

SOLD!



For what has been: **THANKS!**

For what will be: **YES!**

Thank you, thank you,

Thank You, God!



Well, okay, maybe I overdid that just a little bit, but THANK YOU for your prayer for us during this fairly long journey of selling our house in Bristol, Tennessee. In the mystery of God's timing, we "cleared out of town" just in time for the First Baptist Church of Bristol, Virginia to bring in a potential pastor to preach "in view of a call" next Sunday. I hope you'll join us in praying for that day, too.



One of the many gladnesses of vocational ministry is keeping up with former churches we've served and watching how God continues to build His Church in those places. I'm grateful to be able to say that all of the churches I've served continue to move forward in obedience to God's call, and as I stay in touch with friends in each city, my heart is glad that we got to help a little bit along the way.

'Tis the season for graduations, and last week Dawn Howard-Davis asked me to join her at the graduation ceremony for the Cedar Lane School, where she works. As you may know, Cedar Lane is a Howard County Public School for children and young adults with fairly profound mental and physical challenges. The school is bright and cheerful, just as multi-cultural as Columbia itself, and the students seemed truly cherished not only by their families but by the staff and faculty of the school as well.

My experience with the graduates that morning had a holy feeling about it, and even as I was grateful for such an environment for our most-challenged young people, I was struck by the huge disconnect between our attitudes toward such children before and after their births. Between their conceptions and their births, our law absurdly and unconscionably treats all of our children as "tissue" to be discarded for our own convenience; yet after their births—should they be so fortunate as to arrive at that point—we (appropriately) invest the huge amounts of money represented by Cedar Lane for their well-being.

As I sat in that wonderful graduation experience, my thoughts kept bouncing back and forth between what I was witnessing in that moment and the words written of Manasseh, the longest-reigning of any of Judah's kings (696-642 B.C.), and also the most wicked. The Book of 2 Kings blames the eventual destruction of Judah on Manasseh, saying "*Surely these things happened to Judah according to the LORD's command, in order to remove them from his presence because of the sins of Manasseh and all he had done, including the shedding of innocent blood. For he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the LORD was not willing to forgive*" (2 Kings 24:3-4). As we approach once again the birthdate of our Republic, may God have mercy upon us.

While what we do together through Cedar Lane School is wonderful indeed, most mental illness is not so obvious. Indeed, most of our families are probably affected by family members who struggle with depression in its various forms. And while mental illness may appear most commonly among us as depression, mental illness has many other forms as well.

Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research, recently noted that "People who become Christians and have a broken leg will still have a broken leg. We tend to think that Jesus fixes what is in our heads and medicine fixes what is in our bodies. Sometimes what is in our heads needs medicine, as well." David McKnight, a physician in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, commented that "We would never tell someone who is nearsighted that it's because they don't have enough faith. We do that with people who deal with depression."

I've attached with this *Laptop* a flyer inviting you to "Bridges of Hope," a program to be held this Thursday at 7:30 p.m. here at The Meeting House. Sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Howard County and the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the program will include discussion about what mental illness is, how it affects persons, families, and communities, and what the role of faith communities is in walking with neighbors in such distress. I hope you'll check it out.

Grace to you!

Dave

Postscripts:

- Chapters 14-16 of 2 Kings consist of short summaries of the lives of quite a number of the kings of Israel and Judah, and they catch my attention every year when I read through them. Each king gets just about five sentences devoted to his entire life, and I find myself wondering every year what might be said about my life in five sentences? What could be said about your life in so short a scope? What would you like to have said? Would changes be needed in order for such to become possible?
- I've attached the handout that was inserted in last Sunday's worship order, "Can You Tell Me How I Can Become A Christian?" I hope you'll continue to review it until it begins to feel very comfortable in your own unique way of sharing your faith with those who are not yet friends of Jesus. And remember that we have New Testaments available in the office that you can use in such sharing . . . and then give them away.
- I've also attached once more the several ways in which persons can become members of CBF. I hope you'll become familiar with these, too, so that you can share that good news also with persons who would benefit from becoming CBFers . . . and that means ANYBODY who's not already active in another congregation that lifts up Jesus. **CBF is truly a unique fellowship.** Tell the good news!

**Give yourself a Great Gift
this year . . . join CBF!!!
THIS SUNDAY is Your Day.**