# MEDITATION

#### The formation of the New Testament

Someone recently asked me a very good question. They said, "Did certain Roman Catholic popes make the choice of which books were chosen to be in the canon of the New Testament?" This is really a very good question because all believers need to know how the New Testament came

Of course, before there was a "New" Testament, there was the collection of Jewish Scriptures, which were originally written in Hebrew and were accepted by Jesus and quoted by him in his teachings. Alongside the Jewish Scriptures, early Christians also revered the words of Jesus, which were originally circulated orally from hearer to hearer, and later formed the core of the four Gospels.

Parallel with the teachings of Jesus were the apostolic interpretations of the significance of Jesus' person and work, which were communicated to newly established churches during the earliest Christian mission activity. These writings included the letters of Paul, Peter, James and others, and were written to address the spiritual is-

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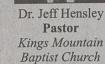
sues of their time, but they were revered by believers because they were understood to be written by the first "apostles" of Jesus.

By the second century, writers like Clement of Rome, and Ignatius, who was the bishop of Antioch, were adding to the growing volume of Christian literature. These writers were

considered "fa-

Church, but not

thers" of the



Meditation

actually "apostles" of Jesus, as Paul was; and even though their works possessed a special authority for the Church, it was clear that believers perceived a distinct difference between writers like Ignatius and Paul. The writings of the church "fathers" were important, but not as important as the writings of the "apos-

By A.D. 150, Justin Martyr tells us that on Sundays Christians customarily read from the "memoirs of the Apostles" (that is, the Gospels) as well as the writings of the Prophets (the Jewish Scriptures)," which means that as early as the middle of the second century the writings of the apostles and the words of Jesus were considered equal with the Jewish Scriptures.

In the years that followed, the words of Jesus and the apostles were translated into several languages and their influence spread across the empire. Then, in the year A.D. 367, Athanasius, who was bishop of Alexandria, provided a list of books that were considered authoritative for Christians, and this list included the books we know today as our New Tes-

What this means is that the process of the formation of the New Testament was not a single decision made by any one council or body of Christian leaders. It was the result of a long and involved journey, a journey that I believe was led by the Holy Spirit.

As the Spirit of God worked in the hearts of believers, they came to revere the writings that we know today as our New Testament, so believers today don't need to worry that any one group of leaders, popes or otherwise, were the sole authority in determining the contents of our New Testament.

# CHURCH BRIEFS

Baccalaureate service June 6

June 6 at 7 p.m. the Kings Mountain High School auditorium will again be the site for the annual Kings Mountain Ministerial Association sponsored baccalaureate service honoring this year's high school graduates. Rev. Jeff Hensley, pastor of Kings Mountain Baptist Church, will deliver the inspirational address. Join us in praying for and encouraging these young men and women upon the completion of this milestone in life.

Health Fair Saturday

Chestnut Ridge Baptist Church, 618 Chestnut Ridge Church Road, is hosting a Health Fair 9 a.m.-2 p.m. on Saturday, May 22. The fair is free and open to the public.

Cross Reference to Sing Saturday

A gospel singing featuring "Cross Reference" will be held Saturday night, May 22, at 7 p.m. at Cherokee Street Baptist Church, 421 Cherokee St. The public is welcome.

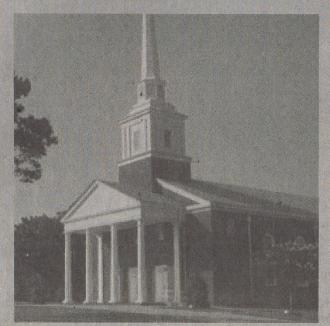
Dixon Presbyterian homecoming

Bert Sigmon, Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina, will speak at homecoming services Sunday, May 30 at 11 a.m. at Dixon Presbyterian Church, 602 Dixon School Road, Kings Mountain.

Following the service, a covered dish meal will be served in the church fellowship hall located in the old Dixon School building. The church was organized in Dixon School on February 4, 1944 and the current church building was dedicated on June 26, 1949.

The public is invited.

# Fellowship & Faith



Featured Church of the Week:

# Patterson Grove Baptist Church

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**Body of Christ** Fellowship Center 405 S. Cherokee St. www.bodyofchrist7.com

**Boyce Memorial ARP Church** Edgemont Drive 704-739-4917

**Burning Bush House of God** 310 Long Branch Rd (KM) 704-739-2877

Calvary Way Holiness Church 1017 Second Street Pastor Clifton Morgan

**Carson Memorial Baptist** Church

262 Sparrow Springs Road 704-739-2247

Central United Methodist Church 113 S. Piedmont Avenue 704-739-2471

Cherokee St. Baptist Church 421 S. Cherokee Street

Chestnut Ridge Baptist Church 618 Chestnut Ridge Road

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First Church of the Nazarene 121 Countryside Road

First Presbyterian Church 111 E. King Street 704-739-8072

First Wesleyan Church 505 N. Piedmont Avenue 704-739-4266

Galilee United Methodist 117 Galilee Church Road 704-739-7011

Gospel Assembly Church 202 S. Railroad Avenue 704-739-5351

Good Hope Presbyterian Church 105 N. Cansler Street 704-739-1062

Grace Fellowship 144 West Mountain Street 704-481-8888

Grace United Methodist Church 830 Church Street 704-739-6000

Harvest Baptist Church 144 Ware Road 704-734-0714

Kings Mountain Baptist Church 101 W. Mountain Street 704-739-2516



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704-739-0310 **David Baptist Church** 2300 David Baptist Church

Dixon Presbyterian Church 602 Dixon School Road dixonpresbyterian.com

East Gold Street Wesleyan Church 701 E. Gold Street 704-739-3215

**East Kings Mountain Church** Hwy 161, Bessemer City/KM

704-739-7367 **Eastside Baptist Church** 308 York Road

Hwy.

704-739-8055 **Ebenezer Baptist Church** 1621 County Line Road

704-739-8331 El Bethel United Methodist Church 122 El-bethel Road

Notice

to check next weeks paper.

In order to accommodate the number of churches in our communities, we will print two alternating lists of churches each week. If you don't see the church you're looking for, be sure