



Director Notes for February

Web: www.faithministriestupelo.com Location: 1634 North Veterans Blvd., Tupelo, Ms. 38804.
Phone: 662-842-5060

From A New Director with an oversize **mantle**:

Will you allow me through this letter (lengthier than any future ones) give you a better feel of what it was like to counsel with Bob McCustion. The purpose serves also to supplement the attached newsletter, hopefully giving you a clearer picture of Faith Ministries, Inc. and its future.

What is a mantle?: def. an important role or responsibility that passes from one person to another.

The mantle has been past; however, for a week all this now responsible counselor could do is stare at Bob's empty counseling chair and office desk. The celebration of his life has past. Dr. Tim Lampley's words cut through my heart as he asked the men around me be sure to pray daily for Opie. I can see my need desperately and clearly. Bob's skill of pulling out hurting people's hidden troubles was that of a master artist. His counseling answer was biblical, simple, precise, and loving; it was delivered with confidence because it was Holy Spirit trusted. My tears have turned into "seeking desperately" God's wisdom to not change what does not appear to be broken at Faith Ministries. At the end of the long first week, God answered with 1 Cor. 4: 16-17 where Paul said, **I urge you to BE IMITATORS OF ME.** That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church (1 Cor. 4:16-17).

So AMEN Bro. Tim. I need an abundance amount of prayer. Imitate Bob? Imitating Bob is imitating Paul who imitated His Lord Jesus Christ. Will you allow me to honor him as well by giving you a glimpse of where I believe God is leading this ministry. I have been entrusted "mantle" of huge responsibility.

I had counseled with Bob for 6 years. About 6 months ago Bob and I finally discussed the future of Faith Ministries, before he left to carry a wooden cross through Jerusalem. He gave me the kind of answer I imagined, **"You know how this works. Seek God's wisdom, make plans, glorify God, and He will guide your steps."** Of course, Bob would give me that precise faith instruction. God was a lot clearer: **"Without faith it is impossible to please Me" (Heb. 11:6).**

Faith and obedience described Bob's journey. To top it all off, he had a lot of laughter along the journey. All he ever seemed to need was the manna from Heaven for that day's work. This is a message to all of us isn't it? Go make disciples! But have life and have it abundantly along the way. Bob did not appear to waste too many moments in carrying out the Gospel message. Immediately after our Lord ascended to be with His Father, the angel looked at the bewildered followers of Christ and asked, "Why are you all standing around. Go make disciples!"

That's right where I feel I am, being handled the mantle. It's a good place. Can I be transparent with you? I don't have a clue how to carry out such a task but to rely on wisdom and direction from the Holy Spirit.

For the last six years I counseled beside a skilled laborer at work. His skill was a consistent faith that followed Christ with a "New Birth" message in the counseling office, hosting the ministries TV Program, interacting in the community, or in another country (Cuba/Israel). I am convinced that is why Bob McCustion was the most effective, fruitful bearing, servant-lay-counselor-evangelist- to farm/fish for souls in at least North Mississippi. It was his 44 year journey, drawing wisdom, direction, and strength, one day at a time, using the portion of manna given for that day. Ok! plus an occasional snack: guaranteed to be a can of Spam or Vienna sausages; it was his comical trademark. Those that knew Bob well, knew that he grabbed all the souls he could get for Kingdom growth on the time allotted for that day. He served His Lord one day at a time, one step at a time, and trusted God to meet his needs for everything else. Bob was not perfect. But what made him the godly man that he was, was when he was in error, He was always quick to make things right with others and his Lord. He never wasted a dime of the ministries gifts. He used it for what it was there for, growing God's Kingdom. He would even microwave yesterday's coffee. Faith Ministries, Inc. has always been God's ministry and Bob was a good steward of it.

So yes, IMTATING that journey is one I will have to make. I acknowledge strongly I will need God each day to make that journey.

A month ago, at the end of a long counseling day for Bob and myself, I walked past Bob's office door and paused to hear again the art of counseling, thinking: "there he goes again; a skilled laborer, keeping it simple." This would be the last time I would hear that similar "testimony" I had heard for 6 years..... It was the way he started the days of Lay Ministry in the 70's and 80's. I hear, the Lay Ministry was like a North Ms. Revival, even spreading into other states. Bob's story never changed.....

BOB: "Joe, I was raised on a plantation in Arkansas. We didn't have much; in fact, we were poor. My dad was a mechanic and my family, sharecroppers. Joe my goal was getting as far as I could away from that cotton field. I wanted to own my own business and make a lot of money. The American Dream! I did just that, Joe. I grew a business, bought a new house, new car, new truck, and a bunch of other toys. I just knew it was going to make me happy.

Oh, daddy and momma made sure we were in church regularly, and I believed in Jesus, God, heaven, hell, sin, and other truths in the Bible. But Joe, my life was still without meaning and purpose. After looking in all the wrong places for answers, I eventually came to the end of myself. I had lost my business, almost lost my family, and my dreams were shattered.

But on August 27, 1967, I gave my life to the Risen Christ, and Joe, Jesus invaded my life, forgave me of my sins, and made a new person out of me. The scriptures 2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore if any person be in Christ, he is a new creation, old things have passed. Behold, all things become new" became real in my life.

In 1973, God called me into full time ministry as a lay person. I had a wife and 3 young children when I walked away from the business world and began Faith Ministries. My salary was \$1,000

per month, yet God enabled me to provide for my family, meet all our financial needs, and even blessed my children with college degrees. God has always provided for me and my family and still does.

Joe I have been living for Jesus since that day, and I am having the time of my life! (then that familiar “Bob laugh”).

Joe, let me ask you a question, **“Is it possible for Jesus Christ to live in a person’s heart and them not change? Can you see evidence of Christ living in your heart Joe?”**

Joe was another won for The Kingdom! A week later, I would drive Bob and his pastor to Memphis for what would be his last International trip to his beloved Cuba..... **65** university students came to faith in Jesus Christ. Regardless of a person’s circumstance or life challenge, Bob found a way to become all things to all people. YES, WORTH IMITATING, at 1634 North Veterans Blvd., Tupelo, Ms.

So as I sit typing this in his chair, at his desk, reflecting back at Bob’s Celebration (funeral) Service, 2 weeks after Cuba. A question was asked to the full church, “If Bob McCustion shared Jesus with you and your life was changed would you raise your hand in attendance?” Around 400+ in attendance, and 70% of the crowd’s hands went up.

40 plus years, a simple sharecropper from Arkansas, followed Jesus to Tupelo/Pontotoc/starting a Lay Witness Renewal movement, spreading revival, from North Mississippi to other states, A fruitful counseling office, TV program broadcasting a 104 mile radius, Countless evangelistic trips to Cuba, recently Israel. 1000’s of “New Births” for Christ.

All I know is our brother’s assignment is complete. Ours is just beginning. Bob celebrates and waits for us. He will be missed. But man, did he leave God’s fingerprints everywhere! There is plenty more to do. I don’t know that I can come close to matching that work. All I know is to be faithful with what I do know. **However, I do hear “our” Paul say, “I urge you to BE IMITATORS of me when I imitated Christ. That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church” (1 Cor. 4:16-17).**

Wouldn’t you know I love Spam and Vienna Sausages too? However, I draw the line on microwaving the day old coffee..