

HHBC CONNECTION

FEBRUARY
2012

CONNECT

to God • to people

GROW

individually • collectively

IMPACT

the church • the world



THE NOBLE MAN

MEN'S CONFERENCE

FEBRUARY 25th



Special Guest
Bob Reccord

8:30 AM - 1:00 PM

ALSO INSIDE: TAKE MY HAND MINISTRIES • MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

OUR PASTORAL STAFF

Carl Weiser	Senior Pastor
David Dalton	Minister of Music
Brian Freerksen	Sr. High Pastor
Bryan Hagley	Jr. High Pastor
Marvin Hiner	Senior Adults Pastor
Rick Magee	Administrative Pastor
Dr. Paul Marks	Associate Pastor
Paul Randlett	Worship Pastor
Michael Summy	Children's Pastor

Phone: 434.821.6906

www.hhbc.net

GREETINGS FROM THE PASTOR



With Valentine's Day being this month, many call this the month of love. Before I write too much more, let me remind every man out there who reads this to be sure and get his wife or girl friend at least a card asking them to be their Valentine. Strange how men see this day as not really that important. Guys make no mistake about it, it is very important. By the way ladies, it wouldn't hurt for you to remind your husband

or boyfriend the date of Valentine's Day. I know from experience that Hallmark still has Valentine's Day cards available the day before the big day. Don't be so pious, you know what I'm talking about.

The word love is abused so many times by people who seem to use it to mean very little. To me, it is amazing that we say we love our spouse then we treat them as if they were second class citizens. . . strange! I hear parents talk about how much they love their children and then they don't even spend time with them or support them as they go through school and life. I hear people talk about how much they love their church, and yet they do little to support it. What's even worse, when something goes wrong at church, instead of doing the loving thing and helping to find an answer, they walk away to find a new love.

God's love is the ultimate example of the way we are to love Him and others. He gave to us when we didn't deserve it. He gave to us knowing that many of us would reject it. He loved us when we didn't want Him to love us. He forgives us, has patience with us, is merciful to us and cares for us even when we don't care for ourselves. What a difference it would make in our church and world if we all simply gave back to God the love He has given us and then love others as He has loved us. I believe that would be called Christianity.

Pastor Carl

TAKE MY HAND MINISTRIES

A New and Exciting Ministry of Hyland Heights!



Six months ago, we saw a tremendous need to minister to those in our communities who are in need of help of all kinds. Take My Hand was born out of our desire to come alongside those folks who often are forgotten and invisible.

As people come to our Food Pantry on Wednesday evenings and on the 2nd

Thursday, we began passing out our flyers to each one. If they chose to fill out this flyer, we were able to be in contact and address the multiple and pressing needs that they identify. To date we have received close to 300 flyers and have been in touch with each one. Our volunteers go into the crowds who come for food and clothing (as many as 300 on 2nd Thurs). and meet with them to listen to the issues they are willing to share. We then call them and set up one on one meetings to assess and assist the many needs. As you can imagine, this takes a lot of volunteer power. We have seven volunteers at present.

Hyland Heights runs on volunteer power and we do as well. Please inquire as to how you can be a part of this ministry. All you need to bring is a willing heart.

We have also been doing home repairs for folks unable to do for themselves – often elderly widows and those who are disabled. Our "Home Repair Division" now has eight men from our church who willingly and joyfully give up one or two Saturdays each month to come out and help. Many people are quite amazed that we actually show up and do the work. They have heard promises often, and been disappointed. We can use more guys who are willing to give a few hours a month to help these folks in desperate need.

Lastly, we run on a very small budget. We can use donations to enable us to buy building supplies needed to repair these homes. We also can use donated building materials which we store in a trailer behind the Student Ministries Center until the need arises.

So, that is our story. Please contact us if you wish to be involved in this ministry. Our mission is to demonstrate God's love to a lost and needy world – right around the corner! We encourage you to call and inquire and see if God is leading you to become involved.

Call 821-6906 and leave a message. We will quickly return your call. We covet your prayers!

Very sincerely in Christ as we walk the walk,

Bill James - Director *Molly Levering - Associate Director*

relief entities and a radio/tv network. During that time, Bob hosted a national radio show called Strength for Living. His other roles have been as Senior Pastor at First Baptist Church of Norfolk, Virginia and Bell Shoals Baptist Church in Brandon, Florida. He also served as a co-pastor at Carmel Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Dr. Reccord has authored eight books which include Beneath the Surface, Forged by Fire, and Made to Count. Bob is an avid hunter, outdoorsman, and adventure lover. Whether as a pastor, businessman, husband or father, Bob has dedicated his life to helping people discover their calling and to effectively develop and exercise their passion for God and His mission to change the world.

BOB RECCORD AT HYLAND HEIGHTS



Bob will be speaking at



February 25th - 8:30 - 1:00

There will also be other great sessions and fellowship

Bob Reccord is a nationally recognized speaker, author, consultant, and currently serves as Executive Director for the Council for National Policy (CNP), a non-profit educational foundation based in Washington, D.C. CNP's mission is to restore and sustain American freedom by providing a forum for leaders to deepen their understanding of the great spiritual, economic, constitutional, and national security issues confronting the nation. In short, CNP seeks to advance the "First Principles" of this nation's Founding Fathers.

He also serves as the Founder and President of Total Life Impact Ministries, challenging people from all around the world to Live a Life that Matters, speaking to over 185,000 men in the last 5 years.

Bob's previous roles include nine years as president of the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) North American Mission Board, overseeing 5000+ missionaries, one of the top three disaster

HIGHLAND HEIGHTS STUDENT MINISTRIES

FEBRUARY

2012

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

I am excited about some of the variety in our services on Wednesdays in February. The first week I will conclude the series entitled, "If You Could Be New, What Would You Do?." A four week study revealing our new identity and freedom in Christ. We will then have two weeks of lessons on purity taught by Devin Swartz, our Student Ministry Intern and Dustin DuBose, a Student Ministry leader and seminary student. Both are studying to go into full-time student ministry upon graduation. I will follow up those weeks with a special lesson identifying the characteristics of a growing Christian. I am excited about this topic because it has the potential to really pose a vision among our students of what we should be striving for in our relationship with God. Finally, I will begin a 13 week study on the book of Acts. This book is essential for understanding the layout and progress of the New Testament as well as the foundation of the church, evangelism and missions.

LIFE GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES

10th Grade Girls Lunch and Service Project from 12-3pm Sunday, Feb. 19th
Meet in the SMC after church and bring money for lunch. Get details from your leaders

Super Bowl Party 6-9pm Sunday, Feb. 5th in the SMC for all MS & HS students
Invite your friends and join us as the Student Ministry gathers for a night of football, video games, movies, food, table games and more. Even if you don't like football you will enjoy this activity. Guys bring a 2 ltr. / Girls bring chips and dip or dessert.

BEAUTY WITHIN—A GIRLS ONLY EVENT

I cannot believe that it is already February and we are about to have the first main event this year just for the beautiful girls of our student ministry! This event is Friday and Saturday, February 17-18th. The cost of *Beauty Within* will be \$5.00 plus the cost of their dinner. Our theme will be focusing on *Beauty Within*. Each of the girls of this ministry are absolutely gorgeous inside and out, and we are going to reaffirm that using Scripture. Meet at the Welcome Center at 4:30pm Friday. There will be ladies present to do makeup and hair. We will be dressing up semi-formal, and have dinner reservations at Charley's for 6:00pm. The rest of our evening will consist of games, a scavenger hunt, and our leaders sharing their hearts about self-image. The girls should bring a change of clothes for the rest of the evening because we will be playing games. Also, since it is a sleepover, please bring a pillow and sleeping bag. The event will end after breakfast at 8:00am Saturday.

Please pick up your girls at the Welcome Center, NOT at the SMC.

It is my desire that the girls learn to see the image that God created them to be and not merely their reflection.—ASHLEY

GIRLS EVENT

If you have not read the article on the front page about our Girls event "Beauty Within," please take a moment to do so. Ashley Olinghouse (Our Student Ministry Assistant) has been working hard to put together a fantastic event for the young ladies of our student ministry. This event is for all girls grade 7-12. If you have a daughter in the student ministry, please encourage her to be a part of this event. The girls will have the opportunity to connect with other girls, leaders, and have a ton of fun. If you have questions, feel free to contact the Student Ministries Office and ask for Ashley.

SUPER SUNDAY!

SUNDAY Feb. 5th we will be hosting a Super Bowl Party. We are asking all the guys to bring a 2 ltr. and girls bring chips and dip or a dessert. Other food will be provided. We will kick things off at 6pm. Please sign up at the Student Ministries Center Welcome desk!

NEW SERIES

EXPOSED! the naked truth about sex

Middle schoolers are talking about—but the church often isn't. Students are seeing it in movies and television shows, but the church often ignores it. Their friends are experimenting and curiosity about it is growing every day. Yes this series is going to address a topic that nearly every middle school student is already aware of—SEX. There are few

topics that are discussed or thought of by teens more than sex. Students are bombarded with the world's ideas, standards, and message about the subject but few are exposed to a Biblical view. It is the purpose of this series to EXPOSE students to what the bible says about God's plan for sex. It may not answer every question that every student has, but it will serve to lay a foundation for biblical understanding about the subject matter. This three week series begins Wednesday February 15th. Join us as we seek to EXPOSE the naked truth about the topic of Sex.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 3 Michael Peterson | 11 Katie Vann | 20 Abby Burnett |
| 3 Devin Swartz | 12 Jeremy Huff | 23 Abby Hicks |
| 3 Will Knight | 12 Josiah Peterson | 23 Patrick Payne |
| 5 Dustin DuBose | 18 Dillon Finger | 27 Sarah Turner |
| 6 JilliAn Moreland | 19 Ben Coulter | 28 Eddie Ireson |
| 9 Ellen Heffner | 19 Chris Garber | |
| 10 Rachel Richards | 19 Amanda MacDonald | |

EVENTS

Connecting

Wednesdays; 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd & 29th
at 5:30pm
Fellowship & Games

Sunday, 5th from 6-9pm
Super Bowl Party
For both M.S. and H.S.

4pm Friday, 17th to
8am Saturday, 18th
"Beauty Within" - MS & HS
Girls Event

Sunday, 19th from 12-3pm
10th Grade Girls Lunch and
Service Project

Growing

Sundays; 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th
at 9:30am
MS Cylinder Groups
HS Life Groups

Wednesdays; 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd & 29th
at 6:30pm
MS Services—"Exposed"
HS services—Various Topics

Sunday Night Electives
6-7:30pm in the SMC from
Feb. 12th—Feb. 26th

Impacting

Sundays; 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th
3-4:30pm Elevate News &
Video Production
4:30-6pm Praise Team,
Drama, & Tech

Saturday, 25th
Service Project

Meetings

Wednesday, 1st at 8pm
All Leaders in the MS room

Wednesday, 8th at 8pm
Summit Team in the HS room



Kidz Rock Report



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Monthly Virtue is Honor

Lesson Schedule

Feb. 5—The Shepherd Kid - David is Anointed

Feb. 12—Sidekicks—David and Jonathan

Feb. 19—Sensei What Absalom Rebels

Feb. 26 - Dance on, Dance Off—David Dances before the Lord

Come Join us this Sunday.

Fabulous February

Where did January go? It seems like just a couple of days ago we were opening Christmas presents, and now we are getting ready to mail out Valentine cards. As I write this letter the challenges ahead of us seem huge, but then I am reminded that God is faithful and He will help us through.

January was a month that we saw some exciting new growth in our children's ministry. We have seen several new families coming to HHBC and many of them have children. I would like to say a word of thanks to our volunteers who faithfully serve on

Sundays and Wednesdays and share the love of Christ. They make our new families feel so welcome.

February will be a busy month as we have activities going on in several different ministries. Our basketball teams continue their seasons and so far it has been a very successful year. Over the first three weeks our five teams have a combined record of 10 wins and 7 loses. There are a lot of fun activities on Saturdays. Our Church 56 group will be going snow tubing on February 10 and the Core Group will be meeting every Sunday night in February (except Superbowl Sunday). On February 11 our first and second graders will have an activity

at the church. They will play games, do crafts, eat some snacks, and have a couple of fun surprises.

One BIG change that we made in the month of January was that our church went back to having two services. This move did not affect the programming or schedule of the children's ministry. If the need arises because of the change in the worship services, we will make adjustments. For now, we will continue to run our programs as they are. We have also begun sign-ups for summer camp and our spring break trip. See you at church.



Plans for this year's summer camp are well under way and we are looking forward to a great year in Christ. We will be going back to Camp Oak Hill for the week of August 6-11. Our theme is **Get a Clue**, and we will be joining our cast of characters as they try to figure out God's plan for

their lives. My goal is to take at least 130 children from Hyland Heights. We also have one and possibly a second church joining us. As of the end of January we had over 80 signed up to attend. If you have a second-sixth grader and would like more information about sending

your child to camp, then please call the church and ask to speak to Mike Summy or Hannah Spear. The total cost of the week is \$250.00, but scholarships are available if there is a need. Please make sure your deposit is turned in ASAP. Your kids are not going to want to miss this exciting week.

Happy

Birthday!!!



Natalie Colville	Feb. 01
LJ Green	Feb. 02
Joseph Lauther	Feb. 05
Olivia Armstrong	Feb. 06
Maranda Cantolli	Feb. 07
Alexis Cabell, Miles Gorman	
Elizabeth Mackey	Feb. 08
Ally Dawson	Feb. 09
Jacob Norman, Lilly Cavanaugh	Feb. 10
Landon Tyree	Feb. 11
Faith Peterson, Joseph Tramontano, Corey Hackenbracht	Feb. 12
Aaron Close	Feb. 14
Lucas East, Gabe Faulk	Feb. 15
Alayna Jones	Feb. 16
Jenna Hackenbracht	Feb. 18
Natalie Hudson	Feb. 21
Kayleigh Lilly, Justin Sparrow	Feb. 23
Christian Hillsman	Feb. 24
Brian Waldo, Leigha Southall	Feb. 26
Larke Pribble	Feb. 27
Mathieu Dent	Feb. 27

Core Groups

What is inside you? That is the question we must ask ourselves each day as we prepare to represent Christ where ever we are. In past years, we have been exploring this very question to find out what is inside us all when troubles come our way. We not only encourage the kids to make a stand for Christ, but we hope that they can make a stand with each other in their schools and sports teams. Each night during Core Groups, we have a great time fellowshiping with each other for the first half of the night. With games like dodgeball, basketball and lots of other great things to do there's not a single moment of boredom here! Plus when you add soda and pizza, it seems like the night will always bring laughs and fun!!

The second part of the night we get down to business and get real with what is keeping us from getting closer to Christ. Whether its friends, home life, or school we talk about it all and confront it with the Gospel. During these Core Groups we want the kids to get real about things they deal with in life, and for the kids to encourage each other through out the week. We will meet on Jan. 29, Feb. 12, 19, and Feb. 26. There will be no meeting on Feb. 5 because of the Superbowl. Core Groups meet on from 5:45–8:00PM. Parents, make sure you send your child with \$5.00. This helps us to cover the cost of pizza. 56ers make it a priority to be at Core and focus on your relationship with Christ. See You on Sunday night!

Church 56

On February 10 we will be going back to Wintergreen for snow tubing. We will meet at the church at 4:30 PM and return at 11:00 PM. The cost is \$25.00 plus the cost of dinner and hot chocolate after tubing. Tickets need to be purchased by Feb. 05 so please RSVP by then. Parents we need you to email or send the permission slip back so we know for sure your child can attend. They are welcome to invite friends and as always parents can attend as well.

Plans for our trip to Myrtle Beach

for our Spring Break retreat are under way. We will leave on April 10 at 12:00 p.m. and return at 7:00 p.m. on April 13. This year we will be doing a lot of exclusively beach things. The total cost of the trip is \$125.00, and that includes everything for the trip except for shopping money and money for Family Kingdom. Our theme this year is **The Amazing Race**. If you are interested in your child attending, please call the church and ask to speak to Mike. Don't forget Church 56 meets each week at 9:30 a.m.

Feb. 1	Awana Football Fanatic Night
Feb. 10	Church 56 Snow Tubing
Feb. 11	1st & 2nd Grade Fun Day
Feb. 12	Core Group Resumes
April 10-13	56 Spring Break
May 19	Kidz Rock 5K Run
June 25-June 29	Music Camp*
July 9–13	Vacation Bible School
Aug. 6-11	Summer Camp
* tentative date	

Notes

* Congratulations to Todd Moore on being selected as our Sunday School teacher of the month. Todd does a great job leading one of Church 56 small groups.

* Parents, don't forget to sign-up your children for summer camp and spring



Football Fanatic Night in Awana on Feb. 01

break. Please turn in your deposits ASAP.

*Parents set aside May 19. We will be doing a 5K run as an opportunity to raise funds for summer camp as well as a fund raiser for each child who participates.

* Our basketball teams will be playing in the year-end tournament on Feb. 25. The semi-finals for the boys are on Feb. 27 and the finals for boys and girls are on March 3.

* Our children's Sunday School classes are currently collecting a missions offering for our Brazil team.

MEN, YOU CAN MAKE A CHANGE!

Dave Ankeney



"I LEARNED IT BY WATCHING YOU!"

Do you remember the public service announcement with that sobering tag line that was screamed at a father by his son who was caught with drugs? How about you? What did you learn and experience as a child? Many of us had absent fathers, many had angry or abusive fathers and some were blessed with godly, loving fathers who were the spiritual leaders of their homes.

One thing that seems to be consistent with men in the church is that we try, try, try (on our own) to lead with what we learned. Sometimes we determine only to NOT repeat things that we experienced in life. Either way, we often quickly reach the "end of our rope", and we tend to become passive, defensive or angry. And when you consider the observation that 90% of men never read another book (including the Bible) after high school or college graduation, how can we ever expect to have a generational change in our lives and our families?

Young men, single men, married or remarried men...pray about making a change right now. There are so many opportunities here at HHBC to connect, grow and have an impact on your own life and the lives of other men. **Make plans now to join one of the 6 Men's Fraternity classes** taking place on campus or in your neighborhood - no matter what age or stage you are in. Make some of the best, most uplifting friends you've ever had - friends who will join you in the journey. You'll see God work in changing your life, your career, and your current and future family. We especially need to have men participate who've been blessed with godly dads, so that we can hear and see the benefits God promises fathers who honor Him. **Sign up today with a friend, coworker, neighbor or family member to attend THE NOBLE MAN MEN'S CONFERENCE, Saturday morning, Feb 25, hosted here at HHBC.** It will be an awesome time of practical workshops and masculine fellowship.

Men, there are two paths that we can choose. One is the path of darkness, continuing in pain that we have experienced, which can continue for generations to come. The other is the path of truth, love and eternal life through Jesus Christ. Make the choice right now to walk and grow with other men and with the Lord. Learn to yield to and tap into the Holy Spirit, the eternal spiritual resource who is in each of us as believers. Take a leap, make a decision, plot a course of faith and allow God to change you. We have the hope that God will help us become good and faithful servants, and that our wives, children and friends will say..."**I LEARNED FROM YOU...PRAISE GOD.**"

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNSELING STAFF

Paul Marks Ashley Kelley Nicole Maxwell



Part of life involves struggles and stresses. In those times, counseling offers support and direction to those that choose it. What makes our counseling unique is the fact that we have been through various struggles of our own. We have faced addiction, marital struggles, loss of loved ones, depression,

career change and other personal struggles. We find that these experiences have enriched our ability to help others. We not only have a head knowledge of many of the issues that we counsel others through, but have also faced them ourselves.

Because we are Christian counselors, we will at times be direct in sharing our faith. At the same time we will not cease helping or counseling an individual should they reject our personal beliefs.

In our counseling, we strive to be aware and up-to-date with the best treatment modalities for a given disorder. We rely upon solid research to inform our counseling processes.

MISSION

The mission of Hyland Heights Counseling Services is to provide a confidential and nurturing environment for individuals, couples, and families to resolve interpersonal, career and spiritual problems

UNIQUE FOCUS

HHBC counseling services is a Christian-based service. This means that any form of counseling or therapy will be guided by the principles of Judeo-Christianity. Essentially, this means that the teaching of the Bible will be brought to bear as applicable to the life and growth process of individuals in counseling. In cases of individuals that are not Christian, or would like to be counseled other than through Christian principles, this request will be honored. Our staff is both clinically trained and Biblically trained so we are able to offer care to individuals seeking either a distinctively Christian approach, or a secular one. Non-Christian individuals are encouraged to benefit from our services without concern of bias.

AREAS OF COUNSELING COVERED

Premarital - Marital conflicts - Remarriage - Separation/divorce
Stepfamily adjustment - Addictions - Career/Job change
Grief/Loss - Depression - Anxiety - Anger management
Spiritual struggles - Family conflicts - Crisis/suicide

NO COST or FEE - Donations accepted.

For appointments, call Jo Jo at 821-6906.

CHICK-FIL-A LEADERCAST AT HHBC

MAY 4TH - 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM



The choices you make define the leader you become. And the choices you make are not just about you. They're about the positive impact you can have on your organization, your community, and beyond. Our world needs everyday leaders who will choose to make it a better place. That's what Chick-fil-A Leadercast 2012 is all about.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

On May 4th, 2012, you will be empowered with life-changing insights from world-renowned leaders. This one-of-a-kind event will be broadcast live from Atlanta and simulcast into communities across the globe. Join more than 125,000 leaders from around the world and begin making choices that matter. For more info and to register, go to www.hhbc.net.

BULLETIN BOARD

HELP SUPPORT BRAZIL MISSIONS

Help support Brazil missions by purchasing a decorative flag in the Upper Lobby and the Welcome Center. The cost is \$15.

FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS

The food pantry needs donations of peanut butter and cereal. Please put the donations in the boxes in the Welcome Center and Upper Lobby. Thanks for your support!

BABY DEDICATION

Baby Dedication will be on February 12th at the 10:55 a.m. service. To include your child, call Jo Jo at 821-6906.

BLUE RIDGE PREGNANCY ADDI CAMPAIGN

This year the Blue Ridge Pregnancy Center is sponsoring the "ADDI" Campaign as a way of impacting the lives of the unborn in our city. "ADDI" stands for "A Dollar Does It." In other words, it only takes a dollar to begin the process of saving a life and anyone can help, no matter how small. To help, place your dollar in the baby bottles located in the Main Welcome Center lobby and the Upper Lobby. You can also donate online at blueridgepc.org.

CHICK-FIL-A LEADERCAST - REGISTER ONLINE!

The Chick-Fil-A Leadercast is coming to HHBC on May 4th. You can now register online at www.hhbc.net! Simulcast includes Soledad O' Brian, Tim Tebow, and Andy Stanley. Please call the church office if you would like to volunteer to serve - 821-6906. To find out more, please look at the insert in your bulletin.

WEEKEND TO REMEMBER TICKETS

**TICKETS ARE STILL AVAILABLE
FOR THIS EXCITING WEEKEND!**

We are gathering a group to attend the Family Life Marriage Conference in Roanoke, VA on Feb 17-19th. This is an excellent opportunity to put some life back in your marriage! If you are planning to marry, this is also a way to get a great start. The cost is \$159 plus hotel. For info call Scott at 942-4380 or Jeri at 444-4306. **Register at www.hhbc.net.**

CONNECTING HEARTS LADIES NIGHT

"If you remain in me and my words remain in you".... **John 15:7**
Ladies - join us Friday, Feb. 10th at 7:00 pm

A night of connecting to God through making your own set of scripture tags, and to one another through fellowship. The cost for the night is \$12. Sign-up on hhbc.net or in the Upper Lobby TODAY. For info, contact Shera at 434-444-2011 or sheranthefaith@yahoo.com.

NEW WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Coming in March to the Women's Ministry - Angela Thomas' new Bible study called "Brave." Be on the lookout in your bulletin for more information.



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If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please e-mail Mike Saunders at misaunders@hhbc.net or call 821.6906

WELCOME TO LAODICEA



Kevin Garber
pkgarber@liberty.edu

COLLEGE MINISTRY

"In every decision, for all of the journey ... Christ as Lord!"

Luke 9:23-24.



We have been studying the Book of Revelation in the Crossroads (College) Class. One cannot look into this epic book without first encountering Christ's address to seven local churches. There are two principal views regarding the seven churches of Asia Minor: (1) that

these actual, local churches are representative of all churches for all time—the number seven is significant, or (2) that these seven churches represent a panorama of church history, meaning that each one is representative of a period in the church age.

To those who hold the second viewpoint: (1) The church at Ephesus (meaning "desirable") may represent the Apostolic Age. (2) The church at Smyrna (the word itself means "bitter") may represent the post-apostolic era up to the time of Constantine when Christianity was made the official religion. (3) The church at Pergamum (the two parts of the name meaning: "elevation" and "marriage") represents the period beginning with the legalizing of Christianity by Constantine in A.D. 313 through his Edict of Milan which outlawed all persecution against the church. It is the age of the state church and it continued until the first pope who exercised authority over the catholic church. (4) The church at Thyatira (the name means "unweary sacrifice") depicts the era of church history which extends through the Middle Ages up until the time of the Protestant Reformation. It is marked by the ascendancy of the Roman Catholic Church. (5) The church at Sardis (the name is probably from a Hebrew word meaning "rest" or "remnant") is thought to picture the Reformation period. (6) The church at Philadelphia (the name means "brotherly love") may represent the modern missionary era of church history which began with William Carey. (7) The church at Laodicea (the name means "judgment of the people") may portray the apostate church of the last days.

If this second view is even close to being correct, then one might conclude that we are in the age of the Laodicean church—and these may be the last of the last days indeed. I hope that your seatbelt is fastened, for these are exciting but dangerous days leading up to the return of Christ! Remember the words of Paul: "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come" (II Tim. 3:1).

Now, if I were Satan, I would lull the church to sleep in an age like this. I would cause them to relish their comfort zones, their independence, their riches. I would see to it that they were so self-assured and self-absorbed that they would not even realize that there was anything wrong! I would cause them to live for "the here and now" rather than to value things which are eternal. I would have them go through religious motions with no meaning. Such was the case with the church at Laodicea!

For our church as a whole—and in our individual lives—may we pray to be far from the mind set and tragic heart condition of the Laodiceans in these last days!