



Maritime MESSENGER

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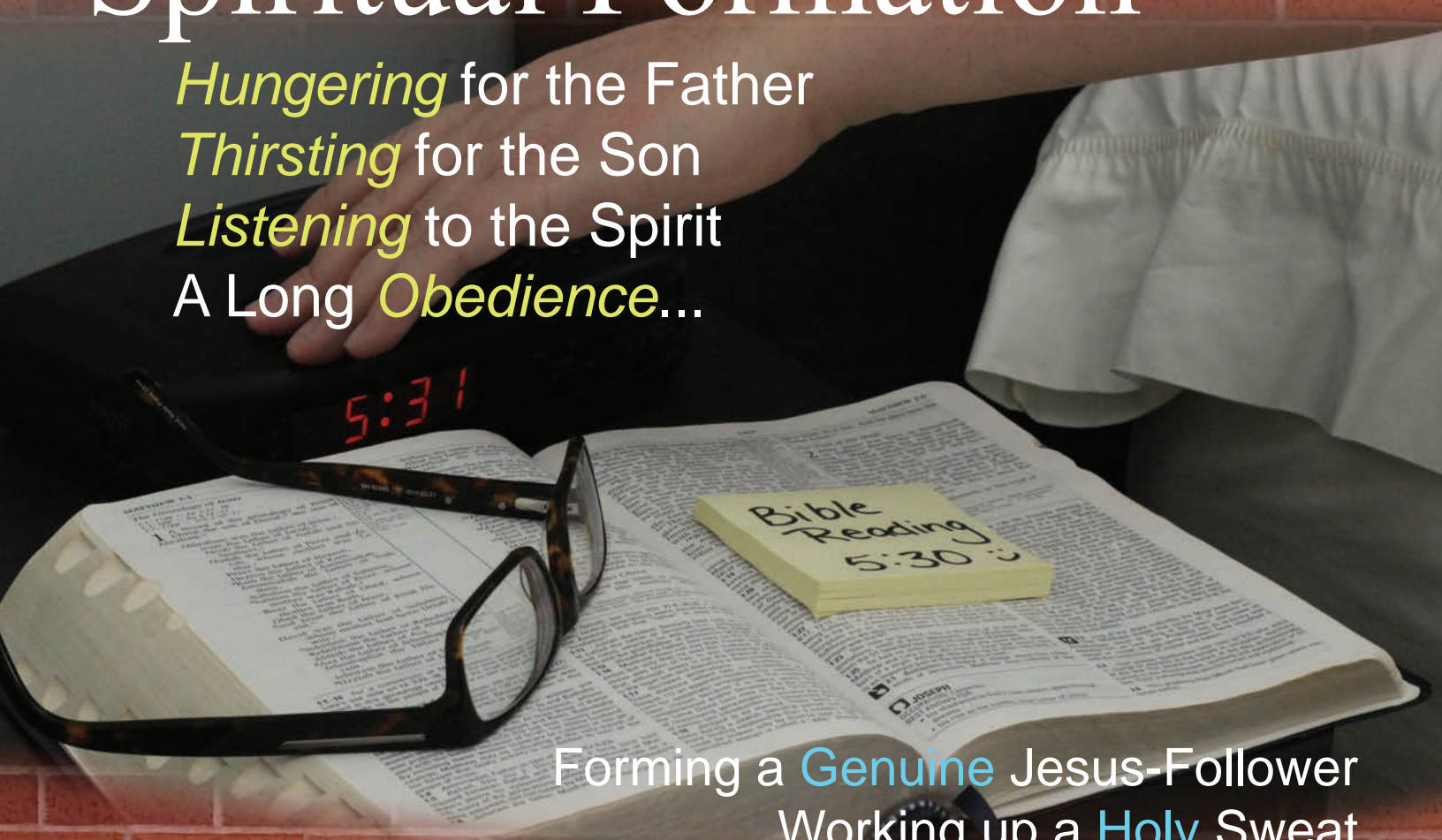
Spiritual Formation

Hungering for the Father

Thirsting for the Son

Listening to the Spirit

A Long *Obedience*...



Forming a **Genuine** Jesus-Follower
Working up a **Holy** Sweat
Life Long Formation
Formation's **Non-Negotiables**

From the President

by Jared Johnson

"Then;" tiny word but it has massive implications.

The power of words impresses me – it always has. God *spoke* Creation into being. We worship Jesus, *The Word-made-flesh*, among us. And James reminded us about the power of "the tongue, that restless evil, full of deadly poison..." (James 3.8).

Such a tiny word, *then*, speaks untold volumes. It appears some 3,000 times in the whole Bible, depending on your preferred translation, (2,571 to 3,681 among five versions).

Inside, our visiting K. T. Norris Lectures (KTNL) speaker, Dr. J.K. Jones, Jr., makes a "defense of spiritual formation." Notice it's a doctrinal belief statement, from Creation to Judgment and Final Redemption as much as anything. *Then* figures prominently in that equation.

Then God said, "Let there be light..."

Then David confessed to Nathan "I have sinned against God!"

Then Jesus shouted "Father! Into your hands..."

Then Peter stepped forward with the other apostles and shouted to the crowd...

Then the angel showed me a river with the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the Throne...

It's a consistent testimony: *then*. The word means that some process is happening –

sequential timing. Something happened, *then* something else happened.

With our Bibles so full of *then*, we remember that God's story in this universe is a constantly-unfolding story. First, He worked through the faith of Adam, Abel, Noah, and Abraham. *Then* God worked through the covenant recorded by Moses. *Then* He worked through the Judges and Kings of Israel. *Then* He fulfilled His promise in Jesus. *Then* He sent His Spirit to create and shepherd His Church.

Why would our individual stories with God be any different? I hope he's constantly working on and in me. Early in his ministry, Paul was "the least of the Apostles," (1 Corinthians 15.59 ~53AD). As he matured, he saw himself more clearly: "Though I'm the least of all God's people," (Ephesians 3.8 ~62AD). At the end of his life, Paul really knew the gravity of the situation: "Jesus came to save sinners, of whom I'm *the worst*," (1 Timothy 1.15 ~65-67). Paul was molded and re-molded throughout his life by the work of God's Spirit.

The rest of this issue shows snapshots along the way of our journey; alumni updates, another year of learning through KTNL; thanks for making the trip with us.

What's true of God's story through all of history is true for us individually, and true for our churches and ministries. We're always on the road, like the pair of travelers in Luke 24 going to Emmaus, progressing toward our goal – dinner with Jesus, The Marriage Supper of The Lamb.

A person wearing a dark blue jacket and light blue jeans is walking away from the camera on a path made of reddish-brown rocks and sand. The path leads into the distance, and the person's shadow is cast on the ground.

A Walk Worth Taking

A Spiritual Formation Reflection

Dr. J.K. Jones Jr.

The spiritual formation walk is not an aimless one or a leisurely Sunday jaunt. It is, by Biblical understanding, marked by great intentionality and perseverance. Each step matters, and because of that, we walk the walk in order to grow into Christ-likeness. The question here is fundamental. How do we walk in a formational way? There are some specific steps that can be taken.

First, we accept the finished work of Jesus Christ. Before we can finish well, we confess that He finished well. The health and vitality of our walk depends on our trust in Him, not ourselves. He offers us the gift of His accomplished work on the cross and we simply accept it with gratitude, joy, and faith. We confess with our mouth what we have believed in our hearts that He alone is Lord (Romans 10:9). He is, after all, the author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). The norm in the New Testament is grounded in accepting Christ by faith in Christian baptism (Acts 2:38). Our call is to not take our eyes off of Jesus as we journey with Him. This is why we can embrace the notion that God the Spirit is taking the initiative in our life. He is powerfully at work, because God the Son is powerfully alive in us. So, here is the first and essential question, have I surrendered to Him? If not, my walk will not end in the manner I hope. If so, I can be assured that He will get me “home.”

Second, the same surrendering required at the start of this walk is required on every part of this walk. It is not a one-time-and-I’m-done-thing or a-now-and-then-never-again-proposition. It is daily. The invitation from Jesus is a routine and regular submission. As strange as it sounds the upside-down nature of the Kingdom of God requires that we die daily to ourselves in order to walk daily with Him. Jesus said, “...Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it” (Matthew 16:25). Clear? The second vital question is this. Am I learning to die daily to myself? The health of my walk depends upon it.

Third, at the very core of all that the Holy Spirit uses to change us into looking more and more like Jesus – what I sometimes label as “various means” – it is paramount how we respond to the pain, the heartaches, and tests of life. Our response determines whether we finish the walk well or not. Failure to embrace the suffering that inevitably comes to all of us can derail and even bring our walk to a crashing halt. The grand disappointment of life is not the pain that finds us on our journey, but rather how much we miss while trying to “get away” from that pain that is tragic. So many wise spiritual directors have encouraged us to not waste our sorrows. The failure to see pain as a genuine gift from God, as difficult as that is, is a failure to believe in the goodness and grace of God at work to form us into the likeness of Jesus. All the grit and dog-eared-determination cannot get us through these seasons of pain.

“Our response determines whether we finish the walk well or not.”

Only the indwelling presence of Jesus and His grace can see us to the end of our walk. Remember, He endured the cross for us, so that we would not grow weary and lose heart on the way (Hebrews 12:3). Several questions can be asked. Am I remaining teachable? Do I have a “listening spirituality?” Does my everyday theology include the cross? Do I see the grace of God at work, regardless of the circumstances, empowering me to finish well? Always be on the alert to suffering that blooms into self-pity.

Fourth, this walk requires our participation and partnership. I know for many of us that is a given, but often this long obedience in the same direction can become a sleep-walking experience. Don’t overlook the power “of our cooperation.” Effort, focus, resolve, and a whole host of other word pictures help to remind us of the needed involvement that is required. No exceptions. As helpful as others are to our walk with Jesus, each of us must eventually walk. Yes, there may be times when another Christian friend picks us up and carries us along the way, but the entire journey cannot be

(continued on page 4...)

Rejoicing in Christ:

K. T. Norris Lectures

Ongoing Spiritual Formation

March 8 - 11

	Morning Sessions Sherwood Church of Christ 9 Lilac Ave	Evening Sessions Sherwood Church of Christ 9 Lilac Ave
Tuesday	Rejoicing in Christ: Hungering for the Father	Forming a Genuine Jesus-Follower Colossians 1:24-27
Wednesday	Rejoicing in Christ: Thirsting for the Son	Formation: Working Up a Holy Sweat Colossians 1:28-29
Thursday	Rejoicing in Christ: Listening to the Spirit	Life Long Formation Colossians 2:6-7
Friday	Rejoicing in Christ: A Long Obedience...	Formation's Non-Negotiables Colossians 3:1-17



J.K. was born in Frankfort, Indiana on June 27, 1953 and yielded to Jesus' Lordship in June 1973. He was raised in a preacher's home - one of seven children.

He and his wife Sue were married in June 1977 and have 2 daughters: Lindsey Rae born in 1982, and Chelsea Anne born in 1985. Lindsey is married to Matt Clark, youth minister at College Park Christian Church and they have 2 children, Preston and Maddison, she serves at Lincoln Christian University. Chelsey serves at Christ in Youth, Joplin, MO.

In his spare time he enjoys walking/weightlifting, motorcycle riding, family time, and morning coffee with Sue, reading, meals with good friends, and daily time of worship. Lindsey and J.K. ran the Chicago Marathon in October 2006 and have done a number of half-marathons together.

(continued from page 3...)

completed in that manner. We jeopardize our own vitality and that of our friend if we simply allow them to do all the cooperating. Here's the question. Have I embraced the necessary Christian disciplines that will assist me to finish well?

Fifth, humble confidence in this walk is based upon the firm promise of God to change us to look like Jesus. We are a holy work in progress (Philippians 1:6). He is "morphing" us day by day to not only look like Him, but finish like Him. Question: Do I trust that I am "being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18)?

Sixth, no one gets very far in this walk without coming face to face with the example of Jesus in serving others (Mark 10:44-45). So much of our health and vitality in the journey depends upon our serving others in the Name of Jesus and with His grace and energy. Spiritual formation, without this central piece, is simply selfish and non-biblical. Here we discover another paradoxical truth of the Kingdom: as we give ourselves away to others we find ourselves. The question here is simple: Do I really love people in Jesus' Name? My answer to that question is central to completing the walk as a servant in the manner He intended (John 13:34-35).

Seventh and finally, the entire walk is about God. "Glory" is the word and praise of Him is the way. Our walk is to Him, for Him, with Him, through Him, in Him, beside Him, and always about Him. "To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, forever and ever" (Revelation 5:13)! He, for His own praise and glory, will get us home. Walk on.



A DEFENSE OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION

by Dr. J.K. Jones Jr.

I am sometimes asked to make a defense of spiritual formation. There are those who perceive any discussion about formation to be on one hand, mystical and heretical, or on the other hand, faddish and elitist. I believe it is essential and biblical. Here's why. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. I believe God is one being, revealed and known as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. He spoke the world into existence and now sustains it by His great power and infinite grace. He is at work in this very moment reclaiming and redeeming all of it. He loves us and longs for our fellowship with Him. On-going spiritual formation is His idea, not mine.

I believe God made Himself known to us in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord and Savior, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. I believe He lived according to the Scriptures as fully man and fully God. He preached, taught, loved, healed, and suffered at the hands of the religious leaders in Jerusalem and under Pontius Pilate. I believe He freely gave His own life, was crucified on a cross, died alongside two thieves, was buried in a borrowed tomb, rose bodily on the third day, was seen by many eyewitnesses, ascended to heaven, and now sits at the right hand of God the Father. He is now our high priest, our intercessor, and the head of His church. He assumes that we will continually and persistently know Him.

I believe He will come a second time and judge the living and the dead. I believe there will be a bodily resurrection of the dead. Believers will enter eternal life and unbelievers will enter eternal separation. Sin and death will be defeated. In the meantime, I believe the Holy Spirit is powerfully at work.

He convicts, guides, teaches, reminds, gifts, fills, searches, testifies, helps, and intercedes. He is the one who changes us to look like Jesus. I believe that the Bible is the uniquely inspired and authoritative Word of God. Scripture-intake is essential. I believe the church is the body of Christ on earth and His beloved bride. I believe that people were created to walk in intimate fellowship with Him and must be born again. I believe that every person, except Christ, is marred by sin and destined for Hell, unless they accept salvation offered to each one through Christ. I believe that this salvation is offered by grace through faith and is based on

*“...He is the one who
changes us to look like
Jesus...”*

the finished work of Jesus Christ at the cross. I believe that all can be saved by God alone through Christ alone. I believe in baptism by immersion, as an act of faith, identifying with our Savior's crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. I believe that Satan is a real enemy and is the originator of sin and opposes all that God desires. This enemy was defeated at the cross, is mortally wounded, yet prowls about seeking those he might devour. I believe at the consummation of all things this enemy will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. I believe that God invites and expects all those who receive His Son as Lord and Savior to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ and into His likeness. Therefore, I believe in on-going spiritual formation.

ALUMNI NEWS



Joel Bridges ('07) was ordained in O'Leary Church of Christ January 10, 2016. Randy Thurlow ('06) officiated the service and Fred Osborne ('77) delivered the message. Pictured from left to right are: Randy Thurlow (Pastor of O'Leary Church of Christ), Tim Cook ('12) (Pastor of The Crossing Christian Church), Winfred Bridges (Joel's father), Rankin MacKinnon ('73) (Elder of O'Leary Church of Christ), Fred Osborne (former President of MCC), Jim Tune (Impact Canada), and Chad MacDonald (Atlantic Regional Director C2C Network).

"The O'Leary Church of Christ was very excited to ordain Joel! He is highly thought of and respected by everyone in our church." –Randy Thurlow



Lead Planters Joel and Kia Bridges, Associate Pastor Josh Stevenson ('15) and Worship Director Katie Stevenson ('15) are looking forward to the fall launch. "The River" has many exciting outreach events planned for the summer months prior to launch.

"We were honored to have Joel, Kia, Emerson and

Grayson with us in Metro Halifax for a weekend in December," Tim, Pastor of the Crossing Christian Church, Dartmouth, NS said. *"Joel preached a great message at the Crossing on Sunday and the congregation laid hands on them as we prayed over Joel and Kia. We are excited about this new church plant and what God will do through the Bridges and Stevenson families in Moncton. It is our pleasure to come alongside them as they enter this exciting and busy launch season."*

Josh said, *"We're really pleased to be part of something new in the Maritimes, and looking forward to working with Joel and Kia as well as Impact Ministries."*



The River Christian Church is set to open October 16, 2016 in the Cineplex Theatre in Dieppe, NB.

In Loving Memory

December 1, 2015 ~ January 31, 2016

In Memory of:

GAVIN J. BELL
Murray Harbour, PE

Elva Bell
Gregory & Laurie Bell

BECKY CASS
Albuquerque, NM

Norman & Shirlie MacKay

CHRISTINA FOSTER
Fredericton, NB

Al & Sheila Decoste

EUGENE & JEAN FOSTER
Fredericton, NB

Al & Sheila Decoste

RALPH & MYRNA FOSTER
Burt's Corner, NB

Al & Sheila Decoste

WILLIAM & VIOLET FOSTER
Burt's Corner, NB

Al & Sheila Decoste

DANIEL & JOY FRASER
Hopfield, PE

Douglas Fraser

RAYMOND HAINES
Douglas, NB

Gordon Weatherby

LOUIS & CARRIE HERRING
Murray Harbour, PE

Elaine Herring

MARGARET HERRING
Charlottetown, PE

Douglas Fraser
Elaine Herring

CINDY MACKAY
Charlottetown, PE

Norman & Shirlie MacKay

KENNETH & JOYCE NORRIS
Charlottetown, PE

Zora K. Gordin

EARL, GORDIE & BRIAN OHL
Murray Harbour, PE

Gregory & Laurie Bell
Shirley Calder

LEONARD & PHYLLIS RODGERS
Fredericton, NB

Al & Sheila Decoste

MURRAY & GRETA SPENCER
Burt's Corner, NB

Hollis & Donna Grant

LORETTA STEWART
Fredericton, NB

Darrel Stewart

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K. T. Norris Lectures presents...

Rejoicing in Christ: Ongoing Spiritual Formation

March 8-11, 2016

Sherwood Church of Christ
9 Lilac Ave (corner of Lilac & Shamrock)

Morning Sessions

9:30am - 12:00pm

Hungering for the Father
Thirsting for the Son
Listening to the Spirit
A Long Obedience...

Evening Sessions

7:30 - 9:00pm

Forming a Genuine Jesus-Follower
Working Up a Holy Sweat
Life Long Formation
Formation's Non-Negotiables



Dr. J.K. Jones Jr.

*Pastor of Spiritual Formation, Eastview Christian Church, Normal, IL
Director of MA in Spiritual Formation, Hargrove School, Eastview Campus*



For more information: www.mccpei.com or 902-628-8887

No registration required, free will offering



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