



HILLSIDE MONTHLY DISPATCH

Hillside Baptist Church, Pembroke, NH

Volume 15 No. 7

Modeling the Truth of God's Word

July 2016

Choosing the Path of Christ

From the Pastor's Desk

Embracing Our Heavenly Citizenship

1 Peter 2:11

Grilling. What does that word conjure up within your mind? Do you think of a guy standing off to the side with a funky looking hat that says "Master Griller" or wearing an apron that says "Kiss the cook"? Maybe you picture a your husband standing over the grayish charcoal cauldron of yummy delight only to see a flame six feet tall that will result in charbroiled outsides and undone insides. When you hear the term "grilling" do you think of summer, sun, the beach, and fun? Do you picture a holiday where all your family gather together to reminisce about days gone by? When it comes to our American holidays often the big "grilling" days are Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day, which all afford an extended weekend and time off for one to catch his or her breath.

As much as the word "grilling" may conjure up a plethora of images and memories, just as equally Independence Day can do the same. This month we celebrate our nation's birth and we as a nation have come a long way since the summer of 1776. We have had two hundred and forty years of celebrating this momentous point in our history and there has been many a burger burned on the altar of the grill. But you and I both know that, although we celebrate with a level of unconcern of what our forefathers endured to win our freedom, deep down we recognize the importance and immensity of this special holiday. And when we consider such an important day in American culture, one must ask, how many more will we be able to celebrate? For if one thing is for sure, cultures come and go. Societies fluctuate and change. Empires crumble quickly. If we are honest with ourselves we also know that our America does not have much longer on her current trajectory in our modern day.

I think it is wonderful as an American to be patriotic and quite frankly I cannot imagine living anywhere else. I also think that it is important to have a high fidelity to the nation that has protected our freedoms, fought for democracy, and upheld, for the most part up till recently, a moral right compass. But each of the beloved ideals we have held so dear in our lifetime are beginning to slip through our fingers no matter how hard we try to hold on. Thus we find that such ideals as freedom, democracy, and morality are as concrete as pudding, or as evanescent as the smoke of a grill

Upcoming Events and Meetings

July 2, 8:00 a.m. – Men's Breakfast

The men share a meal, then engage in a Bible discussion.

July 3, 10:45 a.m. – Lord's Supper

July 4 – Independence Day

Celebrate the 240th anniversary of the U.S.A..

July 31, Noon – Business Meeting

Preceded by a Baptist Potluck Dinner.

Weekly:

Sundays at 9:30 a.m. – Sunday School

Sundays at 10:45 a.m. – Worship Service

going the way of the dodo? How should we view our citizenship? What does it mean to be an American? And what is our place within the current stream of this society?

Well let's consider first what Peter tells us in his first epistle in 2:11. He wrote, "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul." If you were to read the verses prior to this passage, Peter took the time to explain how those who are in Christ are no longer citizens of this world, but are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a people of God's own possession. Thus you are no longer to be overly connected or tethered to this world, its ideals, its declarations, or its governments.

So, if you are in Christ then you are an alien among men, or a stranger even among your relatives if they do not know Jesus. With such an important assertion to consider, then we must ponder how much fidelity ought we to have toward worldly empires, no matter how great they are? The Bible teaches us that this world is not our home and we must order our lives in accordance to this reality. So now we should ask the question, if this is not our home and we are just passing through, then how should we moderate our national pride in this present day with a Christian mindset?

See Pastor's Desk on p. 2

In This Issue: Pastor's Message | Upcoming Events | Men's Breakfast | Fellowship Events | Property & Space Patrol | Missionary News | 240 Years Ago | 32 Years Ago | Birthdays & Anniversaries

On the web at <http://www.hillsidebaptistnh.org>

Pastor's Desk (from p. 1)

Here are a couple of guidelines for all Christians to consider. First, remember that you did not place yourself in your country, God placed you there. If we consider this point of fact to be true, then in reality the fidelity we should have is toward God anyways, not toward any one nation that we happened to be born in. Just remember many in Russia are just as faithful to their country as those in Brazil, and many in Brazil are just as faithful to their country as those in Australia, and many in Australia are just as faithful to those who are in America. The list could be endless if we were to press the point. However, God has placed each person in each place and thus He should be the one who receives the fidelity over that of any given nation.

Second, the country we loved as a child may not be representative of the same country we live in today. American society has shifted in its beliefs. Government leadership has taken our country down a different direction than many of have desired. The freedoms of the past are not equivalent to the freedoms of the present and may be completely eliminated in the future. Often our fidelity is more an emotional connection to something in our childhood or past, thus we correlate such affection of memories with that of the current stream of society and many times that affection is not applicable or even warranted.

Third, as Christians our true home is heaven, the country we live in is just a passing point in our lives in which God expects us to further the Gospel of Jesus Christ while on our way home. Remember the passage from the Bible quoted above? You as a Christian are a holy priesthood, a people of God, his chosen race, thus your inheritance is not some slab of granite, or plot of land, or constructed house. Our future is not here, for today there may be an America, but tomorrow it will be burned up when the Lord recreates the heavens and the earth.

Fourth, as for believers in Christ our pride in any nation is not a healthy expression of our Christian faith, and often ruins or at best diminishes our witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. One of the hardest things for us to watch as Christians is to see God, guns, and the Bible as if to say they are exclusive with one another. Our patriotism ought to be tempered in light of the need to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If our rights for guns, or constitution, or freedoms are equated with the Bible or God, their earthly correspondence diminishes the heavenly Gospel message. What is more important, our witness or our Americanism? Many liberals and unbelievers scoff at the idea that the Bible and God belong together with freedom, guns, and the constitution. However, it goes unnoticed that when American Christians thrust this concept out there, they are actually ruining their witness for Jesus Christ.

Lastly, what do you want to be remembered more for, being a Christian or being a patriotic American? Your efforts as a Christian produce heavenly rewards that are in heaven that neither rust, nor moth can ruin. However, your patriotism at best may last a generation or two, but then like most in our history you will be forgotten.

Men's Breakfast

It's an Independence Day weekend with July 4th landing on Monday. Nevertheless, Men's Breakfast takes place on July 2nd at 8:00 a.m. Anyone for a red, white, and blue breakfast?

We'll start off with some home-cooked grub and fellowship, and then open our Bibles and continue our discussion of Paul's letter to the Colossians. Join us for a fruitful time in God's Word.

Fellowship Events

A quarterly business meeting will convene on July 17 shortly after Sunday Service. Prior to the meeting, everyone will enjoy a Potluck Dinner. Visitors are welcome to join in since we always have plenty to go around.

Property and Space Patrol

Lawn mowing continues weekly. It has been noticed that there are woodchucks in the front lawn that need a new home.

The brush has been cleared from the base of the maple trees along the road. As a result, the church sign is now more visible from the road.

✠ Pastor Al

Pastor's Desk (cont'd.)

Yes we know of the famous men of the past such as Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, and Adams, but for every one man or woman remembered thousands are forgotten. Unless there is an amazing uprising for the cause of freedom or a major war breaks out to protect the patriotic cause, your patriotism will go mostly unnoticed. So do you want to be remembered in heaven or here on earth? Now mind you, I do believe in causes greater than oneself, and as such I believe the greatest and most worthwhile cause is that of the furtherance and glory of Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. It is important for you to choose which you will be remembered for.

When we think about embracing our heavenly citizenship we have to acknowledge to some level a diminishing of our patriotic or nationalistic pride. We have to set aside our fidelity to one in order to be fully faithful to the other. I fear as our nation continues down the dark path of rejecting God, the Bible, and Christian doctrine we are in for some grave misfortune and events in our future history. As I consider my place in this time stream, I am left to make an important decision, will I be remembered more for being an American or more for being a Christian. In our modern times I do not believe we can be both; societal shift will not let us. So we must choose now whom we were serve, who will be our master, who will get our affection and loyalty. As for me I choose the path of Christ no matter what happens to the America that I love, for when it is all said and done, my real citizenship is in heaven and I choose to embrace that more than any citizenship I can claim here on earth.

God bless,
✠ Pastor Jim

Missionary News from the Srokas

Our missionaries to Brazil are back in the field, having taken a 10-hour overnight flight at the end of May. Here are their praises and prayer requests.



Praises:

- 1) We made it back safely and found a wonderful house for our family!
- 2) The kids seem to be adjusting well.
- 3) Steadfast faith of (most of) the K believers.
- 4) Southern Baptists committed to the spread of the gospel and gave a record amount to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering last year.
- 5) Nick's sister had a healthy baby girl this month!

Prayer Requests:

- 1) That this volunteer trip would be fruitful and the group would continue to have favor in the eyes of the K leadership.
- 2) One of the K believers has seemingly fallen away from the faith. He does not come to Bible studies or just stops in for a minute before leaving. His employer recently caught him stealing. Please pray for the Spirit's conviction in his life and that the other believers will encourage him.
- 3) Our Portuguese is, of course, a little rusty but please pray for Carter in particular as he is having some trouble remembering and communicating.
- 4) Pray for the health of our family.

✠ Nick and Amber Sroka

Independence Day, 240 Years Ago

On July 2, 1776, a resolution of independence was approved by twelve of the thirteen colonies meeting at the Continental Congress in Philadelphia.

The Declaration was a formal explanation of why Congress had voted on July 2nd to declare independence from Great Britain, more than a year after the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War in Massachusetts. Thomas Jefferson was selected to draft the formal document.

John Adams wrote about the resolution of independence to his wife Abigail on July 3rd:

"The second day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, *by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty*. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more."

Congress debated and made revisions to the Declaration, finally approving it on July 4th by a vote of 9 out of 13.

Printed copies were sent to all the colonies. George Washington ordered it to be read to the soldiers of the Continental Army. One copy was mailed to Jolly Old England.

Thereafter, Americans celebrated their independence on July 4th, the date printed on the Declaration of Independence, rather than on July 2, the date the resolution of independence was approved in a closed session of Congress.

The following excerpts should be familiar to students of American history. The entire document should be read every year to one's children and to students in school.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

...

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Fifty-six signatures fill the bottom of the document, marking these men as traitors to the British government, but national heroes to Americans.

Footnote: An unusual web site to peruse is called "From Revolution to Reconstruction and beyond" created by a Dutch professor and his students at the University of Groningen to chronicle the pre-World War I history of the U.S. Go to this web site:

<http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/about.php>. Of special interest is the 1581 Dutch Act of Abjuration, declaring their independence from Spain.

A Pastor, 32 Years Ago

The following is an open letter and prayer request dated June 25, 2016 from Mark Ballard, President of Northeastern Baptist College, Bennington, Vermont. In it, he asks for our prayers and support.

See 32 Years Ago on p. 3

32 Years Ago (from p.3)

Dear Family and Friends:

Thirty-two years ago yesterday, First Southern Baptist Church of Pueblo, CO licensed me to the Gospel Ministry. I could not have known all the adventures the Lord would lead me on from that day until now. However, it has always been excited, never boring, and most of the time, fun! What is absolutely certain is that our Lord has always been faithful and has amazed us so much!

What a joy to serve the Lord in pulpit supply, serving as a house parent at Buckner Children's Home, starting our first church, Wyndham Court Fellowship, and helping a friend with planting Cross Creek Baptist Church in Mesquite, TX. Then the Father led us to North Carolina where we served Browns Baptist Church during my first two years in Seminary. The summer of 1994 found us starting a new church in Grove City, FL. That fall the Lord led us to Deerfield Baptist in Deerfield, VA. What a joy to serve in the place we adopted, and that adopted us, as our earthly home! While we intended to spend our life in Deerfield, the Lord called us to New Hampshire in June of 1998 to found Christian Fellowship Baptist Church and be part of starting new churches throughout the state. Then He led us to found the Bible institute, which we served for over nine years.

On June 24, 1984, I would have never guessed that the Lord would call us to start Northeastern Baptist College in Bennington, Vermont. What a journey this has been! From answering the Father's call in late October 2009, to stepping out in faith with no salary and only \$47 to our name in June of 2010. Time and space would not permit me to recount all the ways the Father has led us to this moment in time. He has accomplished so much to bring us to our first graduation last month. So many times when it appeared there was no way to move forward and take the next step He has always come through and moved us forward.

NEBC has reached a crucial stage in its development as a college. The next month, three months, six months, and the next year are so important to our future. Let me share with you **three reasons** why I know that we have come to a crucial milestone in the life of this new college.

First, I know we have entered a crucial time because of the way the Father is using our students and alumni. Every weekend our students are impacting four northeastern states with the Gospel. In addition, throughout the summer they are expanding their reach into other areas as well. The Father is using our students and alumni as pastors, associate pastors, youth pastors, worship leaders, Christian school leaders, Sunday School teachers, Bible Study leaders, and so much more. Lives are being touched, people are being saved, believers are growing, and the Father is being glorified through their ministries. When this kind of impact is taking place in the least-churched states in the US, the enemy is not happy. He will do all he can to distract, discourage, and derail the efforts of our NEBC family. Therefore, we are facing a crucial time and stand in the need of prayer.

Second, our NEBC faculty and staff are laying it all on the line to be a part of this effort. It is a great privilege to be a

part of this team of dedicated servants! They have sacrificed so much to join God at work. They have served faithfully and courageously in the midst of very trying times. While everyone who comes to work at NEBC knows that it is a step of faith and that we are not yet financially stable, 2016 has been extra difficult. While the number of monthly donors continues to increase the more people hear about how God is at work, the fact is, several of our larger donors, have been hit extra hard over the past 12-18 months and have not been able to support NEBC at the level they once did. This has made it extra difficult this year.

Several years ago a friend of mine who led a higher education institution through difficult times wrote an interesting letter that I have never forgotten. He wrote about how great it feels for someone to give to a building project, a mission trip, or to support a special event. However, he noted that unless donations to the general budget didn't increase he would be forced to decide between keeping the lights on and feeding his professors. While paying monthly expenses and covering faculty and staff salaries does not seem quite as exciting as building a new building, without this support, the buildings would be empty.

Our faculty and staff have repeatedly and consistently, demonstrated their selfless dedication and sacrificial service. However, we need to reach a place of financial stability so that our great team can proceed with confidence. Recently, I shared with a friend that if we do not see the Lord move on the hearts of His people to give, or if He does move on their hearts but they do not obey, then at some point we could reach a day like Nehemiah faced in Nehemiah 13:10-13. We are facing a crucial time and stand in the need of prayer.

Third, NEBC continues to grow. We are adding more students this fall. With each new student, we not only have the opportunity to train a new person to have the Mind of a Scholar, the Heart of a Shepherd, and the Perseverance of a Soldier, but we also immediately gain a new laborer in the fields of the Northeast. New England has experienced three straight years of baptism growth. Vermont baptized 8.29 persons per church last year for a total of 398 new believers. This is the largest percentage in the region and the second largest in total number of baptisms with the exception of the Greater Boston Baptist Association, which is one of North American Mission Board's (NAMB) "Send Cities." God is at work in an amazing way in the Northeast! Our students, staff, and faculty are right in the middle of this work.

The more students we have, the greater impact NEBC will have on the northeast. To add more students, we need to expand our facilities. In particular, we need additional student housing. The Father has opened a door for us to secure facilities that will allow us to grow for several years. However, we need the funds to purchase this property. We are at a crucial time and stand in the need of prayer.

This e-mail began with a recounting of various journeys the Lord has led me on over the last thirty-two years. Today, I am about to embark on another journey, and I want to invite you to join me. This is a forty-day journey of prayer for NEBC, from Monday June 27 through Friday August 5th.

See 32 Years Ago on p. 5

32 Years Ago (from p.4)

There are three ways you can join me on this journey.

1. You can commit to praying with me in intentional, focused, effectual, fervent prayer for these forty days. If you are willing to do so, please send e-mail and let me know you are joining me in this prayer journey.
2. Sometime each day beginning on Monday June 27th, I will be sending out an e-mail from my personal e-mail account. The e-mail will share some of the insights from my personal journey of fervent prayer and suggest some prayer requests for your journey. If you would like to receive the e-mail for the forty days, please specify that when you contact me.
3. You can invite others to join us on this 40-day prayer journey. Please ask them to let me know that they are joining us in prayer and that they would like to receive the daily e-mail.

Thank you so much for your partnership in the Lord's work! God is at work in the Northeast! It is an exciting time to be serving Him. Yet, it is also a crucial time in the life of NEBC. Your prayers are always appreciated. Your prayers during the 40-Day Prayer Journey will make a difference in the northeast for the glory of God!

Have a great day in Jesus! I look forward to hearing from you!

"...who knows but whether you have come to the Kingdom for such a time as this."

In Him,

Mark H. Ballard, President, NEBC

<http://www.nebcvt.org> 802.753.7233

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Hillside wishes a happy, happy, happy birthday to the following people who are celebrating another orbit around the Sun:

7/22 Charles & Robert Thomas



Hillside also wishes God's blessing on any couple who celebrates a wedding anniversary this month: If that's you, please let us know.

Prayer Requests

If you need us to pray for a physical, spiritual, financial, marital, or other need, contact Pastor Jim, Pastor Al, or Michael Frascinella and they will get the word out to the membership. It will be our duty and privilege to lift you up in prayer to Jesus our Lord.

Hillside on the Web

Go to the Hillside web site <http://www.hillsidebaptistnh.org/> for more information about our fellowship, including this newsletter in PDF format.

Submissions for Next Issue

Deadline is July 25. Send news items to News Wrangler and Editor, Michael Frascinella, mfrascinella at comcast dot net.



Hillside Baptist Church is a member of the New Hampshire Baptist Association, part of the Southern Baptist Convention.



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