



Dayspring Discipleship Institute

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“...the ministry of the Word” – Acts 6:4

Teaching – Equipping – Training – Ministering

Brenda Cox, Executive Director

January 2016 “...the Dayspring from on high has come to give light to those that sit in darkness...” – Luke 1:78-79 Newsletter

“Can these bones live?”

Dearhearts,

We always hope for a new beginning when the cold winds of a dying year fade at our back. For some, the year that has been put to bed was a good year. For others it was not. Or if it was, it still was knitted with skeins of fear and uncertainty or unraveled by failures of one sort or another. Some may feel hopeless right now, wrung out by illness or job or snared in a web of behaviors or addictions they – or a loved one – seems powerless to control or change.

So the year blows cold at your back...or uncertain. Perhaps for some...despairing. Despairing of change or purpose. And the bones of hope lie bleached in the valley. And then the voice of Ezekiel comes...

“Son of man, can these bones live?”

“Oh Lord, you know, I don’t,” was the prophet’s bewildered response upon seeing a valley full of dry bones. *How can bones, so long lying in the sun...how can those bones live?* Yet the God who spoke to him is One who brings substance and form to bones scattered in the valley; One who restores to them sinew and flesh and skin.

“Prophesy to the bones, Ezekiel,” the angel commanded. And in the speaking there came an eerie rattling in the valley, a ghostly assembly of bone to bone no longer scattered in random array. Heaven overriding earth.

Again the angel instructed “Prophesy to the wind... say to the wind...Breathe upon these slain that they may live.” And suddenly a living, breathing army rose up from the valley floor ready for battle.

God is declaring here to the ages that He makes all things new. He is declaring, here, to you and me that there is no place in hearts of faith for despair. He who parts the seas and calls forth life from death’s stench, calls our faith forth from the grave to rise up to the magnitude of who He is. He is calling us to defy the bones in our valley. When all traces of life have been bleached from our crypt...it matters not. He IS life. He breathes into clay and it becomes a living soul. He takes our greatest failures and creates something new.

Creates redemption. He transforms any tomb into a womb...If we let Him.

Perhaps more than anything, the great miracle of the dry bones of Ezekiel 37 is that He spoke it forth through human command. Human utterance that defied the evidence; that opposed logic and reason. Not human will, but human voice speaking the Divine will. God required that man be partner with Him in miracle. “Prophesy” to the unseen and make it visible. Prophesy the impossible.

Where are your dry bones? Where the places beyond hope? Where the valley of despair? Even if your life *is* that valley right now, the message of Ezekiel still prophesies to the bones...your valley is not without hope. Not beyond the reach of God.

And where are those places for those about us? God may be calling us to speak to their winds...to utter words of life into their wasteland...prophesying faith into someone’s despair...courage and strength into desolate hearts. It is required that we be partner with God in miracle. Faith allows us to see miracles hidden in the debris of their world. Love compels us to bring it forth for them when they cannot.

From the valley of Gehenna, Christ saw heaven. In the agony of Gethsemane He saw glory. In the depravity of Golgotha, He saw love. Prophesy to the Wind, Christ, let it breathe life into the bones of earth.

We are called to a faith that defies the evidence; that holds before Him our dry bones. That calls forth a holy army from the dead. Dare to prophesy to your world...to look by faith beyond the debris field; to speak a truth only faith can see. And by faith, speak it into existence. Not by your strength or will, but by His.

Faith gives human voice to the majesty and intent of God and dares to believe that the rattling of miracle will come.

I love you,

2016: *Passing the Torch of Faith*

Legacy Library Honoring the Pilgrimage of Faith

We are here today as believers, whether we are casual or committed spiritually because of the remnant of the faithful who gave their all to deed to us with their lives and blood an inheritance of faith worthy of Christ. Their works, many housed in our library, beckon us into regions of the soul that can inspire and convict and perhaps change our course. It is those who recorded the ways of our faith and of Christ that we will be looking at in our Thursday evening studies this year. Broken up into 3-4 week mini-mesters, two in the spring and two in the fall, these classes invite you to meet or get to know more deeply some of the seminal figures in Christian history and to explore their understandings of our life in Christ.

Martyr's Bridge

This four week course explores the critical role those church leaders that followed the Apostles played in our having the faith and church we have today. Virtually all these *Apostolic Fathers* were martyred but their "blood was seed" that grew a mighty army of believers that in three centuries conquered the Roman Empire not with the blood of others, but with their own, and who spilled their love and faith out as light in a darkened world.

We invite you to join our team of Becky Elliston, Pat Townsend and Brenda as they introduce you to Justin Martyr, Polycarp and Ignatius, Clement of Alexandria, St. Augustine and others who were the critical bridge that passed the torch from the Apostles to us.

*Thursday Evenings at 7:00
January 21 – February 11*

"Early Christian Heresies" Book Discussion Follows "Bridge" Study

The last two Thursday evenings in February (the 18th and 25th) we will be discussing Joan O'Grady's book that explores the doctrinal / heretical challenges to the budding church that these Apostolic Fathers sought to counter. Though not officially a part of the study, it offers an excellent conclusion to "Martyr's Bridge" and we encourage you to join us. Reserve your book now for pick up at the ministry office: **469-338-5191**.

Legacy Offers Rare Opportunities

With its collection of ancient books, the library can offer rare opportunities not only to see books few have seen but in some cases to hold and look inside at the masterful printing techniques and quality found at the very infancy of printing.



Please consider scheduling personal or small group tours that range from a cursory 30 minute tour to an hour teaching tour to a more extensive visit that affords the opportunity to hold some of these masterpieces and learn more of the men and women who penned them.

We also offer instructional opportunities for those associated with Christian education and would like to be more prepared to teach various aspects of Christian history or would like to bring their students for a tour. The library is also available for classes for small groups of students on a one-time basis or by special arrangement as a regular feature of the library's educational ministry.

And What Will our Legacy Be... What Torch Will Light our Children's Way?

In every generation there have been those remnant hearts that preserved a sacred flame...the 7,000 who had not bowed their knee to Baal...the praying hermits of the desert, the hidden scribes of the Dark Ages, the voices of reform both within and without the church, and all those who lived normal lives but staked all on the Christ who said, "Follow me." It is these who chose to fix an unwavering gaze on Christ, to divert their eye from the distractions of their own day, to shut their ear to the clamor of the world or of their own souls and listen for the whispers of an ancient Spirit that asks us to be His...on His terms.

Those whose books reside in our library understood Christ's words to be in the world but not of it as a radical call on their lives that summonsed miracle from the waves and transformation in the heart. Their words and lives come to us now as torch, if we let them, to enflame our hearts and illumine the dark places along our way...To inspire us to pass on to those who follow a torch worthy of their ancient legacy.

“Ask for the Ancient Path...and Walk in It”

My heart is always seized by this scripture in Jeremiah. “Ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is...and walk in it.” In Daniel, the prophet calls God the “Ancient of Days.” A never beginning God...a God without end...is dealing with us. Is seeking to guide us with a wisdom we cannot fathom. In the end, the only thing that really matters is the ancient Path. If we fail personally or as a ministry to seek that wisdom, then we walk in error. It’s essential for us, individually and as a body regularly to “examine ourselves” as Paul instructs and re-align our course according to Ancient paths. According to what really matters. In the end, if a ministry doesn’t seek His way there is no need for it. It is not a part of his galaxy. It may appear to be. But it is not.

So what are His Paths...For us as a ministry?

We see the Ancient paths in those Jesus walked. He walked among the masses and He ate with the outcast and affirmed those tossed aside by life or political divisions. He liberated those in bondage of every sort, healed emotionally, mentally and physically and restored significance and purpose and value. He sought the lost and called people forth from their graves. He preached to the multitudes and made His way to one alone at the well. He walked among the powerful and moneyed yet told hard truth to them. Yet He called but 12 to follow Him and taught and equipped them, exposing them to experiences that empowered them to impact their worlds with miracle...with encounters from another realm. And yet He asked some who were so impacted to stay where they were and live out the miracle in their own community and prepare them to receive Christ.

Each church or Christian ministry has its own signature with many variations on their theme. Larger churches carry a more Sermon on the Mount mission, speaking to the masses and tending to fulfill the evangelical side of the Great Commission coin. Casting a broad net they gather in many, baptizing and going into all the world, yet maintaining some personal touch as well.

This is obviously not the place He has prepared for us. The Ancient Paths we seem summonsed to walk are more on the discipling side of the Great Commission coin...more personal in touch. Both the large and the small are sacred paths if we are yielded into His unique guidance for us.

Though I am not yet clear on some of the specifics of how we need to proceed this year, these are the Paths this Ancient God has laid before Dayspring; these are the paths the ministry is called to walk in:

With the Woman at the Well. We are called, more than anything else, to sit at the well of a person’s life and be with them there, in their aloneness...in their thirst, in the debris that litters their landscape from another’s hand. We are asked as a ministry to help people drink the water Christ offers that will slake any thirst and will heal and restore and set free.

Once the woman at the well had tasted the water Christ offered, she raced out into the community that had spurned her and declared with boldness and joy the great truth she had encountered.

Impacted, she in turn, impacted.

Discipling Studies

Road to Emmaus III

“The Remnant” Studies on Christian History

Conversations on Prayer

Retreats / Saturday Meditations

Book Clubs / Book Studies

Helping Remove Grave Clothes. Everyone who has been saved stands with Lazarus at the mouth of the grave still bound in grave clothes. It was Christ who commissioned friends to unbind Lazarus and remove his grave clothes. We all stand in resurrection life hobbled by tatters from the old man in us that has died but has not yet been fully removed. Paul’s words of taking off the old man and putting on the new speak to this. As Lazarus could not un-bind himself, neither can we. We are a ministry that helps people with their grave clothes.

Interior Renovation

Counseling

Classes on God’s principles for wholeness and healing

Equipping “Friends”

Courses

Becoming a Person of Impact

Studies / Classes

Travel Guides / Essential Principles

Bringing Down Strongholds

***Experiencing God creates Great Belief.
Great belief removes grave clothes.***

Brenda Cox

2016 Course *The Torchbearers*

This year's course on the history of Christianity begins with *Martyr's Bridge*, a look at the *Apostolic Fathers*. Engulfed in waves of persecution and a sea of contrary doctrines and heresies that assailed the church, they defied the gates of hell that came against the church.



Future Mini-Mesters (one in April / two in fall):



Quietism – perhaps the most consequential figures (outside the Reformation) to walk across Christianity's stage for a thousand years, their influence impacted the world for two centuries.

The Remnant Thread –

Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, Julian of Norwich and Thomas a Kempis and St. Francis de Sales kept a spiritual flame alive in the Catholic church in some of its darkest days.

The Great Awakening – was directly fueled by Quietism with Zinzendorf, the Wesley's and others impacting the spiritual landscape of the world.



Docent Training in Spring

We will be training people starting early this spring to lead individuals and small groups through the Legacy Antiquities Library. Initially, the training will be for the half-hour tours. More extensive training for the longer versions will be offered later in the year.

The first phase of this training will be an introduction to the books in the library and background information on the authors as well as the times in which they lived. If you are interested in being a Legacy Docent and in receiving the training, please register with the ministry at 469-338-5191.

Library Leadership Includes

Research Historian – Linda Palmer

Archivist – Elizabeth Moses

Information Specialists –

Becky Elliston / Caroline Doyle / Linda Palmer

Person of Impact Course Resumes *February 26-27*

We resume our Lay Counseling Training a little later than anticipated this year. We continue to look at the spiritual principles of healing and how to apply them to our wounded places and to consider how trauma changes our "message board" and what is needed to re-write the flawed messages in a damaged system. Please mark your calendars for the end of February.

Koinonia Fellowship Studies Emmaus III *8:30 Sunday Mornings*

Fifteen to twenty men and women gather regularly on Sunday mornings at the Dayspring house for fellowship and study of the third volume of Brenda's Road to Emmaus Bible Study series.

Please join us for coffee and study and still have time to make your way to church afterward.

New Year Covenant Renewal Meal *And Night Watch* *Friday January 8 – 7:00 p.m.*

It is a time to reflect on where we are spiritually and to renew our commitment to Christ for this year. The Wesleyan community met every New Year's Eve for this purpose, using Wesley's Covenant prayer to reflect their own commitment. After our meal there will be a time of personal and shared reflection and a dedicating of this new year to the Lord in whatever way the Spirit leads each of us, but using Wesley's Covenant as a template for our own. For those who can, a *Night Watch* will follow of intercession and prayer for God's purposes to be accomplished among us. Come and go, stay for an hour or for the night.

Wesley Covenant Prayer

I am no longer my own, but yours. Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be employed for you or laid aside for you, exalted for you or brought low for you. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and heartily yield all things to your pleasure and disposal. And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.

Charis Christmas – a Look through the Shutter at a Very Special Evening

Judy Thornhill's Amazing Eye Recorded Moments Aglow with Friends and Family... Fellowship and Food

Our Christmas Open House proved to be a magical time of candlelight, arranged beautifully by Sue Almond and natural Victorian decorations created inside and out by Becky Elliston.



Background guitar by gifted 16 year old Elisabeth Barbee serenaded friends....



....And Family



And Cowboys taking a break from the trail.....



with *wonderful foods* from the 1800's.



Sacrificial cooking and baking by Susan Raines (6 items including "Mamie's potato cake"), Elaine Souder's quadruple batch of Brunswick Stew, Jaynie Lamb (Christmas War Cake, cookies and 5 batches of cornmeal "bricks") Gay Bostick (5 items including a batch of

molasses cookies that almost took her down), Dava Sweeney's last minute double batch of Aunt Vinnie's Chew Cakes, Becky Elliston's Southern Cornbread, and Sue Almond's Figgy/Date Pudding and Scottish shortbread all provided a wonderful look into the foods and experiences of the 19th century.

Approximately 20 dropped in on Monday evening while 30 stopped by on Tuesday night. We were perhaps all a bit surprised that all the tastes were so rich and flavorful.

We hope to see you next year for our second *Charis Christmas* Open House where we hope to add a couple of new surprises for your enjoyment.

Waiting for the evening to begin...



Susan Raines and Jaynie Lamb take a much needed break as part of the team of ladies that prepared the delicious foods. We are so grateful to all of these who gave so much of their time and talents to make our first Christmas Open House one we eagerly anticipate repeating next year. *Thank You For Everything!*

“Save Me Jesus...Save me”

She had pulled out from the Lake Pointe Hospital westbound onto Highway 66. Though tornado warnings blared, the familiar wailing we get used to in this area failed to alert her to the reality. She was determined to make it home ahead of the storm. When the phone rang from a friend whose home had just been hit, her urgent voice broke through, “Get out of your car now! The tornado is here!” Swerving right into the Tatiano parking lot, she fled the car and pounded futilely on the door on the east side of the restaurant. Debris swirled and the roaring air swallowed up her frantic cries, “Save me, Jesus...Save me!” she repeated over and over. Suddenly a young Hispanic man was behind her shielding her from the storm’s shrapnel. Then, abruptly, the door opened and they found themselves inside where 10 other people huddled in a corner amid falling pieces of ceiling. On the west side of Tatiano’s red tiles were ripped from the roof and the houses immediately behind it were in shambles. And in the parking lot her back window was gone and pieces of trees and wood from houses littered her car.

What are the odds that a man would be in the same place at the same time in the middle of an F4 tornado shielding a woman crying out to Jesus to save her? He was either an Hispanic man or an Hispanic angel...Or maybe He was both. Afterall, God uses humans to partner with Him in miracles.



Pictures taken two streets behind Tatiano’s

Surveying the Need...

We will be sending a team out into the neighborhoods that seem to have fewer resources for recovery than many that were hit and will be enquiring of the needs they have that are not being addressed.

Connecting people with Resources. We have access to resources and will be developing additional sources to connect them with the material and human resources they need.

We are so grateful for the increase in donations to our ***Crisis Fund***, but should you want to give to it for tornado victims for defraying some of their expenses or insurance deductibles then, together, we might make a tangible difference for these

who have lost so much.

Because someone has offered this as a possibility, we put it out to you though we know the chances here are quite limited. But...***If you have a vehicle in working order*** that you can make available, if needed, as a tax deductible donation to the ministry, we may be able to provide free vehicles to some who otherwise might not be able to afford it.

Please let us Know if you Know of People Who Need Help

After the Initial Urgency...an On-Going Need.

We will continue to be mindful of the needs, not only physically and financially, but emotionally and spiritually that will surface often in unexpected ways after the emergency has passed.

We Most Especially want to reach out to those who do not have a church home. It is in times like this that the emotional, spiritual and community deficits for some who are un-churched is most exposed. It may be here that we can most live out before them the Christ who loves them and who seeks them.



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