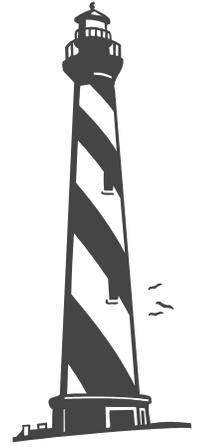


THE BEACON BEAM



February 2020

LOVE FOR CHRIST AND OTHERS

A Clarion Call to the Modern Church

by John MacArthur

More than a decade ago, John MacArthur called modern churches to return to sound doctrine—we need to hear that call again.

Christians historically have understood that their calling is to be in the world but not of the world. As Os Guinness pointed out in a perceptive series of articles on the church-growth movement, traditional evangelicalism not only resisted worldly influences, but also used to stress "cognitive defiance" of the world spirit.

Now, however, "the world has become so powerful, pervasive, and appealing that the traditional stance of cognitive defiance has become rare and almost unthinkable" ("Recycling the Compromise of Liberalism," *Tabletalk* [May 1992], 51.). At some point, evangelicals decided to make friends with the world.

Guinness pointed out that although we are called to be in the world but not of the world (John 17:14-18), many Christians have reversed the formula, becoming of the world while not really being in the world. They did this by allowing ca-

ble television, VCRs, radio, and other forms of communication to infuse worldly values into their thinking, while isolating themselves from any personal involvement with the people in the world who most desperately need the gospel.

"Evangelicals are now outdoing the liberals as the supreme religious modernizers--and compromisers--of today," Guinness writes (*Ibid.*). The market-driven philosophy

The market-driven philosophy so popular among modern evangelicals is nothing more than "a recycling of the error of classical liberalism" (Ibid.).

so popular among modern evangelicals is nothing more than "a recycling of the error of classical liberalism" (*Ibid.*).

The reason most evangelicals

were caught unaware by modernism a hundred years ago is that liberals rose from within evangelical ranks, used evangelical vocabulary, and gained acceptance through relentless appeals for peace and tolerance. New church-growth movements are following precisely the same course, and that tactic has taken evangelicals by surprise once again.

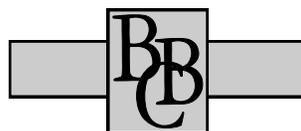
Most of the market-driven megachurches insist they would never compromise doctrine. They are attractive to evangelicals precisely because they claimed to be as orthodox in their doctrine as they are unorthodox in their methodology. Multitudes have been sufficiently reassured by such promises and have simply abandoned their critical faculties, thus increasing their vulnerability. Unfortunately, real discernment is in short supply among modern evangelicals.

Like the modernists a century ago, churches in the user-friendly movement have decided that doctrine is divisive--peace is more important than sound teaching. Wanting to ap-

(Continued on page 2)

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Gregory N. Barkman, *Senior Pastor*
Michael R. Karns, *Minister of Christian Education*
Robert F. LaTour, *Minister of Families*
Gregory L. Phillips, *Minister of Music*

Sunday

Morning Worship...9:30 AM
Sunday School.....11:10 AM
Evening Worship.....6:00 PM

Wednesday

Prayer Meeting.....7:00 PM
IMPACT Clubs.....7:00 PM
Teen Ministry.....7:00 PM

(Continued from page 1)

peal to a modern age, they have framed their message as a friendly, agreeable, and relevant dialogue, rather than as a confrontation with the gospel of Christ.

The relevant issues of our modern age--radicalism, abortion, feminism, homosexuality, and other politically charged moral issues--pose the most obvious threat for user-friendly churches. Their undefined theology and seeker-sensitive philosophy do not permit them to take a firm biblical stance on such matters, because the moment they defy the spirit of the age, they forfeit their marketing appeal. They are therefore forced to keep silent or capitulate. Either way, they compromise the truth.

If a church is not even willing to take a firm stand against abortion, how will it deal with the erosion of crucial doctrine? If a church lacks discernment enough to condemn such overt errors as homosexuality or feminism, how will it handle a subtle attack on doctrinal integrity?

Many evangelical churches have wholly abandoned strong preaching about hell, sin, and the wrath of God. They claim God's primary attribute is benevolence--one that overrides and supersedes His holiness, justice, wrath, and sovereignty.

Rather than addressing humanity's greatest need--forgiveness of sins--modern sermons deal with contemporary topics, psychological issues (depression, eating disorders, self-image), personal relationships,

motivational themes, and other matters a la mode.

The market-driven philosophy of user-friendly churches does not easily permit them to take firm enough doctrinal positions to oppose false teaching. Their outlook on leadership drives them to hire marketers who can sell rather than biblically qualified pastors who can teach. Their approach to ministry is so undocctrinal that they cannot educate their people against subtle errors. Their avoidance of controversy puts them in a position where they cannot oppose false teaching that masquerades as evangelicalism.

In fact, the new trends in theology seem ideally suited to the user-friendly philosophy. Why would the user-friendly church oppose such doctrines?

But oppose them we must, if we are to remain true to God's Word and maintain a gospel witness. Pragmatic approaches to ministry do not hold answers to the dangers confronting biblical Christianity today. Pragmatism promises bigger churches, more people, and a living church, but it is really carnal wisdom--spiritually bankrupt and contrary to the Word of God.

Marketing techniques offer nothing but the promise of popularity and worldly approval. They certainly offer no safeguard against the dangers of the down-grade toward spiritual ruin.

The only hope is a return to Scripture and sound doctrine. We

evangelicals desperately need to recover our determination to be biblical, our refusal to comply with the world, our willingness to defend what we believe, and our courage to defy false teaching. Unless we collectively awaken to the current dangers that threaten our faith, the adversary will attack us from within, and we will not be able to withstand.

*Yet, surely, there must be some
who will fling aside the dastard
love of peace, and speak out
for our Lord, and for his truth.
A craven spirit is upon many,
and their tongues are paralyzed.
Oh, for an outburst of true faith
and holy zeal!*

(Charles Haddon Spurgeon)

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Years ago Harry A. Ironside, that great Bible teacher, told a story about an older Christian who was asked to give his testimony. The man told how God had sought him out and found him, how God had loved him, called him, saved him, delivered him, cleansed him, and healed him—a great witness to the grace, power, and glory of God. But after the meeting a rather legalistic brother took him aside and criticized his testimony, as certain of us like to do. He said, “I appreciated all you said about what God did for you. But you didn’t mention anything about your part in it. Salvation is really part us and part God. You should have mentioned something about your part.”

“Oh, yes,” the older Christian said. “I apologize for that. I’m sorry. I really should have said something about my part. My part was running away, and his part was running after me until he caught me.”

Ray C. Stedman, *Guilt to Glory*, vol. 1, *Hope for the Helpless*

24 Things Love Is and Does



by Paul Tripp

Who will you tell that you love on Valentine's Day? And how will you express that love?

Sadly, I'm convinced that there are too many loveless relationships in the world, and even in the church. For starters, there are many things we call love that just do not rise to the level of what love is. And then to complicate matters, we lack a clear definition of what love does.

So in the midst of all the love hype surrounding Valentine's Day, I want to give you 24 concrete definitions of love.

These definitions don't come from Wikipedia, Dictionary.com, or Shakespeare. We get our best standard of love from the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. His sacrifice of love is the ultimate example of what love is and what love does.

1. LOVE IS willing self-sacrifice for the good of another that does not require reciprocation or that the person being loved is deserving.

2. LOVE IS being willing to have your life complicated by the needs and struggles of others without impatience or anger.

3. LOVE IS actively fighting the temptation to be critical and judgmental toward another while looking for ways to encourage and praise.

4. LOVE IS making a daily commitment to resist the needless moments of conflict that come from pointing out and responding to minor offenses.

5. LOVE IS being lovingly honest and humbly approachable in times of misunderstanding.

6. LOVE IS being more committed to unity and understanding than you are to winning, accusing, or being right.

7. LOVE IS making a daily commitment to admit your sin, weakness, and failure and to resist the temptation to offer an excuse or shift the blame.

8. LOVE IS being willing, when confronted by another, to examine your

heart rather than rising to your defense or shifting the focus.

9. LOVE IS making a daily commitment to grow in love so that the love you offer to another is increasingly selfless, mature, and patient.

10. LOVE IS being unwilling to do what is wrong when you have been wronged, but looking for concrete and specific ways to overcome evil with good.

11. LOVE IS being a good student of another, looking for their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs so that in some way you can remove the burden, support them as they carry it, or encourage them along the way.

12. LOVE IS being willing to invest the time necessary to discuss, examine, and understand the relational problems you face, staying on task until the problem is removed or you have agreed upon a strategy of response.

13. LOVE IS being willing to always ask for forgiveness and always being committed to grant forgiveness when it is requested.

14. LOVE IS recognizing the high value of trust in a relationship and being faithful to your promises and true to your word.

15. LOVE IS speaking kindly and gently, even in moments of disagreement, refusing to attack the other person's character or assault their intelligence.

16. LOVE IS being unwilling to flatter, lie, manipulate, or deceive in any way in order to co-opt the other person into giving you what you want or doing something your way.

17. LOVE IS being unwilling to ask another person to be the source of your identity, meaning, and purpose, or inner sense of well-being, while refusing to be the source of theirs.

18. LOVE IS the willingness to have less free time, less sleep, and a busier schedule in order to be faithful to what God has called you to be and to

do as a spouse, parent, neighbor, etc.

19. LOVE IS a commitment to say no to selfish instincts and to do everything that is within your ability to promote real unity, functional understanding, and active love in your relationships.

20. LOVE IS staying faithful to your commitment to treat another with appreciation, respect, and grace, even in moments when the other person doesn't seem deserving or is unwilling to reciprocate.

21. LOVE IS the willingness to make regular and costly sacrifices for the sake of a relationship without asking for anything in return or using your sacrifices to place the other person in your debt.

22. LOVE IS being unwilling to make any personal decision or choice that would harm a relationship, hurt the other person, or weaken the bond of trust between you.

23. LOVE IS refusing to be self-focused or demanding, but instead looking for specific ways to serve, support, and encourage, even when you are busy or tired.

24. LOVE IS daily admitting to yourself, the other person, and God that you are unable to be driven by a cruciform love without God's protecting, providing, forgiving, rescuing, and delivering grace.

*Taken from
Wednesdaysword@paultrippministries.org*

The Perpetual Problem of Race

by Greg Barkman

There's no question that racial issues are one of the biggest problems in American society today. Instead of making progress, we seem to be moving backwards. Some contend that racial problems are bigger today than ever before. Judging from the volume of strident voices around us, I think that this is largely true, at least as evaluated by the degree of tension and discontent arising from racial matters. There are many attempted explanations as to why this may be so, but one thing is clear, namely that we have a racial problem, and the solution appears more elusive as time goes on. So, what's the problem, and what's the solution?

COMMON HUMAN ORIGIN.

Christians know that in the beginning, God created one man and one woman. No one knows what Adam and Eve looked like. Most story books picture them as white Caucasians, but that usually reflects the appearance of the artist. The truth is, we have no way of knowing if they were black or white, or something else. What we do know is that God made only one original human pair, and every human being descends from the same set of parents. God did not make a white Adam, a black Adam, and a yellow Adam. He made Adam. Every member of the human race came from Adam, and therefore every member of the human race is related by blood. We are all cousins. I read some years ago that everyone on earth is no farther removed from anyone else than thirty-sixth cousin. It is both a Biblical as well as a biological fact that all men are indeed brothers in the physical sense. The

racial factors that divide us are far more incidental than the biology that unites us. Understanding our common human origin would go a long way towards defusing racial animosity. There is really only one race, the human race.

NOAH'S THREE SONS.

Most people trace the three most prominent "races" to Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Arthur Custance wrote a masterful book published in 1975, entitled "Noah's Three Sons," in which he traces three major families of humanity back to Noah's descendants. I read this book many years ago, and found it fascinating, informative and factual. Custance's main focus is not about race, but rather about the way these three men and their descendants influenced human history. Still, most people assume there are three races tracing back to Noah's sons. But racial categories are not so neatly divided. Why do we think in terms of three races? What race are American Indians, Hispanics, or Australian Aborigines? The attempt to neatly categorize everyone into one of three races quickly falls apart. It is just as accurate to say there are dozens of races as to say there are three. And since Noah's three sons all descended from Noah, we are right back where we started. We all not only descended from the original man, Adam, but we all descended from Noah as well. Not only is Adam the father of us all, but so is Noah. So how many races are there? From a Biblical perspective, there is only one.

THE CURSE OF HAM.

The curse God placed upon Canaan, one of the sons of Ham, has been used as Biblical support for the notion that Negroes are a cursed race. While it is true that Negroes are descendants of Ham, it is not true that they descended from Canaan. Canaan is the father of the Canaanites who inhabited the land of Canaan. They were, in fact, cursed by God because of their sins, and God used His people, the Israelites, to drive them out of Canaan and eventually eradicate them from the earth. You would be hard pressed to identify a Canaanite today. But what does that have to do with Negroes? Nothing. The curse of Canaan used to justify racial discrimination is a shameful distortion of Scripture to encourage the enslavement and mistreatment of Negroes. No Bible believing Christian should encourage such grievous error. It is an outrageous fiction employed to rationalize sinful conduct. God does not look lightly upon the misuse of His holy word to justify actions that are contrary to truth.

THE LAW OF MOSES.

But didn't God command His people, Israel, not to mix with, and certainly not to intermarry with non-Jewish people? Isn't there Biblical warrant for segregating the races? No. Once again, that notion is based upon a misunderstanding of Scripture. God's Old Testament marriage prohibitions were about religion, not race. God forbade His people marrying idol worshippers, but when those same idol worshippers became worshippers of Jehovah, the Jews were free to marry them with God's approval.

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(Continued from page 4)

Consider how many foreigners righteously married into the Jewish nation. Significantly, there are four examples in the genealogy of Christ. First there is Rahab, a Canaanite prostitute of the city of Jericho. She turned from paganism to believe in Jehovah, and married into the line of Christ. Then there is Ruth from Moab, who left her pagan gods to embrace Jehovah and was married to godly Boaz, becoming the great grandmother of King David. There are others, but that should be sufficient to validate my point. Intermarriage with non-Jews was sinful only when the marriage partner did not embrace the God of Abraham. It is the Old Testament equivalent of a Christian marrying an unbeliever. It has nothing to do with race, and everything to do with religion. God's people are to marry only those who are followers of Christ. Furthermore, they are free to marry any qualified partner who is a genuine follower of Christ.

THE CHURCH.

Too many Christians have justified and perpetuated racism down through the years. This is a sad blight upon the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christians should take the lead in racial equality and churches

ought to be models of racial harmony. Our churches should not only be places where men and women of every race are welcome, but we should pray that God will, in gracious power, bring Christians of diverse racial backgrounds into our congregations. We should model Biblical truth about the races before a confused and watching world. The racial harmony we long to see in society should be alive and well in churches. Why should churches be segregated? Is there any Biblical reason for this? If not, then let churches lead the way in demonstrating Biblical truth, not cultural tradition and prejudices. We, of all people, should demonstrate the truth that there is in fact only one human race, and all who are in Christ constitute a new spiritual race. We not only share the same human origin, but have been born again by the Spirit of God into the one family of God. All born again Christians have the same Father and we are all His children, brothers and sisters in the same family.

THE PROBLEM.

The problem of race is sin, not skin. Racial divisions will never disappear until Christ changes hearts, causing people to think and act like Christians. Social experiments can-

not engineer racial harmony. Governments cannot force people to think and behave correctly. Only Christ can create the inward change from which racial harmony flows. Because there will always be unbelievers, there will always be racial tension until Jesus Christ returns and makes all things new. Until that glad day, may Christians act according to truth, and may we show our love for Christ and others, regardless the color of their skin, because of His undeserved love for us.

Let us then inquire, whence came the Bible? Is it from heaven, or from men? If it is from men, is it the work of good men, or of bad men? If bad men had been the authors of the bible, they would have made it to their liking. If made to please them, it would please other men of like character. But it is not a book in which bad men delight. They hate it. Its precepts are too holy; its doctrines too pure; its denunciations against all manner of iniquity too terrible. It is not at all written according to the taste of such men. There are men who prize the Bible; who pore over its pages with delight; who have recourse to it in all their perplexities and sorrows; who seek its counsels to guide them, and its instructions to make them wise; who esteem its words more than gold, and feast on them as their sweetest food. But who are these men? They are those who detest all deceit and falsehood, and whom this very book has transformed, from men of iniquity and vice, to men of purity and holiness. It is impossible, therefore, that the Bible should be the work of bad men.

—John Dagg, *Manual of Theology*

On The Feminine Side

by Marti Barkman

And we know that all things work together...

From a January Sunday School lesson: Most of our prayers consist of these two things; that God would give us something good, or remove something bad. Remove from our lives the difficult, replace it with something we would call a blessing. When God answers our prayers, He often withholds the good while the difficult remains. Why? I imagine Abraham might have asked this question on more than one occasion during God's lifelong interaction with him. And never with more incredulity and angst than when God told him he was to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, the boy through whom God's promise of a nation would be fulfilled, and by whose death this promise would die.

What was Abraham's response? He did what God told him to do, even to the point of actually raising the knife to kill his son. How is this possible? How does a father do this? Only one way. By believing that God keeps His word. When we wonder at God's responses to our prayers, when He withholds what we call good and leaves what we call evil, when His ways are beyond our comprehension and seemingly contradictory to the actions of a loving father, where do we go? What do we need to know to trust in His choices? How can we trust His answers to our fervent prayers for good? There's only one way: We can trust what He does because of who He is...

...And who is He? **From recent bedtime reading:** "It is ... incorrect to argue that God is the sum of all the divine attributes. Rather, (divine) attributes are identical with the essence of God." In other words, God is not like His attributes, but His

attributes are like God. Those characteristics we call good are good because they are like God. 'Hmmm,' you might respond. How does that help my understanding of the way He answers prayer? What light does it shed on a verse like Romans 8:28, the assurance that all things work together for our good? God is not just good, but powerfully good, wise and powerfully wise and good, His power is his goodness, wisdom, and unchangeability. "We can therefore trust that all things are working together for our good because our God is wisdom, power, goodness, and immutability. All He does for us necessarily involves all these attributes."¹

So back to the question of the things for which we pray: **From this morning's Coffee n' Courage lesson:** What's wrong with wanting what I want, when what I want are good things that would seem to glorify God and benefit His Kingdom? Is this desire wrong? No, that desire is not wrong... as long as it doesn't violate the first commandment which tell us, "You shall have no other Gods before Me." And what does that have to do with what I want? When my desire becomes a demand, when I love what I want more than I love God, *when I trust my own heart more than I trust God's wisdom*, I have violated the command to keep God first. Even if what I want is something good.

The third and fourth chapters of James provide pointed teaching on the subject of our desires and how, when out of control, they lead to all kinds of strife, bickering, and conflicts with other people. But the author of the book, *Good and Angry*² makes a distinction between 'horizontal' and 'vertical' sins. When we look at those around us--our horizontal relationships--and hold those people responsible for our trials, we

are in fact, sinning vertically, against God. God controls those horizontal issues and when I insist, by my desires, a change in my horizontals, I'm playing God. The sin is mine, and it's against God!

The good news is that God provides grace for change. He does this for people who are humble... what we are when we confess our sinful pride against God and our sinful demands that our desires be granted. But stubborn failure--pride--results in God's resisting us. No grace to do right 'til we admit we are wrong.

I'm grateful that all things DO work together for those people who love God, even when our love is so lacking compared to His love for us. And sometimes it's the things we read, hear, and study that work together, to show us who we are, what we are, what we are doing wrong, and how to change.

¹ *God Is*, by Mark Jones, Crossway Books

² *Good and Angry*, by Dave Powlison, New Growth Press

God's Vast Love for Us

by Alistair Begg, *Truth For Life*

Believer, look back through all your experience, and think of the way in which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness, and how He has fed and clothed you every day --how He has suffered your poor behavior--how He has put up with all your murmurings and all your longings after the flesh-pots of Egypt--how He has opened the rock to supply you and fed you with manna that came down from heaven. Think of how His grace has been sufficient for you in all your troubles--how His blood has been a pardon to you in all your sins--how His rod and His staff have comforted you.

When you have then reflected upon the love of the Lord, let faith survey His love in the future, for remember that Christ's covenant and blood have something more in them than the past. He who has loved you and pardoned you will never cease to love and pardon. He is Alpha, and He shall be Omega also: He is first, and He shall be last.

Therefore, remember when you pass through the valley of the

shadow of death, you need fear no evil, for He is with you. When you stand in the cold floods of Jordan, you need not fear, for death cannot separate you from His love; and when you come into the mysteries of eternity you need not tremble, "For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things pre-

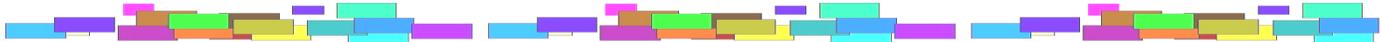
Christ Jesus our Lord."¹

Now, soul, is not your love refreshed? Does not this make you love Jesus? Does not a survey of the vastness of God's loving care stir your heart and compel you to delight yourself in the Lord your God? Surely as we meditate on the love of the Lord, our hearts burn within us, and we long to love Him more.

*Does not a survey of
the vastness of God's
loving care stir your
heart and compel you to
delight yourself in the
Lord your God?*

Devotional material is taken from *Morning and Evening*, written by C. H. Spurgeon, revised and updated by Alistair Begg. Copyright (c) 2003, Good News Publishers and used by Truth For Life with written permission.

sent nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in



THE BEACON BROADCAST

Monday thru Friday

WITA 1490 AM (Knoxville, TN)	9:30 a.m.
WKBA 1550 AM (Roanoke, VA)	10:00 a.m.
WKPA 1390 AM (Lynchburg, VA)	10:00 a.m.
WBAG 1150 AM (Burlington, NC)	12:15 p.m.
WTRU 830 AM (Winston-Salem, NC)	2:00 p.m.
WDZY 1290 AM (Richmond, VA)	6:15 a.m.
WDZY 103.3 FM (Richmond, VA)	6:15 a.m.
WSKY 1230 AM (Asheville, NC)	7:15 a.m.
WYYC 1250 AM (York, PA)	5:00 p.m.
WYYC 98.1 FM (York, PA)	5:00 p.m.

Monday thru Sunday

WXTH-LP 101.7 FM (Richwood, WV)	10:05 a.m.
	10:05 p.m.

Sunday

WCRU 960 AM (Charlotte, NC)	9:30 a.m.
WBAG 1150 AM (Burlington, NC)	10:30 a.m.
WTRU 830 AM (Winston-Salem, NC)	10:30 a.m.
WDRU 1030 AM (Raleigh, NC)	10:30 a.m.
WLES 590 AM (Richmond, VA)	10:30 a.m.
Harbour Light of the Windwards 1400 AM/94.5 FM (Caribbean)	9:30 p.m.
WGNQ mixlr.com/weng-radio (M-F)	8:45-9 a.m. & 4:45-5:00 p.m.

(Internet station based in Greenville/Washington, NC)

BEACON HIGHLIGHTS FOR FEBRUARY

CALENDAR

- 02 ESL
- 03 Tri-State Particular Baptist Fellowship
- 05 Annual Congregational Business Meeting
- 08 Teen Homeplace Ministry
- 09 Lord's Table
ESL
- 11 Coffee n' Courage
Elders/Deacons Meeting
- 12 IMPACT Clubs
Teen/Parent Focus
- 16 Deacon Installation
Members Meeting
ESL
- 18 Coffee n' Courage
- 19 IMPACT Clubs
- 20 Silver Saints
- 23 ESL Fellowship Meal
- 25 Coffee n' Courage
- 26 IMPACT Clubs
- 27 Men Sharpening Men

MEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 03 Joanna Isley
- 04 Mae Counts
Hazel Garcia
- 06 Rob Conrad
- 07 Wendy Lynch
- 14 Pam Owens
Nancy Verdi
- 21 Tommy Blanchard
- 22 Amanda Abernathy
- 24 Larry Byrd
- 26 Sherry Kane
Greg Mullis
Larry Norris

MISSIONARY BIRTHDAYS

- 08 Gabriel Bixby*
- 19 Bill Standridge
- 20 Miriam Bixby*
- 21 Caroline Vaughn*

*Children of Missionaries

We express our heartfelt sympathy to the family of:

Auman Hunter

*Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love,
I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.*

I Corinthians 13:1

The Beacon Beam
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