

The Harvester



*Preparing Souls
To Serve The Lord!*



Volume 39

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Number 2

Remembering ...

B.C. Carr **Faithfulness, Wisdom, and Humor**

By Brian R. Kenyon

In celebration of our fiftieth school-year, some reflection is appropriate. The Florida School of Preaching's founding director, brother B. C. Carr, was born November 9, 1918, in Dennis, Mississippi. He graduated Freed-Hardeman College in 1938, and married Sybil Brown on April 9, 1939. Though he began his career as a school teacher and then salesman, he had an interest in preaching and often preached for area congregations. He earned a BA from David Lipscomb College in 1948 and served as a full-time preacher in Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia, and Florida. He first came to Lakeland, Florida, in 1950, where he preached for the Patterson Street church of Christ (which later moved a few blocks away to South Florida Avenue). He left this work in 1953, but returned again to South Florida Avenue in 1964.

After Florida Christian College (now known as Florida College) in Temple Terrace took an anti-Biblical expediency position, brother Carr was encouraged by two brethren to start a preacher training school in Lakeland to counter the anti-Biblical expediency influence. These two close friends were B. C. Goodpasture, who was editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, and G. K. Wallace, a retired Vice President of Freed-Hardeman College living in the Lakeland area. In September 1969, as the result of much planning and additional encouragement from the South Florida Avenue eldership and congregation, the Florida

School of Preaching began under the directorship of B. C. Carr. He directed the school until his retirement in 1992. He passed away January 13, 2001.

Whenever I traveled with brother Carr, he often asked me to drive. While traveling with him, whether as a student or an instructor, I learned a lot about brother Carr's faithfulness, wisdom, and humor.

Faithfulness

There was no doubt that brother Carr came from the "old school." He was one of a shrinking number who sat at the feet of such men as N. B. Hardeman and other stalwarts of the faith from a few generations ago. We need more preachers today from that same "old school" who demanded a "Thus saith the Lord" in all they believe and practice! Consider three examples of Brother Carr's faithfulness.

First, when the anti-Biblical expediency movement was firmly entrenched in Lakeland, brother Carr preached a sermon titled, "Who Made Us to Differ?" This sermon was attended, standing room only, by brethren from both sides of the issue. Brother Carr accompanied each main point with the question, "Who made us to differ?" For example, he showed that in the past brethren from both sides believed the same thing about Galatians 6:10 and James 1:27, but "Who made us to differ?" The most effective point of the sermon was an actual check the bank had

paid to a local church written and signed by the leadership of a “non-institutional church” in support of a work they were now saying was unscriptural for local churches to cooperate in supporting, but, as brother Carr reminded them, “Who made us to differ?”

Second, during a time when many brethren saw no conflict between being a member of the Lord’s church, even serving as an elder, and belonging to the Masonic Lodge, brother Carr risked his career (at least with that congregation) to preach against the Lodge. He knew he was of the minority who saw no Bible authority for the Masonic Lodge, yet he preached the truth anyway! Brother Carr expected this to be one of those “moving sermon,” but as it turned out, the brethren involved repented, and the church grew.

Third, brother Carr was among the first in Central Florida to see the error of the Crossroads Movement (so named after the Crossroads church of Christ, Gainesville, Florida, where the doctrine was popularized). Brother Carr, along with the South Florida Avenue eldership, faculty members of the Florida School of Preaching, and other faithful brethren warned about the dangers of the Crossroads doctrine. For many in Central Florida, it was to no avail. Some brethren accused brother Carr and the school of “butting into their business” and have resented the Florida School of Preaching ever since. In a bit of sad irony, however, the opposition of brother Carr and others to Crossroads was vindicated by its evolving into the International Churches of Christ.

In each of these examples, one truth stands clear: no matter the perceived human opposition, a preacher must continue to stand on God’s word. God makes the majority no matter who is on His side!

Wisdom

Brother Carr had many one-liners, such as “Preachers must have tough hides and tender hearts;” “When people know better, they’ll usually do better;” and, when referring to brethren who flock together to promote some hobby, “One laxative would flush ‘em all.” I have often reflected on these words of wisdom and shared them with preaching students.

One example of brother Carr’s wisdom happened while he was a young preacher. He was called by a distraught woman of the congregation around 2:00 a.m. She had been arguing with her husband and wanted brother Carr to help them resolve their problems. As brother Carr was driving over, the thought occurred to him that it might be good to bring one of the elders. This was a very wise decision. When brother Carr and the elder rang the doorbell, the woman opened the door without a stitch of clothing! Brother Carr warned us students, “There are people out there who want nothing else but to bring down the preacher. Do not allow yourselves to be put in compromising situations,” and then he quoted Mat-

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*Our final deposit for the month is usually made on the last Wednesday of the month. All contributions received after that time are reported on the next month’s financial statement.

The Harvester

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1807 South Florida Avenue
Lakeland, FL 33803
(863) 683-4043

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thew 10:16, “Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.”

Humor

Brother Carr had a very good sense of humor. It was often difficult to tell which stories actually happened from those that were fictional. I sometimes wish I had taken notes on his jokes and stories, then maybe I could remember why one should “never bend down in a watermelon patch”! Be that as it may, consider two examples of brother Carr’s humor.

This first humorous happening also illustrates brother Carr’s faithfulness and wisdom. When brother Carr was a young man, a nearby denomination held a tent meeting. Toward the end of each service, the denominational pastor would ask for testimonials from the audience. One night brother Carr responded to the testimonial invitation. He used the opportunity to boldly preached the Gospel! Needless to say, the denominational pastor did not ask for any more testimonials for the rest of that meeting!

Second, one of the best memories I have of this humorous side was as a student traveling to a student day. We departed with overcast skies very early Sunday morning, planning to arrive early enough to eat breakfast at a restaurant close to the church building. As usual, I drove and brother Carr rode in the front passenger seat. The rest of the students in the minivan were quiet and in an early morning daze, not quite sleeping but not fully awake. Brother Carr and I kept our eyes on the road. The students in the back had their Bibles or study notes open. They were mostly staring out the windows and some occasionally glanced at their Bibles or notes. When we came upon a billboard advertising topless dancers, I looked in the rear view mirror, and every student quickly turned his head toward his Bible or notes

and pretended to study. Then, after we passed the billboard, the students’ eyes drifted back out the windows in their daze. On that section of the interstate, we came across several billboards advertising this place, with such statements as “We Bare All;” “Couples Welcome;” and “We Serve Food 24 Hours.” Each time we came upon a billboard, the students would quickly turn from staring out the windows to either pretending to study or closing their eyes as if they were sleeping. Then, after passing the sign they would resume staring out the windows. No one made a sound. We finally came to a huge billboard for the topless dancers that said to “Exit Now.” As soon as we saw that sign, even before the students in the back could react, brother Carr asked, “You boys hungry?,” and then said, “Let’s get off at this exit.” The silence characterizing the journey to that point erupted in laughter. Everyone, except brother Carr, who merely cracked a smile, laughed in unison. It turned out that was our exit anyway, and we did eat breakfast, but not at that place! Brother Carr was aware of the silent tension created between the “We Dare to Bare” billboards and the preaching students, yet he waited for the perfect time to exploit the situation with humor!

Conclusion

Brother Carr was a blessing to countless preachers, students, and church members. Those of us who had him for class cherish the moments more and more as the years pass. Though our culture and situations may be different than his, the same blending of faithfulness, wisdom, and humor that characterized brother Carr will not only benefit us and those within our sphere of influence, but will even reach beyond and potentially touch the entire kingdom of God! May God bless our faith, wisdom, and humor!

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1807 South Florida Avenue
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Would you help us \$50/month in honor of 50 years?

Since 1969 the Florida School of Preaching has proven its value to the cause of Christ and our brotherhood. We have faithfully trained preachers and better equipped souls to live God-glorifying lives by loving the Lord, loving each other, and knowing and applying God's word. We have armed brethren by "handling aright the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15, ASV) to stand against error and uphold God's plan. We continue to thank our supporters. Some have been contributing since the inception of the school, others have been giving for a number of years, and some have recently begun. We simply could not operate as we have for these fifty years without your help! We have never charged tuition, but our students must still raise living expenses. Supporting preaching students is right, as Paul confirmed, "Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?" (1 Cor. 9:7). Additionally, the daily operation of the school needs financial support. If you are not a regular contributor, please help us train preachers and better prepare souls for eternity with God. Thanks! —*Brian*



All FSOP directors in one picture (1990-1991 school year). At this time, Jackie was the associate director and Brian was just a student.