



# The Harvester

*Preparing Souls  
To Serve The Lord!*

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## Gordon Methvin

**A Friend of the Lord's Church, Gospel Preachers,  
and the Florida School of Preaching**

Gordon Methvin, who passed from this life April 6, 2020, was a great influence on the Florida School of Preaching. Because the April and May 2020 issues of the *Harvester* were already laid out with a two part article when Gordon passed from this life, we are presenting this tribute to Gordon in this issue.

Brother Gordon Methvin was born May 24, 1930, in Anniston, Alabama, where he graduated from high school in 1947. He was introduced to Eva Jane, his future wife from Gadsden, Alabama, by Franklin Camp, her uncle and a well known preacher of the time. Gordon and Eva Jane were married on April 14, 1956. They were blessed with two children, Debbie and Doug. Gordon and his young family moved to Clearwater, Florida, in August 1968 due to his work as a distributor for medical supplies. He continued in this business until retiring in 1995. Following his retirement from that line of work he went into business with his children, operating a greeting card company for a few years.

Gordon had been a member of the Central church of Christ in Clearwater since 1968. This congregation was established in June 1965, meeting in the small auditorium that they currently use for a fellowship hall. Their present auditorium was completed in December 1968. Gordon, along with others, helped with painting and other tasks within his abilities to complete the new building. He first became an elder in 1971 and had served twice, totaling over thirty-nine years. (He retired from the eldership for a brief time, but realized he was still needed, "came out of retirement," and continued to serve faithfully until a few years ago!)

Gordon's involvement with the Florida School of Preaching began in the early 1970s. Brother B. C. Carr asked Gordon to serve on the school's board of directors in 1978, and he accepted the invitation and served from that time. In 1992, he became chairman of the board and served in that capacity until retiring from the board in 2009, the same year his long-time coworker, Jackie M. Stearsman, retired as director of the school. In his letter of resignation, Gordon wrote: "I have many good memories of those with whom I have served over these years ... My thanks go to brother Stearsman for his



Brian with Gordon (ca. 2008)

leadership as director of the school. As brother Kenyon now takes over as Director, my prayers will be with him as he undertakes his new responsibilities. The school will always be in my prayers as well as the great work that will continue to take place.”

I first learned to appreciate Gordon when I came to work with the Florida School of Preaching in 1996. Three things stand out. First, Gordon’s being part of the Central church of Christ’s eldership (along with Jack Cronk, Sr.) did much to positively shape the direction of the school. I have always admired that eldership for standing with brother Jackie Stearsman through some of his most difficult trials. Through that eldership’s encouragement, along with other sober minded men of the congregation, Jackie was able to continue preaching and eventually began working with the school full-time for many years, including serving as its director from 1992-2009. As the school’s present director, I will be forever thankful for all the Lord has done through Jackie toward the betterment of the school, and Gordon had a large, behind the scenes, role in that!

Second, one of my first impressions of the school as a possible work for me was that they “practiced what they preached” in the areas of reimbursing travel expenses, a compensation package that included room for self-funded health insurance and retirement, and the encouragement to keep family as a priority second only to the Lord. Though these areas might seem insignifi-

cant, at that time in my young preacher’s life, many brethren with whom I interviewed did not seem concerned about them. It was not until I became a board member in 2004 and sat in the meetings that I realized a great part of the school’s attitude had to do with Gordon’s influence and wisdom concerning living “in the world” while not being “of the world.”

Third, “Commissioner Gordon,” as he was known to my children while growing up in Lakeland, has always been a pleasant person to be around. His sense of humor was keen and always relevant. He was always an encouragement to the school and other good works in the Lord!

It is because of these qualities (and many more) that we gratefully dedicated our 2012 lectureship book, *Do You Understand the Local Church?*, to Gordon. May the Lord continue to bless Gordon’s influence in the Lord, and may He continue to be with Gordon’s family, especially with his lovely wife, Eva Jane. May the Lord also send us more men like Gordon Methvin! —*Brian*

**A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient. (2 Tim. 2:24)**

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# “Abba, Father”

## The Perfect Balance Between Intimacy and Reverence

Brian R. Kenyon

Recently, while discussing Jesus’ teaching on prayer in Matthew 6:5-15, the question was asked, “How do we keep from using vain repetitions?” My initial response, and what I do in private prayers, especially on long car rides, is to converse with God through Jesus’ name as I would to a close friend riding with me. Few, if any, use meaningless clichés when having a heart-to-heart discussion with a close friend over serious matters. However, the thought occurred that this might leave the wrong impression. Sometimes, close friends can be flippant or speak slang or colloquialisms inappropriate for addressing God. On the other hand, some people think God is so high above that the very thought of conversing with Him as a friend is beyond imagination. Then, the “Abba, Father” verses came to mind. These two words together expresses the perfect balance between intimacy and reverence.

“Abba, Father” only occurs three times in the Bible: once as a way Jesus addressed His Father in prayer (Mk. 14:36); twice to describe the Christian’s relationship with Deity (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6). “Abba” is an Aramaic word meaning “father.” It is said to derive from the babbling of a little child toward his father, who, in the typical Greco-Roman home of the first-century, was the absolute authority (i.e., the *paterfamilias*) in the home. Everywhere “Abba” occurs in the New Testament, it always appears with the word “Father” (*pater*, πατήρ), undoubtedly so as to eliminate any idea of disrespect. However, the very fact that “Abba” is used at all in connection with God the Father, “tells us that God is not a distant Ruler in transcendence but One who is intimately close” to His people (Leon Morris [quoting Schrenk] *Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Epistle to the Romans*, 316) (cf. Acts 17:27).

This intimacy is further emphasized in that “Abba” was a term signifying the newly acquired father through the process of Roman adoption. In first-century Roman culture, adoption almost always meant a brighter future for the one being adopted. This brighter future is always the case spiritually, when a sinner outside of Christ is adopted into God’s family through obedience to the Gospel. Although the full adoption process is not complete until the resurrection (Rom. 8:23-25), Christians today live with those blessings and promises. Both of Paul’s uses of “Abba” are within adoption imagery.

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” (Rom. 8:15)

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup>to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. <sup>6</sup>And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” <sup>7</sup>Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. (Gal. 4:4-7)

Jesus opened the way for the most intimate relationship possible with God! Through His blood, Jesus “has broken down the middle wall of separation” (Eph. 2:14), and He has given Christians “boldness to enter the Holiest” and to “draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (Heb. 10:19-22). This makes intimacy possible, yet we must always have the reverence and fear due God (Heb. 12:28-29).

Prayer is a great blessing that should always come from the heart (Mt. 6:5-8), through the mediatorship of Jesus (1 Tim. 2:15), and with the confidence God will answer (1 Jn. 5:14-15). Yet, faithful Christians reverently speak to God as an intimate Father.

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Day	Time	Lakeland Classes	Instructor	Credit
Monday	8:30-12:00	1 and 2 Thessalonians and Galatians (137)	Bauer	3
	1:00-4:15	Old Testament History (239)	Kemp	3
Tuesday	8:30-12:00	World Religions (275)	Wheeler	3
	1:00-4:15	Between the Testaments (220)	Wheeler	3
Wednesday	8:30-12:00	Preparation and Delivery of Sermons (203)	Patterson	3
	1:00-4:15	Biblical Greek I (222)	Kenyon	3
Thursday	8:30-12:00	Hermeneutics (100)	Beals	3
	1:00-4:15	Life of Paul (262)	Brownlow-Dindy	3
Friday	8:30-12:00	Hebrews (210)	Atnip	3
	1:00-4:15	Ezekiel and Daniel (214)	Richardson	3
<b>Extension Classes</b>				
Thursday	6:00-8:30	Romans (261) (Tenth Street church of Christ, Apopka)	Brownlow-Dindy	2.5
Thursday	6:00-8:30	Between the Testaments (220) (Orange Street church of Christ, Auburndale)	Bauer	2.5
Thursday	7:00-9:30	TBD (contact the office) (Wesconnett church of Christ, Jacksonville)	Kenyon	2.5