



Confirming the Churches

world evangelistic work of Al Parr
P. O. Box 381, Harrisburg, AR 72432
(903) 721-0332



Sponsor: Harrisburg Church of Christ, P.O. Box 266, Harrisburg, AR 72432. 870-578-2965

September Report

September 29, 2012

Dear brethren, family and friends,

May God our Creator, Sustainer and Judge bless you for your love toward Him, the church and the souls created in His image. Certainly He has blessed me with good health and great encouragement in my labors. September has been a mixed month, with time to visit family in four states while continuing to contact churches by phone, mail and in person.

On the first day of the month, Saturday, I drove to Tennessee to visit with my daughter-in-law, Misty, and her four children. I hadn't seen them since they moved from northeast Arkansas over four months earlier, and our half-day visit was far too short. You may remember that the remnants of the hurricane were progressing up the Mississippi valley. I drove home that night in very heavy rain. Interstate highway traffic was slowed to 35 MPH, and many cars were parked on the shoulder and under the overpasses.

The first Sunday morning in September I preached to the Noland church outside of Pocahontas, Arkansas. My two lessons were a presentation of this work by means of an expository study of Acts 15, and a plan for dealing with false teachers as presented in Jeremiah 28. Both were well received by the Christ-honoring saints who constitute this rural church. I was made to feel like one of the family, and hope to be able to return to enjoy their company again. If you are in the area, I suggest that you attend the personal evangelism seminar they have scheduled for October 20. I am scheduled to be elsewhere that weekend, or would be there myself.

Sunday evening I visited with the church in Light, Arkansas. I had been unable to contact them otherwise with regard to the work, so I chose the personal approach. Arriving later than I had expected, I was pleased to see that the members had chosen seats near the front of the building, leaving the back 2 or 3 pews open for late-arrivers. What a great practice! Preachers – I among them – have been suggesting that for generations, but I don't see it often. As had the Noland church in the morning, the brethren at Light sang evangelistic songs in their worship of God. It is an extremely encouraging thing to see, and be a part of, churches that are sincerely concerned for the salvation of souls, and of their own responsibility in that evangelism. Brother Jody McFadden presented a report on the work of World Bible School, and I had opportunity to present my work in discussion with the church leaders. As I do everywhere, I left brochures for those who may be interested in looking more closely at the presentation. If you are able to distribute brochures to encourage support of this work – or to inform mission churches what we are doing – please ask; I can send you as many as you can use.

On Labor Day I drove to central Illinois to spend some time with my mother. She is in good health and mobility, but she doesn't drive. When I visit we always have places to go and things to do. I think that we were out and about every day except the one that had thunder storms. Being in the area only from Monday night until Saturday afternoon, I had opportunity to visit with the good church in Lincoln only on Wednesday evening, but the local Christians and I enjoyed the mutual encouragement that has always characterized my visits with them. One important aspect of this work is the encouragement of Christians living where they don't get much of it. Including Mom and me, the preacher and his wife, there were seven people present in that assembly. Sometimes just showing up is an encouragement to people. I didn't teach the class, but I did contribute to the discussion. I have always found that encouraging others results in great encouragement to myself. Every visit with the church of Christ in Lincoln, Illinois is always an encouragement to me.

I made phone calls and exchanged electronic communications with several churches while in Illinois, but the following week in Indiana I was able to mail information packages to churches in the target area, introducing my availability to help them in their work. Letters went to about three dozen address, some of them taken from a directory of churches with whom I have had no previous contact. At www.acts1541.org/classes.pdf you can read about the service I am offering to these churches. Additional letters were sent to churches who might be able to support this work. Hospitality in Indiana was provided by my brother, Randy, and his wife, Diana. On Sunday I visited twice with the church in Lebanon. When I returned for the evening assembly, then again on Wednesday evening, the elders and others

expressed surprise that a visitor would attend every assembly. In my experience it doesn't happen often. My own attitude, however, is that there is no other place I would want to be when I know that the children of God – my brothers and sisters – are gathered to teach and admonish one another, and to worship Almighty God. Also, while Randy and Diana were at work, I had ample opportunity to work for several days on the study guide I am preparing for the preachers in India. It is an expanded compilation of seven sermons I have preached on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. We are to use it in the classroom at International Bible Academe, and then distribute it further to churches where some of the graduates preach around the state of Andhra Pradesh. The book will be printed in English; if you would like a copy, tell me now and I will bring one back from India for you when I return in March. If you want more than one, they will be available for purchase after the printer gives us the price.

I had planned to drive to Detroit on Saturday to stay a week with my daughter, Angela, and her children while her husband, Sasha, was out of the country on business. He called to ask me to come a day earlier so I could take him to the airport. It's a drive of over 25 miles across the city, and he didn't want Angela to have to get all the children up and dressed early, and then to drive through the traffic alone to get back home. They only arrived in the area from Arkansas the first week in August, so they aren't completely comfortable yet with the geography and the traffic. There was a good deal still needed to make the apartment comfortable, so during my ten days with them I used my truck to haul boxes and furniture between the apartment and the storage facility. I visited with the Auburn Hills church on two Sundays and the Wednesday between, and was asked to preach on one Sunday night ("Confirming the Churches," Acts 15). This church has a long history of supporting mission works in various places, and is especially involved just now in the evangelization of Ghana. They were eager to hear about my work, and I was pleased to see how they have welcomed Angela and the family. They made me feel from the beginning that I have known them for many years. With all the work we did on the apartment, and caring for the three children, there wasn't much time to write letters, but I did make contact with one other church in southeast Michigan that is interested in supporting mission work. Please pray for all the churches that are considering the support of this work, which nearly everyone familiar with the plan agrees is a work much needed in America today.

The last of three scheduled annual check ups after my 2009 cancer surgery was in Memphis on the 25th, and I had a dental appointment in Jonesboro on the 26th, so I returned to Memphis on the 24th (no cancer issues; no further follow-ups!). Keith and Cheryl Cozort opened their home to me again for the week, after which I joined them for the drive to North Carolina for the annual convention of home-schooling families who are members of the church. The trip and the arrival have been difficult for me, coming without Chris for the first time (we attended the inaugural event in 1990 and were on the first board of directors for 5 years before our mission work in Ukraine). It is a great group of people, however, and will give me the opportunity to speak with members of perhaps 50 or 60 churches in various parts of the country. I will have a display table to introduce the work to all who pass through the display area.

Last Wednesday night I heard David Gibson preach in the gospel meeting in Egypt, Arkansas. David spoke of the rightness and the blessing of neighboring churches supporting one another in such works. It was a perfect illustration of the rationale for my work: there are many of our brethren who don't enjoy that blessing regardless how right it is. They simply don't live near enough to other churches to benefit from the fellowship in the service of Christ.

People not familiar with mission work or fund-raising sometimes don't realize that fund-raising, especially in the beginning of a new project, is a process of getting the word out then waiting, sometimes for months, for the response. At this time of year churches are evaluating all the opportunities they have and deciding which will fit into their budgets for the coming year. That process can take several months, and the people who sent the requests for inclusion into the budget don't know until the process is finished whether their works will be included. This work is in this waiting period, but I am not failing to continue contacting potential partners. If you know someone who might be interested in hearing about this work, please let me know today. Thank you, and may God, our loving Father, continue always to bless you abundantly.

In His service,

A. L. Parr
alparr@acts1541.org
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