

# Brushy Fork Baptist Church

*A Light to the Counties and to the World*

## NEWSLETTER

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## Friends and Cannibals

### Who is a Friend?

This question may have crossed your mind or it may not have occurred to you. In thinking about friends this month, we may want to consider how some have defined friends. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a friend as, "One attached to another by affection or esteem." Elmer Towns defines friends as either a, "Friend, relative, acquaintance, or neighbor." Clearly, a friend is one who we know and with whom we have some sort of relationship. A relationship is the key and Jesus picks up on this very emphasis when he talks about being a friend of God.

In John 15, Jesus talks about his relationship to God and shares with his disciples the intimacy that he shares with the Father. Jesus goes on to say that if a person abides in him, then Jesus will abide in them signifying a close relationship. The question then becomes, what does it mean to abide in Christ? Jesus answers this question by stating that those who want to abide in him will keep his commandments (Jn. 15:10). Next, Jesus addresses what keeping his commandments looks like and he shows that one who keeps his commands will love his neighbor even to the point of laying down his life for those around them (Jn. 15:12-13). After highlighting the characteristic of love, Jesus repeats himself by saying that his friends keep his commandments (Jn. 15:14). After this step by step progression showing the connection of love and obedience Jesus then makes the most amazing claim of all, he says, "No longer do I call you slaves, for a slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you." (Jn. 15:15)



Here we see the meat of Jesus' argument. If we obey God by loving others as ourselves, then we will be abiding in Christ and have the special privilege of being a friend of God. We will know God and he will know us as friends. What an amazing thought. This is an altogether new development in God's relationship to his creation. Because of Christ's ministry, we, as those who keep his commandments and love him, will now be close friends

with God. We no longer have to wait for his revelation to us like David, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and all the OT saints, but we have the words of Christ and we now have the complete plan of God. That plan includes a command to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and

teaching them to observe all of God's commands (Matt. 28:18-20). So, in being a friend to God, we will take his message of the Good News to our friends and acquaintances. The point will be to rescue our friends from the peril of an eternity spent in hell, with the knowledge that Jesus can be their friend if they will trust and obey him. At Brushy Fork Baptist Church we will have several special services spread over the rest of the year that you can invite your friends to so they can hear this message. Let's all be friends that love Jesus and seek to share the message of eternal life with all of our *friends*.

*written by Chris Clemans*

### Missionary Stories

On April 16, 1858, John G. Paton (33) and his wife sailed to the New Hebrides (Vanuatu) to be missionaries amongst these very primitive and dangerous people. Just nineteen years previous (1839), two missionaries (John Williams and James Harris) from the

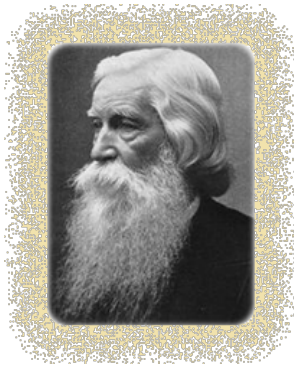
London Missionary Society went to on island (Erromanga) and were eaten by cannibals just minutes after going to shore. You can imagine the resistance that Paton received when he decided that he too shall go and try to win these primitive people to Jesus. Mr. Dickson, a respected elder, exclaimed, "The cannibals! You will be eaten by cannibals!" when he heard of Paton's plan. In faith, Paton responded to this outburst by saying,

*"Mr. Dickson, you are advanced in years now, and your own prospect is soon to be laid in the grave, there to be eaten by worms; I confess to you, that if I can but live and die serving and honoring the Lord Jesus, it will make no difference to me whether I am eaten by Cannibals or by worms; and in the Great Day my Resurrection body will rise as fair as yours in the likeness of our risen Redeemer."*

In faith, Paton went with his wife to the island of Tanna of the New Hebrides. On November 5, he landed on his desired island of Tanna. Yet, in as little as four months both his wife and newborn child died from fever. Paton decided to stay on the island and for the next four years he faced incredible obstacles with no sign of even one conversion. He was finally driven off the island in February of 1862.

Paton did not give up on Tanna or the islands of the New Hebrides, and for the next four years he spent mobilizing missionary efforts to the New Hebrides traveling around Australia and Great Britain. During this time, he married again to Margaret, and he and Margaret decided to go back to the New Hebrides. They ended up on the island of Aniwa and for the next fifteen years they struggled without much fruit of which to speak. They

labored creating an alphabet for the natives, they built orphanages, they sought to train the youth in Christianity and trades, ministered in medicine, and ministered to the families of those dying. Finally, after 15 years Paton was able to say that the whole island of Aniwa had turned to Christ. Because of the ministry of this faithful man the heathen who were supposed to lack the ability to receive the gospel had all turned to Christ in faith. The faith and obedience of John Paton allowed for thousands of people in the New Hebrides to hear and receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What an inspiration even in the face of incredible loss, John Paton lived out his calling. I pray that we strive for this same type of faith and sacrifice in our lives.



*written by Chris Clemans*

## Youth Shout Out

Happy Easter everyone! I hope everyone will be able to join us on Sunday, April 8, for Easter services as we celebrate our resurrected savior. I hope all the youth will join us on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 as we will be beginning a study entitled: "Who are you?", a look at who and what we find our identity in and what makes us who we are. On April 28, we will be going to Louisville to play lazer tag and (weather permitting) go go-carting. Stay tuned as the events for the summer will be coming soon!

*written by Josh McClure*

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