

## Upcoming Events...

Ladies Bible Class: Today at 4:00 p.m.

Barnabas Group Meeting: Tuesday, 11/29 at 7:00 p.m. at McKnight home.

### Read through the Bible in 2016!

Suggested chapters to read so that we might read through the entire Bible during 2016! **This week's "schedule":**

- Day 319 - Luke 24; John 20-21 Monday
- Day 320 - Acts 1-3 Tuesday
- Day 321 - Acts 4-6 Wednesday
- Day 322 - Acts 7-8 Thursday
- Day 323 - Acts 9-10 Friday
- Day 324 - Acts 11-12 Saturday
- Day 325 - Acts 13-14 Sunday

### November Birthdays

6 Ashley Tanner	10 Daniel Brown
21 Carroll White	27 Lupita Guzman

### November Anniversaries

2 Shannon & Susan Hudson

#### Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.  
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.  
Sunday.....6:00 p.m.  
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

#### Church of Christ

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**Preacher:**  
Mike McKnight

(Address Service Requested)

# Indio Informer

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### A Gift From Johnson Oatman

By David Bragg

Over a 100 years ago Johnson Oatman gave a wonderful gift to Christian worship. It sprang out of a gift he himself had received from his father.

Born in 1856, at Medford, NJ, Johnson Oatman inherited his father's love for music. An excellent singer, the elder Johnson's voice filled the Oatman home and made an indelible impression in the mind of his young son. After college the younger Oatman was a partner in his father's general store and later in the insurance industry while also serving as a denominational preacher. But from the age of 36 much of his "spare time" was spent on his real passion, writing hymns of which he reportedly authored more than 5,000. Hymnologist Jacob Henry Hall wrote of Oatman, "no gospel song book is considered as being complete unless it contains some of his hymns" ([hymnary.org](http://hymnary.org)). While we are familiar with Oatman's favorite hymns, **Higher Ground** and **No Not One**, it is **Count Your Blessings** (written in 1897) that is considered his finest work. It has been said of this song, "Men sing it, boys whistle it and women rock their babies to sleep to it" (St. Augustine Record, 11-20-14). The hymn's popularity was evident from the moment it was first released but skyrocketed in America during the Great Depression, seven years after Johnson Oatman, Jr.'s death.

As we approach the fourth Thursday of November the thoughts of most Americans will turn towards thanksgiving. It is truly a shame that it takes a national holiday to dredge such thoughts to the surface when every day countless blessings from God are taken for granted. How much better this world would be if everyone heeded Paul's command, "*in everything give thanks*" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Perhaps the familiar words and melody of **Count Your Blessings** will linger with us as a subtle reminder of the source of those daily blessings. That would be a great gift from Johnson Oatman.

## Hitting the Bull's-Eye

By Joe Chesser  
(Modified for 2017)

Tony Evans related a story in the introduction of his book *The Kingdom Agenda* that I thought particularly appropriate as we are about to begin a new year (page xv-xvi).

One day a man was on his way to spend the day with a good friend who lived on a farm. When the man reached the farm, he turned onto the long, winding road that led to the farmhouse. On the way, he had to pass by the barn. But as he drove by the barn, he stopped and got out because he saw something that both amazed and stupefied him.

Drawn on the side of the barn were twenty targets. Each target had a hole right through the middle of its bull's-eye. There were no other holes anywhere on the barn. Whoever had been using the barn for target practice was definitely a crack shot.

The visitor couldn't believe it. He got back in his car, drove up to his friend's farmhouse, and said, "John, before we do anything else, I've just got to ask you. Who in the world did the shooting on the side of your barn?"

John said, "Oh, it was me." His friend replied, "I can't believe anybody can shoot that well! We're talking about twenty targets with twenty dead-center bull's-eye shots. You mean to tell me you did that?" John said, "Made every shot." "Where in the world did you learn to shoot like that?" John's friend asked. "It was easy. I shot first, then I drew a target around the bullet hole."

Tony Evans' point was: "We do everything we can to give the impression that our lives are on target when in reality all we have done is learn to paint bull's-eyes." In a humorous way, that little story illustrates a serious flaw in our society today. Many, many people have tried to camouflage their emptiness and failures by painting meaningless "targets" around themselves that give the appearance that their lives are successful, that their lives are on target with purpose and direction. They have learned to look, talk and act like people who know what they are doing.

Workaholics want their families and friends to think that they are reaching their dreams, when they are often just trying to escape the realities of life. Parents want others to see how good a job they are doing by painting targets of involvement in activities outside the

home. They sometimes use sports, hobbies, scouting, etc. as proof of how good of parents they are. Even Christians sometimes paint targets of church attendance or mission trips or charitable contributions to give the appearance that they are spiritually healthy.

Hitting the bull's-eye is not the same thing as painting a bull's-eye around something you have already done. As we begin the new year, 2017, let's be sure we are aiming at the targets the Lord has set for us, forgetting about how we might happen to appear to others.

*"Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."* Philippians 3:12-14

## As The Year Ends

By Ronald Bartanen

As the year 2016 rapidly draws to a close, we should remind ourselves once again of this gift of God we call "time." How quickly the year has passed! Time has been described as "a section cut from the great circle of eternity," and "the uncertain boundaries of life on earth." Ben Franklin said, "Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of." Someone else once said, "I have no yesterdays. Time took them all away. Tomorrow may not be, but I have today." Time has great value. Although you may not be paid an hourly wage, you cannot limit the value of time.

If you would burn a \$100 bill, you would be destroying more than the paper and ink of which it consists. You would, in essence, be taking bread from your table, medicine from the sick, and books from the scholar. Likewise, the value of time is not in itself, but in what time offers us—the blessings, privileges, and opportunities of life.

Time is NOW. Not yesterday—all of the yesterdays have passed on, and its opportunities are no more. Tomorrow has not yet come—and it may never be. You are left with only today. This must have been in the apostle Paul's mind when he admonished, "*See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil*" (Ephesians 5:15-16, NKJV). Time well-spent is time spent in the will of God.