



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 45, No. 5, February 4, 2020 / Southside Baptist Church / P.O. Box 1594
1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / **The Grow in Grace Newsletter is a WEEKLY Bible Study**, plus local church news notes — designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church; and is sent forth with the desire to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Savior JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever.***

SOUTHSIDE— CALLED TO BE A CHRIST-HONORING CHURCH [BRIDE!] IN THE MIDST DEEPIING DARKNESS!

***** DID YOU KNOW? — About 85% of all churches in America are STAGNANT or declining.** *From 6,000 to 10,000 'Christian' congregations in America CLOSE THEIR DOORS! CEASE TO EXIST! DIE! EVERY YEAR!*

***** DID YOU KNOW? —** About 73% of Americans claim to be Christians... but only about 31% attend worship services... at least ONCE a month! George Barna's research shows **"that only 17% of Christians who consider their faith important and attend church regularly actually have a biblical worldview."** [In other words, when decisions or choices are to be made... even from a congregation's most committed members— **only about 17% of them will get their beliefs and make their decisions based on WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS!**]

***** DID YOU KNOW? —** THE BUILDER GENERATION of America, (those born before 1946) — fought and WON wars, raised families, built businesses, institutions, and CHURCHES... and they were, and are LOYAL in good times and bad. **WAKE-UP CALL — THEY are dying out at a rate of 13,000 EVERY WEEK!** The LOYAL BUILDER GENERATION will soon be no more! ***** DID YOU KNOW? —** IN MOST CHURCHES, the MAJORITY of the LOYAL, faithful members are in their 70's and 80's and 90's! AS THEY DIE OUT in congregations— may churches CLOSE THEIR DOORS!

***** DID YOU KNOW? —:** All over the vast rural, small town, AND EVEN big city America— THOUSANDS of congregations are barely holding on by the weakening efforts of the shrinking Builders! **And so in the year 2020, another 6-10 thousand congregations will CLOSE THEIR DOORS... and MULTITUDES of other congregations are close behind them!**

***** DID YOU KNOW? —** A few years back, H.B. London, Jr. and Neil B. Wiseman wrote a book titled, ***PASTORS AT RISK!*** They did extensive research as to trends in evangelical churches of our day. THE REALITY IS THAT ***Churches are at risk! HERE IS SOME OF what the Researchers Found***

1. Church members are “centered on their own comforts, achievements, and happiness rather than on the needs of others ... [they] are easily enticed by cultural non-values... [they] place more value on success and show than on spiritual reality and wholehearted repentance and authentic holy living.” (Page 25)
2. “Pastors deal daily with diluted dedication, family disintegration, superficial commitments, and an accepted churchly consumerism no longer interested in sacrifice, suffering, or servanthood...” (Page 29)
3. “Like wild geese, church members are on the move— not leaving the church, just moving to another local congregation... Today, long-held assumptions about doctrinal devotion and congregational commitments no longer apply. **Fewer and fewer people choose a church or continue to attend because of biblical teaching...**” (Page 35-36)
4. “... It is estimated that 80 percent of church growth in recent years is a result of people moving from one church to another... The migration works to the advantage of megachurches... **which generally emphasize the worshiper rather than God... their worship includes lots of contemporary music, drama... and sermons... with a minimum of exegesis of Scripture.**” (Page 36)

5. “Consumer mentality saturates the American way of life. [Today’s] Consumer [church folk]... want church programs and [and music] to appeal to varied interests and [preferences] ... they choose a church on the basis of what it does for them rather than what they can do for it... Such consumers view the church as a means to achieve their goals. [MANY] even feel uncomfortable with the biblical language of sin and salvation.” (Page 39-40) “Today, believers seldom evaluate life [OR CHURCH CHOICES] by biblical truth” (Page 42)

REALITY: In order to have correct understanding and evaluation of churches, be they growing or declining— we must make a **DISTINCTION between the TRUE BRIDE OF CHRIST and the anti-Christ system’s HARLOT!**

***** DID YOU KNOW? — WE CANNOT DEVELOP A GODLY, WISE strategy for the Building Up of a local Church unless we UNDERSTAND and settle on WHICH CHURCH we are seeking to build up— The Bride or the Harlot!**

WAKE UP CALL: ** If we are **IN THE BRIDE...** we are motivated by and we use strategy tools which line up with HOLY SPIRIT revelation which is set forth in THE WORD OF GOD. ** **If we are IN THE HARLOT...** we are motivated by that which appeals to the flesh... and we use THE ARM OF THE FLESH in seeking to build up congregations.

I. THE HARLOT, so called ‘CHURCH’— you will find her to be outwardly impressive but inwardly an evil harlot. She is an adulteress. She loves the world and is loved by the world. Thus, the love of the Father is not in her! (1 John 2:15) **The great harlot and her daughters are in explosive end-time revival!** It is a revival that pleases the flesh. It is a revival that offers the comforts of “religion” while at the same time allowing deceived masses to keep their sin and their ego.

At the harlot (Wide Gate!) church (Matthew 7:13-27) there is no need of denying yourself, taking up your cross daily, and following Jesus. **HOWEVER, JESUS TELLS US that God did not plant her and in due time, she shall be rooted up! (Matthew 15:13)**

AND... ONE DAY HER MANY PASTORS WILL HEAR STUNNING WORDS FROM JESUS: "I NEVER KNEW YOU... DEPART! (Matt. 7:21-23) Many and VARIED (Matthew 7:13-14) are 'WIDE GATE' Harlot Churches.

But also, a member of "the Harlot" may be found in the midst of a true expression of Christ's church. **WHEAT (The Bride) and tares (The Harlot) often grow together!** (Matthew 13:24-30) **IN THE PULPIT or in the PEW, let each one of us ask: Does the spirit of the Harlot live in me?**

THE HARLOT SPIRIT * Newsweek Article: Shopping for a church!** "...the customer is king... the most successful churches are those that most resemble the suburban shopping mall... the aim is support not salvation, help rather than holiness..." **THE HARLOT SPIRIT *** Marketing the Church**, by Barna: "It is...critical that we keep in mind a fundamental principle of Christian communication: The audience, **not the message**, is sovereign..."

II. THE BRIDE: The true Church of Jesus Christ is comprised of ALL those personally "**planted**" by God the Father (Matthew 15:13); and **personally given** to God the Son by God the Father! (John 17:2) Ultimately, this true church will be a numberless multitude out of every kindred, tongue, tribe, and people (Revelation 7:9).

MEMBERS of the BRIDE OF CHRIST experience the life of God in their souls by the miracle of new birth and revival by the Spirit

of God, feeding souls on the profitable Word of God! (Matthew 4:4; 2 Timothy 3:15-17, 4:1-4)

Those who all their lives had been dead in sin, and living according to the course of this present world, and duped by the devil, and under the holy and just wrath of God (Ephesians 2:1-3) — **NOW BY THE GRACE OF GOD find themselves BORN AGAIN**, set free from satan; and set free from sin's guilt, power, and domination by the precious blood of Jesus and by the LIFE-GIVING power of the Holy Spirit who now resides in all true saints of God. (Ephesians 2:4-10) **WHO IS IN THE BRIDE?** The LORD knows those who are HIS... let everyone that names the name of CHRIST, depart from iniquity! (2 Timothy 2:19)

III. THE BRIDE'S 'LOYALTY' FACTOR

R.E. Bieber correctly reminds us that the New Testament church, "... Used the Gospel alone to arrest the world's attention and bring men to conversion... it also relied upon the Gospel alone to hold men and women to their commitment and to build the church."

*** The True BRIDE of Jesus Christ is comprised of **people to whom** the Kingdom of God has already come! *** The Bride of Christ is **a people over whom** the Spirit of God is already sovereign. *** The true church is **a people among whom** the Lordship of Christ is already received.

*** **FOR the Bride of Christ, the real and only cohesive and loyalty factor is Jesus Christ the Lord!**

*** **The Bride** listens to and receives the Word of God. *** **The Bride** goes forth out into her world as a people sent forth by Jesus

Christ.

Members of the Bride of Christ are—

***** FOLLOWERS** in the steps of Jesus! ***** PUPILS** at the feet of Jesus! ***** SERVANTS** submitting to the commands of Jesus! ***** AMBASSADORS** of Jesus to a lost world! None have perfection; but all are possessed of a genuine, life-changing love for Jesus because He first loved them! (1John 4:10, 19) ***** And they are WORSHIPERS OF THE TRUE AND LIVING GOD!**

V. BRIDE EXAMPLES!

***** BRIDE OF CHRIST EXAMPLE ONE:** Acts 2:36-47; 8:1-4— In these verses we see that **when the lost are born again by the Spirit of God— No one has to beg, bribe, pamper, threaten, or motivate! Discipleship is on automatic! There is an INDWELLING COMPELLING!**

***** BRIDE OF CHRIST EXAMPLE TWO:** **Over 450 years ago, a 14 year old lad**, Cornelis Aertsz De Man. (because of having witnessed a genuine expression of the Bride of Christ), was moved to search out where such believers met. He found a group, meeting in a nearby home. THE YOUTH and YOUNG ADULT PROGRAM of this church was powerful... the same as their OLDER adult program— **JESUS!** Cornelis stated that, *"...Their witness of faith, their serious study of the Word, their joy in life, (Though they were persecuted), and their concern for love and moral integrity all excited him...."*

Before long, by the power of the gospel of Christ, Cornelis was saved; and then discipled by the ADULT saints— not sent to a fun and games youth or young adult department! By age 17 Cornelis was so dynamic in his love for Jesus that **the**

Harlot “church” wanted to get him to recant his simple faith in Jesus. The Harlot arrested him, tortured him, and at the same time promised Cornelis “a future of honor and position if he would turn....” from Christ. Calmly he replied, **“There is no higher position than to be a child of God and no greater honor than to be a voice for Him!”** Cornelis survived many tortures with a Christ-like spirit, before being burned at the stake at age 21. (This account from, *Faithful Unto Death*, by Myron Augsburger)

CRITICAL NOTE: The Bride is willing to be tortured and even killed... but she is not willing to inflict such on others. **God may not call you, or I, or our youth to martyrdom.** But such is the case in parts of our world this very day. AND WE MUST be developing a spirit like theirs, a spirit like Cornelis!

***** BRIDE OF CHRIST EXAMPLE THREE: William Borden (From Mrs. Howard Taylor’s book, BORDEN OF YALE!... and other sources)**

In 1904 William Borden graduated from a Chicago high school. As heir to the Borden Dairy estate, he was already a millionaire. For his high school graduation present, **his parents gave 16-year-old Borden a trip around the world.** As the young man traveled through Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, he felt a growing burden for the world's hurting people. Finally, Bill Borden wrote home to say, **“I'm going to give my life to prepare for the mission field.”** One friend expressed surprise that he was “throwing himself away as a missionary.” In response, Bill wrote two words in the back of his Bible: **“NO RESERVES!”**

Even though young Borden was wealthy, he arrived on the campus of Yale University in 1905 trying to look like just one more freshman. Very quickly, however, Borden's classmates noticed something unusual: “WHEN HE came to college, he had already given his heart in full surrender to Christ and had really done it. During his college years, Bill Borden made one entry in his

personal journal that defined what his classmates were seeing in him. That entry said simply: **“SAY ‘NO!’ to self and ‘YES!’ to JESUS EVERY TIME!”**

During his first semester at Yale, Borden started something that would transform campus life. **He started a prayer meeting with one or two other friends.** HOWEVER, Borden's small morning prayer group gave birth to a movement that spread across the campus. By the end of his first year, 150 freshman were meeting for weekly Bible study and prayer.

By the time Bill Borden was a senior, one thousand of Yale's 1,300 students were meeting in such groups. "In his sophomore year he organized Bible study groups and divided up the class of 300 or more, each man interested taking a certain number, so that all might, if possible, be reached with the gospel.

Borden's missionary call narrowed to the Muslim Kansu people in China. Once that goal was in sight, Borden never wavered. He also inspired his classmates to consider missionary service. "Although he was a millionaire, Bill seemed to realize always that **he must be about his Father's business, and not wasting time in the pursuit of amusement.**"

Although Borden refused to join a fraternity, "he did more with his classmates in his senior year than ever before." He presided over the huge student missionary conference held at Yale and served as president of the honor society Phi Beta Kappa. Upon graduation from Yale, Borden turned down some high paying job offers. In his Bible, he wrote two more words: **“NO RETREATS!”**

William Borden went on to graduate work at Princeton Seminary in New Jersey. When he finished his studies at Princeton, he sailed for China. Because he was hoping to work with Muslims, he stopped first in Egypt to study Arabic. **While there, he contracted spinal meningitis.**

Within a month, 25-year-old William Borden was dead! "A wave of sorrow went round the world . . . Borden not only gave (away) his wealth, but himself, in a way so joyous and natural that it (seemed) a privilege rather than a sacrifice" wrote Mary Taylor in her introduction to his biography. **Was Borden's untimely death a waste? Not in God's plan. Prior to his death, Borden had written two more words in his Bible. Underneath the words **"NO RESERVES!"** and **"NO RETREATS!"**— **Borden had written, "NO REGRETS!"****

"BRIDE" MEMBERS AT SOUTHSIDE: * WE MUST BE ACTS 2 BRIDE OF CHRIST CHRISTIANS—** no begging to be faithful — having an **INDWELLING COMPELLING** to worship and serve Christ.

***** WE MUST BE AS TEENAGER** Cornelis Aertsz De Man—
"There is no higher position than to be a child of God and no greater honor than to be a voice for Him!"

***** WE MUST BE AS BORDEN OF YALE: 1. No Reserves! 2. 'Say NO to self and YES to JESUS every time!' 3. No Retreats! 4. No Regrets!**

Let it so be among us!

FINAL QUESTIONS: There are only two churches in my town OR in your town! Let each of us dare to ask:

***** To which Church do I belong?**

***** Which church am I helping to build?**

Mercy, Grace, Love, and PEACE to all in Christ!
 James Bell www.southsidegallatin.org

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SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES:

TUESDAYS: Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care Nursing Home. Meet at the front door at **5:15PM**.

WEDNESDAYS: → **6:30pm— Wednesday CHURCH PRAYER SERVICE**

→ Enter via **IRON STEPS, side door.**

WEDNESDAYS: → **6:30pm— Youth** Activities and Bible Study— enter, side double doors.

WEDNESDAYS: → **6:30pm— Young Family Prayer Time!** THIS IS a time of Bible study and prayer geared toward **families with children in the nursery and pre-K class**. Enter at double doors, under AWNING.

***** LADIES BIBLE STUDY: NEXT MEETING** scheduled for **FEBRUARY 18th 2020 @ 11:00am; NEW STUDY ==> LESSONS FROM WOMEN IN SCRIPTURE!** ENTER at the back of the church building, *[Under AWNING, open at 10:30am... re-locked at 11:10am]*

***** MEN's Fellowship/Bible Study: EVERY SATURDAY @ 8:00am: (WE ARE STUDYING THE GOSPEL OF JOHN!)** ENTER AT THE back of Church building... DOUBLE DOORS, under the drive-thru awning. **[DOORS OPEN FOR FELLOWSHIP, Juice, coffee, Hardee's biscuits, & Donuts at 7:30am!]**

SUNDAY SERVICES FOR FEBRUARY— 9, 16, 23

**** Sunday School— at 9:30am // ** Worship at—
10:45am**

ADDITIONAL NOTES... ABOUT EACH SUNDAY:

1. February 9 ... Equipping Faithful Men at 5:30pm; 1689 Confession of Faith Study Group

2. February 16 ... LORD'S SUPPER, at conclusion of the Morning Worship service; Home Groups, most at 5pm

3. February 23 ... CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP FOR ALL ... currently completing a VIDEO series on Husband/Wife relationships, at 6:00pm