

THE FIRST EPISTLE

VOLUME 42, NUMBER 9

MARCH 6, 2009



Dr. J. Ligon Duncan III PREACHING SCHEDULE

Sunday, March 8
8:30 & 11:00 a.m.

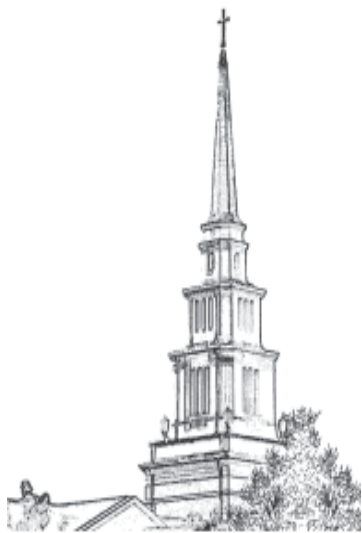
Dr. Ligon Duncan
“In My Father’s House”
Luke 2:41-52

6:00 p.m.

Dr. Derek Thomas
“Lord: Give to Me So That I
Can Give Back to You”
1 Samuel 1:1-28

Wednesday, March 11
6:30 p.m.

Dr. Ligon Duncan
The Gospel and Personal
Evangelism 8
“What’s Our Motivation to
Evangelize?”



Ministering to Students On Campus Through MCF

A Report on Millsaps Christian Fellowship by Brian Sorgenfrei, College Coordinator

Millsaps Christian Fellowship is a ministry that might be unfamiliar to much of First Pres. However, First Presbyterian Church has been ministering to the students at Millsaps through the campus ministry known as MCF for over a decade. MCF is modeled after Reformed University Fellowship (RUF), but it is run by the part-time college interns at First Pres. Our mission is to reach students for Christ and equip them to serve.

We recognize that college is a unique set of four (sometimes five or six) years in an individual’s life. For many, it is a place where hard questions are asked for the first time, where formative life decisions are made, and where people realize their sin and brokenness in new ways. All these aspects of college create an environment ripe for the gospel, therefore, a place where God works mightily in students’ lives. First Pres recognizes this opportunity and has faithfully supported the work for many years.

I wanted to give a brief report on the way God is working through MCF. MCF reaches students through three main avenues. We have a large group meeting on campus Tuesday nights at 8:00. During large group meetings, anywhere from 15-35 students gather for singing, prayer, and a half hour of Biblical teaching. In addition to large group, we also offer small group Bible studies. In this informal setting, a student can feel comfortable discussing and looking deeper into the topics, all the while developing friendships. Lastly, we frequently meet one on one with students who come our way. We recognize that God makes every person in the image of God, and that everyone is a unique individual. Therefore, students have individual sin patterns, issues, and questions. We take the time to get to know the students in the hopes of applying the gospel to their personal situation.

David Felker came on staff this summer and has been doing a fabulous job of developing relationships with Millsaps’s students and with First Pres college students. Over the last year, it has been exciting to see some of the fruit of God’s work. I thought I would let you hear from them:



“Our mission is to reach students for Christ and equip them to serve.”



• MCF was a huge part of my college experience. So many people’s faith is tested or lost in college, but MCF helped me grow in my relationship with God and kept me focused on Him.

• I am so thankful to have MCF as a part of my life! It has not only helped me overcome many struggles while being at Millsaps but also to better prepare for them in the future. I have come to know the greatness of my sins and, that it is by the grace of God that we are saved.

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Pastor's Perspective

A few words about the preaching schedule in the coming months, and in the summer time – just to whet your appetite and stir your anticipation. I will continue to preach through the Gospel of Luke on Sunday mornings until the end of May. Then I will be away on vacation, General Assembly and sabbatical for June and July, and the first part of August. While I am away, you are in store for a great blessing from Derek and company. Wait ‘til you hear the summer sermon series planned!

Meanwhile, starting this Sunday night, Derek is taking us into **1 Samuel**. This short first set from 1 Samuel will run on Sunday nights from March through May, and then take a break for the special summer series. Derek gives us a taste of what he will preach on in this issue of *The First Epistle*. I for one loved the series on Ezra and Nehemiah, and I am truly looking forward to hearing Derek tackle 1 Samuel – an exciting and important and timely book. Be here and invite friends.

In the summer time, on Sunday mornings, Derek is going to preach a series on Romans 8, provocatively titled: “The Best Chapter in the Bible.” I’ll let him explain that to you! Here’s how it will go:

June 7	Romans 8:1-4	“No Condemnation”
June 14	Romans 8:5-8	“Never Mind”
June 21	Romans 8:9-11	“Always Mind”
June 28	Romans 8:12-13	“Killing Fields”
July 12	Romans 8:14-17	“Lovers of Abba”
July 19	Romans 8:18-25	“Hope of Glory”
July 26	Romans 8:26-27	“Spirit Power”
Aug 2	Romans 8:28-30	“Golden Chain”
Aug 9	Romans 8:31-37(1)	“If God is For Us (1)”
Aug 16	Romans 8:31-37(2)	“If God is For Us (2)”
Aug 30	Romans 8:38-39	“No Separation”

This will be a summer to anticipate!

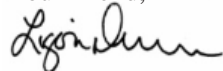
On Sunday evenings, the fare looks just as good. Derek, Jeremy, Billy and Nate are going to preach “Encounters with Jesus.” These sermons will take us to a variety of Gospel stories in which Jesus meets, encounters various people, and amazing things happen. Here’s how it is supposed to go:

June 7	Matt 15	A Concerned Mother
June 14	Mark 8	A Blind Man
June 21:	Mark 10	A Rich Young Man
June 28	Mark 10	Two Proud Men
July 5	Luke 7	A Soldier
July 12	John 3	A Bible Teacher
July 19	John 4	A Shady Lady
July 26	John 8	An Unfaithful Woman
August 2	John 9	A Blind Man
August 9	Matt 16	A Willful Disciple
August 16	John 11	Two Loyal Sisters
August 23	Luke 23	A Dying Man

The series will be chock full of Gospel, so it presents the perfect occasion for you to invite friends along to in the certainty that specific “gospel” issues are addressed and issues relating to how we might get into a saving relationship with Christ.

Ready yet?

Your friend,



Ligon Duncan

Ministering to Students On Campus Through MCF

Continued from page 1.

- After three years of going to MCF, I can without a doubt tell that the fellowship and teaching of MCF have had a significant impact on both my growth in theology and my courage to hold fast to the truth of the Bible while at Millsaps. In the midst of my busy life as a student, it is always refreshing to be reminded at MCF that the grace of God towards me is unmerited.
- At MCF I feel very comfortable asking hard questions and thinking deeply about tough issues because I know that the leadership and the regulars really believe the gospel and have reasons for it.

Since I am scheduled to graduate in May, I wanted to say thank you for the opportunity to work on the campus of Millsaps. Millsaps Christian Fellowship simply would not exist without your prayers and support. It has been a privilege and joy to be a part of MCF. As the remarks from current students show, God is faithfully at work by the power of the gospel. We remind ourselves that the success of MCF will only be seen 20 years down the road. We desire to see God working in students’ lives during their college years, but also recognize that we are just a small part in their life as a Christian. The next generation of men and women is right across the street! The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is changing hearts and building up a group of men and women that will leave college, serve the Lord in their various vocations, and plug into local churches all over the south.

Faith Promise for Missions 2009-2010



As of Sunday, March 1, 247 cards were received for a total of \$687,265.40. If you have not turned in your Faith Promise card, we encourage you to bring it this Sunday and place it in the regular offering plate as an act of worship.

Samuel — Israel's Crisis of Leadership

— by Dr. Derek W.H. Thomas

This Sunday evening it's all-change at First Presbyterian Church, Jackson. We hit the button and move back in time from where we have been parked for the past year. From the middle of the fifth century B.C. and the story of Ezra and Nehemiah we move over half a millennium earlier, to the eleventh century B.C. and the period of the prophet Samuel. We will be taking a look at the opening chapters of 1 Samuel for a few months in which we find the story of the birth and life of Samuel himself.

It's a story about leadership – or the lack of it. It begins at the end of the period known as “the Judges” – and every Sunday school child knows how the book of Judges ends: “In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25). 1 Samuel picks up this tale of woe and tells us how Israel wanted to be like all the nations around them – monarchist. That's right, you're going to have a Brit tell the republic which is America about the benefit of having a monarchy! Well, not quite, because Israel's monarchy was a disaster. You might even say, it should never have happened in the first place. True, God overruled it. True, from this broken system the Messiah-Jesus came. Remember, it was the failure of the kings (David, too, though he was the greatest of them) that got them into the trouble of the exile from which we have just emerged in our recent study of Ezra-Nehemiah.

But before we look at King David or Saul his predecessor, we are going to spend a few months taking a look at the prophet Samuel. There are some great war stories (with the Philistines) which should capture our imagination. But it begins in lowly circumstances. Not in Jerusalem – for this great city has not yet been chosen as the center of worship. We start in Shiloh and with an insignificant couple, Hannah and her husband Elkanah. And all is not well. They are childless and to make matters worse, Elkanah has resorted to an ancient form of procreation – have two wives! Right, it didn't work too well for him. It's the question you are longing to ask a Mormon: how do the wives get along? Not too well, is the answer. How could a godly couple (and they were godly) end up in this sorry mess is a tale in itself, but from it emerges one of the Bible's greatest characters – the prophet Samuel – the result of the godly prayers of a grieving wife. She calls her son Samuel because, “I have asked for him from the LORD” (1 Sam. 1:20). And then, having waited so long to have him, she hands the boy over to a priest called Eli and leaves him under his care. It's hard to take it all in.

So that's what on the First Presbyterian Sunday evening menu for the next three months: a tale of a prophet called Samuel. It should prove exciting.

Here's what the series will look like:

March 8	1 Samuel 1:1-28	“Lord: Give to Me So That I Can Give Back to You”
March 15	1 Samuel 2:1-11	“Rejoicing in the Lord”
March 22	1 Samuel 2:12-36	“When Children Let You Down”
March 29	1 Samuel 3:1 - 4:1a	“Here I Am, Lord”
April 5	1 Samuel 4:1b-22	“Boxed-up Theology”
April 12	1 Samuel 5:1-12	“Is God Safe?”
May 10	1 Samuel 6:1 – 7:2	“Do not Touch!”
May 17	1 Samuel 7:3-17	“Here I Raise My Ebenezer”
May 24	1 Samuel 8:1-22	“We Want To Be Like Everyone Else”

WIC March Circles

■ Monday, March 9, 10:00 a.m.

- #2 Heather Vise
2435 Sand Ridge Drive
- #3 Larry Noblin
350 Glenway
- #4 Helen Mayfield
Church Parlor
- #5 Laura Blaylock and Bess Corbitt
Youth House

Monday, March 9, 12:00 noon

- #14 Susan Turner
Miller Hall (brown bag)

■ Tuesday, March 10, 10:00 a.m.

- #9 Glenda Cox and Mildred Brock
Church Parlor
- #10 Betty Welsh
4343 Dalrymple Court
- #11 Jackie Paine
Youth House

Tuesday, March 10, 12:00 noon (Lunch)

- #13 Janet Quayle
Miller Hall

Tuesday, March 10, 5:30 p.m. (Dinner)

- #7 Marian Ware
Miller Hall

Women in Need

The “Women in Need” ministry of the WIC will be participating in a training session for new volunteers on Saturday, April 18, 2009, from 4:00 - 6:30 p.m. at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility. This outreach is a one-on-one mentoring program between women at First Church and Christian inmates at the prison in Pearl. The deadline to submit completed applications is March 16. NO EXCEPTIONS are made as each prospective volunteer must be cleared with a Mississippi State background check. For sign-up forms and additional information, contact Madeline Clark at 601-956-2136 or mclark5475@bellsouth.net.

Sew and Sow

March 6 & 27
9:00 - 11:00 a.m.



Come join us as we prepare items for the House of Glory, an extension of the Peru Mission that supports unwed teenage mothers. We will knit hats and make diaper bags for this ministry! We will meet on Fridays in Room SC211. New faces are welcome—please come even if you have never attended before! If you need a nursery spot, please call Sarah Waters at 601-321-0725.