

# PILGRIM NEWS & NOTES

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MIDWEST PILGRIM HOLINESS CHURCH

DECEMBER 2016



*Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem . . .*

*Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. - **Matthew 2: 1-2***

The Midwest Pilgrim Holiness Conference wishes you a very Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year!!

# How **CHRISTMAS** Reminds Me of a Day in **LONDON!**

By Rev. Nathan Purdy

It was a swelteringly hot, sun-drenched day. The yuletide tradition of hugging a hot cocoa by a blazing fireside, while carols play and snowflakes fall silently outside, could not have been further from my mind. True, my heartbeat was racing with a festive-like excitement. It had nothing, however, to do with a magical winter wonderland or the thrilling suspense of tearing the glittering paper from a gift at Christmas. Instead, I was striding toward 49 City Road, London. And then, there it was!

It was a heart-stopping moment; something akin to glimpsing a dream gift through a tear in the paper; through the railing stood the chapel where John Wesley preached and the Georgian home where he lived. Soon, I was walking where the founder of Methodism had walked, my head swimming with the eternal significance of this historic base of Methodist operations.

It was time to step in and explore this gift of a lifetime. As the doors of this hallowed spot swung shut behind me, time stood still. In the Museum of Methodism, I found myself slowly, cautiously climbing the steps of the pulpit where the “brand plucked from the burning” had stood.

Though others mingled, I was soon enveloped in a silent, lonely sense of longing. Oh to have his missionary zeal! For a Methodist, John’s home is furnished with more gifts than you could stack under the town Christmas tree. As you reverently tip-toe into the famous prayer room, it’s hard for it not to burst into life with scenes of the saintly John prostrated in agonizing prayer.

In the Foundry, it’s hard not to see Charles sitting at the old pipe organ excitedly scribbling some new lyric, with tears of holy passion falling to its keys. It doesn’t take much imagination to see these two men pouring over a map of the world and, like generals at war, strategizing how best to “spread scriptural holiness across the land.” Or, to be more precise, across the world. “The world,” as John famously said, “is my parish.” These brothers were missionaries to the core. And, who knows, right there, at this time of year, in that pulpit, John might have had his heart stirred by the lofty lyrics of his younger brother’s famous carol, Hark the Herald Angels Sing.

If I could, I’d empty my wallet to bring John and Charles back to life for a week. Their visit would happen at Christmas. I would have it prearranged; just as Charles walked into Walmart, the greeter would be tapping his toe to the strains of Hark the Herald.... It wouldn’t take long to see a hint of recognition creep over this peerless poet’s face, even if time has tinkered with the words and tuned it to a new melody. What would he think? Sacred words penned centuries ago performed in the temple of consumerism? What would he say? Something so sacred played to a rushing, edgy, jostling mass whose patience has worn thin with the stress of the season? We can all speculate. However, we know how these men lived.

They were the ones, after all, who trekked thousands of miles on horseback. They cut with custom, planting their pulpits in the whitened harvest fields. It was their itinerant preachers who galloped without apology into the battlefield. They bravely held high the bloodstained banner of ‘holiness unto the Lord,’ while hell’s legions fought to tear it down. Though all of Satan’s fury was unleashed in their faces, their bold, powerful preaching shook the very gates of hell. They didn’t evacuate the public arena. Like Jesus at Christmas, they invaded it.

That’s why I think that after our trip to Walmart, Charles would pray that his theology-laden carol would be a missionary—a song missionary! His heart’s anguished cry would be that God would open the ears of the harried, antsy “sons of earth” so they would both hear and feel the significance of each prayerfully crafted word. And, most of all, his earnest plea would be that they respond to its powerful Gospel message. His song is a perfect missionary; its message is all about Jesus; it’s brimming with worship; it’s bursting with Gospel truth.

Just hours before visiting Wesley’s Chapel, I had opened another priceless gift; I had stood unable to hold back tears in the breathtaking Westminster Abbey. Many ornate things vie for one’s attention in this architectural masterpiece. My eyes, however, were preoccupied in a vigilant search for the only thing I did not want to miss—the grave of the pioneer missionary to Africa, David Livingstone.

As I stood by his final resting place, I was overpowered by a silent, lonely, heart-rending longing. Oh to have his missionary zeal! Here lay the remains of a man missionary; one who left home, gave all, and lived out the love of God. So much so, in fact, that after dying, those to whom he was sent removed his heart and buried it where it belonged—with them—in Africa.

Christmas is, of course, all about love—God’s love. It’s about God’s love invading our world. It’s about the love that caused Jesus to leave home and give all. It’s about God’s love incarnated in the gift of Christ: Emmanuel—“God with us.” And Christmas is ultimately about what Jesus came to do—die an agonizing death so that man could be transformed from sin to holiness. It’s also about opportunity. Even in 21st century America, Christmas gives us the gift of opportunity. Opportunity, like Wesley’s carol, to spread the message of Jesus through word and song, and the opportunity, like Livingstone, to show the love of God incarnated in our daily lives. If there’s one gift not to leave unopened this Christmas, make it this one—the gift of opportunity.



Rev. Nathan Purdy is a graduate of Penn View Bible Institute, in Penns Creek, PA, where he met his wife, Charity.

They pastor The Bible Mission Church in Lock Haven, PA.

**Article was originally printed in the December 2010 issue of the God's Missionary Standard.**



# His First Christmas in Heaven

By Dan Plemmons

I remember it as if it were yesterday. I was working at JC Penney Co. in Vincennes, Indiana, and one day when I came home from work, my dad said to me, "We were in the Washington, Indiana, Wal-Mart today, and we saw Rev. & Mrs. James Sneed, and he asked if you would be willing to come to their Watch Night service to sing a song." I agreed, and that was the night that I met the man who would become my father-in-law.

We hit it off right from the start! Someone from the church had asked me to come over in the afternoon just prior to the evening service to practice and see if three of us (Leroy, Loyace Lamar, and myself) could work up a song to sing that evening, so I did.

I later asked his daughter out on a date, and to make a long story short, things fell into place and within a few months I found myself asking Leroy for permission to marry his daughter!

Today, after 26 years of marriage, I can truthfully say that there was never a time when we didn't get along! I have wonderful in-laws!

I remember when I started pastoring. Leroy came to our first revival and after the service he put his arm around me and said, "Dan, I want you to know that I am very proud of you and I am behind you!"

We were both raised in the Conservative Holiness movement as preacher's kids, and we both loved to listen to southern gospel music. I doubt I have ever met anyone with a larger musical library than Leroy Sneed! Whether it be LP's, tapes or CD's, he had purchased a whole lot of music down through the years!

Leroy was fiercely devoted to his church. In my 20 plus years of pastoring, I have never met anyone more dedicated to the local church than Leroy Sneed! In his home, you didn't skip church because you had a slight cold, or just didn't feel well, you went to church!! I have said on more than one occasion, "If everyone was as dedicated to their local church as my in-laws, our churches would be a lot healthier than they are!"

Leroy was the song leader for the Twin Oaks Holiness Church in Petersburg, Indiana, and if there was ever a man created to lead congregational singing, it was Leroy! In fact, one denominational leader told us at the funeral service, "Leroy was a better song leader than any Song Evangelist that we've ever had at our camp!" Leroy took his job as song leader very seriously, and he had a way of leading that made you want to do your very best during the song service!

He worked at Jasper Rubber Co. in Jasper, Indiana, and I would have no clue just how many times over the

years that Leroy said to me, "Dan, if I can just make it a few more years, I'm going to retire, and when I do, I want to take Cheryl and do a lot of traveling." But it was not to be.

A year ago this past September, Leroy, Cheryl, and his mother, Iris Sneed, came to our place for a visit. Leroy didn't feel well. He was dealing with gout issues, and was in much pain, but we had a marvelous time during their visit, and then they returned back home to Jasper, Indiana.

A couple of months later, Leroy discovered a lump in the arm pit area, and it was discovered that he had not just one, but two types of cancer. Although we didn't know it at the time, they were both in Stage 4.

Leroy was in tremendous pain. He had a high pain tolerance, but his pain was unbearable. We had planned to make a visit to see them right after Dayton, IHC in April, but one day I said to Leah, "I think we had better go see your parents next week." We will always be glad that we did!

We arrived in Jasper to find Leroy in tremendous pain. We sat around his bed and ate pizza and had a good time of fellowship, then Leroy said, "Why don't we have a time of prayer before going to bed." And he prayed like I have never heard him pray!

On Saturday night, Leroy decided that he wanted to go to church the next morning if he was able. We all agreed that if he felt like going, we would do whatever it took to get him to God's House! We had no earthly idea that it would be his last chance to go to church.

The next morning he said, "I'm not sure I will be able to make it!" So we decided that we wouldn't go, then all of a sudden, from the other room, I heard Leroy say, "DON'T COUNT ME OUT YET!" And so we all got ready quickly and made our way to church!

I wheeled him into the church and as the congregation was singing the chorus, "I Can Trust Jesus", Leroy lifted his hand high into the air and praised God as he sang. The Spirit of God settled down in the church that morning in a beautiful way!

Leroy was in so much pain that we had to leave after a few minutes, but the whole way back home, he kept saying, "Thank you, Lord, for Your goodness to me and for letting me make it to church!"

Within 48 hours, he would be admitted to Jasper Memorial Hospital where he would make his final flight to the city where there is no pain, no disease, and no hospitals!

I shall forever be grateful for the memories that I have of one of the finest men I have ever known. My highest hope is that our family will remain true to Jesus so that one day, we, too, will be able to hear the words that Leroy heard on April 7, 2016 . . . "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joys of the Lord!" **Leroy is enjoying his first Christmas in Heaven!**



# A Woman's Perspective

By Stephanie Burley

## Christmas Spirit

One of the “benefits” of being an Ohio resident is that sudden weather changes are not only possible, but also highly probable. A couple of days ago, we were enjoying the sunshine and mid-70’s temperatures. The next morning, I awoke to a beautiful light snow settling on the deck! All through the day, we experienced picturesque flurries. At times it became a whiteout, and we were in awe of the spectacular display. My family and I agreed: this put us in the Christmas spirit. Our smiles were a little brighter as we blasted holiday tunes and watched the snowflakes fall against the backdrop of remaining yellow, orange, and red leaves. Saturday chores became a little less cumbersome, and every few minutes one of us would yell, “Look! It’s coming down again!”

So often we associate the “Christmas spirit” with what our senses perceive and how our emotions react to those perceptions. For some, it’s the first ‘red cup’ of the season. Others find Christmas cheer as the holiday lights appear and Christmas music hits the airwaves. And most of us would admit that some years have passed without us ever really experiencing the “Christmas spirit.” We just kind of plodded through the seasonal traditions without really feeling the expected emotional connection.

Although the lights, the music, the snowflakes, and even the red cup are all to be enjoyed, it is important that every woman of God be in the spirit of Christmas every single year. Even during the difficult times. After all, the spirit of Christmas is best experienced by the woman who knows that Jesus came to be the Savior of the world. Not only did He come to be the Savior of the world, He came to be her Comforter, her Counselor, her Companion, her Savior. The Christ Child came for her! Whether or not her emotions or her circumstances allow her to fully engage in the Christmas festivities, she can rest in the knowledge that Bethlehem’s Child came, and she can share that knowledge with a world that is desperate for Him.

Friend, if you are struggling to find the Christmas spirit this year, may I encourage you to step back and evaluate your priorities? Choose to focus on the things that matter most. The people in your life are irreplaceable, and they need you. Like a thousand chasing lights, there are a thousand distractions just waiting to pull your attention away from your most valuable treasures. Choose your people, then choose peace. We have just come through the most divisive election season in my memory. If there is anything that I have learned yet again, it is that people are lost. They have placed complete confidence and hope in political figures who can give them nothing in return. The unrest that has followed is evidence of a lost culture. As Christian women, we have the power to bring the peace of Christ into every situation we encounter. As we work to bring His peace to our world, we will find ourselves in the Christmas spirit.



# News from around the Conference

*News articles on this page have been submitted by various Pilgrim Churches. We reserve the right to edit the submissions as necessary to fit space requirements. E-mail all news to: [pauldplemmons@yahoo.com](mailto:pauldplemmons@yahoo.com)*

## **Noblesville, IN** (By Amber Fish)

Good things are happening at Noblesville Pilgrim Holiness Church. As we have celebrated this month of Thanksgiving, we have much for which to be grateful. God has been moving in our services and speaking to hearts in our congregation.

During the month of October, we had the opportunity to show appreciation for our pastor and family. A pounding was taken every Sunday for different items such as, paper products, meat, etc. There was also a special service to express our thanks for their faithfulness to us and to God.

On another note of gratefulness, the dream of acquiring a fellowship hall is finally coming to fruition. After many months of working on permits, blueprints, and all the other things that come along with a building project, we have broken ground. Our pastor and church board as well as other faithful attendees have banded together and helped to make this reality. Truly, God has guided the leaders of our church every step of the way. As we enter this Christmas season, let's take time to celebrate "Jesus" and His coming to our darkened world!

## **Peebles, OH** (By Rev. Wayne Kennedy)

We had a wonderful revival with the Cassady family November 8th-13th. God's presence filled each service. Everyone enjoyed the anointed singing and preaching.

We have a busy couple of months planned including a Praise & Thanksgiving service joining together with two other local holiness churches, annual Christmas dinner and a trip to the Christmas display at the Creation Museum. God is blessing our people and we are anticipating what the new year holds for our church.

## **New Castle, IN** (By Rev. Don Raines)

We were happy to host the North-Central Indiana zone rally-joint missions service, Nov. 18. We had 4 churches represented, Noblesville, Kokomo, Elwood and New Castle.

Bro. Dahler gave a report of churches in the Philippines that are wanting to join our Conference, and of a lady who wants to partner with the Pilgrims in organizing an orphanage in Africa. He also encouraged us to do all we can for the self-denial offering.

Sis. Roll blessed us with her presence, telling of the work that has been done in Antigua on the mission house and how the people are encouraged to work and pray both in Antigua and Dominica.

Bro. Nichols gave a challenging message on the importance of prayer in the church, encouraging us to bind together, work hard and lift the load for the church.

**Continued on next page . . .**

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## Church News (Continued)

### Lima, OH (By Don Nichols)

We are thankful for the help of the Lord at Lima. Several of our senior saints have suffered physical challenges, but God has graciously helped and all are improving.

Our church was shocked and saddened by the passing of Danna Hunter, August 20th. She died in her sleep. She had been affiliated with the church for many years. She is survived by sons, Robert (Brenda), and William (Chrissy) and five grandchildren.

Pilgrim Christian School was able to procure some used school offices and chairs at bargain prices, improving the décor of the Learning Centers before the opening of school this fall. The school has 28 students this year from Pre-K to grade 12. We are thankful for our dedicated teachers: Marea Pouzar, who is in her 20th year of service to PCS, Stephanie Burley, who has served for 19 years, and Brenda Hunter who serves as a teaching assistant in the Pre-school/Kindergarten. The school is now in its 33rd year of continuous operation for which we give God praise.

Rev. Jeremy Fuller served as evangelist for our fall revival, November 8-13. His anointed preaching was challenging and a real blessing to all. Area churches supported the meeting as well. Several found victory at an altar of prayer. Bro. Fuller preached in each evening service as well as in three chapel services, Wednesday through Friday. The students enjoyed his preaching immensely.

When our Missionary President, Cheryl Barnt, shared our Self-Denial Offering challenge and goal of \$4k a few weeks ago, she promised that if we reached the goal she would eat a dog bone treat. She created a missions wall with a dog house, dog, and 100 bones to feed the mission dog. Each bone was "fed" to the dog as \$100 was raised. The Jr. Worship part of the wall consisted of an ant colony. Their offerings followed the ant trail to the colony. She made good on that promise at the beginning of the Sunday evening service, 11/06. The total offering raised was \$4,630. The children raised \$215 of the total amount. We give God the praise.





# Ministers & Wives Retreat 2016

By Ruth Nichols

Thursday, October 20th, was a beautiful autumn day in southeastern Illinois. The serenity of Cresthaven was interrupted as Pastor's Retreat began! One by one, the cars and campers came pulling in. Each person was eagerly anticipating time away from the busyness of life. At 6pm, the bell rang out, and everyone knew it was time to gather in the dining area for the traditional soup supper. This year, it was prepared by Leanne Zeigler and Ruth Nichols.

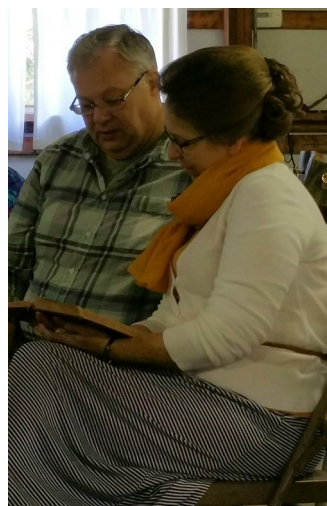
Friday morning we were served a hearty breakfast of eggs, bacon, biscuits, gravy and delicious glazed homemade donut twists. Some of the men put together their culinary skills to fix breakfast.

A highlight of each retreat is the Friday morning devotional time. Leanne Zeigler does a wonderful job of coming up with creative ways of worship. This year, we had a singspiration, with the theme of "Walking with Jesus". All the songs focused on some aspect of our walk with the Lord. She used a variety of ways that different songs were sung, some verses by ladies, some by men, some by age group, etc. Our hearts were blessed as Mark Arnett sang "Then I Met Jesus". The singing led to spontaneous testimonies, each echoing how Jesus was walking with them, leading them, intervening on their behalf. It was a refreshing time from which each person drew special strength.

The afternoon was a relaxing free time. Several of the men went fishing, some ladies just relaxed, putting together puzzles and visiting. Our hearts were saddened because one of our dear former pastor's wives was at the point of death in a health care center a few miles away. A few took that opportunity to go have prayer with Sis. Naomi Gray, and say their earthly goodbyes. It was a precious time with her recognizing the visitors, and telling us who she was going to see in heaven. Within about 24 hours, she made the landing!

The evening meal was a taco supper with all the toppings, and our annual fish fry! The fish were caught throughout the day in the large pond on the Cresthaven property. Bob Leach, Keith Gibson, Don Raines, Jack Hart and Craig Dahler were among those who were proud of their catch. After Don Raines filleted the fish, Sharon used her special recipe to coat and deep fry it to perfection. Throughout the retreat, there was a table loaded with all kinds of finger foods, dips, snacks and desserts. No one went hungry! Friday evening we shared in a time of organized games, and a silent auction. This year's corn hole tournament winners were Leanne Zeigler and Sarah Jackman!

Saturday morning came all too early. After another wonderful breakfast and clean up time, cars and campers were packed and we said our goodbyes once again. As we pulled away, we realized once again how blessed we are as a Pilgrim family, and the wonderful bond of fellowship that we have as fellow pastors and wives.





## Celebrating a Life Well Lived

By Rev. Paul Gray

The following words were shared by way of Eulogy at the funeral service of Naomi Gray by her brother-in-law, Rev. Paul Gray.

We would like to thank Pastor Gray for allowing us to print it in this issue of *Pilgrim News & Notes*.

In the small town of Marshall, Illinois, envired by the countryside and the fertile soil of Clark County, the journey of life for Naomi Ruth Gray began on October 27, 1935.

Perhaps to some in the surrounding area of the town of Marshall, it was just a cry from another newborn baby that was heard in the Wheeldon family home that Sunday evening, but to Elmer and Golda, it was not just another normal birth, it was their second child and because of that occasion - 80 years later, we gather here today.

Previous to Naomi's arrival, the stork delivered a blue bundle, and they named him Lavern. Later, the stork brought a blue bundle which contained Harold, then the Wheeldon family was completed by another pink bundle, Nancy. By the way, Naomi's Birthday is tomorrow . . . sorry Junia & Philip, but she wanted to celebrate this one with Bob!

Naomi attended Palestine High School, but chose to do her Senior year at Frankfort Pilgrim College in 1954.

In her younger days, for six years, she and her sister Nancy, traveled all around regional churches and camps, singing as "The Wheeldon Sisters." Her love of music continued for the rest of her life, and she enjoyed playing the piano and organ for many years. In fact, when Bob & Naomi moved back to this area, our church was blessed to have the "Wheeldon/Gray sisters" playing together again at the piano & organ! Nancy said, "I will always be grateful to Naomi, for the four years that she sponsored my piano lessons!"

50 years ago, Bob Gray had a secret admirer! Her name happened to be Naomi Wheeldon! On Nancy's senior picture, which she gave her sister Naomi, she wrote on the back of it, these words, "Perhaps someday we will both be Grays!" What chance did Bob and I have? Both of these Wheeldon sisters were plotting against us!

Now generally when couples send letters back-and-forth in the mail, those letters are off limits to anyone other than to whom they are addressed! Right? And you can get in serious trouble reading someone's love letters! Well, Bob Gray didn't like to write letters, so his way of corresponding with Naomi was via cassette tapes! Wow! Naomi didn't have headphones, and the walls of the Mason parsonage were not insulated, so without too much strain a person could listen in on Bob's 'High Tech' love letters!

On June 2nd, 1973, at the Pilgrim Holiness Church in Mason, IL, the knot was tied and Bob & Naomi began their loving walk together for the next 41 years! When she married Bob, her life was made complete.

She was a dedicated housewife, and made the house she shared with Bob, Junia, and Philip into a home. Her family will always remember her as a wonderful teacher, a fantastic cook, as well as a loving mother and grandmother. To that union, Junia and Philip were added, and later their marriages resulted in 12 Grandchildren!

Bob and Naomi and children served as Pastors at the Pilgrim Holiness Church in Frankfort, Indiana, the Merom Holiness Church in Merom, Indiana, the Pilgrim Holiness Church in Mason, Illinois, the Palestine Wesleyan Church in Palestine, Illinois, and the Pilgrim Holiness Church in Bloomington, Illinois. They also filled in for many churches.

A few years ago, Nancy, Joy & I took Bob & Naomi with us to Florida for a few days vacation! I liked to see Naomi come unglued when I would bring up certain subjects! While riding in the car, I happened to turn on the radio for a few minutes to listen to Naomi's favorite talk-show host, Rush Limbaugh! She couldn't stand his egotism! That afternoon, Rush said, "I am the one that millions of women wish their daughters could marry!" That set Naomi off! She came unglued! She raised her voice & said, "Well, I'm sure not one of them!!" Right up to the very last Naomi kept her spunk!

This past Wednesday when Nancy and I were visiting her, Junia mentioned about her having lots of candy hidden in some drawers in her room! Naomi was laying there with her eyes closed and we thought perhaps sleeping, so I mentioned that I might get some of that candy and immediately without opening her eyes Naomi said, "No, No You Don't."

We were getting ready to leave, so I mentioned to Junia that I might just take some of that extra candy with me and without opening her eyes again, Naomi said, "No, and don't take any with you either!"

After we had had prayer with her, and were ready to go out the door, Junia and some of the nurses were there with her, so I said, "See you later, Naomie!" (knowing that she did not like her name pronounced like that) and she told the nurses, "He knows better than that!"

This past Saturday evening, about 4:45, with Junia, Paul & Joan there in the room, her breathing became more shallow, and peacefully she slipped her hand into the hand of Jesus as she stepped on shore in the Land of Living, where there is no pain, and no sorrow!

I am sure Naomi would want me to tell all of her family and friends to please make proper preparation so that you can come and join her in Heaven.

So, this morning, we say, "Farewell, Naomi, you have run the race, and we will all plan to see you again just inside the Eastern Gate!

# PASTOR TO PASTOR

Ministering to those who minister

## Tell It Like It Is!

By Pastor Tim Wiford

Living in the south has its unique advantages and there is one experience that left a remarkable impact on this pastor and our family. We were invited out for a meal at the Beacon Restaurant in Spartanburg, S. C. The minute we walked in the door we were greeted by a strong clear voice asking, "Can I take your order?" Now this was a "hamburger and fry" cruise-in restaurant in our community and they never write down your order. As soon as one would speak an order the booming voice of J. C. Strobel would repeat the order and then announce; "Called It." I will never forget that experience as long as I live!

Sometimes it is necessary to take an evaluation of our pulpit ministry and ask ourselves a question or two. Can we identify with the Apostle Paul who declares in Acts 20:27, For I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God? So how do we define the whole counsel of God? Adam Clarke notes, "All that God has determined and revealed concerning the salvation of man, the doctrine of Christ crucified with repentance toward God, and faith in Jesus as the Messiah and great atoning priest." The Great Apostle was bold in preaching Christ to his generation and culture. He did not hesitate to proclaim Christ as the only way of salvation and that Jesus was the only Savior for the human race. It was not a popular message in his day and we likewise serve a generation that gravitates to a watered down gospel.

The voices of ecumenicalism and tolerance for all religions have created an environment that is parallel to the New Testament culture. Occasionally we must ask ourselves how we are doing? Do we preach with clarity regarding the sin of man, the reality of eternity, the coming judgement, and most importantly of the way of the cross? When was the last time we preached a sermon on hell or heaven?

Does our congregation know where we stand, or is there some uncertain sound from the pulpit?

A pastor friend recently told me of new people attending their local church who were impressed with hearing a sermon from the Bible. After the first visit the individual went and invited family members with this proposition, "If you want to hear a sermon from God's Word come with me next Sunday." Is it really that unclear in the pulpits of our day? Are people still hungry for truth and a clear message on sin and the hope found alone in Jesus?

Now, let me acknowledge there have been seasons in my preaching ministry that have been heavy on some easy themes of encouragement or comfort and unfortunately lean on doctrines or foundational truths.

I have learned to keep a journal of my sermon topics and to review that list to see if there are some gaps that are overlooked. The results of that review have been very humbling at times and yet they have provided a necessary perspective on where my ministry focus could be sharpened or improved. Sermon series have often required me to preach truth that I might have unintentionally skipped over by choosing topics closer to my heart. I have found that when I commit to preaching through a book like Acts or Romans, it is most beneficial

to this preacher in defining clarity on God's eternal truth and in declaring the whole counsel of God. Paul said in Acts 20:26, I take record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. What a statement! I'm confident that this is the goal of my fellow pastors and that God will help us to speak the truth with clarity, and delivered from a heart bathed in divine love.

The somewhat famous J. C. Strobel had a career that spanned 58 years at the Beacon and it involved meeting presidents, governors, and people from all over the world. His voice kept ringing out with confidence and certainty year after year, even decades. God wants our generation to hear a clarion call of truth!

Our world is desperate for men like the Apostle Paul! Our world needs men and women who will stand for Biblical truth and not apologize to anyone for God's Word and the gospel of Jesus Christ. We too can lift our voice and lend our influence for God and holiness year after year, until the return of our Lord. I pray that we will discover new courage, conviction, and confidence to **Tell It Like It Is!**

## **Preacher, Tell It Like It Is**

Written by Rodney Griffin

### **VERSE I**

*Preacher, I'd say it's been a while since you heard this request, but my spirit is tired and I need rest.  
I want to hear from Heaven a clear word from God, A sermon of conviction straight from the heart.*

### **VERSE II**

*I've been hearin' other preachers say I don't have to change. The most eloquent of speakers tell me I'm okay.  
It hasn't eased my conscience and I know it's not the truth. So when you stand before us, can I count on you?*

### **VERSE III**

*So open up the word and let the spirit lead, preach until I've heard God speak to me.  
Don't worry 'bout my feelings, don't worry 'bout my shame, preach the cross of Jesus and that I'm to blame!*

### **CHORUS**

*Oh Preacher, you say you want to be my friend, don't be afraid to call my sin what it is.  
And Preacher, tell me I can overcome, but it's only by the blood of the Lamb.  
Don't tell me like I wish it was, Preacher tell me like it is.*

### **BRIDGE**

*Life is quickly passing, the world is fading fast, and the foolishness of preaching is the only hope we have.*

### **CHORUS**

*Oh Preacher, you say you want to be my friend, don't be afraid to call my sin what it is.  
And Preacher, tell me I can overcome, but it's only by the blood of the Lamb.  
Don't tell me like I wish it was, Preacher tell me like it is.*



**Rev. Tim Wiford is in his 25th year of pastoral ministry, having spent the last ten years at Grace Holiness Church in Anderson, IN.**

**He is married to Liz, and they recently celebrated their 28th Anniversary. They have four wonderful children. Tim says, "It is a privilege to serve God and His people!"**



# About Pilgrim News & Notes

*Pilgrim News & Notes* is the official publication of the Midwest Pilgrim Holiness Church, and is published bi-monthly.

The main goal of *Pilgrim News & Notes* is to be an encouragement to our readers, as well as a source of information to those with connections or interests in our Conference.

All submissions are welcome, however, we reserve the right to edit as necessary to fit design and space needs. Not all submissions will be published.

Please email all submissions to the editor via the contact info below:

[pauldplemmons@yahoo.com](mailto:pauldplemmons@yahoo.com)

## ***Conference Info:***

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**Conference Vice President**, Rev. Mark Arnett

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**Conference Treasurer**, Rev. Bryan Line

**Conference Missionary Representative**, Dr. Craig Dahler

**Conference Youth Director**, Rev. John Zeigler

## ATTENTION PILGRIM CHURCH NEWS REPORTERS . . .

We would love to be able to report on the happenings in and around your church, but we need to here from YOU!

If you would like your church news to be included in the next PNN, please have your report to the editor no later than January 15th. THANKS!

Email your report to: [pauldplemmons@yahoo.com](mailto:pauldplemmons@yahoo.com)