

James Hamilton
April – June 2021 Report

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GAINS AND LOSSES

We praise God for His steadfast faithfulness to His word and for His eternal, unchangeable love. God is the constant source of blessings that strengthen and encourage us to live for Him. This is in contrast to the many changes that occur in the lives of all of us as we sojourn in this world while striving not to be of the world.

We are thankful for opportunities that the Lord has provided for us to teach others. Like Paul, I want to focus on sowing more and watering less, since the reaping is proportionate to sowing (2 Corinthians 9:6), not necessarily proportionate to the watering (though some watering is necessary—1 Cor. 3:5-7). Nonetheless, it is God's work to save souls. He lets us have fellowship in His work as we are messengers. I thank God for the fellowship that you have with me in His work by your prayers, encouragement, and support. May the Lord bless our work together!

BENTON

The church in Benton recently lost a dear brother, Frank Van Stiefel. He was always an encouraging person. His feedback on sermons was specific and helpful. He was a regular listener to the radio program that I did with Don McClain from 65th Street and the online program that continues today. He did a lot of physical work for the church, replacing lights and other electrical work, trimming hedges, and he did his share of giving Wednesday night talks. Frank was the one who started the very good practice that has continued in the reading of a pertinent scripture before the Lord's Supper. He kept up the Hwy. 5 Facebook page, recording sermons, taking pictures and posting and videos on it.

Last year, Frank self-isolated a long while because of having several risk factors for Covid-19. He was happy when he got the first dose of Covid vaccine and was able to assemble with us. However, his health rapidly deteriorated after suffering side effects from the second dose, and he peacefully departed from this life. He is missed very much.

His calm and spiritual disposition was wonderful for building up others. He generously helped Christians and strangers in need. He was hands-on in being involved with helping others by giving his time, effort, and attention as well as finances to help others. On the other hand, he was reluctant to ask others for help. We will miss Frank very much.

The church at Hwy. 5 must continue on, and we have seen some increase in attendance and financial contributions recently. A couple of the larger families are still sporadic in attendance because of frequent illnesses of young ones. Several over the age of 80 have not been able to attend regularly, but there has recently been an improvement in several older members. One young Christian has started working in the area and has been attending some on Wednesday evenings. Preston is a fine fellow, and he learned that he is distantly related to one of our members. He has not yet moved into the area; we (and he) is looking forward to making a permanent move to Saline County. A wonderful sister in Christ, Gloria H., has recently started attending Hwy. 5. She is very friendly and a good source of encouragement.

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My studies throughout the week keep me pretty busy. The study at the Manor has been going well. Several are regular students: Mary Jo A., Sammye C., Herman H., Karen J., Bob L., and Eleanor (I am not sure about her last name). We have had several others, but they are not in our studies of Matthew as often.

Three of the studies that started since January 1 have ended: Chris G., the Hall family, and the Honorable family. Studies that I have at this time are: Brandon C. (Personal Evangelism), Mildred P. (Leviticus), the Phillips family (John), the Dickerson family (Matthew), Thursday morning at Hwy. 5 (James), Jason and Angela C. (First Principles).

I publish a weekly bulletin for the members and preach twice on Sunday. Our Sunday morning Bible classes have continued since November, and more people are starting to attend them. I teach the adult class as we study in Proverbs. Herb M. is teaching the adult Wednesday evening Bible class on Hebrews. The online program "Searching for the Truth" at 65th Street is on Facebook Live and You Tube at 3pm Central Time on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. I have rearranged my schedule to help Don McClain on Mondays as well as Wednesdays and Fridays now. People from all around the world tune in. Instead of a daily half-hour radio program, it is now a one hour-long online program every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

FELLOW WORKERS

My father-in-law, Tommy Thornhill, has recently announced that he will end his work with the church of Christ in Etna, AR sometime in November. This is because my mother-in-law needs more supervision because of short-term memory loss, and he is unable to keep up the good work he has done in Ozark and Etna for nearly ten years and do everything that Mom's care requires at the same time. By the end of the year, if the Lord wills, they will move in with us so Ellen can help her dad with her mom. We realize that we all will be making sacrifices, but I am looking forward to having them here as an asset to the cause of Christ in Benton in the near future. They already know a good number of people at Hwy. 5. A preacher of Tommy Thornhill's experience will be a plus for us, and I have some ideas how he can continue doing many of the things that he does now, such as his teaching bulletin that is sent to many people outside the country. I look forward to us being fellow workers at Hwy. 5. Like most preachers, he may officially "retire" from preaching full-time, but he will continue serving the Lord.

I also thank God for fellow workers such as the congregations that are currently supporting me. I am thankful to God for your love for Him, His word His people, and for the lost so that support my effort to reach them in other places. May the Lord bless our work and bring eternal fruit to His glory.

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