



SEEDS NEWSLETTER

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MEET THE FAMILY

Phil & Cherie Columbia

Both are native Kentuckians. Cherie was born in Shelbyville and was saved at age 13 while living in Zion III. Phillip was born in Lexington and saved near Crestwood, KY at age 12.

They met at work in the mid 1970's and were married in 1979. Now they have two daughters and two grandchildren living near enough so that they can be backup babysitters and homework tutors. They also care for Randy, Cherie's adult brother.

For nearly 40 years the couple worked as small business owners, providing food services to major corporations at seven locations in Kentucky and Ohio. They finally retired in 2019 and moved to Georgetown to be near their daughters and grandchildren.

Phil comments that they came to Bluegrass in search of the true Word of God, and stayed because they found it here, along with a loving church family.



Ken & Lydia Au



Ken's parents are from Hong Kong. He was born and raised in Horsham, PA. Lydia's mom is also from Hong Kong, and her dad is from Malaysia. Her family moved from Singapore to Allentown, PA when she was 7 years old.

Ken grew up in a Christian home, receiving Jesus into his life during his elementary school years. Lydia's family were church attenders, and she trusted Jesus for salvation at age 12. They met in 2011 when Ken was living and working in the Washington,

D.C. area. Lydia was living and working in Pennsylvania and was a member of the church where Ken's brother served as a pastor. When the Lord moved Lydia to the D.C. area for a new job, Ken's brother and sister-in-law played matchmaker, and they were married in 2012. Now they have two children, Christian (12), and Evelyn (8).

Ken works as a contractor to help improve financial systems for Veterans Affairs. Lydia is a homeschooling mom. They have alpacas and chickens on their farm in Cynthiana, where they moved in 2022 to escape the hustle and bustle of the D.C. area. Finding Bluegrass Baptist Church has been a great blessing for the family who are active in various ministries. "We thank God everyday for the Biblical preaching, teaching, and fellowship of this very blessed church family!"

Ron & Beverly Kristoff

Beverly is a clown. No, really. Read on to find out more!

Both Ron and Beverly hail from Gary, Indiana and were saved as children. They met at Merrillville Baptist Church in the summer of 1970 and married in January 1971. They have two children and two grandchildren.

(About that clown thing: During a brief stint in California, where the couple had moved for Ron's work, Beverly took a Clown Course at "Circus Circus" in Nevada—where Red Skelton was mentored—and became fully certified).

Ron is a retired Mechanical Engineer. He worked at three steel mills in Indiana for 20 years. In 1990 he and Beverly moved to Kentucky to enjoy warmer weather. Ron was employed at two non-union plants here before joining Toyota, where he retired in 2013. Beverly worked at a law office in Georgetown, then moved to manage a staffing position at Norrell Services before she joined the human resources department at Toyota.



They joined Bluegrass because they wanted to be part of a Bible-believing church grounded in the Word of God.

PERSPECTIVE

WHO RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD?

Pastor Zach Kirchner presents a fresh perspective that will strengthen your faith—and assist in evangelizing Jehovah's Witnesses with their own words. (Part Two of this article will appear in the July issue).

My mother was an English teacher, so my siblings and I were destined to know the English language! We would never struggle to discern whether we should use "their" or "there" in a particular context, and we knew that the word "me" was objective, and the word "I" was subjective. We were confident that the article "a" precedes words that begin with consonants, and "an" is used before words that begin with vowels. We knew our prepositions, and we wouldn't *dare* to use improper punctuation or allow our subjects and verbs to disagree. With this being my childhood, English in grade school came easily to me. I don't think I once studied for an English test, and I made sure all my friends knew.

As I've grown older, I've mellowed in my prideful agenda to correct my friends' speech (an action of which they were not fond, to say the least!), but I have continued to appreciate the little things about language. You may be thinking, "What in the world does this have to do with the resurrection, doctrine, and Jehovah's Witnesses?"

The point is that I enjoy studying language and digging into word meanings to get at deeper truth perhaps hidden or implied in an important book like the Bible. If we had quiet, focused time, probably all of us could think of proof texts that offer support to various points of doctrine (for example, the completeness of the Old Testament, from Luke 24:44; or that the Holy Spirit is God, from Acts 5:3–4, etc.). I would hope, however, that as we grow in our walk with the Lord and in our knowledge of his Word, our confidence in the truth grows beyond mere proof texts, and we begin to see connections of doctrines in random passages that we come across in our daily time in the Word. A great example of "doctrine in random passages" comes from the question, "Who raised Jesus from the dead?"

The book of Acts affirms not a few times that God raised Jesus from the dead. For example, when Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost about Christ and his crucifixion he described Christ as the one "Whom God hath raised up" (2:24). Just a few verses later, Peter says, "This Jesus hath God raised up" (2:32). In the book of Acts, similar statements occur TEN more times! (I'll include references at the end of the article next month.) Therefore, you would be exactly right to say that "God raised Jesus from the dead."

However, there's a *very interesting* passage early in John's gospel. In John 2:19, Jesus prophesies about His death and resurrection when he says, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up". In this sentence, Christ uses a future tense, active, first-person verb. (So what, grammar nerd?). Well, He's telling us that *He* will do the raising. In other words, *Christ is prophesying that He will raise himself from the dead!* Some have proposed that Jesus is talking about the Davidic Temple, but John leaves no doubt in v. 21 when he narrates, "But he spake of the temple of his body."

Let's put these pieces together: The testimony of Acts is that God raised Jesus from the dead, yet John records Jesus saying that He will raise himself from the dead. Also, what does this have to do with evangelizing Jehovah's Witnesses? Come back next month to find out!

WHAT'S HAPPENING!

Off To The Wilds!

Eighteen teenagers and two sponsor/chaperones (Joe and Abbie Rincon) left early in June for the annual visit to the Christian summer camp in North Carolina. It was, as always, a wonderful time of fun and spiritual refreshing for all.



Pastor Turns Fifty!



Pastor Kyle with parents Ron and Pat Fannin.

The picture below shows some of the crowd who stayed after a Wednesday night service to enjoy birthday food and fellowship together.



Vacation Bible School

The theme this year was “Emerald Crossing: An Irish Adventure Through Psalm 23”. As usual, a good time was had by all the children (over 40 of them) and 30 exhausted but happy workers.



ENCOUNTERS:

LIVING AS A CHRISTIAN IN A POST-CHRISTIAN WORLD

*Here we share anecdotes from church members, telling their experiences as Christians living in a world that is indifferent to the Gospel and Christian values in general. This month's contribution from 16-year-old **Olivia Clemons** repeats her recent testimony in church after returning from a week at The Wilds Christian summer camp, sharing with us how her experience there has helped to mold her spiritual growth through the years.*

I recently had the opportunity to go to The Wilds for my fifth visit. As I look back on my camp experience, I am just so thankful for that place and for the people who have poured their teaching into me there.

Not only do we get to play games and have fun, but we also get to worship, learn about God, and be completely submerged in His Word. Most days at camp are filled with activities centered around growing closer to the Lord. We wake up, memorize verses, eat breakfast, attend a service, spend time in the Word, play games, attend another service, talk with our counselors about the Bible, have some free time, and then end the day with another service. Throughout the entire week, we are constantly being encouraged and challenged from God's Word!

This year our speaker was Caleb Phelps. He taught many great lessons, but one that really stuck out to me was a sermon about how, when all of our hope is gone, we can always rely on Jesus. He reminded us that Jesus is **accessible**, **available**, **approachable**, and **able**. Even if I am facing a trial that I cannot fix or even explain, God will always be bigger than what I am facing.

Camp this year really challenged me to trust God, even in the midst of trials, and to recognize that I can do nothing on my own. But with God, I can face any obstacle. As I have thought back on camp over the last couple of weeks, that truth has continued to encourage me.

I am thankful to have grown up in church and to have heard the gospel from a young age. I was saved when I was about five or six years old. Even though I have been in church for most of my life, God still uses summer camp to encourage me, challenge me, and help me grow closer to Him.

2 Timothy 3:14 says: “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.”

Camp may be over, unfortunately, but what God taught me does not have to stay at camp. The God at The Wilds is the same God here in Kentucky. When coming home from camp, it can be challenging to stay faithful to the commitments we made there. At The Wilds almost all distractions are removed, but when we return, those distractions are thrown right back at us.

Please pray for us teens, that we would remain faithful to what God taught us, that we continue to seek Him, continue growing in His Word, and applying what we learned in our daily life.

BIBLE QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

*In this section we answer questions about Bible doctrines or texts or Church life or Christian life in general. If you have a question that you think may prompt an answer helpful to yourself and to the church family in general, please let us know. This month **Edward Thal** answers the question: **Why Do We Go Knocking on Doors?***

We call it Neighborhood Evangelism, and we do it once a week, weather permitting. But what's the point? Doesn't it intrude on people at home who just want to be left alone? And, anyway, isn't it something the pastor is paid to do? Also, it just seems too scary—what if someone challenges me and I don't know how to answer?

I have been doing it for over 30 years and in that time, I have heard all these objections and questions, and more. I asked the same questions when I first started out!

Since then I have knocked on many thousands of doors and, yes, there have been times when I have been rudely treated—cursed, mocked, sworn at, yelled at, doors slammed in my face.

On one memorable occasion in the suburbs of Washington DC, an outraged atheist called the police to arrest me. The police officer turned out to be a Baptist and laughed when I gave him a tract and explained what I was doing. (And be of good cheer—the people of central Kentucky are much nicer! In 14 years, I have never been rudely treated here).

However, the question remains: why should **you** do it? Before I get to the scriptural reasons I want to share a secret: the person who benefits most from intentionally and habitually sharing the Gospel with others, is You! The blessings are varied and powerful because God delights in us when we are obedient to His Word, when we make a habit of sharing our faith and go out of our way to do so, and when we lean on Him for help. Then His delight in us fills us with His joy, especially when a lost soul responds to the Gospel and turns to Jesus Christ for salvation.

As to that last point, very few people pray for salvation after a five minute conversation on their doorstep. But I look forward to meeting many, many souls in heaven who, unknown to me, later responded to the Gospel because of the seed I had sown.

An additional bonus is that sharing our faith drives us to study God's Word when we are confronted by questions for which we have no answers, or land in difficult circumstances, and instead of quitting we pray and determine to do better next time.

And a glorious bonus awaits in heaven where you will hear Jesus say, "Well done!" while somebody thanks you, perhaps many somebodies you met long ago gratefully thank you for talking to them, for leaving a tract with them, for going out of your way to plant a seed in their hearts that grew into eternal life!

When we turn to Scripture we find it is quite compelling on the subject: we are commanded to share our faith!

The first time Jesus preached in public He declared His purpose: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because **he hath anointed me to preach the gospel...*** (Luke 4:16-21).

Later He said that He came **to seek and to save the lost** (Luke 19:10). When He recruited His disciples, He told them, **follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.** (Matthew 4:19). At the last supper He reminded them, *I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should **go and bring forth fruit*** (John 15:16).

Towards the beginning of the Gospel of Mark, we read that Jesus *called the twelve and **began to send them forth two by two*** (Mark 6:7).

In the last chapter of Mark, these were the last words Jesus spoke to His disciples before He ascended to heaven: **Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature** (Mark 16:15).

Clearly, it is the duty (and hopefully the delight) of all born-again Christians to share their faith at every opportunity.

If you would like to learn more, nine videos are available on this subject at our church web page (bluegrassbaptistchurch.org) with a lot more information about how to be a well-prepared personal evangelist. Go to the menu at the top of the first page, find SEEDS, scroll down to CLASSES, and amongst several video series' on important topics you will find Personal Evangelism.