



Learning from the Early Church

By Mr. Alexander S. Brown, Minister

LAST MONTH we began to think about the importance of viewing Golden Isles as a Mission Station, and understanding ourselves as missionaries to St. Simons Island, and to Glynn County. As I said in April, when we begin to view ourselves that way, the dynamic of our church dramatically changes, and we stop being consumers and start being workers.

However, all this can seem a little abstract, and it is easy for us to ask, “Well, what does this actually look like?” A short article that I came across this week by John Piper (of Bethlehem Baptist Church, in Minneapolis, and Desiring God), entitled, “Inspired by the Incredible Early Church,” fills the picture out a little. Taking the example of the Early Church, Piper highlights six points that characterized the mission-focused Early Church, that so greatly impacted the pagan world in which it was ministering.

Piper writes,

I’ve been reading Stephen Neil’s [A History of Christian Missions](#). It is an overwhelming thing to be caught up in the spirit of those early centuries when Christianity spread far and wide by countless, nameless saints in totally pagan cultures. By A.D. 300 there was no part of the Roman Empire which had not been to some extent penetrated by the Gospel. What human factors did God ordain to bring about this amazing spread of the Christian Movement? Stephen Neil suggests six:

1. *First and foremost was the **burning conviction** which possessed a great number of the early Christians. The church historian Eusebius of Caesarea (A.D. 260-340) described the way the gospel spread:*

At that time [about the beginning of the second century] many Christians felt their souls inspired by the holy word with a passionate desire for perfection. Their first action, in obedience to the instructions of the Savior, was to sell their goods and to distribute them to the poor. Then, leaving their home, they set out to fulfill the work of an evangelist, making it their ambition to preach the word of the faith to those who as yet had heard nothing of it, and to commit to them the books of the divine Gospels. They were content simply to lay the foundations of the faith among these foreign peoples: they then appointed other pastors, and committed to them the responsibility for building up those whom they had merely brought to the faith. Then they passed on to other countries and nations with the grace and help of God (*Ecclesiastical History, III, 37, 2-3*).

2. *The solid historical message which Christians brought was indeed **good news**, and a welcome alternative to the mystery religions of the day.*

(Continued on the next page)

May Calendar

Sundays

9:30 a.m. Sunday School
Church History, Part 2

10:30 a.m. Morning Worship
“I Peter: Strangers in a Foreign Land”

6:00 p.m. Evening Worship
“Jeremiah: Judgment and Restoration”

Children’s Church, Nursery available

.....

Wed 5/2, 9, 16, 23, 30
Midweek Prayer Meeting
(6:30 p.m., GIPC)

Thu 5/3 **National Day of Prayer**
(Info: nationaldayofprayer.org)

Sun 5/6 Guest Minister,
Rev. Tim Foster
(Communion, AM)

Tue 5/8, 15, 22 Ladies Bible Study
(6:00 p.m., Dr. Diane
Bowen’s office)

Tue 5/8 Book Group for Women
(6:30 p.m., Taylor home)

Sat 5/12 “Second Saturday” Men’s
Breakfast & Bible Study
(8:00 a.m., Brown home)

Sun 5/13 “Mother’s Day” - Annual
‘Change for Life’ Baby
Bottle campaign begins,
to benefit CareNet

Wed 5/9, 16, 23 Ladies Bible Study
(9:30 a.m., GIPC;
child care provided)

Tue 5/8 Stated Session Meeting

Fri, Sat 5/18, 19 **GIPC Membership
Class (see pg. 2)**

Mon 5/28 **Memorial Day (Holiday)**

In this issue

Committee Updates..... 2

Bible Reading Plan..... 3

May Fighter Verses..... 3



Learning from the Early Church

(Continued from the previous page)

3. *The new Christian communities commended themselves by the **purity** of their lives.*
4. *The Christian communities were marked by **mutual loyalty** and an overcoming of antagonisms between alienated classes.*
5. *The Christians were known for an elaborate development of **charitable service**, especially to those within the fellowship. Emperor Julian, writing in the early fourth century, regretted the progress of Christianity because it pulled people away from the Roman gods. He said,*

Atheism [i.e. Christian faith] has been specially advanced through the loving service rendered to strangers, and through their care for the burial of the dead. It is a scandal that there is not a single Jew who is a beggar, and that the godless Galileans care not only for their own poor but for ours as well; while those who belong to us look in vain for the help that we should render them.

6. *The **persecution** of Christians and their readiness to suffer made a dramatic impact on unbelievers. Neil observes, "Under the Roman Empire Christians had no legal right to exist...Every Christian knew that sooner or later he might have to testify to his faith at the cost of his life."*

Here we are at the end of the second millennium. May God raise up hundreds of thousands of super-ordinary Christians and Christian communities with this kind of passion.

Pastor John¹

AS WE think about what it means for us to be a mission on St. Simons and within Glynn County, let's pray that these six marks would be for us, both individually and as a congregation. Let's pray that we would be caught by the wonder and conviction of the Early Church, that through us many would come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. ■

¹ By John Piper. © Desiring God. Website: desiringGod.org

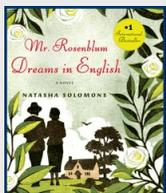
Women in the Church

Ladies Bible Study —

The current study is entitled, "Women of Faith from the Old Testament." Two times are available: Tuesday evenings at 6:00 p.m. (Dr. Diane Bowen's office) or Wednesday mornings at 9:30 a.m. (at GIPC; w/childcare). Please note—the groups do not meet during the first week of the month.

Book Group for Women — Tuesday, May 8th, 6:30 p.m.

The Book Group will meet on May 8th (rather than the first Tuesday, this month only) at the home of Sue Taylor. The book we are reading for May is, "Mr. Rosenblum Dreams in English," by Natasha Solomons.



—Sue Taylor, Book Group Chair

"A journey marked by both heartache and charm.....Solomons creates a world that is poignant, brutal, but also blessedly comic in its depiction of any small town.....Drawing on her grandparents' own postwar experience in England, Solomons honors the wrenching task of recreating a life, but through a tale that is never far from being utterly charming in its proper English pluck." (*Kim Ode, Minneapolis Star Tribune*)

Membership Class

May 18 & 19, 2012

The GIPC New Members Class is being offered the weekend of May 18th and 19th and is open to all those who are interested in becoming a member of GIPC, or who simply want to know more about what membership entails.

Over the course of Friday evening (6pm-8pm) and Saturday morning (9am-12pm) we will study the membership vows which all members must take, in order to understand what they require and the implications that they have for us, once we become members.

Please notify Alexander Brown or the church office by Sunday, May 13th, if you plan to attend.

Finance Committee

GIPC Monthly Update— Loan Balance

Loan Balance 1/1/12	\$840,102
Principal Paid YTD	\$ 10,661
Loan Balance	\$829,441
May Payment:	
Interest	\$ 2,626
Principal	\$ 2,623
Total Payment	\$ 5,249

Men in the Church

"Second Saturday" Men's Breakfast and Bible Study— May 12th, 8:00 a.m.

All men are invited to gather for food and fellowship at the Brown home on the second Saturday in May. The current topic of discussion is *biblical manhood*. Led by Mr. Brown.

Significant Sessional Actions

The GIPC Session did not meet during April.

Connect with us!

Church Office

Ph: 912.638.2563

E-Mail: office@gipc-pca.org

48 Hampton Point Drive
Saint Simons Island, GA 31522

www.gipc-pca.org

MAY

"From childhood you have been acquainted with the holy Scriptures." (II Timothy 3:15)

Family Worship

Old Testament Reading

Date	Book	Chapter	✓
1	<i>Numbers</i>	8	<input type="checkbox"/>
2		9	<input type="checkbox"/>
3		10	<input type="checkbox"/>
4		11	<input type="checkbox"/>
5		12,13	<input type="checkbox"/>
6		14	<input type="checkbox"/>
7		15	<input type="checkbox"/>
8		16	<input type="checkbox"/>
9		17,18	<input type="checkbox"/>
10		19	<input type="checkbox"/>
11		20	<input type="checkbox"/>
12		21	<input type="checkbox"/>
13		22	<input type="checkbox"/>
14		23	<input type="checkbox"/>
15		24	<input type="checkbox"/>
16		25	<input type="checkbox"/>
17		26	<input type="checkbox"/>
18		27	<input type="checkbox"/>
19		28	<input type="checkbox"/>
20		29	<input type="checkbox"/>
21		30	<input type="checkbox"/>
22		31	<input type="checkbox"/>
23		32	<input type="checkbox"/>
24		33	<input type="checkbox"/>
25		34	<input type="checkbox"/>
26		35	<input type="checkbox"/>
27		36	<input type="checkbox"/>
28	<i>Deuteronomy</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
29		2	<input type="checkbox"/>
30		3	<input type="checkbox"/>
31		4	<input type="checkbox"/>

MAY

"From childhood you have been acquainted with the holy Scriptures." (II Timothy 3:15)

Family Worship

Psalms Reading

Date	Book	Chapter	✓
1	<i>Psalms</i>	44	<input type="checkbox"/>
2		45	<input type="checkbox"/>
3		46,47	<input type="checkbox"/>
4		48	<input type="checkbox"/>
5		49	<input type="checkbox"/>
6		50	<input type="checkbox"/>
7		51	<input type="checkbox"/>
8		52-54	<input type="checkbox"/>
9		55	<input type="checkbox"/>
10		56,57	<input type="checkbox"/>
11		58,59	<input type="checkbox"/>
12		60,61	<input type="checkbox"/>
13		62,63	<input type="checkbox"/>
14		64,65	<input type="checkbox"/>
15		66,67	<input type="checkbox"/>
16		68	<input type="checkbox"/>
17		69	<input type="checkbox"/>
18		70,71	<input type="checkbox"/>
19		72	<input type="checkbox"/>
20		73	<input type="checkbox"/>
21		74	<input type="checkbox"/>
22		75,76	<input type="checkbox"/>
23		77	<input type="checkbox"/>
24		78:1-37	<input type="checkbox"/>
25		78:38-72	<input type="checkbox"/>
26		79	<input type="checkbox"/>
27		80	<input type="checkbox"/>
28		81,82	<input type="checkbox"/>
29		83,84	<input type="checkbox"/>
30		85	<input type="checkbox"/>
31		86,87	<input type="checkbox"/>

MAY

"From childhood you have been acquainted with the holy Scriptures." (II Timothy 3:15)

Private

Old Testament Reading

Date	Book	Chapter	✓
1	<i>Song of Solomon</i>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
2		7	<input type="checkbox"/>
3		8	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<i>Isaiah</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
5		2	<input type="checkbox"/>
6		3,4	<input type="checkbox"/>
7		5	<input type="checkbox"/>
8		6	<input type="checkbox"/>
9		7	<input type="checkbox"/>
10		8,9:1-7	<input type="checkbox"/>
11		9:8-10:4	<input type="checkbox"/>
12		10:5-34	<input type="checkbox"/>
13		11,12	<input type="checkbox"/>
14		13	<input type="checkbox"/>
15		14	<input type="checkbox"/>
16		15	<input type="checkbox"/>
17		16	<input type="checkbox"/>
18		17,18	<input type="checkbox"/>
19		19,20	<input type="checkbox"/>
20		21	<input type="checkbox"/>
21		22	<input type="checkbox"/>
22		23	<input type="checkbox"/>
23		24	<input type="checkbox"/>
24		25	<input type="checkbox"/>
25		26	<input type="checkbox"/>
26		27	<input type="checkbox"/>
27		28	<input type="checkbox"/>
28		29	<input type="checkbox"/>
29		30	<input type="checkbox"/>
30		31	<input type="checkbox"/>
31		32	<input type="checkbox"/>

MAY

"From childhood you have been acquainted with the holy Scriptures." (II Timothy 3:15)

Private

New Testament Reading

Date	Book	Chapter	✓
1	<i>Hebrews</i>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
2		7	<input type="checkbox"/>
3		8	<input type="checkbox"/>
4		9	<input type="checkbox"/>
5		10	<input type="checkbox"/>
6		11	<input type="checkbox"/>
7		12	<input type="checkbox"/>
8		13	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	<i>James</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
10		2	<input type="checkbox"/>
11		3	<input type="checkbox"/>
12		4	<input type="checkbox"/>
13		5	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	<i>I Peter</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
15		2	<input type="checkbox"/>
16		3	<input type="checkbox"/>
17		4	<input type="checkbox"/>
18		5	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	<i>II Peter</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
20		2	<input type="checkbox"/>
21		3	<input type="checkbox"/>
22	<i>I John</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
23		2	<input type="checkbox"/>
24		3	<input type="checkbox"/>
25		4	<input type="checkbox"/>
26		5	<input type="checkbox"/>
27	<i>II John</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
28	<i>III John</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
29	<i>Jude</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
30	<i>Revelation</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
31		2	<input type="checkbox"/>

Week beginning APRIL 29

Ephesians 4:29

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Week beginning MAY 6

Ephesians 4:31-32

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Week beginning MAY 13

Proverbs 4:20-23

My son, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Let them not escape from your sight; keep them within your heart. For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

Week beginning MAY 20

Proverbs 4:24-27

Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you. Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure. Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.

Week beginning May 27

Proverbs 6:20-21

My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching. Bind them on your heart always; tie them around your neck.