Help ourselves in helping others

I am sure that most of us are familiar with the safety demonstration provided by flight attendants. The demonstration typically includes the reminder that airplane seat cushions may serve as "floatation devices" and that oxygen masks will fall from the overhead compartment in the case of "a loss of cabin pressure."

It is this last bit of safety instruction that has always seemed to me to be contrary to the logic of average parents, for I suspect that most parents tend to want to see that their children are safe before they

worry about their own safety. I know that's the way I typically function. But the airline attendant says that we need to put our own oxygen mask on first, and only after having done this should we help our children.

This bit of airline logic is based on the notion that we can't help anyone else if we are suffocating ourselves. I thought about this familiar experience when I recently read a new article on church health. The article was written by two people whose job it is to help hurting congregations deal with situations of cri-

sis. In a sense, they provide the floatation devices and the oxygen masks for churches that are in danger of dying.

Statistics suggest that many congregations are falling into this category these days, for our socalled "postmodern" world has resulted in a number of changes in church life that have probably happened without many of us even noticing them. Yet, here we are living in days when church attendance is the cultural exception rather than the rule, which has caused many congregations and pastors to begin

Meditation

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just

how

many

more

years

we will

be able



Dr. Jeff Hensley "keep Pastor the Kings Mountain church Baptist Church open."

Faced with this reality, we tend to look into the community and wish that more people would become involved in our churches. But when asked why they feel this way, church members will sometimes say that the reason they want more people to come to their church is so that they can keep their programs running and their doors open.

The sad thing about this motive, though, is that it is the same as putting a child's oxygen mask on before putting on our own. When we want more people to come to our church just to keep the doors open, we are allowing ourselves to think of the people in our community as the means of salvation for our churches, rather than thinking of our churches as the means of providing God's salvation to our commu-

Unfortunately, this perspective is backwards, for the purpose of the church is to bring people into loving, life-transforming relationships with God and others. This is the "oxygen" that churches should be providing to the children of our community, but how can we help others do this unless we are willing to do it ourselves? If we ourselves don't have loving, lifetransforming relationships with God and others, then we are missing the point.

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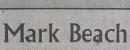


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Featured Church of the Week:

David Baptist Church

To follow is a list of upcoming Churches of the Week. If your church is listed here and you have a special event that you would like listed on your feature week - please contact Lisa at 704-739-7496 or e-mail lisa kmherald@gmail.com

7/22 True Gospel Holiness 7/29 KM Baptist Church 8/5 Sunrise Baptist 8/12 Midview Baptist

KINGS MOUNTAIN Long Creek Presbyterian Church

701 Long Creek Road 704-629-4406

Love Valley Baptist Church 2032 Bethlehem Road 704-730-0075

Macedonia Baptist Church 1101 S. Battleground Avenue 704-739-6811

Midview Baptist Church 703 Margrace Road 704-739-6711

Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church 220 N. Watterson Street

704-739-8354

Mountain View Agape Church 506 Sparrow Springs Road 704-739-0160

Mt. Olive Baptist Church Compact School Road 704-739-4516

Mt. Zion Baptist Church 220 N. Watterson Street 704-739-8354

New Beginnings Church of Jesus Christ 541 Crocker Road

New Bynum Chapel Zion Church N. Cansler Street 704-739-2606

704-730-9507

New Camp Creek Baptist

863 New Camp Creek Ch. Road 704-487-7128

New Life Family Worship Center 428 Oak Grove Road 704-739-9371

New Way Missionary Baptist Church 105 Waco Road

Oak Grove Baptist Church 1022 Oak Grove Road 704-739-4833

704-724-0414

Oak View Baptist Church 1517 York Road 704-739-7831

Pathway Baptist Church 3100 Parkdale Circle 704-734-0852

Patterson Grove Baptist Church 301 Oak Grove Road 704-739-5826

Peoples Baptist Church 1010 Groves Street 704-739-0398

Progressive Church of Our Lord 1001 Cleveland Avenue

704-734-1070 Resurrection Lutheran Church 600 Crescent Circle

Saint Matthew's Lutheran Church

704-739-5580

201 N. Piedmont Avenue 704-739-7466 Second Baptist Church

120 Linwood Road

704-739-4216 **Shady Grove Baptist Church** 339 Shady Grove Road 704-739-8920

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to check next weeks paper.

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