

Monthly Support Report

August 31, 2017

Dear elders,

Greetings on this last day of August 2017. What a beautiful day it's been today. I trust that you've had a blessed day and that August weather has been as good for you as it has for us in this area. Clearly these positive sentiments of good weather are not shared by those in and around Houston, and now the Gulf Coast States. I feel so bad that so many continue to suffer due to Hurricane Harvey. I had heard this morning that the death toll had reached 21. That was early this morning. I would imagine that the death toll is higher now and that it will continue to rise until the waters subside considerably. The survivors in that area continue to be in my prayers.

It's my prayer that this report finds all of you doing well and that you're enjoying good health. We are fine and very thankful for God's many blessings. Now that summer has passed (not officially), after this Labor Day Weekend most around here won't be doing any traveling until the Thanksgiving Holiday. It will be good to have everyone back at worship services. Many of our members have actually done an unusual amount of traveling during the summer months. But now that school is back in session it's time to settle back into a rather normal routine.

Our Wednesday evening Bible class is studying a book that deals with the subject of Respect. It's a book that approaches this very important subject from many different angles including our Respect for God. If you're like me, just seeing the word respect makes you think of what's sorely missing in our society today. There's no sense in going down the road of remembering "the good old days" when respect seemingly was important. I'm sure all of us have much to add about the lack of respect in our world today and how much better off we would be if there was proper respect. Just this one word shows you how good things can be when you follow the wisdom of God that's found in the Bible. It also shows how negative things can be when men choose to go their own way instead of the ways of God. Respect is just one of those qualities that we could discuss.

Our Bible study in the Parables of Jesus continue to go well. We just completed a study of the Prodigal Son. It was a very interesting study as it usually is. And when you have good brethren together in a Bible Class who always come well-prepared it makes for an interesting discussion. I had thought we could cover the lesson in one class, but those good comments kept coming so we ended up taking two classes instead of one. And as per usual there are always things that you see that you didn't see in previous studies. I've always really enjoyed that and I've been amazed by that in my years of Bible study. When you think you have done a thorough study of something as simple as a Parable, you find a new little nugget or two. That's all the more reason to continue to read, study and meditate upon the word of God. What a fascinating book the Bible is.

Let me take a moment to recommend a book to you. The title of the book is Muscle and a Shovel. The author is Michael Shank. I'll tell you just a little about this book. Maybe you've read it. I've copied and I'll paste what Amazon says. **"6th Edition Revised Muscle and a Shovel is a true story about a pair of young newly-weds who move to the city to chase the American dream. In the middle of their pursuit they are befriended by a man who turns their beliefs about God, their church, and their faith upside-down."**

Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Catholics, Community Churches - no one is spared when Truth is at stake - and their new friend Randall isn't concerned about political correctness or religious tolerance." It's well written and one of the reasons I like it is it's filled with scripture (correctly used) and my thought is it's a book that could be useful for Personal Evangelism. My wife and I plan to purchase some extra copies and ask some of our friends and acquaintances to read it. While I don't know of anyone who has used it this way, I'm confident some have. I actually see it as a good tool that can be used to help teach someone the truth in a non-confrontational way. There are many different websites that sell this book. I don't know the author personally, but he has done a good job in writing this book. He has a second book titled When Shovels Break that's a true story about a Christian falling away and God's grace and mercy. I should have time to get this book and read it this fall.

We have a young woman who is actually reading Muscle and a Shovel in an attempt to steer her away from her denominational past. Time will only tell if her heart is honest enough to turn away from what she has known and been taught all of her life. Many denominational issues are discussed in this book in a very organized way with a good use of Scripture. She is taking her time and I'm thankful she is. I want her to be sure and convicted by the truth when and if she makes the change. This is the way that I see this book being used. A person like this lady reads, and then you have a discussion. It is my hope and prayer that in one of my future Monthly Support Reports I'll be reporting that we have had a young woman who was baptized for the remission of her sins. That day, if and when it comes will be a cause for rejoicing.

We have another young lady who is getting closer and closer to being baptized. The word is convicting her heart and it appears as though she has a good and honest heart and that she wants to do that which is right. When that time comes she will be a good servant of the Lord Jesus Christ and we will have cause for rejoicing.

A nearby College has brought us another student that will possibly (hopefully) be with us on most Sundays. Some of us know her family and they are a very fine family, just like this young lady is a very fine young lady. It will be a blessing to have her with us. Many of us have memories or stories about college years away from home and other good Christians watching out for the welfare of young college students away from home for the very first time in a strange city. It's a blessing and an honor to be in the position of repaying a debt such as that. And some of us still have one who will be in that position within a year or two and as a parent we pray for Christians nearby where they are at school to be their second home. Their home away from home. My wife could talk for hours about a few good families in Gainesville, Florida who took her in while she attended the University of Florida. She has such fond memories of those families and is still in contact with quite a few of them. They were such a blessing to her during those years of her life.

Well, I guess that's all to report for August. Thanks for reading and thank you for being a blessing to me and my family. Your fellowship in the gospel is greatly appreciated as are your many prayers for us and the work we're attempting to do for the Lord's glory and honor. I can't say thank you enough. You continue to be a blessing. You remain in our prayers as well.

God bless.

Randy