

Schedule of Meeting Times:

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM
 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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“...I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified,”

—1 Corinthians 2:2

**Servants during April:**

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

Reading: Mike

Announcements: Stanley

Table: Larry, Mike, Marty

Wednesday Lesson: Larry (1), Stanley (8),
 Kris (15), Larry (22), Stanley (29)

Lawn Mowing (week starting): Larry (5),
 Marty (12), Kris (19), Stanley (26)

Area Meetings:

Hays Mill church of Christ

21705 Hays Mill Road
 Elkmont, AL 35620

The Bible . Examiner

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

Volume 8

April 26, 2026

Number 41

Two Churches Want to Grow

By Bill Hall

Two churches want to grow, but their attitudes toward growth differ greatly.

The first church looks upon growth as its primary purpose. Goals are placed before the membership: “We want to double our membership within the next three years,” for instance. Success (or failure) is judged almost entirely on the basis of that congregation’s numerical growth.

The second church looks upon the saving of souls as its primary purpose and any growth in membership is just a natural result of that primary purpose. Members of the second church are infused with the value of immortal souls rather than a sense of congregational pride.

Members of **the first church** become eager to get people to the water. Baptism is the point at which people are added to the membership list; consequently, it’s going to take so many baptisms to keep pace with

their goal of doubling their membership. They must not only get them to the water, they must get them there within the time period that has been arbitrarily set by their leaders.

Members of **the second church** are far more eager to get people to repent. Their concern is for additions to the Lord’s body rather than additions to a membership list. Their approach is to bring sinners to a consciousness of their sin and the consequences of remaining in sin. If they can do this in one study, great! But if considerable time is required to uproot false concepts and to plant the true seed of the gospel, they patiently accept this. Their only sense of urgency grows out of the uncertainty of life and its duration. But they know that shortcuts are not the answer; that baptism without repentance is worthless; and that once people are brought to true repentance, having been properly taught, baptism for the

remission of sins will follow. So they wait with longsuffering until the gospel brings about its desired effect in the hearts of those whom they are teaching.

Members of **the first church** will be tempted to use questionable tactics in their approach to people. The old methods and approaches don't seem to be effective any more. New and more positive approaches must be found. So the members of the first church make their appeal to the pride of people. They persuade them of their self-worth; they build their self-image; they tell them how valuable they would be to the congregation. "We need you," they tell their prospects. They might also extol the virtues of the congregation, persuading their prospects of the value of being a part of such a vibrant, growing group of people. So, people "become members," and they conform to the rules that are placed before them for acceptance within the group, but there may have been little grief over sin; in fact, they might even still believe they were Christians before they "became members."

The members of **the second church** recognize that the gospel never makes its appeal to the pride of people. They bring people to see their spiritual bankruptcy; that they have "nothing to pay"; that their true worth is not to be found in self, but in Christ; that they must humble themselves and look to Christ for their exaltation; that they are sinners in desperate need of salvation; that their only hope

is to be found in Christ. They would bring them to say, in the words of Mrs. C. H. Morris:


*Nearer, still nearer, nothing I bring,
Naught as an offering to Jesus my
King,
Only my sinful, now contrite heart;
Grant me the cleansing His blood
doth impart.*

The first church may become compromising in its teaching. Its elders intend to maintain doctrinal soundness, but there is the pressure to produce, to maintain the growth rate set before the congregation. When doctrinal soundness becomes an obstacle to that purpose, the elders may succumb to the pressures and ease up on its teaching. **The second church** faces no such pressure, for in its concern for the spiritual wellbeing of people, there is desire for truth on every subject vital to salvation.

The emphasis of **the first church** is organizational and institutional; the emphasis of the second is spiritual and heavenly.

We commend **the second church** to our readers. Serious problems can result when churches see growth as their primary purpose. If goals are to be set—and goals can serve a good purpose—let them focus on the number to be taught rather than the number to be baptized. If new approaches are needed, let them be conceived only if they are compatible with God's wisdom. In efforts to reach others, let all determine to know nothing "except Jesus Christ and Him

crucified." When churches thus become really serious about saving souls, God will give the increase and growth will take care of itself.

—via *Two Men: Articles on Practical Christian Living*, pp22-24. 

What about my Father and Mother?


By Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

A man said to me, "Brother, I can't take the doctrine you preach that one must be baptized to be saved, because it damns my father and mother who were not baptized."

Well, let us see. Do you think one must believe in Jesus Christ to be saved? "Oh, yes," he answers. Very well, I will just change my subject from baptism to faith. A Jew comes around and says, "Mr. Preacher, I can't accept the doctrine you preach, that faith in Jesus is necessary to salvation, because my father and mother died without believing in Christ."

The Jew thinks as much of his father as you do of yours. By the same argument with which you eliminate baptism, because perchance it damns some of your ancestors, he also

eliminates faith in Christ. Then I preach that the knowledge of God is necessary to salvation and a Chinese comes around, and says, "I can't take the doctrine you preach, because it damns my poor father and mother, who died without the knowledge of God"—and there you see the whole plan of salvation is nullified by contingencies.

Friends, I suggest that we leave the matter of clemency to the Judge (a judge only, has the power of clemency) and let us observe the law. **I have no authority to preach clemency—I must preach what God commands men to do to be saved—and I know what the law says.** *[Emphasis mine, KV]* 

Remember in Prayer

Please pray for **Faye's nephew, Tommy**, as he is in very poor health; and **Dwight** has had a good deal of pain due to arthritis in his hip. Please

continue to pray for **Betty; Carolyn; Hazel; Marie and Billy**; as well as **John, Sylvia, and Paige Pollard**.