

Schedule of Meeting Times:

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM
Speaker, Kris Vilander
 Study Sunday 10:00 AM
 Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM
 Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM
Singing every 2nd Sunday evening
 Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

Preacher / bulletin editor:

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“And He gave some...
 for the equipping of the
 saints for the work of
 service, to the building
 up of the body of
 Christ...”

—Ephesians 4:11,12

**Servants during February:**

Songleader: Stanley (5), Larry (12), Peter (19), Stanley (26)

Reading: Mike B

Announcements: Stanley

Table: Peter, Larry, Mike M, Marty

Wednesday Lesson: Larry (1), Stanley (8), Kris (15), Larry (22)

Meetings: Parkway, Feb 12-15, Lance

Blackburn; **East Albertville**, Feb 12-17, Phillip Owen; **Pepper Road**, Feb 18-22, Caleb Westbrook; **Oakland**, Feb 19-24, Lowell Sallee; **Kelly Spring Road**, Feb 24-26, Kevin Clark; **Bethel (TN)**, each Monday 7pm, Series: How we Got the Bible, Scott Richardson

Hays Mill church of Christ

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The Bible . Examiner

“Examine everything carefully...” —1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

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When Worship Becomes a Circus

by Justin Odom

When I was a kid, I loved going to the circus. I liked all the acts, especially the trapeze artists. I once worked at a local radio station and got to be a “ceremonial ringmaster” since the station sponsored the event. I loved it. My kids loved it. I would do it again. However, the circus doesn’t seem to be as popular as it once was, but if you are desperate for the circus to come around, there are plenty of churches that are trying to fill the bill and put on the “greatest show on earth” all for your viewing enjoyment.

Am I being sarcastic? Yes. And then, in a sense, no. Churches, especially the big ones, do some pretty strange things to get people to

come in the door. For example, over the years, I have seen groups that brought in paid performers and called it “worship.” Every animal under the sun (and yes, even snakes) has been used to “enhance” the message being preached. The worship is being turned into a circus, and in some places, they celebrate that fact:

“The Second Baptist Church of Texas, led by Dr. Ed Young, Sr., presented ‘Christmas Under the Big Top’ at its Woodway campus from Friday to Tuesday, with tickets ranging from \$10 to \$25. The 90-minute drama centered on a storyline about a fictional effort to save a financially struggling circus by putting on a

Christmas show. In addition to much singing and dancing, the program also featured a Stomp-like trash can drumming performance, and plenty of circus tricks, from juggling to acrobatics to Cyr wheel spinning. Styles of music varied from traditional to big band, to hip-hop and rock. A segment of the production also included a living nativity, and a brief message about life's 'distractions' from the meaning of Christmas was delivered near the conclusion." *

And, while all of these are extremes, sometime the residual effect is that people in our congregations want to grasp a little of that excitement. For example, while I have no objection to "praise songs" being used in church (at least those that are scripturally sound), I do have a problem with the "praise team" putting on a rock-n-roll concert as part of the service. In doing so, they draw attention to themselves and not toward Christ. The same can be said for the "cool" preachers who give a basic moralistic, feel-good message that is theologically and exegetically shallow. We worship an infinite God who has revealed himself in His word, shall we not expect that word to go deeper than we ever imagined? If we are mature, do we really need the preacher to hold our hand on personal application? Would it not be better for him to focus on digging out new treasures from the depths of this Word that help us appreciate the character of our God even more?

And that gets me to my point. What do you come to worship

expecting it to be? If you expect entertainment, you are in the wrong place. True, there ought to be much about worship that should be uplifting to you, but you are there to draw near to God by carefully attending to His word. The sermon should not tickle your ears but should instruct you on the character of God and exhort you to repent of your sins and live in a way that honors that character. Entertainment tends to leave you as you are—just perhaps more at ease from the stresses of life. The worship of God's people is designed to be a tool to conform you into the image of Christ.

Yet, I look at the landscape of the "church" around us and I scratch my head. Exhortation and instruction seem to be only secondary and occasional byproducts of their approach. I know those praise bands are practicing for hours to get their "set" down pat. I know many preachers practice their sermons with an audience repeatedly during the week to make it come across just so when it is delivered. In fact, many of them purchase sermon outlines that are pre-prepared. All they have to do is to personalize them and adapt them to their context, their job then largely is that of an actor performing a role and not as the teacher of Christ's church. Of course, many of these places have long ceased trying to be Christ's church in anything but name and have imbibed of health-wealth and word-faith heresies to tickle those itching ears.

Preachers, you are teachers and

exhorters, not performers. We need to be prepared but not polished. And we need to do our work in the text of God's word. It needs to work on us and get into our souls before we can ever expect that it will get into the souls of our people. That said, it is not a performance and errors will be forgiven by Christians who have any sort of spiritual maturity.

And folks in the pews, do not sit passively expecting to be entertained. You are not there to be entertained. You are there to actively engage in the worship of the King of the Universe, Jesus Christ. That does not mean that you need to put on a show... in fact, just the opposite. But it does mean you must participate. You must sing with the people of God, do not just stand there reading the words out of the hymnal and praying that the hymn is done soon. Sing with the people of God in their worship.

Paul writes in Ephesians 4:11-14, "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and

teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming..."

The building up of the church is not done through concert lighting and camels. Nowhere did Paul, with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, describe praise teams in this passage. He did mention that through the preaching of the gospel and the worship that comes from the unity of the body, that people will no longer be tossed around from one position to the next.

Stop going to the circus and start going to worship!

**<https://christiannews.net/2016/12/21/text-as-megachurch-turns-christmas-production-into-circus-literally/>*

Remember in Prayer

Robert passed away early last Sunday (2/5/23) afternoon. **Buddy** is in ALH with a torn muscle in his hip due to a fall after his ammonia levels rose again.

John and Sylvia Pollard's newborn, Paige, is still in at Texas Children's Hospital, Houston, but is no longer in ICU; her condition is genetic: Alternating Hemiplegia of Childhood, or AHC. It is permanent, serious, and will

require a lifetime of care—they need our continued love and prayer. **John's mother, Sharon**, is also being treated for heart failure.

Please continue to pray for **Carolyn Dennis** and **Dot Hice**, too.

We have two new brothers in Christ: **William Dooley** and **Antonio Burks**, both inmates at the Limestone County Jail, were baptized into Christ on Friday, 2/10! 📖