



April 2025

# The Lighthouse

## On Heresies

The Oxford Dictionary defines a heresy as *a belief or opinion contrary to orthodox religious doctrine*. In our context here, a heresy is anything contrary to God's Word, the Bible.

One widespread and common heresy is salvation by works, the idea that one's salvation is dependent on one's deeds.

Our Men's Bible Study has been studying a series on Exploring Islam. As part of our study, we've been looking into a Tree Of Heresies, first published by theologian Lambert Daneau in 1576 in a commentary on Augustine's *De haeresibus ad Quodvultdeum* (The heresies of Quodvultdeus – Quodvultdeus was the Bishop of Carthage). Things can get a bit deep when you're looking at a modern theologian (Dr. Kirk Summers) discussing an analysis by another theologian (Lambert Daneau) written in 1576, and that analysis was of a work by yet another theologian (Augustine) written in 340. But the tree of heresies part was very interesting.

Daneau identifies many heresies that culminate into two main ones: Papism (Catholicism) and Islam. Interesting that Islam is identified as a heresy, but there are several teachings in the Qur'an that make this clear. The Qur'an presents final judgement as the idea that everyone's good deeds will be weighed against their bad deeds. Likewise Papism contains elements of a works salvation, e.g. purgatory. Both are contrary to judgment as presented in the Bible. No amount of good deeds can make someone righteous. Perfect righteousness can only be found in Jesus.

Another heresy in the Qur'an is what it says about Jesus – that He was not the incarnate Son of God and did not atone for our sins on the cross. He was merely a messenger who preached the same message as Muhammad.

But heresies are not only found in other religions. Anything that contradicts God's Word is a heresy. Our culture is full of them. Sexual perversions, illegal drug use, social ills of all descriptions are often celebrated. All these evils (“social ills”) have their origins in heresies – deviations from the Bible.

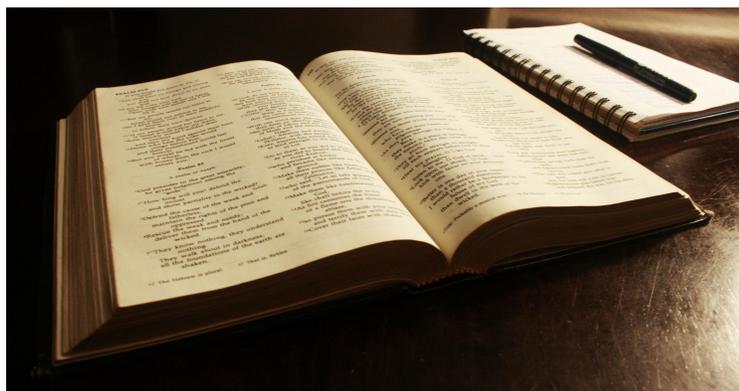
Sometimes heresies are quite subtle. Our own denomination, the Presbyterian Church in America, has battled several. Not too long ago the New Perspective on Paul movement attempted to redefine the gospel to be how one identifies the members of the new covenant community instead of how an individual is saved. That movement tried to radically redefine the doctrine of justification by faith alone.

Here's one that may surprise you. Did you know that the original Apostle's Creed did not contain the line “He descended into hell.”? That line was first added by Rufinus in the late fourth century. Rufinus makes clear that he did not believe Christ literally descended into hell, but rather that the phrase merely meant He was buried. Perhaps a better translation would be that He descended into Hades, the realm of the dead. Christ was well and truly dead, not asleep, not unconscious, not in a coma -- all heresies widely spread in the early days of the church. Rufinus was correct, of course. Jesus experienced hell while he suffered on the cross, but Jesus did not descend into hell after he died. Remember what Jesus said to one of the criminals next to Him on the cross: *“Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”* (Luke 23:43).

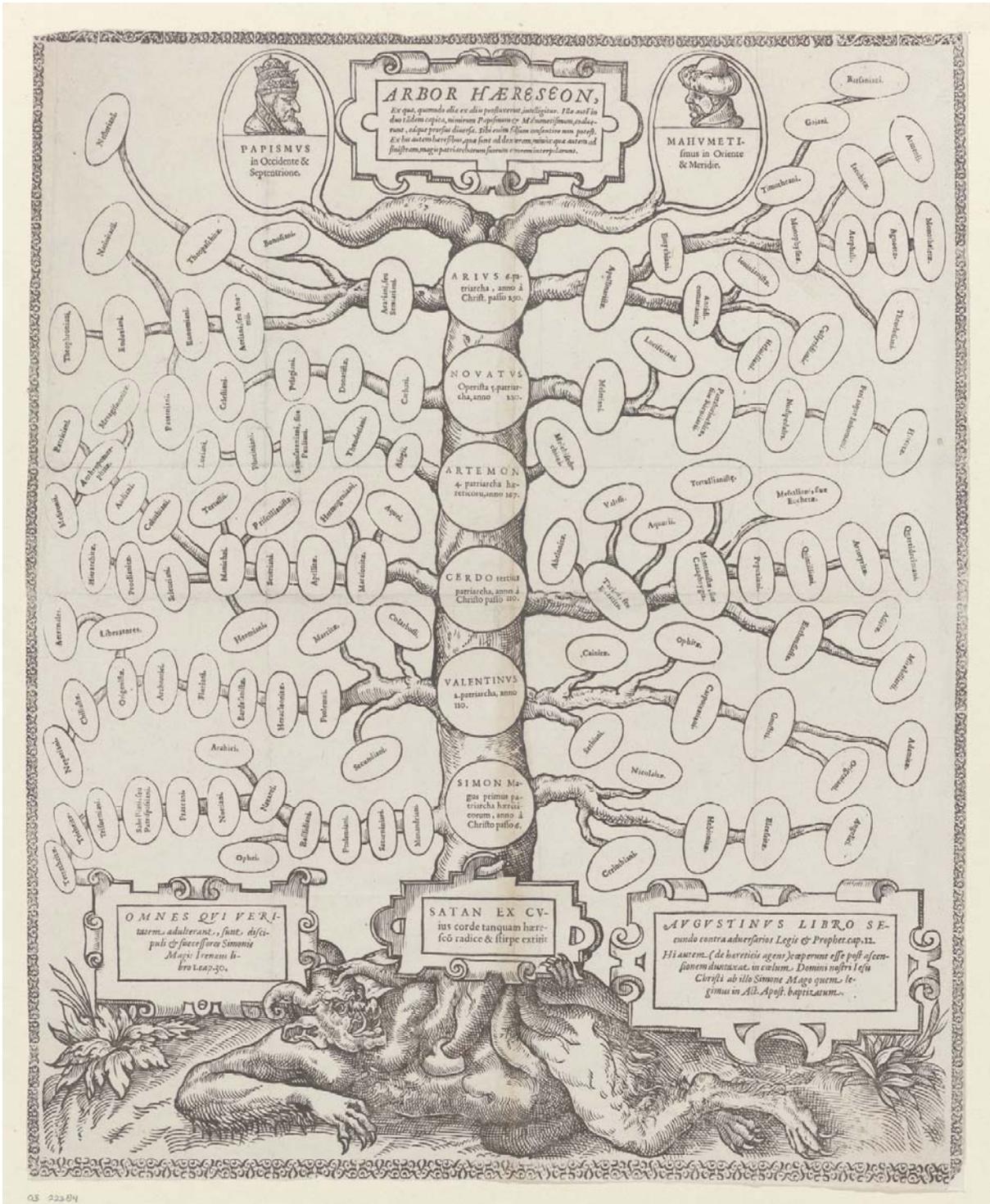
When Paul and Silas were in Thessalonica, they were badly treated by the Jews there (Acts 17:1-9). But when they got to Berea, their reception was quite different. *“Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.”* (Acts 17:11) How joyous those early Christians must have been to hear the truth of the gospel and verify it was not heresy!

Whenever you hear things that seem puzzling and may be in conflict with God's Word, verify them with the absolute authority, the Bible. Be a Berean!

– David Allen



The Tree of Heresies as published by Lambert Daneau in 1576



A translation of the top center box:

The Tree of Heresies, from which one can see how they flowed one from the other. Furthermore, these heresies have coalesced in the end into two completely distinct heads, that is, Papism and Islam. Truly, falsehood cannot agree with itself. And of these heresies, the ones on the right have expanded upon the error of their own patriarchs the less, while those on the left more.

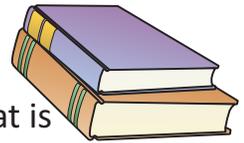


## A Voice from the Past That Still Resonates Today



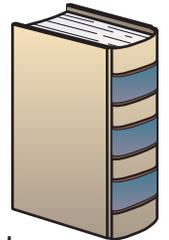
For this month's book review, I am going to reach back into the past to recommend a classic work which speaks loudly to us today. The book written by Francis Schaefer, the founder of L'Abri Fellowship and a member of the PCA, is entitled *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century*.

In this book, Dr. Shafer sought to challenge the church in the seventies to wake up and stand for biblical truth in confronting the issues of his day. The issues of our day may be different, but the challenge is the same for our generation – Scripture, God's inspired, infallible, inerrant word is “the only rule of faith and practice”. It is to be the guidebook for all we do! Biblical truth is never outdated or obsolete! The written word of God is just as relevant today as it was when its authors, guided by the Holy Spirit, put pen to paper.



Dr. Shafer states in the book that “this is not a day for a sleepy church – a church that is merely operating on the basis of memory and is afraid to be free within the bounds of Scripture”. He contended that the New Testament not only commands particular forms for the church to follow, but also allows a great freedom to be exercised under the leadership of the Holy Spirit for a particular time and place.

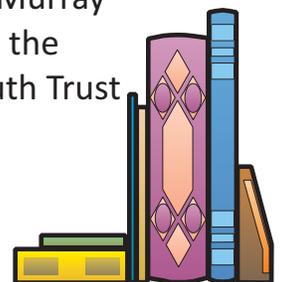
The chapter entitled *The Mark of a Christian*, later reproduced as a separate pamphlet, addresses the practice of demonstrating observable love within the body of Christ as well as before a watching world. On the topic Schaefer states: “It is a day of no small games. We need to teach a Christianity of content and purity of doctrine.” He talks about how to practice observable love among the entire body of Christ. Needless to say the same challenge applies to us today.



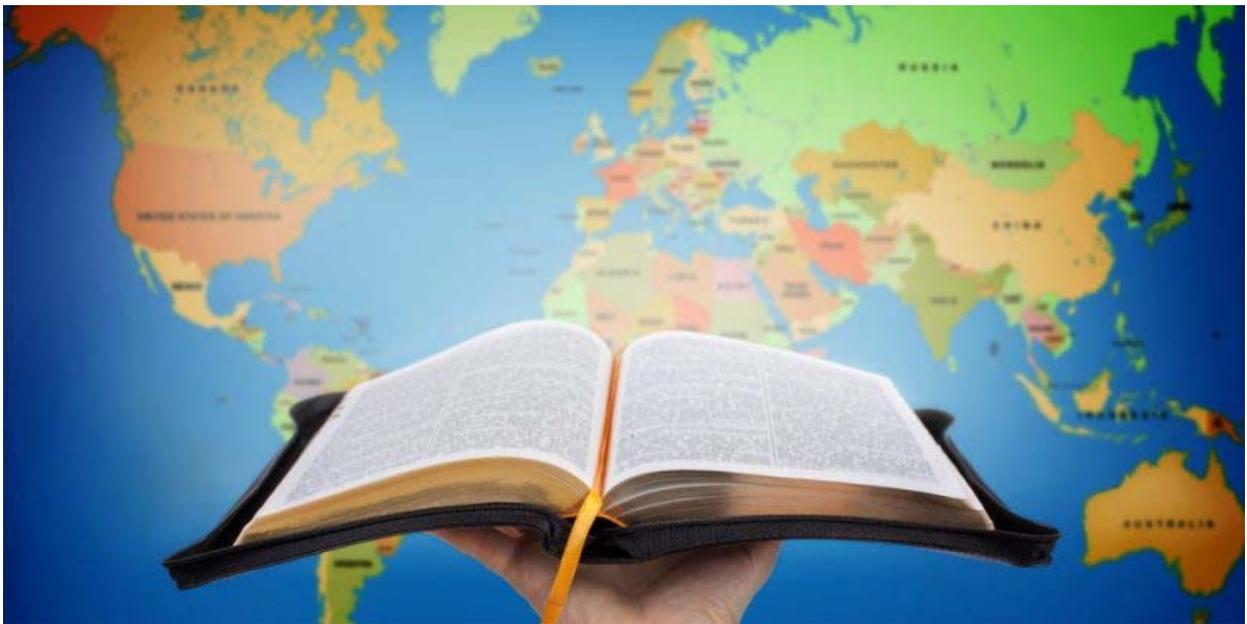
For this to happen the author challenged followers of Christ to live out their relationship with Christ in the midst of the daily affairs of life. Not just on Sunday, but 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and by so doing communicate biblical truth before a bankrupt culture.

This truth can only be found in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and in a life guided by the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. These 66 books are described as inspired, infallible, and inerrant – the only rule of faith and practice. I also recommend a daily reading schedule. Many good guides for daily reading are available, but I recommend particularly the one developed by the Scottish pastor Robert Murray McShane whereby you read the whole Bible once in a year, and the Psalms and the New Testament twice. If interested, this can be ordered from the Banner of Truth Trust (<https://banneroftruth.org/us/store/devotionalsdaily-readings/read-the-bible-in-a-year/>).

Coram Deo,  
Jim Misner



*News from the*  
**Mission Field**



## A Brief Update April 2025

Steven Hammond | Nagoya, Japan

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**Hey!**

Hope you're doing well! I just wanted to check back in and give an update as to how things are going with all things Japan!

### **UPDATE 1: I Still Don't Have My Visa (I'm not in Japan)**

Yeah, it's a bummer. As long as I don't have my visa, I'm stuck in the US. It's been a difficult wait, and I confess that I've really been struggling. Nonetheless, I know it's in God's hands and in His timing. The hard part is really leaning into that truth and resting in it—especially for the type of person that wants to have control over everything.

### **UPDATE 2: Japanese Tutoring is Going Well!**

On the bright side, I've been studying Japanese with a tutor via Zoom, and it's been incredibly helpful! God blessed me with a great, Japanese Christian tutor who can not only teach me Japanese, but also the Christian vocabulary, too! So that's been really fun and very encouraging.

Other than that, I've been picking up some design work and have spent time with family and friends, which has been nice. I've also been back up at

the school substituting when needed and have been helping run the game club again.

That's all for now. As frustrating as waiting can be, I trust that God is here in the midst of it and is working to refine me (and there's a lot that needs to be refined). Thanks for all of your prayers, and I look forward to keeping you posted as things progress!

As always, some prayer requests are listed below.

Blessings!

## Thanks For Praying with Me!

### PRAYER REQUESTS

- That I would obtain my visa.
- That my Japanese language learning would continue to go well, and that I would be much more proficient when I deploy.
- That God would help me to lean into Him more deeply during this time.
- That I would continue to spend my time well.

### ENCOURAGEMENTS & ANSWERED PRAYERS

- I've gotten to spend extra time with family and friends, so that's been nice!
- My Japanese ability is increasing, which is an answer to prayer and very encouraging.

*In Christ,*  
**Steven Hammond**

## Prayer and Praise

Jody Collinge

March 21, 2024

"Your word is a lamp to my feet

And a light to my path".

Psalms 119:105 (NASB)

### Travels

March 27, 2025--Moving to Texas

### Prayer and Praise



1. My apartment is a mixture of empty bookshelves and full boxes. On March 27th, I will be moving to Grand Saline, Texas to live in the cabin at the home base of the Christian Health Service Corps. But this is not a final goodbye to Zihuatanejo--I hope to return from January to March (at least) to take part in the ministries here.

2. Although I am moving, I am not retiring. I will continue to work with curriculum development and with Children's CHE with the Global CHE Network. And thank God for many faithful partners and the reports of new opportunities around the world.

2. Moving is bittersweet. The hardest part of missions is saying "Goodbye" or "Hasta luego" ("See you later" ) to many friends and ministries. But the Lord is good--he has found new homes for many of my books (including medical books and Greek books), clothing, cooking supplies, decorations, and some appliances and furniture. May they be well used!

3. Many thanks to Reyna and Hector for caring for me in their apartments for many years. Right now the refrigerator seems to have died--but that doesn't affect me much since I am using up all my food!

4. Please pray for the colonias or neighborhoods in Zihuatanejo. In Nuevo Amanecer, where we have the children's ministries, there was a series of shootings. We returned yesterday and it seemed calm but the families nearby are

understandably anxious. Pray for safety for them and for wisdom what to do.

5. And pray that I may become fully connected with the ministries, friends and churches in Texas! In case you missed it, here is a photo of the cabin. My address will be P.O. Box 132, Fruitvale, TX, 75127. CHSC is active with medical missionaries and ministries around the world. It is a joy to be part of that. And I have been active in a small Hispanic church in town.

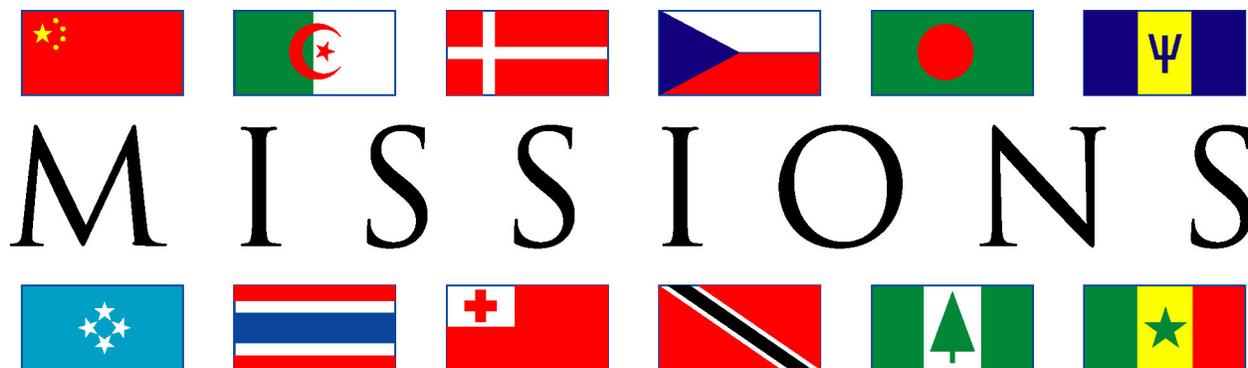


**¡Muchas gracias!**

Thank God for his protection and care and for many friendships and ministries in Zihuatanejo over 25 years. Thanks for accompanying me on this journey. And many thanks for your prayers, encouragement, and support! Let me know how I can be praying for you.

Dios les bendiga. (May God bless you.)

*Jody*



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# WORDS FROM THE WILDERNESS

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Establishing a Prayer Team To Share God's Heart to Reach the Lost

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## He is the Best Songwriter On the Coast

I met Cory on one of my first nights going into the bars of Ocean Springs in the hope of doing evangelism and ministry. He is impossible to miss. I am not a small person, but Cory is huge. If not a musician, he easily could have been an NFL lineman. But instead, he is a regular at the local watering holes, including open mic night at the Government Street Grocery, the bar where I first met him. I sat fascinated, while I listened to him sing the most heart-breaking, beautifully written, original songs you have ever heard. Seriously, Cory's songs reveal that he is a master wordsmith and so much more than just a "dive bar all-star." His songs spoke of loss, of pain, and of the search for something, anything, as a reason to be. And I was riveted.

When he was done that first night I heard him, he providentially came over and sat down right next to me, which gave me the chance to look for a connection. I reached out to him and said, "Cory, I love your music. And it sounds like there is a lot of pain behind your writing. Can you tell me that story?" So Cory began to speak to me of a lifetime of hurt, of wounds done to him, and wounds he had caused. He spoke of depression, anxiety, and of divorce and loss. And then, when he was done, he summed it all up by saying, "Every night I come home from work, I pour myself a fifth of bourbon, I go out on my back porch.... And I sit there and ask myself, 'Is this the night I am going to kill myself?' And then I come down here to the bar, and I pour that question and that pain out in my music.

That was two years ago. In the months since, Cory and I have grown close. We sit and talk often together, him telling me his story in between shots of whiskey, and me listening and praying, asking God to help me make the love of Jesus clear to a hurting and searching man. Cory will often text me on Thursday afternoons, before open mic night at the Grocery, to see if I am going to be there that night. He has shared with me the story of some of his tattoos, including one that is the neck of a Gibson guitar, overlaid with lyrics from a song that remind him not to lose sight of nor let others take who he really is. It was Cory, as told in our last newsletter, who reached out to me to share a new song that he had written, and that song became the occasion for standing outside the Grocery with him and two others for hours, talking about the gospel and questions about God until way past when the bar closed. And then, after that breakthrough, came the night that Cory and I were talking again at the bar and he said, "Wait here, there is something I want to show you." And he went to his truck and came back with his notebook – THE notebook in which he writes all his lyrics, bits of lines, and ideas for songs. And any of you who are artists or who are close to artists know what a sacred, profound honor and demonstration of trust it was for him to place that notebook into my hands. And so we talk. And share. And it has been two years.



## The Already and Not Yet of Evangelism

In reformed circles, we often talk about "Already and Not Yet" as a way of describing this life we live as followers of Jesus in the time between his two advents. On this side of cross, we already have all of the promises of God, and the identity He gives us in Christ. We are already chosen, redeemed, and justified, and adopted fully, now, already, as sons and daughters of the Father....

But not yet do we have the full fruition. This side of the second coming of Jesus we look, we wait, and we hope. It is a sure hope – but also a not yet here hope. We grow, and we groan. We feel the effect of this still fallen world, already possessing all of the love of the Father and identity and standing of the Son, while still waiting for the fulfillment of the promises that all will be made new. Promises that are sure...but not yet here and now.

That same “Already and Not Yet” reality applies to ministry and evangelism. We have been here, on-site and ministering in Ocean Springs about two and half years now. And I am **Amazed at What God Has Already Done:**

- He is adding to our **core group and to the new, young church** we are starting. The group is growing in size, and more importantly, in depth. **Steve and Sherry Lanier** are with us, helping us to disciple and shepherd this group of young believers. We meet every Sunday evening for good food, for worship (led by a team of people within the group who are using their gifts to lead worship), and we study the Bible. Every week we talk about the beautiful, amazing grace of Jesus, how that grace is meant to fill us up and change everything in our lives – And how we are not meant to hold and keep that grace just for ourselves: We are meant to share it far and wide to reach all of Ocean Springs with the gospel. There is such a sweet Spirit in our weekly Sunday night times together, and it is breathtakingly beautiful to watch the group start to bond, operate in their gifts, and love each other the way a young church is supposed to. It truly is a sweet and special thing to behold!



- And weekly, even daily, God is **adding to our evangelism ministry** throughout Ocean Springs and then focused on Government Street. He is bringing us in touch with bartenders, musicians, and the lost, hurting souls who make up the population of a bar community. They are asking questions, and they are trusting us in deep, profound ways that are already becoming opportunities for the gospel. We have literally had lost people telling other lost people that they should check out and become part of our ministry because, “God is doing something life-changing there.” And just yesterday, I had lunch with Carter, an actor whom I met in the bar. As we met, he, not yet knowing I was a pastor, told me about leaving the faith of his childhood, and about the crushing loneliness and the unanswered questions he now has, and about how, just three days before, he had prayed for the first time in years, asking God, “If you are real, would you send someone who can help answer my questions?” And then he asked me, “So Mark, what are you all about?” And there, sitting at an open-air restaurant on Government Street, I had the privilege and the sacred opportunity to tell Carter my story, my testimony, and why we have come to Ocean Springs. And I got to explain the gospel to him – How God is a God who runs to prodigals, the lost, the broken, the confused, and the ones who are crying out for help. As I shared, Carter began to cry, right out there in the open. He grabbed my hand, and he said, “This has to be God! Only He could have done this! Will you walk with me as I take my questions to Him?” To which I gladly said yes, and I left praising God for all He has done, already, in just two and a half years, and how we are now in a place of pastoring, first the core group and launch team in my house on Sunday nights, and then **over a hundred people** like Carter, with whom we have the profound privilege to walk with, to show the love of Jesus, and to tell them of the gospel. With those people, and with our core group growing toward becoming a church, I look with wonder, and I give praise: **God has already done this!**



## And still there is the Not Yet:

With Cory, it has been two years. And counting. At times he seems so close to the light and the hope that can only be found in Jesus – And yet he is still so far from the gospel. He even wrote a song recently, one of the ones he was eager to share with me, and in the chorus there is the line,



“I’m not looking for Jesus. I pray He doesn’t see us.” And yet...if you listen to the rest of the song, it is literally a lost man crying out for the gospel, for it is the only thing with the power to make him the man he needs to be. With Cory, and with many of the 100+ people in our evangelism “parish,” and even with the believers in our core group church that is launching in our house (for we all need the same gospel daily), this is a “season of seeds.” Of showing up faithfully. Of praying. And of waiting. And walking along with them, like God does with us. So many of them are in process, but they are not yet Christians. And that is ok.

In 1979, a Japanese writer named Kosuke Koyama wrote a book titled *The Three Mile Per Hour God*. In it, he traces the journey and the ministry of Jesus and writes about a Jesus who intentionally chose to move slowly, roughly the speed at which a man naturally walks on foot. About a mile every twenty minutes. Three miles each hour. But instead of accepting this as merely a physical bar to which all bipeds tend to adhere, Koyama suggests a deeper reason – A reason that has nothing to do with era or culture or topography: He claims a hidden message for humanity in Jesus’ unhurried approach to how he engaged people.

Who among us does not feel the rush, the hecticness, and the hurry to “already have everything”? In ministry, and simply in modern life, there can be so much pressure to move quickly. In church planting, there seems to be an assumed and constantly ticking stopwatch. “Are you ready to particularize yet? Do you have a building yet?” As Jim Hatch, a mentor and hero of mine once put it, “Most of us PCA-ers want to see numbers fast, particularization soon, and buildings up as metrics of success. And I am convinced that traps us into plants filled with believers who are mostly consumers....and who do not have a missional bone in their bodies.”

But I wonder: What if we too began to live life at the speed Jesus’ modeled for us all those years ago? What if we moved along at the pace of a Three Mile an Hour God, choosing people over technology, and relationships over productivity? What if we put the material aside when the human came calling? What if we learned to celebrate and praise God for what He has already done – While watching, waiting, and walking with Him toward what has not yet come?

### **It has been the vision, the goal, and the hope of this new ministry from the beginning.**

We are working and praying for a healthy church to be planted and standing strong at the end of this story. We are praising God for the believers He is calling and placing in our group to be part of that mission. And we are praising God for the not yet Christians He is already leading us to walk alongside with the gospel.

But it has always been a **ten year vision (and beyond)**. A vision of a church one day praising Jesus as one, and a church made up of people who do not yet, as of today, know Jesus as their Savior or even that He is real. And a church that will then be the means of grace that God uses to plant many more churches on the gulf coast – So that many more “not yet Christians” will be saved and come to know and worship Jesus Christ!

**Would you pray for Cory and for the “Already and Not Yet” in this ministry? Would you consider being part of our financial support team? Would you give toward what God wants to do save many souls on the coast – Now...And in the days to come!**

- Use the QR code to the right, or visit <http://give.pcamna.org/to/1749>
- Checks can also be sent payable to "Mission to North America"  
PO Box 890233  
Charlotte, NC, 28289-02333  
(Write "Mark Horn, Ocean Springs Church Plant" on the memo line)
- More information for all of this and updates on our Ocean Springs story can be found at our website: [www.PlantHopeOS.org](http://www.PlantHopeOS.org)
- And remember: The Facebook page for our livestream of our Bible studies and photos of our meetings can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/613907074215025>



**Thank you, Dear Friends and Partners. Thank you for your prayers. Thank you for praising God with us for all that He has done – And all that He is going to do. Thank you for your giving and your support. And thank you for believing with us that God is going to do a great work for the gospel through Jesus Christ!**

**A closing encouragement:**

.....  
“God walks slowly because He is love. If He was not love, He would have gone much faster.” – Kosuke Koyama

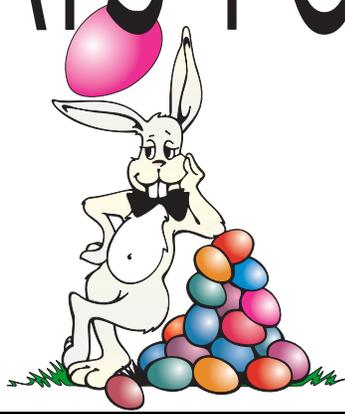
# Shepherding List

Aaron Smith/John Chaney	David Allen/Mike Clark
Smith Family John Chaney Vanderkooy Family Nick Clark Freeman Family Pizzari Family Carol Roch Margaret Fore/Tammy Turney Marilyn Kooienga Phil Pennington Willson Family Dean & Lynne Rydbeck Warren & Linda Brookhart Blakeney Family	David Allen Mike & Kim Clark Andy Bagby Norman & Fran Bagby Frank Genzer Jim & Elizabeth Mosely Kay Pringle Dandre Washington Glidewell Family Eloise Gryder Anky Delarie Tal Braddock Nancy Marvar
Regular Attenders	Regular Attenders
Mike McMurray & Zandra Walker Barber Family	Libby Jordan Maria Smith Victor Allen Dan & Christine Garrett Mike & Elaine Dent
Ken Pennell	Ben Bowden/Jeff Harrison
Scott Malthaner Ben & Julia Bowden Phil & Vielsa Harding Jim & Janet Misner Harvel & Megan Jackson Charlotte Rhett Rachel & John Roach Joan & Tricia Gauthier Harriett O'Malley Horn Family Venning Family Sue Faircloth & Cathy Davenport	Ken & Pat Pennell Diane Bowden Ken & Joan Gosnell Jeff & Katherine Harrison Melba Sipriano Fran Handel Greg Mann Rosemary Bailey Steve & Michelle Lustig Kathleen Edwards Kayleigh Clark Vince Giordano Josiah Lamont Michael & Amy Conaway Chris & Natalie Calmes
Regular Attenders	Regular Attenders
Johnny & Maria Gonzalez Pat Shaw Barry Fancher Bryce & Gayle Hicks	Glenn & Susan Collins Manuel & Ashley Diaz Family Sharon Parker Hall Family

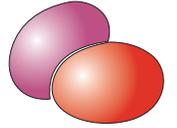
Updated  
March 4, 2025

# BIRTHDAYS FOR APRIL

Elizabeth Moseley 3rd  
Carol Roch 4th  
Norman Bagby 9th  
Virginia Horn 12th  
Ray Pringle 15th  
Janet Misner 16th



Rosemary Bailey 17th  
Joan Gauthier 17th  
Marilyn Kooienga 17th  
Benjamin Willson 19th  
Anky de la Riv 25th  
Ken Pennell 29th  
Steve Lustig 30th



## Dates to Remember for April

April 2 Ladies Circle meeting at 9:30 a.m. in the church parlor

April 5 Men's Breakfast at 8:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall

April 5 Easter Egg Hunt at 10 to 11:30am in the fellowship Hall and church grounds

April 6 Communion

April 7 Men's Bible Study at 6:30 p.m. in the church parlor

April 13 Palm Sunday/Monthly Luncheon after the worship service, please bring a dish to share

April 16 No Wednesday activities

April 17 Maundy Service at 6:00 p.m.

April 18 Good Friday, church office will be closed

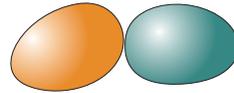
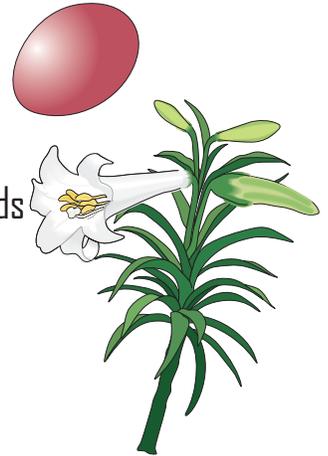
April 20 Easter

April 21 Men's Bible Study at 6:30 p.m. in the church parlor

April 21 Deacon's Meeting at 5:45 p.m. at the church

April 22 Session Meeting at 6:00 p.m. in the library

April 30 Women's Leadership Meeting at 5:30 p.m.





**1340 Beach Boulevard  
Biloxi, Mississippi 39530  
228.374.6880  
firstpresbiloxi.org**

**First Presbyterian Church of Biloxi is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America.  
To learn more about the PCA, log on to pcanet.org**

### **Elders**

<b>David Allen</b>	228-547-1007	david.allen@firstpresbiloxi.org
<b>Ben Bowden</b>	228-596-5007	ben.bowden@firstpresbiloxi.org
<b>John Chaney</b>	228-238-4379	john.chaney@firstpresbiloxi.org
<b>Mike Clark</b>	228- 326-3213	mike.clark@firstpresbiloxi.org
<b>Jeff Harrison</b>	228-596-6600	jeff.harrison@firstpresbiloxi.org
<b>Ken Pennell</b>	601-674-1637	ken.pennell@firstpresbiloxi.org
<b>Aaron Smith</b>	601-214-0918	aaron.smith@firstpresbiloxi.org
<b>Tim Horn (Pastor)</b>	662-313-8445	tim.horn@firstpresbiloxi.org
<b>Dean Rydbeck (Pastoral Care Minister)</b>	337-351-5294	dean.rydbeck@firstpresbiloxi.org

### **Deacons**

<b>Andy Bagby</b>	228-547-5334	andy.bagby@firstpresbiloxi.org
<b>Phil Harding</b>	410-310-2389	phil.harding@firstpresbiloxi.org
<b>Steve VanderKooy</b>	228-990-1933	steve.vanderkooy@firstpresbiloxi.org

### **Church Musicians**

<b>Jeff Harrison</b>	Music Director	jeff.harrison@firstpresbiloxi.org
<b>Melba Sipriano</b>	Pianist/Organist	melba.sipriano@firstpresbiloxi.org

### **Church Secretary**

<b>Kim Clark</b>	228-374-6880	info@firstpresbiloxi.org
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### **Church Facilities Manager**

<b>Greg Mann</b>	601-954-1241	greg.mann@firstpresbiloxi.org
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