine minutes to recall the numbers before he messed up on the number 5. "I am always stumbling over that one," he explained.

My preference is for pi in smaller slices, but one thing this episode underscores is just how much can be accomplished if a person is committed and dedicated to the task. For example, consider our attention to the Bible. How many of us stumble through John 3:16, Acts 2:38 or Mark 16:16 or plead brain-lock when we try to learn more than one verse at a time? For many, John 11:35 is the crowning achievement of their efforts. Yet, Paul told Timothy (II Tim. 2:15), "*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" The young preacher was admonished to apply himself to studying the Word, but is it only the local

evangelist who should feel the need to know the Text? Do we not also read "*be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks for the reason of hope that is within you, with meekness and fear*" (I Pet. 3:15). The assignment for each of us is to know why we believe what we believe. There are times when we simply must know what The Book says.

At times, some of life's lessons are hard learned. When I was a college freshman, I made the tactical error of selling my Biology book six weeks into the semester. I was hungry and the campus bookstore seemed like a viable source of revenue. I reasoned that for the next 12 weeks I could listen "hard" and take good notes. Q: Have you ever wondered how long it takes to overcome four failed semester hours? A: Three years and a second Biology class. To the point, sometimes we tend to apply our own imperfect logic to life's situations. Even those of us who recognize a dependence on the Word tend to make excuses for our lack of Scriptural knowledge. We underestimate our abilities and quickly offer excuses for a lack of depth regarding basic Bible facts and spiritual truths; this, in spite of the fact we (and our kids) can learn every lyric ever penned by Garth Brooks, Jack Johnson, or Hootie and the Blowfish. Yet the challenge of memorizing the Beatitudes seems Olympian. I wonder why that is? Then again, maybe I already know. Perhaps it says volumes about

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what we (and they) consider important.

Mr. Mahadevan's amazing feat of regurgitating pi for almost four hours has me wondering how much better we might understand God's plan for man if we spent more time learning the Book? Maybe we could better recognize the difference between counterfeit religion and the real thing. Now there's something sweet to chew on!

◄Charlie King►

What Am I? by Eric Bridge

I killed some bad men, I killed some good men.
Some in the old, some new
You'll find me in Peter, and in the ark,
Though Noah never knew.

Through Abel, Noah, Abraham,
I brought the Lord a pleasant scent.
To work with me, by the king's decree
The best of Hiram's vassals went.

Twelve times extracted, twelve times immersed,
The kids remembered, don't you?
Sometimes collected, sometimes disbursed,
As the preacher tells you.

You wouldn't think to taste of me,
But tempt Him Satan did.
You wouldn't think me weak to fire,
But into ask I fled.

Jesus talked about the day
My temple brethren I'd eschew.
On another day I'd roll away
And Jesus knew that, too.

So call me Ebenezer
And don't let me offend you,
For from day one I'm like your Maker,
And like me He defends you.

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enabled me to preach the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ among you, and to work beside you in the harvest of the Lord.

Thank you so much for your part in making my work here such a joy and satisfaction.

◄Brent Paschall►

AUGUST 2010 DUTY ROSTER

| Weekday | SUN | WED | SUN | WED | SUN | WED | SUN | WED | SUN |
|--|------------|----------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|
| Date | 8/1 | 8/4 | 8/8 | 8/11 | 8/15 | 8/18 | 8/22 | 8/25 | 8/29 |
| Opening Prayer | John M. | | Michael F. | | Eric B. | | Ed M. | | Brent P. |
| Morning Message | Eric B. | | Charlie K. | | Jimmy F. | | Alan M. | | John M. |
| Announcements | Randy F. | Larry P. | Larry P. | David T. | John M. | Matt M. | David M. | Randy F. | Matt M. |
| Leading Songs | David T. | Eric B. | Bill A. | Alan M. | Brad F. | John M. | John M. | Leo R. | Alan M. |
| First Prayer | Michael F. | David T. | Jerry D. | Jimmy F. | Charlie K. | Michael F. | Eric B. | Eric B. | Ed M. |
| Lead at Lord's Table & Contribution | Alan M. | | Jimmy F. | | Randy F. | | Charlie K. | | Leo R. |
| Assist | Leo R. | | Brad F. | | Michael F. | | James M. | | Bill A. |
| Assist | Brad F. | | Don H. | | James M. | | Jeremy P. | | Jerry D. |
| Assist | David M. | | Cody M. | | Jeremy P. | | Jerry D. | | Cody M. |
| Read Scripture | Ed M. | | David M. | | Cody M. | | Matt M. | | Larry P. |
| Preaching | Brent P. | | Brent P. | | Larry P. | | Leo R. | | Brent P. |
| Wed. Exhortation | | Jimmy F. | | Matt M. | | Randy F. | | Charlie K. | |
| Closing Prayer | Jerry D. | James M. | Ed M. | Jeremy P. | Bill A. | David M. | Don H. | David T. | Brad F. |

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Sunday

9:15 - Morning Message

10:00 - Bible classes for all ages

11:00 - Worship

Wednesday

7:30 - Bible Classes for all ages

Elders:

Jim Fields, Alan Moeller & Leo Rodrigue

Deacons:

Eric Bridge & John Malloy

Evangelist:

Brent Paschall

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