

August 2018 Report from Gary Henry

Dear brethren,

I'm getting a good bit of writing done this summer, but the past few weeks have found me "on the road" preaching in various places. Each location has provided a unique experience in the Lord's work and given me cause for great joy.

Pine Lane, Bessemer Alabama. On June 17-22, I presented the "Obeying the Gospel" lessons for this congregation near Birmingham, Alabama. David Deason is the local preacher for this group, and I appreciated the opportunity to get to know him. We had good attendance and interest during the meeting, with one person being baptized into Christ. These days, it is rare in a meeting to have many visitors from neighboring congregations, but during the week at Pine Lane, we had visitors from Hueytown, Helena, Edwards Lake, Cahaba Heights, and other congregations. Some came several nights. While at Pine Lane, it was a special treat for me to get to spend time with Reg & Martha Ginn. Reg was the preacher in Meridian, Mississippi when I was a child growing up there.

Studebaker Road, Long Beach, California. On July 8-13, I was in a meeting with the Studebaker Road congregation and presented the "Obeying the Gospel" lessons to them. This is a bilingual, multicultural congregation, and they bring in two speakers for their meetings, one English-speaking and one Spanish-speaking. It was a pleasure to meet Greg Roark who delivered lessons in Spanish during the week. Mark Reeves and J. P. Flores work together as full-time evangelists at Studebaker Road. During the week, two individuals were baptized into Christ, and a married couple were restored who had previously been baptized but had fallen away. I stayed in the home of Del & Ruth Scott. Del is one of the elders, and Ruth and I are "Copeland Cousins." We had an enjoyable week sharing family memories. The work at Studebaker Road is exciting. Located in a diverse community, they are reaching out to all of the populations within their circle of influence. The result is a healthy blend of groups from various races & cultures, economic & social backgrounds, and levels of spiritual maturity. It has been a long time since I preached to a more attentive audience. They are a very special group, and it was an honor to be a part of their work for a week.

Seventh Street, Meridian, Mississippi. I just returned from preaching in Meridian on July 29. As always, it was a treat to be with the group there. It does me great good to go back to Meridian, the place where my childhood days were spent, and I am grateful that the brothers and sisters there give me the privilege of preaching to them. They are at a tough, discouraging point in the history of their congregation, and I want to do everything in my power to hold their hands up. I am convinced that we need to do a much better job of encouraging our brethren who worship with congregations that are on the downside of their life cycle. Rather than writing them off, I believe we need to come to their aid. *When folks are nearing the finish line, they need our encouragement more than ever.*

Some days I feel that the finish line may not be far off for me personally. None of us knows how much time we've got left, of course, but I would be less than honest if I did not confess that the struggle gets harder each day. Nothing would please me more than to know that I am soon to depart and be with the Lord. Nevertheless, if there is more work to do, I will do it with all my heart — for as long as it pleases the Lord for me to remain. In any event, I hope you know that I deeply appreciate the sacrifices you are making to underwrite my work and keep me afloat. I live and work with a profound sense of responsibility to use wisely every penny that you make available to me.

Brotherly,



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