



March - April 2025

Greetings in the Name above every name, Jesus Christ:

Cancer News: Allow me to lead with the often-asked question of late. *“How’s your sister Gale doing after that very invasive surgery?”* Thank you for asking and caring. Let’s just say, everyone involved is amazed how well the procedure went. She has the expected post-op difficulties but is healing well. They had her off oxygen and walking around in two days. She’s been declared cancer free, all tests showing the desired results. We praise God and appreciate more than words can offer how so many of our friends took Gale’s burden upon themselves. God bless you for caring for my sister despite having never met her.

Remember, *“Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?”* I think Christians sometimes wonder how well known they are in the spirit world. I don’t know how well known my sister is either, but in the most devotional way, I have a mental picture of the Lord being PELTED and PUMMELLED with prayers about this “Gale” in North Georgia with cancer! I’m thankful for all of you.

It’s most certainly worthy to mention that we received the same “cancer free!” report concerning Bro. James Knox in DeLand, FL. What a gracious God! Could we now all focus our freed up anti-cancer prayers for my friend Pastor Ron Ralph who is still battling cancer?

We rarely know what the Lord is doing, but it is my strong opinion that the body of Christ would not be better off with his premature departure. Pray for my friend and this most excellent pastor. Thank you for your faithfulness to pray! Only heaven will manifest how effectual it really was.

Attendance News: After a six-month dry spell, the Lord opened the windows of heaven and has brought new visitors. It’s an interesting assortment of personalities and backgrounds.

* Four young military people came to us from a sugary, shallow pentecostal church, longing for more substance and depth. They’ve officially left that church and have been faithful to nearly every service for two months. * One family of six is a direct answer to a very specific prayer. I had asked the Lord for some “mixed” families, that is, families in which one half of the marriage is “local” and the other half mainlander. We’re thankful and are praying for more such mixed marriages so as to gain a footing in the very local community we live in. I’m very white and very articulate. Not many locals know what to do with that. * For those yet unconvinced that Hawaii is a “real mission field”, Victoria from Argentina was walking by our church, saw our sign at 10:55 Sunday morning and decided to pop in and give us a try. She later came back with her American military husband a few times. I pray they continue to return. * I could equally tell of as many who have not returned, apparently looking for something very different than what we offer. We’ll remain faithful to the old paths.

Not as a matter of conviction, but strong preference, Angie and I don’t usually go shopping on Sundays, but having an ox in the ditch (or better said, no ox in our fridge) a few Sundays ago, we ran to the store to grab a rotisserie chicken as a quick solution to lunch. No sooner had we breached the door of the very busy store, that someone came outta left field, *“HEY... you’re them!”* It was a somewhat attractive blond woman, about our age. I was taken back, mind racing as to what this might mean? Did Angie know her? (No). Was this a scam or grift? No clue... but she continued... *“You’re the Christians that stand out on the street with Bible signs every Friday afternoon!”* I breathed a sigh of relief as the field of possibilities narrowed. Come to find out, she lives only a few houses behind our church, complimented us on the renovation improvements and asked about a men’s prayer group that perhaps her husband could attend. We’re following up with her as well. Being famous is tough business.

Jeremiah News: As stated many times, Hawaii is unbelievably transient. We've had SO many people come in and out of our lives; it's a blessing and a curse. One of these families was with us for nearly three years and left in April 2024. They have three boys and the whole family fell in love with the Lord, his word, our church and of course, me and "the Ang".

The middle boy, Jeremiah, received his first phone a little bit ago and has stayed in touch faithfully. He recently sent me a solemn message, thanking me for helping the Lord call him to preach. I don't know the whole story, but this young man is convinced the Lord wants him to be a preacher. There's a LOOOONG road between now and when that might materialize, but I'm THRILLED and will pray that the Lord keep and grow him until that day.

He became such a witness while with us, that not only did his parents have to rein him in, but they asked me to have a talk with him that he not be so aggressive while trying to convince people of their need of salvation! I can work with that ALL DAY LONG and would to God, more young men would catch aflame as young Jeremiah has.

Only slightly related, he really enjoyed one of the last messages I preached entitled "*Jeremiah's Drawers*". The whole family thought it novel to preach on a prophet's underwear. At this point, if you don't know what I'm talking about, you need to read your Bible more and study! The Bible is ANYTHING but boring. If you know, then you know! Amen.

Building News: We're happy to report that we've taken a few more steps to make our outdoor fellowship area nicer. Construction is not that exciting to most, so I'll just leave the thousand words to these pictures.

To my chagrin, the second electrical permitting attempt has also failed. The company completely dropped the ball. Lest I vent here, let me just say, I'm simply accepting it as from the Lord and trusting him with this battle. Just like the Lord asked Israel time and again to trust him with their battles, so will we. One blessing is we were charged \$12k for an *expedited* process but have received a full refund. The fella working it for us now says it'll take time, but should only cost about \$2-3k. Life here is chaotic, irregular and discombobulated! We're not in Germany, *that's fo sho!* Would you ask the Lord once and again to help us with this?

I personally think that I am the one "suffering" the most concerning this. Everyone else seems to be ok with serving in a perpetual construction zone. Laissez-faire, an expression unknown to many, is the spirit of the age. Hawaiian ambition is an oxymoron! Another white import here taught me the phrase *Polynesian paralysis*, a euphemism for laziness.

German News: Back in 2005, during one of our regularly scheduled guest Sundays, the mildly handicapped brother of one of our members was born again. He lived so far away that we rarely saw him after that. He has since passed on to glory. Their mother came a few times as well, but was very hardened to the gospel. She was quite a bitter person and was difficult to be around. We made a concerted effort to show her kindness and the gospel. You may be wondering: "*Why report on something like this from TWENTY years ago?*"

Well, we just received word that the mother finally got saved! She is 80 years old! Before her salvation, she refused to have contact with her son's girlfriend, erroneously blaming her for her son's death (for not calling an ambulance sooner). Remarkably, just after her salvation, some of her first words were: "Call Alice and tell her about Jesus, too."

Meanwhile, Alice reported that they had been given some cassette tapes of my sermons and listened to those over and over until they knew the contents of the sermon by the number on the cassette. She said her boyfriend was "thanking Jesus" every day of his life. She prayed on the phone, asking Jesus to save her as well!!!!

This is a reminder to me and to all of us, that our labour in the Lord Jesus Christ is not in vain and by God's grace, we'll have people walking up to us in heaven, telling the rest of their story after receiving a tract, a witness, reading a bumper sticker or church sign or our persistent invitations to church. I'm THRILLED to hear of that difficult woman getting saved as well as her son and his girlfriend. Would to God more would trust him before it's eternally too late.

BIG PRAYER REQUEST: Over 25 years ago, Angie and I started the church in Heidelberg. In order to get started in a new town, we put an ad in the paper for Germans to practice conversational English and I, in turn, would improve my German. **Axel** is one of many who came. We became friends, dive buddies and I have witnessed to him off and on for 25 years - very directly sometimes. He's always shown interest and has suffered my direct nature (after all he IS German). Well, my good friend is coming to visit me in just a few days with his wife. He's told me he wants to talk about these matters again. Would you PLEASE lift up his name over and over between now and 22 May, that the Lord Jesus would convict his heart and give him the courage needed to finally receive the Lord Jesus?

Thank you for helping us to remain here. We're not as energetic as we once were, but we're thankful that there's still a place for us in the Lord's gleanings. None of us feel very special or very "used" or very fruitful, but our God glories in and commands us not to despise *the day of small things*. Brethren, keep your chins up and your noses down. It's a real balance, but certainly attainable with the help of our Lord Jesus. Soon and very soon, we're going to see the King, our beloved Saviour and God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Trust Him. Don't quit. Thank you for serving him where you are. See ya soon!

Bro. and Sis. Castellaw