



James Simrell Woodroof

March 9, 1933 - March 22, 2018

James Simrell Woodroof (Jim) was born on the 9th of March, 1933, to Claude and Bessie (Simrell) Woodroof in Obion, Tennessee. He lived to celebrate his 85th birthday. He passed on to be with his Lord (which, for him, was “better by far”) on March 22, 2018. Jim graduated from David Lipscomb High School in 1951. He attended Memphis State University for his freshman year in 1951-52, then attended to David Lipscomb College from 1952-1955, graduating with a BA in Biblical Studies. He began work on a Master’s of Arts in Religion from Harding Graduate School of Religion in the early 1960’s but—due to ministry and family demands and the decision to do mission work in New Zealand—was unable to complete his work until 1967, when he was awarded an MA degree.

Jim and Louine (his wife of 64 years) met and dated while Jim led singing and worked with the youth at the Union Avenue Church of Christ in Memphis, Tennessee. They were married in 1953 (in a double-wedding with Louine’s sister Racine and her groom, Bill Kritz; Jim’s father, Claude, officiated). Five children were born of their union over a ten-year span: James Timothy in Hickory, North Carolina, in 1955; David Bryan in Hickory, North Carolina, in 1957; Jonathan Bradley in Columbia, South Carolina in 1959; Amy Elizabeth in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1962; and Rachel Louine in Christchurch, New Zealand, in 1965.

Jim’s and Louine’s partnership in both family and ministry was—besides faith in Jesus himself—the greatest blessing either of them knew.

Ministry

Jim and Louine served a number of churches during the course of their six plus decades of ministry.

- Berea Church of Christ, Berea, Tennessee (1953-1955)
- Hickory Church of Christ, Hickory, North Carolina (1955-1957)
- West Columbia Church of Christ, West Columbia, South Carolina (1957-1959)
- South Highland Church of Christ, Little Rock, Arkansas (1959-1963)
- Union Avenue Church of Christ, Memphis, Tennessee (1963-1965)
- Bryndwr Church of Christ, Christchurch, New Zealand (1965-1970)
- White Haven Church of Christ, Memphis, Tennessee (1970-1972)
- College Church of Christ, Searcy, Arkansas (1972-1980)

- A&M Church of Christ, College Station, TX (1980-1984)
- Burlington Church of Christ, Burlington, Massachusetts (1984-1990)
- Muskogee Church of Christ, Muskogee, Oklahoma (1990-1997)

Jim and Louine always spoke fondly of their time in New Zealand (an experience Jim called “pivotal” to his thinking and future ministry) and their work with college students in Searcy (the “high point” of their ministry life).

In the closing years of his ministry, Jim also did interim ministries with several churches, including churches of Christ in Searcy, Arkansas, Corpus Christi and Belton, TX, Antioch and Nashville, TN.

Writing and Speaking:

Jim wrote several books, addressing issues relevant to churches of Christ or focusing on favorite biblical passages. His books have been translated into several languages and were pivotal in shaping the thinking of ministers and church leaders in churches of Christ over the past half century: *The Divorce Dilemma*; *Struggles of the Kingdom*; *Four Realities*; *The Aroma of Christ*; *Beyond Crossroads*; *Between the Rock and a Hard Place*; *The Church in Transition*; and *Sayings that Saved my Sanity*. (His last book—*Sayings*—was written and published at the age of 81.)

In addition to his writings, Jim was a popular speaker, preaching at lectureships, retreats, and congregational meetings, as well as at events around the world (in Asia, Europe, and the South Pacific).

Jim’s preaching and writing ministries occurred during interesting times in the history of churches of Christ. At a juncture where churches of Christ in general were struggling with more sectarian and reactionary tendencies, Jim stressed the centrality of the person and work of Jesus Christ, the priorities of love and unity over doctrinal divides, and the need for personal transformation by the power of the gospel. Many people who sat under his teaching or read his writings testify to the influence of Jim’s Christ-centered teaching on their own understanding and practice of faith.

Jim is preceded in death by his parents and brothers Dan Woodroof and Tom Woodroof. Jim is survived by his wife of sixty-four years: Louine Miloe McGee Woodroof; sisters, Jodi Morris (married to Sonny) and Bettye Alley; children, Tim Woodroof (married to Julie), David Woodroof (married to Debbie), Jon Woodroof (married to Stacy), Amy Phillips (married to Mark), and Rachel Bossier (married to Scott). He is also survived by 15 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 25, 2018 at the College Church of Christ in Searcy. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the charity of your choice.

Events

MAR **Memorial Service** 02:00PM

25

College Church Of Christ

712 E Race Ave, Searcy, AR, US, 72143-4421

Comments



“ I looked forward every Sunday to hearing a message from Jim Woodroof while I was a student at Harding in 1973-75. His sermons made a great impact on me, helping me to grow deeper in my faith and walk with the Lord. His messages were so soul-stirring and challenging. I have thought of him many times through the years and credited him as my all-time favorite preacher. I can say he was who I missed most of all when my time was done there.

Susan Murphree Kelley - August 23, 2018 at 05:15 PM



“ We loved having Jim and Louine in Corpus Christi, TX at Church of Christ South. Dan and I along with many others, wanted to keep him there! What a blessing he was! There are not enough words to express our condolences....yet, one day soon there will be a great reunion!! Dan and Jo Gardner

Jo Gardner - April 30, 2018 at 12:22 PM



“ Gary And Melinda Smith lit a candle in memory of James Simrell Woodroof



Gary and Melinda Smith - April 02, 2018 at 06:43 PM



“ Jim was in a short list of recent preachers that I would consider a "Hero of the Faith". His ability to think "outside the box", but still within the Word, was wonderful. We were blessed to have him speak for our Men's Retreat and at church service several years. He was able to relate almost prophetically in both settings. When you spoke to him, he was always so personable and interested in what you had to say. Another one of his and Louine's legacies was giving us Tim. He worked with us for over a year as an interim preacher and supported us greatly with his guidance, discernment, and love.

May the Lord be with this whole family, and rest in the assurance that Jim is (as he said many times) "leaning just a little closer to Jesus". Love, from LaRue and Marcy Bennett, North Central Church, Indianapolis.

LaRue Bennett - March 28, 2018 at 01:59 PM



“ Jim had a powerful influence on my life. His stress to be Christ-centered will live with me forever. The work he did at the college church supported our efforts in the Bible Department. Many people refer to the golden years of training preachers as the time Jim was preaching at the college church. His teaching of the relationship of the gospel to Acts was life changing. In many ways, Jim was a man ahead of his time. He preached more as a prophet than he did as a pastor. He had the ability to challenge past thinking in a unique way. He was not afraid to challenge the status quo regardless of the price he had to pay. He lived the faith he proclaimed. I am a better disciple of Jesus because I knew Jim. What I have said could be said by a countless number of students he influenced at the College church.

Jerry Jones - March 27, 2018 at 11:27 AM



“ To the Woodruff family and to David. My Mother, Helen James and I Gerry Schnebly had so much admiration for Bro. Woodruff, and you David, Mother would have been very moved to learn of his passing. Prayers to your family and love.

Gerry James schnebly - March 25, 2018 at 06:22 PM



“ I graduated from Harding in 1980. Jim is an integral part of my experience. He was so real. He pointed us to the man, the suffering servant and the friend Jesus. It has helped to sustain me for almost 40years and I can't WAIT to see both of them in glory.

Kendra Gorrell Johnson - March 25, 2018 at 08:51 AM



“ I just couldn't wait to hear his next sermon. That day he announced he had done all he could do there, and it was time to move on was a very sad day for me. I never stopped missing him. Jim just opened our world in ways no one else did. I am happy for him and will always carry him in my heart! May the Lord bless all of you and keep you close.

Marlene Copeland - March 24, 2018 at 10:41 PM



“ Words cannot express the profound influence Brother Woodruff had on me during my time at Harding from 1976-1980. I was especially grateful for his preaching influences, for a person who survived a difficult family life. I can remember all the worship services that we had outside centered around the lily pool area at Harding when a new semester would begin. Moreover, I remember racing to each service with my room mate, just to get a seat up front at College Church. I was so excited, because He had an uncanny ability to actually make you felt like you had walked with Jesus. Also, I will never forget the time he asked one of his rhetorical questions, and the answer was given by a trucker over his CB radio as he was passing through town. Much of my teaching and preaching has been heavily influenced by Brother Woodruff. It is rare in life that you can find a person to have had a profound influence on you. For me, it was Brother Woodruff. Thank you for helping a young kid from Toledo, Ohio, experience for the first time in his life, what it means to walk with Jesus. I am forever grateful God put him into my life at such a pivotal time. Danny Duncan

Danny Duncan - March 24, 2018 at 08:34 PM



“ Jim was such a blessing to me as a teacher, mentor, and friend at Harding in the early 90s. I was blessed to get to be in his home most every week, and his love for Jesus was infectious and life-changing for a kid who had grown up at church, but sometimes not all that near Jesus. I'm blessed to have known him and honored to have counted him a friend. Looking forward to seeing him again!

Patrick Odum - March 24, 2018 at 07:43 PM



“ I caught the last two years of Jim Woodroof at the College church in Searcy and God changed me through the man. I listened to his sermons, I read his books and I watched him live. He was deeply in love with Jesus of Nazareth and he invited you to join him in experiencing the goodness of God. Yesterday, I was talking with a friend who said he known the Christ but that Woodroof introduced him to Jesus. Jim Woodroof was a kind, gentle, grace-soaked servant, who was vulnerable even in the glare of the pulpit. I smile to remember that his chief rhetorical tool was to genuinely ask his listeners a spontaneous question. He was an open-handed proclaimer of the good news of Jesus Christ.

John W Moore - March 24, 2018 at 02:33 PM



“ Jim was certainly a pivotal person, especially for my life as a newly converted Christian from Catholicism. I decided to come to Harding to study the bible in 1979. Shelly Kritz & Dave Hawley drove me down from Wichita, KS for a visit to HU. I asked Shelly where we'd be staying; she simple stated “at my uncle's house”. Little

did I know my first night in Searcy would be in Jim's home. Arising the next morning, I was greeted by Jim's bouncy, cheerful, young daughter, Rachel in her pajamas. From that point forward, I was hooked to the Woodroof family. Jim's series on Jesus captivated me & I especially remember his story of "Claire in Despair & Claire in the Air". It was a pivotal story for Jim's ministry & a pivotal story for my further study of Jesus Christ. Thereafter & to this present day, I worship with the church of Christ. However, when asked my 'denominational preference', I always refer to myself simply as a student of Jesus Christ. I continue to listen to Jim's audio sermons on my computer. My in-laws are Arnie & Wanda Pylkas as I am married to their daughter, Lauri. Jim would come to Arnie's home when he was bedridden & would always bring two chocolate malts; one for him & one for Arnie to drink as they conversed. Whenever I was in Searcy these last few years, I'd call Jim to meet me at Midnight Oil where we'd share nuggets of scriptural insights we each had discovered. I am saddened at his passing, but he influenced thousands upon thousands to keep their focus on Jesus Christ, as found in the Gospels. I am a better student of Jesus Christ, thanks to Jim's mentor-ship. I say, as many others would now say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." All my love & prayers go to the Woodroof family at this, the hour of your bereavement.

Kelly Bracken - March 24, 2018 at 12:46 PM



“ Jim had such an impact on so many including myself. His joyful faith helped shape me. I'm grateful to have known him. Louine and family, I'm with you in spirit tomorrow. Thanks for your hospitality and willingness to share Jim with the rest of us.

Cindy Lapp - March 24, 2018 at 12:16 PM



“ Thankful for a life well-lived and for the influence he had on tens of thousands of us. We grieve with the family in losing him to this side of heaven and rejoice that he is now where he lived to go.

Martha Farrar Highfield - March 24, 2018 at 10:59 AM



“ Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of James Simrell Woodroof.



March 24, 2018 at 07:25 AM



“ Such wonderful memories of the Woodroof family from their time in College Station, TX. Jim lived his faith. He was kind, gentle, and loved his Lord. I learned so much from him. One of my favorite sayings from Jim was "Do what your mind knows is right until your heart follows."

Louine and Jim built a house during their time in College Station which they sold to my young family of 4 when they moved away. We thought of them so often in the 27 years we lived there. One thing they shared with us was their pledge to live off a little less each year than the year before. I was amazed.

The world has lost a great man of God, but I know he is rejoicing to be home at last!

Vickie (Young) Thomas

Vickie Thomas - March 23, 2018 at 09:46 PM



“ Our family always enjoyed Jim's sermons at College Church in Searcy. We also enjoyed your whole family. I have nothing but fond memories of you all.
Patricia Cox

Patricia J. Cox - March 23, 2018 at 08:14 PM



“ Dearest Louine, Tim and Family

This is Beth (Maguffee) Stafford (Harding 72-76) Jim (Brother Woodruff) called me “Scruffy Maguffee”. I deeply loved him and you.

I have often used your (Louine and Jim) practice of routine hospitality with hundreds of us college students, providing us a feast of popcorn, water and precious fellowship in your cozy home, as an example of the ultimate example of extravagant love to encourage women to open thier homes regardless of means.

Tim attended our wedding in Michigan 1-3-77 in a snow storm. Thrilled us!

Do you remember when i embarrassed myself by visiting your home in Searcy (unannounced visit from Michigan) i wanted to surprise and did not know you had moved - i was let in my a child - telling her to get her dad because i wanted to surprise him. Then I decided i would hide behind behind the couch and proceeded to jump out when i heard footsteps come into the room... scary event to the new family..

Brother Woodruff was laughing so hard with me when i finally located him, saying “scruffy, i have to live in this community”.

This story has entertained my family and countless friends over the years! :)

He counseled me, mentored me and inspired me to be my best person and to love Jesus first. I am sure i am just one of many... but wanted to share my wonderful memories with you.

I got to reconnect with him in the northeast and I always treasured that reunion. Now, i will look forward to the ultimate reunion.

Brother Woodruff played a majot role in the reason I will be there.

#blessed to have called him friend.

I share your sorrow and your joy.

Beth

Beth Stafford - March 23, 2018 at 07:25 PM



“ Another star was added to our heavenly sky Thursday morning. Only God knows how much Jim and Louine impacted our lives in the early 60s. And thru the years he continued to influence us for good. We are all thankful and happy to have been around them. We are blessed with many good memories . God’s blessings to Louine and all the family. We’ll visit again one day.
Imogean & Farrell Falwell

imogean Falwell - March 23, 2018 at 10:18 PM



“ Louine,
My Jim loved your Jim so much. Oh what a reunion they are having. My heart goes out to you and your family. I love you, Peggy Arnold

Peggy Arnold - March 23, 2018 at 05:42 PM



“ Words cannot express the love and gratitude I feel for Jim due to his influence on my life, and in the life of my family while growing up in Searcy. One of my earliest memories is watching him roof our house with my father - not exactly what you'd expect a "preacher" in one of the most influential pulpits in our fellowship to do. At the age of 6, he took me by the hand and taught me how to roller skate. I remember him calling the children to the pulpit steps of the College church and watching him sit among us. As I grew older and continued to listen to his sermons and read his writings throughout the years, Jim's life, teaching, and example always allowed me to see Jesus more clearly. As a child, I truly thought he was just like Jesus. As an adult, I now realize he allowed Jesus to be seen through him. I praise God for the life of Jim Woodroof and I look forward to sitting with him again, but this time at the feet of Jesus.

Alan Underwood

Alan Underwood - March 23, 2018 at 04:28 PM



“ May God bless this wonderful family. May God give you grace and peace.

Keith Bellamy - March 23, 2018 at 02:11 PM



“ Although I was anticipating it, I cried when I read the Friday obituary column about Jim's death. This long-time friend and mentor had a lasting impression on my spiritual life, reorienting me from a law/ works relationship with church organizations to one of a grace/faith relationship with Jesus Christ. I have found this is not an easy transition to make, but helped tremendously by my first beginning to identify with his early book "Struggles of the Kingdom," then by his call directing the church back to a Christ-centered message in his later "The Church in Transition." He dealt with the questions many of us traditionalists in the church struggled with; comfort with the status quo, fear of loss of the old and familiar, the new and untried. There came an outpouring of criticism about his "soundness" with such screeds as "Transition to What?" that subjected Jim to persecution for a period of time until more spiritual heads prevailed. Jim in his grace-filled way defended his position but never attacked his critics personally. His teaching series on "Grace in the Parables of Jesus" was always in great demand with wide acceptance. He could see grace where other only saw law and rules. If something did not lead one to a more Christ-like transformation, it should be discarded, he would insist. His often stated goal was to follow Jesus, wherever it led.

I was not ready for Jim to leave this world, but realize he is now in a better one. I will continue to be enriched by his writings as well as personal encounters that set the mark for me to follow, though in my hesitant and faulty way. I can not imagine anyone who will be more welcomed into Jesus' open arms than Jim Woodroof.

Clarence Richmond,
Searcy, AR

Clarence Richmond - March 23, 2018 at 11:58 AM



“ Jim was an inspiration to so many during his lifetime. I loved hearing him preach when I was a student at Harding and I loved hearing him again when he preached for us again for a season when he preached for us at Sycamore View several years ago. I count it a blessing to have known him! May God bless your family richly with many wonderful memories to ease your time of loss and grief!

Tammie Skelton Hacker

Tammie S. Hacker - March 23, 2018 at 10:45 AM



“ Praying for all of you. We give gratitude to God for allowing us to meet and be impacted by such a powerful influence as Jim was to us. His sweet spirit, his lessons and his writings with forever remain with us. With deep sympathy for your loss.
Dr. Tom and Anita Drinnen

Tom and Anita Drinnen - March 23, 2018 at 09:59 AM



“ Keeping the Woodroof family in prayer. Jim's lessons at College Church were inspiring while I was at Harding. He came to Rochester, NY for a meeting and we had him over for dinner. He was such a genuinely humble servant of God. I'll never forget the influence his sermons had on me. Thankful to God that our paths crossed.
Tina Hines Brazas

Tina Hines Brazas - March 23, 2018 at 09:42 AM



“ Love and prayers for you through this difficult time. I have so many wonderful memories of growing up with you through the years. My favorite memory are the times that I would see him over the years and he would always say "Hey, Angela!" When he would say it when I was a young girl, it made me feel that I was important, even though I was young. As I grew older and left home, our paths crossed through the years. Every time I saw him he would always smile and say " Hey Angela!" it would instantly take me back to the sweet comfort of home and brought back the feeling of an important connection with special people that you can only have in Jesus.
Angela Jones Gossett

Angela Jones Gossett - March 23, 2018 at 09:28 AM



“ Jim's book 'The Church in Transition' was deeply moving and very eye-opening to me. It took hold of me and shook me with each re-reading. I began writing about it (Christian Chronicle, June 1991; Image, July/August 1991) and talking about it with as many people as I could. A deep, deep appreciation for its author grew in me and I longed to meet this man that had guided and blessed me so. Some Day, I will. Thank you, Father God, for Jim Woodroof.

David Smith - March 23, 2018 at 08:33 AM



“ I enjoyed his sermons so much. He spoke in such a way that regardless if your age or education level, you understood what he was saying. What a blessing and legacy he leaves to those of us whose lives he touched.

Rachel Elder

Rachel Elder Taylor - March 23, 2018 at 02:21 AM



“ Where do I begin? From the moment you came to Searcy, your family blessed my life. I have such fond memories of Jim connecting with me each week. This young boy sat at his feet down front to hear the Good News preached each and every week, and my Bibles are filled with notes taken from his messages. Jim continuously connected with me through the crucial teenage years--playing tennis and racquetball with me, talking and sharing with me, and mentoring me. As I got older, the connections did not stop; they just came about in different manners. It was always a joy to see him. This connection spread over to my entire family, and I have vivid memories of my father and Jim discussing deep subjects. Your family is a blessing to my family. Our hearts are heavy, and yet, our hearts are full! He fought the good fight! He finished the race! He kept the faith! There's a crown of righteousness on his head, and that's what he always wanted! Blessings to you, Louine, Tim, David, Jon, Amy, and Rachel, and all of your families!

Zac Muncy - March 23, 2018 at 12:44 AM



“ Louine and entire family, My heart is sad, my prayers many and my love strong for each of you. May you find comfort in that Jim was a good man, a faithful family man, devoted to God and an inspiration to thousands. Angels rejoice! Blessings, Treva Terrell Pryor

Treva L. Pryor - March 23, 2018 at 12:10 AM



“ I'm often asked how I managed not to become legalistic since I grew up in a church and school that depended on rules. My answer has always been two people: my dad and Jim Woodroof. Jim was preaching at College Church throughout my childhood. His are the first sermons I remember and they were always always always about Jesus and his love for people. "You get the power to live the Letters by living what you read in the Gospels." Jim taught me how to roller skate, stopped his day to visit with me when I rode my bike to his house, wrote letters back and forth with me when I was a lonely 13-year-old who missed her preacher when he moved, and he baptized me.

I've never been one to cry easily, but today I am grieving. Mr Woodroof will be missed dearly.

Lisa Underwood Fuller - March 22, 2018 at 11:35 PM



“ May the peace that passes understanding be with all the family and loved ones.

The first house we ate in after arriving at Harding was the Woodroofs. Still a strong and fond memory.

A special family in many, many ways. God bless you all.

Keith Cronk - March 22, 2018 at 11:20 PM



“ I never met Jim, but The Church in Transition began change in my life that continues til today. I will dig out my frayed copy and journey through it again.

James Thrasher - March 24, 2018 at 07:51 PM



“ The service today for Jim by you children was wonderful! I know that parts of it were difficult, but you all rallied on. Your Dad was a special man. I loved hearing him preach. He did it with such love and enthusiasm! I remember after I left Searcy and moved to Little Rock, Jim was holding a short meeting at a congregation near by. My husband and I went to see/hear him preach. He was the only one that greeted us at the door and he did it with twinkling eyes and a huge smile on his face. My prayers are with all of you as you grieve his loss.

Kathy (Bullard) Sweeney

Kathy Bullard Sweeney - March 25, 2018 at 08:22 PM



“ Burlington Church of Christmas was blessed to have Jim and Louise serve a Senior Pastor. Jim was a pivotal part of my acceptance to have enter my soul in Baptism in 1985. Jim gave folks nick names; mine was P. Paul Herman. As Roy Rogers said, "Happy trails to you until we meet again." Look forward to that day, my friend in Christ.

Paul Herman - May 03, 2018 at 08:41 AM



“ Burlington Church of Christ

Paul Herman - May 03, 2018 at 08:43 AM



“ The news of Jim's passing has just reached me and I grieve with everyone who knew him. My memories of Jim and Louine go back to 1949-50 Nashville, when I began my journey as a 14-year-old boarding student at David Lipscomb High School. You were both so kind to me and helped me to feel more confident and comfortable in a new world for me. I have kept up with you through Jim's wonderful writings and have found recently his sermons on-line. What a blessing! I pray for the Woodroof family to receive God's peace and comfort in this sad time. Jim was truly one of the kindest and most generous people I have ever known.....he shared his love for the Lord with everyone. Now he is alive and living with

Him.

Susan Dodd Fraser - May 17, 2018 at 12:37 PM