

Jan./Feb. 2023

Bethel

Colony of Mercy

Breaking the chains of addiction

Since 1948



Lessons from Abram at age 75

If you have kept up with the newsletters since the Lord gave me the privilege to lead, you know I am always excited about what God is doing and is going to do! I have been around Bethel since 1997 when I came as a student in the program. This February Stacy and I will have been serving at Bethel for 20 years. Bethel is such an exciting place to serve, minister, and see God's handiwork every single day. I am always looking at things with the promises of knowing that God is able to do great and mighty things that we cannot even imagine (Eph. 3). I am not in the business of getting comfortable but in the mind-set to minister to everyone the Lord sends our way. The leaders here want to always look forward to what He is going to do and be obedient to what He tells us. I believe we are in good company, as Caleb at age 85 wanted the mountain God gave him. Moses was 80 when he confronted Pharaoh and began to lead the Jews. And Abram, (to become Abraham) the great grandson of Noah, when God spoke to him in Gen. 12:1-2 ***"Get out of your country, ... To a land that I will show you.² I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; And you shall be a blessing."*** Verse 4 says, ***"So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him... And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed"***

This year is another exciting and unique year!

On October 1, 2023, Bethel will be celebrating 75 years of ministry!

As the years show, God has established us, blessed

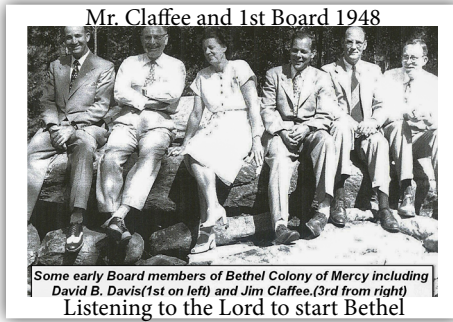
us, and made us a blessing to others. And, I believe we are yet to see what God is going to do through Bethel Colony of Mercy!

Many individuals, businesses and sometimes ministries get comfortable in the aging process. Grabbing the phrase, *"We have never done it that way."* That can make things stagnant and stop the growing process of what God would like to do. Here at Bethel, we try our best to stay focused on the Word and not the waves of the world. And as said in the previous paragraph we have been Biblically taught and modeled; ***"I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."*** Phil 3:14. We also have had it marched out in front of us by **two great leaders: Paul Ritchie at 91 is still preaching and counseling and Don Loss at 78 is still preaching and counseling!** What an inspiration their walk is to many!

I think there are some important lessons we can remember no matter where we are on the timeline of life that will help us stay ready for the amazing work God has before all of us!

First, I would say to keep our ears open to hear God's voice. Abram heard the voice of God in Gen. 12, ***"Now the Lord had said to Abram."*** I am not sure how easy that was in that day. At every place in life, there is enough noise and distractions to rob our focus and attention. Compared to today we have a wonderful blessing of a Bible in hand and the church where we can meet with other believers. Also, with technology we can listen to Bible teaching any time we want. Whether Abram then or us now, it is taking the time to position

ourselves before the Lord so we can be ready to hear.



Mr. Claffee and 1st Board 1948

Second, Abram believed God's word and promises. Summing it up, he was given three major promises in verses 2 and 3: a land; a seed; and a blessing. I think

Abram was willing to be obedient and after 75 years of life, he understood the value of what God was telling him. After growing up in a moving family and years of moving himself he understood the value of roots and being established that you may grow. At this time, he still had no children of his own. The closest was his nephew Lot. He understood the greatness of having a family and heritage as he came from the lineage of Noah. I am sure in all the moving he and his family did growing up and the recovery of people being scattered after the Tower of Babel, Abram understood what it meant to receive and to be a blessing. Think of it this way; real blessing does not come from toil and agonizing hours of labor, but from the fruit of intimacy, namely children. Abram's blessing was largely to be seen in his descendants. Here was the basis for the 'great name' that God would give to Abram.

Abram may have lived 75 years already, but his life was just getting started.

Jim and Eva Claffee stepped out in faith in 1948 and founded this beautiful ministry. Some others came behind and maintained what had already been established. Then God brought the Ritchies and the Losses in a time to grow deeper roots and to grow the number



of men served at Bethel. And now, God has grown us to two campuses, reaching the family that is in bondage. I am so excited as He leads us in the process of completely establishing this facet of our ministry. So, every day I'm excited to hear and to see what is next!!!

You know what Abram did after he traveled a while? The Lord came to him and spoke to Abram. **And Abram built an altar there unto the Lord. Or should I say; He worshiped the Lord!**

Third, I would encourage you to worship the Lord no matter where your travels lead you. The more Abram trusted God, the more Abram enjoyed Him, the more they became friends. Wherever Abram journeyed he found the Lord was there too. Wherever he put the tent for the night, he called on the name of the Lord. A relationship with God begins there. Sometimes you hear people say, "I wish I had your faith..." or "I admire your faith". Their idea of "faith" has a magic or superstitious ring about it. If only I had some, life would be so different. But that's not how the Bible describes faith. As we have seen, Paul tells us that those who believe in Jesus share the faith of Abram (Romans 4:11-12). In other words, his life is more than just an example of a man who believed in God. He is rather a prototype. He is the first man in the Bible to show clearly, what faith means. **Faith for Abram and for us begins with God and His Word.** Genesis 12:1 begins, "**The Lord said to Abram...**" This eliminates right away some of our magical ideas about faith. Faith requires action.

The next thing that Abram did was to travel as far as Bethel. So I am encouraging you to put on your calendar and commit to travel and worship the Lord at Bethel on October 1, 2023. **75 years of God's blessing deserves the journey and our expression of gratitude for what He has done to bless our families and us!**

Pastor Paul and Stacy Pruitt
Executive Director



Pastor Starnes
Associate Director



continuing to grow

BETHEL COLONY OF MERCY, INC. OPERATING BUDGET
 MEN'S AND WOMEN'S CAMPUSES
 Combined Budget
 Nov. 1, 2022 to Oct. 31, 2023



INCOME	
10- Contributions	\$668,650.00
14- Sales Tax Refund	\$10,000.00
15- Fund Raiser	\$23,000.00
16- Pay Phone	\$29,000.00
18- Estates & Foundations	\$150,000.00
19- Entry Fee Donation	\$7,000.00
20- Canteen	\$40,000.00
22- Edward Jones	\$65,000.00
23- Entrance Fee	\$160,000.00
24- Other & New Const.	\$11,000.00
25- Lawn Care	\$75,000.00
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$1,243,650.00
TOTAL	
EXPENSES	
26- Utilities	\$122,000.00
28- Vehicle	\$42,000.00
30- Food Services	\$35,000.00
32- Telephone	\$8,000.00
33- Pay Phone	\$300.00
34- Public Relations	\$44,000.00
36- Office Supplies	\$6,500.00
37- Web Donation Fees	\$2,500.00
38- Postage	\$6,050.00
40- Medical	\$5,800.00
42- Homecoming	\$5,100.00
44- Christmas	\$3,500.00
46- Conference & Travel	\$600.00
47- Chaplaincy	\$0.00

48- Chr. Ed.	\$7,000.00
50- Recreation	\$2,200.00
51- Media	\$5,150.00
52- Floral	\$300.00
54- Computer	\$17,000.00
56- Misc. Items	\$300.00
57- Lawn Care	\$15,000.00
58- Work Projects	\$200.00
59- Heavy Equip	\$10,000.00
60- Housekeeping	\$7,700.00
62- Maintenance	\$18,000.00
64- Property & Lib. Ins	\$42,000.00
66- Auto Insurance	\$7,000.00
68- Lawn & Garden	\$4,500.00
70- Pest Control	\$900.00
72- Equipment	\$5,500.00
73- Other Construction	\$49,000.00
74- Remodel	\$70,000.00
75- New Dormitory	\$0.00
76- Property Taxes	\$1,850.00
77- NC Sales Taxes	\$10,000.00
78- Land	\$0.00
80- Salaries (25 employees)	\$545,000.00
82- Social Security	\$37,000.00
84- Treasurer Exp	\$5,500.00
86- Staff Insurance	\$93,000.00
90- Internet	\$4,200.00
92- Benevolent Fund	\$4,000.00
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$1,243,650.00

From November 1, 2021
to October 31, 2022

Bethel Colony Men's Campus:

Serviced 386 men
 Served 87,012 meals
 Held 156 worship services
 Held 364 teaching sessions

Bethel Colony Women's Campus:

Serviced 69 women
 Served 12,840 meals
 Attended 156 worship services
 Held 364 teaching sessions

**Dual Campus Cost Breakdown
(w/o construction, housing,
remodel & land)**

\$32.06 per day (per man/woman
x's man days here)
 \$2,923.56 per day
 \$20,521.17 per week
 \$88,925.09 per month
 \$1,067,101.02 per year

We want to thank our supporters who have let God work through them in making provision for His visions which He has revealed through our Board Members and Directors.



Sufficient

“And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

- 2 Corinthians 12:9

One of the greatest internal struggles people face is **the need to be good enough**. We want to measure up to expectations; both of others and of ourselves. It is difficult to feel good enough, however, when we are constantly aware of our shortcomings. We are painfully aware that **we have not measured up**, that we are not good enough, or that we are not enough in general. In fact, many of the ladies I have counseled have been running from that very feeling. We run to substances, food, achievements, and anything else in an attempt to prove that feeling wrong or obliterate it from our consciousness. **If only we could be sufficient! If only we could be enough! But the truth is this: we are not self-sufficient. We were never meant to be, but He is sufficient for us.**

Many of us have been brought up in a **cultural lie**, which is that we can handle all of our problems ourselves. So many of the people I encounter, myself included, have struggled with some version of what I am calling *self-sufficiency-syndrome*. This “condition” renders a person **unable to receive the grace and mercy of God because of the subconscious mindset that she is supposed to earn her way into God’s good graces**. Many of us have been taught by family, friends, society, and even the church, that we have to carry our own weight and work hard. After all, God helps those who help themselves; right? But, the problem with this mentality is that the complete opposite is actually the truth. **God helps those who cannot help themselves. “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble”** (James 4:6). The feeling of not being good enough is a sneaky pride message because it implies that we could ever be good enough on our own. This message, the idea that we must make ourselves right, is so deeply rooted in individuals - even among believers.

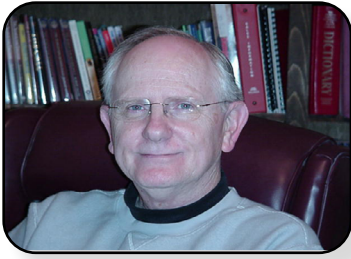
I have discovered that many of the women I counsel have *self-sufficiency-syndrome* and struggle with the messages of low self-esteem that tell them they will never be good enough. Not only do they believe this lie, but they also believe that it is their job to fix whatever it is that keeps them from being good enough. The feeling of double-despair that comes with knowing that I can neither be good enough nor fix my flaws drives me into self-medication, self-sabotage, and ultimately, self-destruction. I am not able or sufficient to correct what is wrong with me. The fact, however, is that **“all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God”** (Romans 3:23), so I was never able to be good enough on my own. Once I have this understanding, I can finally grasp the truth: **I need help**. I don’t just need forgiveness from God because I haven’t measured up. I need power from God to measure up. It has to come from Him, or I am doomed. I can either despair of my self-sufficiency and fall into self-pity since I, in my own strength, cannot be enough. Or, I can accept what Christ did to make me enough in His power and on His terms. Even the task of surrendering to Christ has to come through His power, not my own. I cannot quit my bad habits, make my life good, or do my good deeds apart from Him. There is no room for pride in this solution, and humility can sometimes be the price people are not willing to pay. Thanks be to God that **“with man it is impossible, but with God, all things are possible”** (Matthew 19:26).

Mrs. Regina Kelly

Women's Campus Co-Director



Grace



Christian Meditation

One of the challenges of the Christian is the practice of meditation. **The purpose of meditation is for coming to know God through thoughtful, attentive, and regular reading of Scripture.** Meditation is a spiritual duty which cannot be neglected without injury to a person's spiritual improvement. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, "Meditation ... lets us be alone with the Word...We ponder the chosen text on the strength that it has something utterly personal to say to us...We expose ourselves to the specific word until it addresses us personally." The purpose of meditation is to enjoy fellowship with God.

The apostle Paul in his letter to the Philippian believers gave admonition to meditate on "things that are true". Christians having come out of the atmosphere of wickedness and the worship of pagan gods needed biblical truth to ground them in the faith. Paul gave specific principles to keep their minds sound.

"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praise worthy...MEDITATE on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you." (Philippians 4:8-9)

The godless atmosphere that the Philippians were in required the plumb line of truth to withstand the pagan adversaries. Paul writes; *"Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, and not terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God."* (Philippians 1:27-28)

Today, we are facing the same atmosphere the Philippian believers faced. Clamor, dissension, rebellion, perversion, and wickedness abound. Paul writing to them proclaims, *"Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world; holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain."* (Philippians 2:14-16)

Whatever things are noble, (showing fine personal qualities or high moral principles) whatever things are just, (ethical, honest, truthful) whatever things are pure, (spotless, unsoiled, wholesome) whatever things are lovely, (graceful, divine, aesthetic), whatever things of good report, (trustworthy, credible, delectable) if there is any virtue, (moral excellence, temperance, righteousness) and if there is anything praiseworthy, (worthy, righteous, good) meditate on these things.

Meditation has to do with the realm of spiritual mindedness. The Lord is the foundation for entering into spiritual mindedness. The Word is the ground of spiritual mindedness. Holding fast the Word of Life is a necessity for the continuance of meditation. Consider Paul's admonition on his list majors on virtuousness. **Christian meditation must be deeply fundamental to withstand the assault of this corrupt world on our minds. Our lives, our faith, our character, our countenance and our sound mind depend on it.**

When a worm gains entry into an apple it will pollute the freshness of it. When the world worms its way into your soul it will destroy it. The worms of the internet, movies, literature, peer pressure, undefiled people, lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, pride, and covetousness will defile any attempt to proclaim you are a new creation in Christ Jesus.

As children of God we must continue meditating on the things of God. We must pursue the means of grace. Meditation is one means of grace. Meditating on Christ and Calvary is a means of grace. Getting alone with God and meditating on the Scriptures is grace for the soul.

Remember Paul's admonition to the Philippian believers on meditating on the things that are true. *"The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you"*. (Philippians 4:9) Are you longing for peace? You can have it. You first must repent of your sins and ask Christ to save you. Go to a pastor, elder, or deacon in the church. They can help you. *"Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* (Matthew 11:28)

Where the grace blows,

Pastor Don Loss

Director of Counseling





New Year New Me

The New Year has begun and with it a new list of resolutions. **Have you ever questioned why we make New Year's resolutions? A resolution is a firm decision to do or not do something.** How often do we make resolutions throughout the year? Why does society place such an emphasis on a resolution made on New Year's Day?

Too often the world encroaches on Christianity and how we operate as God's people. We often adopt certain rules and rituals that are contrary to God and His Word. We can let the ways of the world, and what is socially accepted, dictate how we operate in a relationship with Christ.

Many people will flood the churches, gyms, and invest in some new hobby saying, **"it's a new year and a new me."** Many of us can find ourselves at times struggling with a besetting sin, bondage, or we might struggle to live a healthier lifestyle. I am all for someone wanting and willing to make a positive change in their life, but I question why does it have to be made in the form of a New Year's resolution? **The illusion that we must start something new based on the beginning date in our calendar year is absurd.**

Scripture tells us that **"with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day"** (2 Peter 3:8, NKJV). Time is irrelevant to God. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. Putting a time stamp on when you are going to start or stop something is not as important as doing it. **Application is everything when it comes to our relationship with God.** Knowing the Word is not enough and knowing conviction is not enough. Our response to God seen in our application is what truly matters. James tells us that we are to be doers of the Word because if we only hear the Word with no application, then we are deceiving ourselves (James 1:22-25).

Lamentations 3:22 & 23 states **"The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies begin afresh each morning. I say to myself, 'The Lord is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in Him'"** (NLT). Every morning as a follower of Christ you can experience the newness of God's grace and mercy. The day of the year should not be the catalyst that ignites your desire to be more conformed to the image of Christ.

Do you have a besetting sin? Does something have you stuck where you feel helpless with no way out? Do you feel that the lifestyle you have been living is making you unhealthy? Let me encourage you to be obedient to the Word of God. 1 John 1:9 tells us to confess our sins because God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The first step is acknowledging that we have sin and coming into agreement with God that it is sin by confessing it to Him. The second step is to receive His forgiveness and turn from the sin that had you snared. Then you must put on the armor of God and walk it out (Eph. 6:10-17). **There is no easy button to push for this to take place. It takes an intentional effort.** Remember the promise in Philippians 4:13; **"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"** (NKJV).

2 Timothy 3:16,17 tells us that the Word of God is given to us Holy Spirit inspired in order to teach us about what is true, to help correct us when we get wayward, and to help us be complete, equipped for every good work. It is amazing how quickly life can change when we operate under the obedience of God. **That sin, bondage, and unhealthy living seems to just disappear as we walk in obedience.** God has called us to live holy lives and He would not place that calling on us if He wasn't going to equip us to be able to live that way. It has nothing to do with a specific day of the year or even our abilities, but it has to do with our obedience to Him and His Word.

My final encouragement to you is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22 and Paul writes, **"Rejoice always! Pray constantly. Give thanks in everything, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Don't stifle the Spirit. Don't despise prophecies but test all things. Hold on to what is good. Stay away from every kind of evil. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely. And may your spirit, soul, and body be kept sound and blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it"** (HCSB).

Pastor Zac Starnes
Associate Director



Fill out and mail your prayer request to us.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

II Chronicles 7:14

Prayer Request: _____

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\$10.00/case

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To schedule your lawn care service, and to check prices, contact Bryan Ingram, Bethel Lawn Care Manager, at (678) 848-9990

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Use this link:
<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/56-6050210>



Founded in 1948 by Jim and Eva Claffee
1675 Bethel Colony Road
Lenoir, N.C. 28645
Phone 828-754-3781
Fax 828-754-5370
bcom@bethelcolony.org
www.bethelcolony.org

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Bethel Colony of Mercy, Inc.



1675 Bethel Colony Road
Lenoir, NC 28645
828-754-3781

Breaking the chains of addiction

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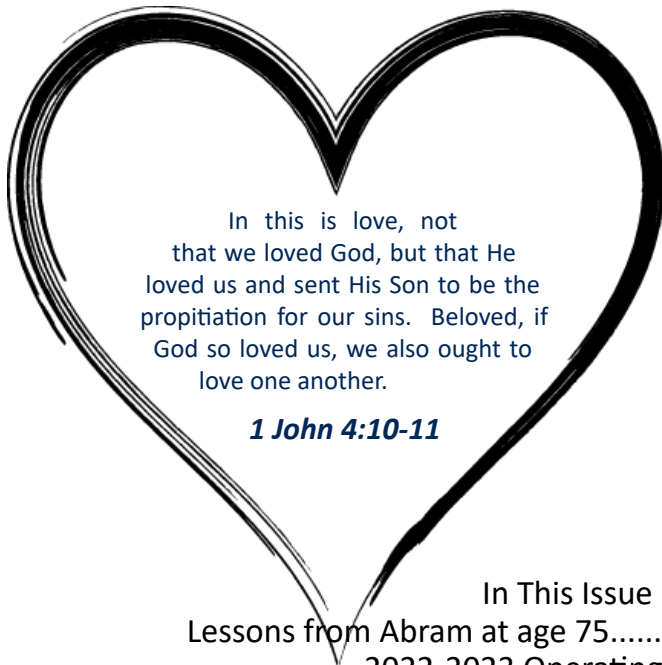
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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In this is love, not
that we loved God, but that He
loved us and sent His Son to be the
propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if
God so loved us, we also ought to
love one another.

1 John 4:10-11



GIVE THANKS
WITH A
Grateful
Heart
MADE WITH FONT CANDY

In This Issue

- Lessons from Abram at age 75.....Pastor Paul Pruitt
- 2022-2023 Operating Budget
- Sufficient.....Mrs. Regina Kelly
- Christian Meditation.....Pastor Don Loss
- New Year New Me.....Pastor Zac Starnes
- Firewood for Sale
- Prayer Requests