

"The Link"

BETWEEN YOUR CHURCH... AND HOME!



A CHURCH FAMILY DISCOVERING
"NEW BEGINNINGS"



Volume XXIII

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Issue 10

SOUNDING THE ALARM

by Timothy Mark

I was drifting off to sleep when it happened. The heavy fog of slumber had settled upon me, and I welcomed its warm embrace. I had been lying in bed for an hour, fitfully tossing from side to side. I was weary from trying to go to sleep. Finally, I could sense the moment had arrived, and I smiled as the curtain of sleep began to descend. Suddenly a piercing squawk jarred me from my slumber. Startled, I was instantly on high alert. Quickly I realized it was a chirp from the smoke alarm in the hallway.

I was so tired. I just wanted to lie there and go to sleep, but I knew that if I did, it would only be a matter of time before the alarm would sound again. The smoke alarm has a built in system to let me know that the battery needs to be changed. It sounds a short, intermittent, ear-piercing chirp. For some reason, it seems the notification never seems to sound during the day. It's as if it intentionally waits, watching to see if I am asleep, and then with glee sounds the alarm just to watch me jump in my bed. But I digress. As I lay in bed, I considered putting a pillow over my head. Perhaps that would drown out the noise. Maybe two pillows would work. In my heart, I knew it would be futile. With growing frustration, I tossed aside the blanket and crawled out of bed.

I stumbled to the garage, found a step-stool, and then retreated back to the hallway. I stepped up on the stool and unhinged the smoke alarm from the ceiling plate. Bleary eyed, I walked to the living room and fumbled through the drawer where I keep my batteries to find a fresh 9-volt battery. I was still in that fog of slumber as I pulled the old battery out of the smoke alarm and put the new battery in its place. I tested the new battery by holding the button on the unit. Thankfully, it was in good working order.

Tired or not, it was crucial that I replace the battery. The heart of the unit needed to be changed. The smoke alarm is not able to fulfill the purpose for which it was created without a new battery. The entire house would be at risk if I ignored the warnings and just let the battery die a natural death. The consequences could be disastrous.

The next morning I sat on my couch and pondered the experience. It occurred to me that the Holy Spirit has been sounding a similar alarm in our churches in North America for some time. He has been sounding the alarm that our heart needs to be changed. He has been sounding the alarm through our declining membership. He has been sounding the alarm through a record number of church foreclosures. He has been sounding the alarm with the rapid increase in immorality in our country and, sadly, within our churches. He is shouting to us, "The heart of the church needs to be changed!" But we seem to have chosen to ignore the warnings.

We tried better buildings and better programming, hoping it would muffle the alarm, but the alarm continued to sound. The church continued to decline. We built buildings believing it would give us credibility in our communities. We taught people to follow rules, but did not model relationship with God to them. Now our buildings are in disrepair, decrepit, and falling apart. Our communities are godless. People are walking away from the church in record numbers because they have little or no personal relationship with God. The few remaining members of our churches sit shell-shocked in the pews unable to comprehend why the church is dying.

Meanwhile the alarm continues to sound, and we continue to ignore it. It boggles the mind. We have disregarded the alarms, hoping that we can just continue in our slumber a little longer. Like the battery in the smoke alarm in my home, the heart of the church needs to be changed. We can no longer ignore the warning. Without a new heart, the church in North America will not be able to fulfill the purpose for which it was created. If we continue to ignore the warnings, there is little hope for us. The consequences will be devastating.

Personally, I am hopeful that we will change. God seems to be raising up a new generation of leadership in our churches who are desperate for change. Maybe you are one of them. I hope that you are.

Where have we gone wrong?

The core of the issue goes back to our neglect of the two commands Christ said were most important: to love God with utter abandon, and to love others selflessly. Until the church is willing to acknowledge that we have sinned by ignoring these commands, there is little hope for change.

Not only does Scripture teach us what we are supposed to love, it is also very clear what we are not to love. John wrote, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15, ESV). That is a very explicit statement. When I exhibit a life that mirrors the materialism of North America, I should question whether or not I love God with all my heart. Is there a part of me that loves this world and the things that are in this world? I frequently question my own heart in this area. And to be honest, I frequently find myself repenting of this sin. It is a subtle yet dangerous trap.

The problem is that I can’t have it both ways. It is an all or nothing proposition. Either I love God entirely, or I am disobedient. If I love the world or the things that are in the world, the love of the Father is not in me. Period. End of story.

As I travel across North America, I watch and observe Christian leaders and pastors of our churches. I’m watching to see what their lives represent. Often what I see is not encouraging. To these leaders, I give the same challenge Paul gave to Timothy: be “an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12, ESV). Set the example! This applies if you are a Pastor of a church of 50 people or 50,000 people. This applies if you are the leader of an international Christian ministry or leading a new ministry in your local community. Your life should look like the life Jesus modeled for us. Unfortunately, I rarely see this. More often I see people who are trying to build a bigger platform, a bigger salary, or a bigger home. Rarely do I find someone who has turned away from materialism and status in North America. It is exceptionally rare. Even in churches that are growing, rarely is an all-consuming love for God modeled to the congregation. We claim we love God, but we also love wealth and status, and the church in North America has suffered greatly as a result. Thankfully, God has given us a clear path out of this crisis. One night, God appeared to Solomon and said to him, “When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:13-14, ESV).

Never has this been more applicable than now for the church in North America. We need our leaders to humble themselves, instead of lifting themselves up. We need men and women of God to pray and seek God’s face. We need our leaders to love God with utter abandon. Our pastors need to turn back to God and lead their congregations to do the same. When we do this, God will hear from heaven. God will forgive our sin. God will heal our land. But it begins with us.

My friend, the Holy Spirit is sounding the alarm. It is getting louder by the day. Will you heed the alarm? Will you seek the change of heart for which God is calling? Will you truly love God with all your heart, all your mind, and all your strength? Will you turn away from this world, and turn back to God? Will you repent of loving other things? I pray that you will. After all, the life of the Church depends on it. When we do, everything changes. Our lives are changed, our churches are changed, our communities are changed, and our country will be changed as well.

The alarm is sounding. What will you do?

October 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7 pm Pastor Search Com	2	3
4 12:15 Property/ Baptist Men 12:15 WMU	5 7 pm Finance Com	6 7 pm Deacon's meeting	7 7pm Business Meeting	8 7 pm Pastor Search Com	9	10 5 am Apple Butter making Pavilion
11	12	13	14 7 pm Bible Study	15 11 am 3 Score & More 7 pm Pastor Search Com	16	17 Youth 5:15 pm to Liberty
18	19	20	21 6 pm Family Night Dinner 7 pm Bible Study	22 7 pm Pastor Search Com	23	24
25 Youth to Percival's Island	26	27	28 7 pm Bible Study	29 7 pm Pastor Search Com	30	31

Bible Wordsearch

Wordsearch 241

Matt. 5:43-6:4

Sermons of Jesus 2

H	E	A	V	E	N	O	D	E	R	O	N	O	H	S
H	S	G	N	I	O	D	S	I	V	T	R	U	T	H
D	G	T	P	R	A	Y	G	R	O	I	W	E	U	Y
S	N	H	R	O	B	H	G	I	E	N	L	C	Y	M
S	I	A	P	E	T	P	O	C	L	H	U	N	R	E
N	V	T	H	E	E	U	N	O	O	B	T	U	C	N
A	I	E	O	R	R	T	F	L	V	E	D	O	A	E
G	G	U	F	Y	C	S	S	L	E	F	O	N	R	A
A	S	E	D	A	S	T	E	E	D	O	O	N	E	B
P	C	E	U	O	E	K	T	C	R	R	G	A	F	N
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N	E	S	M	D	R	I	E	O	E	T	H	W	L	V
S	N	U	G	C	S	S	L	R	W	E	E	T	E	E
D	R	A	E	H	I	O	V	S	E	O	R	L	A	R
T	O	S	R	R	E	C	E	I	V	E	D	G	D	F

ANNOUNCE	DOING
BEFORE	DONE
BROTHERS	ENEMY
CAREFUL	EVEN
CAUSES	EVIL
FATHER	GOOD
HEAVEN	GIVING
HONORED	GREET
NEIGHBOR	HAND
PAGANS	HATE
PERFECT	HEARD
RECEIVED	KNOW
REWARD	LOVE
RIGHTEOUS	NEEDY
SECRET	PRAY
STREETS	RISE
TRUMPETS	SENDS
TRUTH	SONS
PERSECUTE	
COLLECTORS	

After you find all the hidden words the left over letters spell out a Bible verse reading from the top left to the bottom right

MORE PUZZLES AT:

<http://biblewordgames.com>

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Three Score and More

On September 10th, 3 Score and More got together for an end of summer picnic and fellowship. There were plenty of hot dogs with all the trimmings and so much more was on the table for us to enjoy. After our meal, we were privileged to be entertained by the musical talents of Phyllis Coffey on the piano. Karen was coaxed into joining her on the organ for a couple of our favorite hymns. It turned into a sing-a-long and fun was had by all. Thanks to everyone who came and made it such a success. If you are 60 or older, come and joins us, God is good.

3 Score and More will meet at the Pavilion on October 15th for a Fall Harvest meeting, please come and join in the fun!



October 5th- Grover Carter
 Linda Hill
 October 16th- Jeanette Burroughs
 October 28th- Jack Wheeler
 October 30th- Dorothea Martin

? Bible Quiz?

According to the New Testament, John the Baptist introduced two of his followers to Jesus. The men were brothers named Andrew and Simon. Almost immediately, Jesus accepted the two men as friends and followers. He gave one of them a new name. Jesus said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas." (which is translated _____). Choose the correct name from the list below.

- A. Nicodemus
- B. Matthew
- C. Philip
- D. Peter

Answer above the calendar

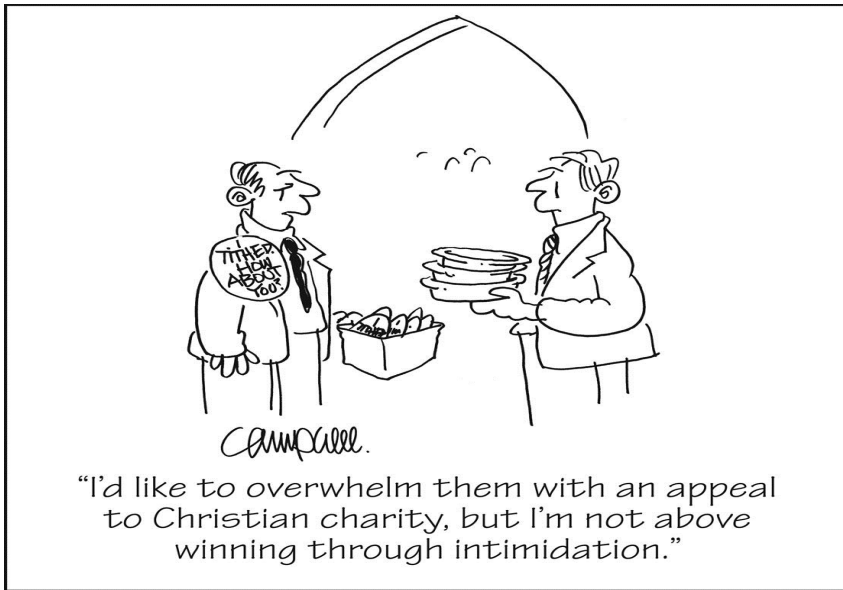


Church Members

James Board
 Jim Brown
 Lucille Caniff
 Myrtle Ellis
 Linda & Jim Ferrando
 Kenneth Gray
 Collins Leftwich
 Reva Meade
 Agnes McPherson
 Jack & Edna Powers
 Jack Wheeler
 Jimmy & Jerri Wheeler
 Ken & Arlene Wheeler
 Sherman Wheeler



The WMU is extending an invitation to all woman of the church, to come and join us in our meetings, activities, projects and please bring your ideas. We would like to hear your ideas and suggestions and have the opportunity of working with all the woman of the church.



A Note from the secretary:
 If your birthday isn't listed, please let me know, if it doesn't show up, I don't have it, and if you have anything that you would like to announce in the newsletter please let me know, thanks!!
 Also, address changes, phone numbers and emails, and if I have your email the newsletter can be sent that way!



OCTOBER

**Apple Butter Making
 October 10th, 5am
 At the Pavilion**

Youth

We are happy to have Judy Grisso as the new Youth Director and here's what's planned for October!

October 17th

The Youth will be at the church
at 5:15 pm
To attend the Scaremare at
Liberty University
Cost is \$8 per person.



Scaremare presents fun-house rooms and scenes of death in order to confront people with the question "What happens after I die?"

Groups of people experience a 40-minute journey, passing through creepy trails, dark woods and eventually entering the House. At the end of the experience, visitors are presented with an answer to this question and given the life-changing message of Jesus Christ. Approximately 26,000 people have made decisions for Christ over the past two decades. Ironically, this House of Death points to the Way of Life!



October 25th

The youth will be going to Percival's Island walking Trail in Lynchburg after the Sunday morning service. Lunch will be provided and bring a friend!!