

News and Notes

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Lee Moses - In ER since early Thurs. morning, Aug. 31. Possible heart attack.
Dub McClish - Lasik eye surgery for cataracts.
Pam Patrick - General health problems. Now undergoing treatment with new medicine.
David Brown - Spring, Texas preacher, blood clots in his leg.
Sandy Craig - Ongoing kidney problems and awaiting results of recent tests.
Jo Ann McLerran - Confined to home but doing better.
Glenda Marble - Faithful Christian at Lexington, Okla. Heart problems.
Debbie Post - Wife of Doug Post, preacher in Salisbury, Maryland - Cancer.
Sissy Craig - For spiritual and emotional strength.
Charles and Linda Pogue - Congestive heart failure. They report that they are safe after the hurricane.
Nancy Verkist - Ellensburg, Washington. Suffering from Von Hippel Lindau disease.
Don Smith - Faithful brother in Christ persecuted for teaching fellow inmates in an Ohio prison.

HURRICANE/FLOOD RELIEF - The church in Spring, Texas is accepting contributions to aid victims of the hurricane in their area.

THANK YOU - This note was received this week: “Dear brethren at Northeast, I wanted to reiterate my appreciation to you for thje opportunity to speak in your recent gospel meeting, and for the fine way you received and treated me while I was there. I am honored that when you were considering whom to invite, you thought of me. I had long looked forward to meeting you all (besides the two I had already been blessed to know), and this was a wonderful way to make your acquaintance. I appreciate the pleasant accommodations, the good meals, your faithful attendance at the meeting, the encouraging comments you offered, and the rich and rewarding time of fellowship we shared. And I can’t leave out the delightful artwork I received from several of your young people. You were a joy to be with, and I thank you, and wish you all God’s blessings. In Christian Love, Lee Moses.”

KENYA REPORT - Contributing this week to the Kenya Fund was Ronald Skinner, Lexington, Okla. Benard reports a good meeting last week at Muluanda with my former students, Julias Okelo, Sylvester Obare, Milton Owanga, John Odunga, and Juma Wenceslaus—all faithful men. We have ordered another printing of our commentary on Galatians to send to Kenya preachers.

GOSPEL MEETING - Jerry leaves for Odessa, Texas Sept. 9th for a gospel meeting with the Parkview church there, Sept. 10-13. He returns home on Sept. 14. Pray for the meeting and for his safety in travel.

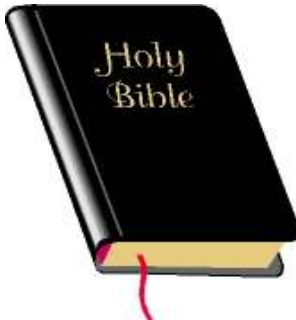
Our building is located at East Avenue C and North Locust in Elk City, Oklahoma, one block east of Van Buren on Avenue C. You are invited to visit with us at any of our meeting times.

Weekly Meeting Times

Sunday Morning Bible Classes.....	9:30
Sunday Morning Worship.....	10:30
Sunday Afternoon Worship.....	5:00

Visit Us on The Web

You Tube - www.youtube.com/channel/UCjd5rSEV1vXCNx52ouOrXoQ
Website - www.necoccec.org
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Sound Doctrine

“But speak thou the things that become sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1)

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Preaching The Gospel: 1997-2017

Jerry C. Brewer

Twenty years ago, nine of us who worshiped at Carter, Okla. lived in Elk City—18 miles away. Believing our efforts in the Lord’s cause could be better utilized nearer their homes, we began to look for other places to work and worship. We initially sought to launch out in Canute—seven miles away—and reestablish the church there. Those efforts were thwarted when a month-long search revealed that there were no suitable places to meet in that town. Another effort was made to find a place to meet in the Merritt community—a distance of 5-6 miles—but that turned up nothing. After exhausting those efforts, we decided to establish another congregation in Elk City, and stated our intention in a letter to the Pioneer and Bell church in Elk City , with whom we were in fellowship at the time, on August 25, 1997.

Dear brethren:

This is to inform you of the establishment of another congregation of the Lord’s church in Elk City. The new congregation will begin meeting on September 7, 1997 at 114 West Avenue B. Our purpose in writing is to let you know that this is not a competitive effort with Pioneer and Bell and that we consider ourselves in fellowship with you brethren. We are simply adding more voices to those preaching the gospel in Elk City and assure you that we will be in attendance at your meetings and invite you to those we conduct. Furthermore, we are not in the “proselyting” business and want it known that we do not wish to draw any of the disciples from Pioneer and Bell and would strongly encourage them to remain there. Our intent is simply to preach the gospel. With that in mind, we pray God’s blessings upon all that you do in His service.

Your brethren in Christ,
Jerry C. Brewer
Landry Brewer
Nathan Brewer
Doug McLerran

So, on Sept. 7, 1997, what is now the Northeast church of Christ began meeting in a small duplex at 114 West Ave. B in Elk City, with nine persons present for our first Lord's Day worship. In the intervening years, we have continually preached the gospel of Christ by every means at our disposal. We began with a weekly newspaper article, in which we could not advertise our location because of city zoning laws. City Manager Guy Hylton told us we could not advertise a public meeting there, or place a sign at the location. The Constitution guarantees freedom of religion—except in Elk City, Okla. The provision that, “Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion” also says, “nor prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

Undaunted, we pressed ahead, preaching the gospel and meeting in that little duplex. Our first gospel meeting was held by Ron Cosby, in January, 1998, and in June of that year we conducted the first of several “Western Oklahoma Lectures” in rented facilities at a local motel. Our second gospel meeting was held in March, 1998 with Jim Foster of Willow, Okla. preaching. Among others who have preached in our meetings are, Stephen Wiggins, Robin Haley, Jess Whitlock, and, most recently, Lee Moses. In 2001, we began publication of *The Gospel Preceptor*, a tabloid paper which was thrown to every house in Elk City each month. We conducted a weekly radio program, and now use You Tube to send the gospel around the world, in addition to maintaining a Face Book page to teach the lost.

Perhaps our most extensive work of preaching is what we have done in Kenya, and the monthly financial support we provide to 12 preachers there with the aid of generous individuals and congregations. In 2011, one of our members, Sandy Craig, went to Kenya to aid the work there. She met—and introduced us to—Benard Kagaga who conducts a preaching school at Kalamindi. At his urging, I went to Kenya in 2012 and spent a month there with his family, teaching in the school and preaching at various congregations. In 2014, I returned with my daughter, Holley, Sandy Craig, and Sandy's niece, Tracie Moore. Sandy and Tracie (both nurses) conducted a free clinic for area residents at Kalamindi, Holley taught a ladies' Bible class, and I taught in the school of preaching and preached. I returned again in 2016 and taught more classes in the school of preaching. In addition to those efforts, we have provided several hundred books by sound men such as C. R. Nichol, R. L. Whiteside, N. B. Hardeman, Foy E. Wallace, Jr., and Leroy Brownlow to preachers in Kenya. Additionally, we have purchased, and printed thousands of sound gospel tracts which were sent to Kenya.

In April, 1999, we purchased the former building of the Eastside church of Christ in which we now meet, and is now free of debt. That summer, we conducted our second annual lectureship, during which the air conditioning unit went out. That meant that we had to install another heating and air system and borrowed funds for that. That is also now free of debt. We refurbished the building and, with the aid of generous brethren, were able to obtain a pulpit stand, a lectern for Bible class, new carpeting for the auditorium and the annex, have plumbing added to bring water to the baptistry, install a new water line from the meter and install a new sewer line when the old one collapsed. Through all of this, there has never been a time in the past 20 years that we have not preached the gospel, publicly and from house to house.

I have preached here since the congregation began, except for a time when Nathan Brewer preached for us, and now we are fortunate to have Earl Reed and his son-in-law, Patrick King, who also preach with me in a regular monthly rotation.

Like all endeavors of the Lord's church, there have good times and sad times. Four of our faithful members who were with us through the years have passed on and we still mourn our loss. They are Doug McLerran, my mother, Bessie Brewer, Kenneth Craig, and Imogene Kisinger. Their deaths left gaping holes in the congregation and in our hearts.

There was initial opposition to the congregation. Perhaps not surprisingly, most of it came from some of our own brethren in other congregations. I wrote an article for our April 26, 1998 bulletin addressing that opposition. Here is that article, reproduced in part:

“He Followeth Not Us”

And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part” (Mark 9:38-40).

While he wasn't one of the apostles, it is evident that the man of whom John spoke was a disciple of Christ. Had he not been a disciple, he would not have had the power to cast out devils. All apostles were disciples (followers), but not all disciples were apostles. John didn't deny the man's ability to work miracles, nor did he question his discipleship. John's problem was obstinate pride. The man was doing the work of Christ, but didn't belong to John's congregation—“He followeth not us.” ...John's problem afflicts some brethren in Western Oklahoma. He thought the kingdom was a club that required membership in one exclusive group. Jesus condemned such elitism, and we believe some of our own brethren ought to learn the same lesson John did.

The B Avenue church was established by people who had been members at Carter. Because we all lived in Elk City, we decided to establish a congregation here, and did so with the blessing of the Carter brethren. The B Avenue church did *not* result from a “church split” but from a desire to use our physical and financial resources to preach in the name of Christ—which remains the sole reason for our existence. ...But some brethren would forbid us from doing this because we “follow not them.” No brethren who oppose us have offered scriptural reasons for doing so. One said, “It projects a divided image of the church to the community.” That objection is based on the false premise that Biblical unity results from meeting in the same building instead of “speaking the same thing” (1 Cor. 1:10), and betrays a concern for “public image” instead of doing the Lord's work. ...Another keeps saying he, “has a problem” with what we are doing, but has never defined what the “problem” is, or what he believes we are “doing.” We would ask, “What is the scriptural limit (if any) for congregations in a town?” “What is the scriptural limit (if any) for preachers who teach the truth in a community?” What is the real reason for so much opposition to us from area churches? It's the same reason John gave: “He followeth not us.”

The result of this opposition is that some area brethren refuse to announce our meetings and support what we do because “He followeth not us.” But that won't deter us from continuing to preach the gospel of Christ and, until we can be shown from God's word that what we are doing is sin, we shall continue to do so. Brethren who oppose our efforts to preach the gospel of Christ ought to be ashamed. They need to take another look at the church and its mission: “Unto *Him* be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end” (Eph. 3:21). “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).