



Dr. Johnson

June 21, 1919 - January 9, 2006

Dr. Robert Lee Johnson, 86, formerly of Siloam Springs, Arkansas, died January 9, 2006 at the Meadows Living Center, Nashville, Tennessee. Born June 21, 1919 in Detroit, Michigan, he was the son of Delbert M. Johnson of Buckhorn, Kentucky and Loretta Walker Johnson of London, Kentucky. He most recently made his home in Nashville, Tennessee near his daughter. Dr. Johnson and his late wife, Mary Elizabeth Sowell Johnson were long time residents of Siloam Springs, Arkansas. He received his PhD. from New York University in Philosophy of Religion. He chaired the Department of Theology and taught at John Brown University for 9 years until his retirement in 1984. Other Universities he was associated with are Malone College in Ohio, Friends University in Wichita, Kansas, and Abilene Christian University in Abilene, Texas. Some courses he taught were Philosophy of Religion and Living World Religions, as well as Bible Classes. Dr. Johnson served as pulpit minister in Churches of Christ, including Westville Church of Christ in Oklahoma, Northwest Church of Christ in Detroit, Michigan, Malverne Church of Christ on Long Island, New York, Baker Heights Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas, and from time to time locally at the Eastgate congregation. Dr. Johnson also authored two books, *Humanism and Beyond* and *A Commentary on the Book of Galatians* first published by the Sweet Publishing Company and reprinted by Leafwood Publishing Company of Siloam Springs. He was a Captain in WWII, stationed at Molesworth Air Force Base, England. Dr. Johnson was an active member of the 303rd Bomb Group Association, having

presided at the Protestant Services at their annual reunions for over 8 years. Locally, he was a member of Eastgate Church of Christ, involved in the Rock Club of Benton County, the Farmers Co-op, and the Dogwood Literacy Council. Survivors include one son, Thom Johnson and wife Nancy of Enid Oklahoma; one daughter, Mary Hemminger and husband Bob of Nashville, Tennessee; one sister, Iris Hurst of East Petersburg, Pennsylvania; six grandchildren, and a number of nieces and nephews. Visitation will be Sunday, January 15, 2006 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. and also on Monday, January 16 from 5:00 to 7:00 pm at Wasson Funeral Home. Funeral services will be 2:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 17 at Eastgate Church of Christ, Siloam Springs with Mr. Charles Cash officiating. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to the Christian Scholars' Conference to fund minority scholarships for individuals seeking to attend the conference. Please mail checks in Robert Johnson's name to David Fleeer, Christian Scholars' Conference, 800 W. Avon Rd., Rochester Hills, MI 48307. Arrangements are under the direction of Wasson Funerals Home, Siloam Springs, Arkansas.

Tribute Wall



“ Robert “Bob” Johnson was my grandfather on my dad’s side. He was a big part of my life until his death in 2006. I was 8 years old. I have nothing but positive memories of him.

I remember watching the muppets, laughing and laughing even harder because he was so tickled by “Animal” that he was crying with laughter.

I remember the bond he had with my childhood dog Shannon. We were worried he wouldn’t approve of having a dog around while we were staying with him, but it was love at first sight. They were inseparable.

I remember rolling my eyes and turning my nose up every time he came home with a bag of Arby’s roast beef sandwiches three times a week. But now, I would give anything to share an Arby’s roast beef sandwich with him.

I remember that smile. That warm, inviting smile. Free of judgment. Nothing but love.

I love you, “Bob.” I miss you.

Somewhere, somehow, I know you’re smiling.

Daniel Johnson - May 13, 2020 at 10:50 PM

MH

“ *Mary Hemminger lit a candle in memory of Dr. Johnson*



mary hemminger - January 02, 2013 at 04:01 PM

RH

“ *Bob Johnson was my teacher at Abilene Christian University in 1966-67, and served on my thesis defense committee at the same institution. Though I have not seen Bob often over the intervening years, I have treasured my memories of this great and good man. It was apparent to all his students that this man walked with God in ways that most of us do not. Perhaps this was why he was able to share with his students such extraordinary spiritual insights. Perhaps this was why he was able to introduce us to new and fresh ways of thinking with such gentleness and kindness. Most of all, I shall never forget the prayer that Bob led at the outset of my oral defense of my M.A. thesis. I had never heard a prayer so rich, so in tune with the spirit of God, and so uplifting. Bob prayed that prayer almost 40 years ago, and it made such a strong impression on me that I can remember it now almost as if it were yesterday. The human race has lost one of its finest representatives, and the church has lost an extraordinary Christian man.*

Richard Hughes

Richard T. Hughes - September 19, 2012 at 12:05 PM

MH

Thank you Richard. I met you briefly at daddy's last Pepperdine lecture.

mary hemminger - January 10, 2018 at 08:08 PM

DR

“ Dear Family,

May God comfort you in the passing of His wonderful servant.

Bob Johnson was, for me, briefly a colleague at Abilene Christian University, but more than that he had earlier been the most outstanding teacher under whom it has been my privilege to learn. The term "master teacher" is often cast about rather casually, but it is most appropriate to Bob's calling. More importantly, he was a teacher for the Master.

Bob had the extraordinarily rare, perhaps unique, ability to allow the student to offer the most wrong-headed comment and then steer the discussion around to the point where the truth emerged----and the student felt he had been responsible! This talent no doubt sprang from his equally remarkable humility.

(My wife and I were further blessed by Bob having conducted our wedding ceremony in 1959.)

All who were blessed by association with this great Christian man had their lives uplifted and brightened by his influence. Our world is lessened by his passing.

*Dr. John L. Robinson
Professor of History
Abilene Christian University*

Dr. John Robinson - September 19, 2012 at 12:05 PM

MH

Thank you John. We appreciate hearing such kind words even after all these years. Everything you said was true.

mary hemminger - January 10, 2018 at 08:10 PM

LK

“ *I remember Bob fondly, he was the first minister at Baker Heights Church of Christ and I was one of the first members there. We send our condolences.*

*Sincerely,
Lois & Family*

Lois Kile - September 19, 2012 at 12:05 PM

TS

“ I am an ACU student, the school where Dr. Johnson was unfortunately fired from in the late 60s. I recently was introduced to Dr. Johnson through my study for my MA thesis. I talked with a friend of his, Walter Burch, who told me about Dr. Johnson's bold stance against ACU's administration when they were trying to get him to sign a faith-statement. During this time there was much angst at ACU concerning who were ?true? and ?false? teachers. Dr. Johnson got labled a ?false teacher? because he seriously thought about the composition of scripture and was willing to challenge long-held notions in order to preserve academic honesty. When the president of ACU, Don Morris, made Bible faculty sign a petition sating their beliefs in the infallibilty of scripture, Dr. Johnson could not, in good conscios, sign it. Walter Burch gave me a copy of the letter Dr. Johnson wrote to President Morris explaining why he was uncomfortable with this ?witch hunt? and why he could not agree with such a university policy.

After reading this letter, and the accompanying statement he wrote concerning his views on inspiration of scripture and the salvation of people who had never before heard of Christ, I became very proud of Dr. Johnson and what he did. I was ashamed that this university asked him to leave, but proud that he remained faithful to his beliefs in spite of persecution.

Today, ACU and Churches of Christ have changed. What Dr. Johnson was once fired for is now the common teaching in the ACU Bible Department. Though he had to sacrifice much, I believe his sacrifice paved the way for students like me to receive a good, honest, and well-rounded education that takes into account all different understandings of scripture. It is because of men like Dr. Johnson that I can study the things I study today.

When I learned today of Dr. Johnson?s death, I was sad because I had hoped to talk to him and let him know how much I appreciated what he did. Instead, I will have to share this note with you. Although I have had the blessing to meet Dr. Johnson, I am very

proud of what he did with his life and admire him for being a person of integrity.

I hope to include part of this history I have recounted here in my thesis, since it will relate to my topic. I also plan on donating copies of the documents Walter Burch gave me concerning Dr. Johnson to the ACU Center for Restoration Studies, so that future students will have access to this important information.

God bless you all during your time of loss and praise God for men and women like Dr. Robert L. Johnson.

Travis Stanley - September 19, 2012 at 12:05 PM

MH

Thank you Travis. Your words bring comfort still.

mary hemminger - January 10, 2018 at 08:13 PM

RR

“ *He was a great and good man whose influence lives on in the lives of those he taught and influenced.*

Robert M. Randolph - September 19, 2012 at 12:05 PM

DN

“ *I really got to know Bob after he retired by being able to eat lunch with him at the JBU Cafeteria. We had a lot of interesting conversations. He was a very special man. Our prayers are with the family for your loss.*

Dr. & Mrs. Lee Netherton - September 19, 2012 at 12:05 PM

NR

“ *My thoughts and prayers are with you.*

Nancy Rutherford - September 19, 2012 at 12:05 PM

PW

“He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.”

From Mary, Dr. Johnson's daughter, and my dear friend, I learned Dr. Johnson lived this verse. He dedicated his life to honoring God by imparting to others the message they could not fathom. We all understand it better for the life he lived.

*Respectfully,
Paula*

Paula and Roger Wiemers - September 19, 2012 at 12:05 PM

GB

“I saw Brother Johnson's obituary in the Abilene paper. Thank you so much for including your announcements the people who knew him here.

When I was an undergraduate student at ACC in the 1960s, I took Dr. Johnson's Living World Religions course. It was one of the best courses I took, and certainly did more to broaden my mind and world than any class I had ever taken. He had a marvelous gift of doing two things that might seem mutually exclusive-- being a faithful, productive member of the church and challenging the set preconceptions of young people who had been raised in that church. May you all be blessed as you say goodbye and remember.

Gay Barton

Gay Barton - September 19, 2012 at 12:05 PM

EH

“Never knew a better family or better Christians than the Johnsons.

Elsje Hays & Lee Hays - September 19, 2012 at 12:05 PM

CN

“ *Bob Johnson will never cease to be an example to me. His maturity and wisdom will always be particularly noted in my memory.*

I remember when I interviewed Bob for a project I did in eighth grade on World War II. I can't say that I remember all of the details of his story, but I will never be able to forget the enormous impression his decisions and his faithfulness in that period made upon me. It seemed as if his life story was really that of two or three faithful men.

I can only pray that I can be half the example Bob is to me. God has richly blessed us through him and I am so thankful for his life.

Chad Nicholson - September 19, 2012 at 12:05 PM

JB

“ *Dear Mary and Family,*

We send our love to you in the loss of your father. What a servant of his fellowman he was! You will continue to be in our prayers.

Joe & Cornelia

Joe & Cornelia Bain - September 19, 2012 at 12:05 PM

DT

“ *Dr. Johnson was an honorable, God fearing man, totally dedicated to Christian higher education.*

Dr. John V. Terry - September 19, 2012 at 12:05 PM

WW

“ *We extend to you and your family our sincerest sympathy. Blessings, Wayne and Judy Willis*

Wayne & Judy Willis - September 19, 2012 at 12:05 PM

GB

“ To Mary and Thom and all of Mr. Johnson's family,
I just want you to know that it was indeed my honor and privilege to know your Dad. He and his family have been in my prayers for quite a long time now. He was such a special person. And it was also my great honor to have heard him give presentations at Eastgate Church of Christ. He was so knowledgeable of the Bible and historic events associated with the Bible, and presented these events in a manner that was so easy to understand. He was and is so special to me. I will miss him greatly. I will miss his smile and his warmth and his loving manner. God bless all of you at this time and always. I am sure that it will serve as a comfort to you that he is now resting in peace in the presence of God.

Gwen Browsers - September 19, 2012 at 12:05 PM

GM

“ Thom and Mary,
Your father was a special man. It was a pleasure getting to know him (and you) at the 303rd BGA reunions. His passing will certainly leave a void in the Association, but in time we will all be together again. We will keep in touch.

*With much love and admiration,
Gary and Susan*

Gary and Susan Moncur - September 19, 2012 at 12:05 PM

PS

“ *Mary,
Something happened to the last message that totally erased it. we think! Don't have anyway to find out so if you did get the other message now you have two. What we said was that our prayers are with you and your family. It's good to know people such as your father that showed how much he loved our heavenly Father as he did. We love you! Pete and Faye*

Pete and Faye Sasser - September 19, 2012 at 12:05 PM

DB

“ *With great respect for a man who loved his Lord and served others in the love of Jesus.*

Dr. and Mrs. William H. Burnside - September 19, 2012 at 12:05 PM

JJ

“ *Dr. Johnson was on the interview committee when I applied for my position at JBU in 1977. I always looked up to him. I have good, good memories of him and Mrs. Johnson (from the bookstore).*

John E. Brown, Jr - September 19, 2012 at 12:05 PM

CT

“ I feel so privileged to have known Bob. I never heard him preach, but I know he would have been wonderful. I first met Bob about 10 years ago. Over that decade, I truly grew to love him, despite the fact that we met so infrequently. Bob's gentle, engaging personality was obvious from the first time we met. His love of Christ showed clearly. That love was obviously shared with his daughter, my friend, Mary, as she also reflects that love of the Lord.

I enjoyed visiting Bob over the last several months. Until recently, we had great conversations. Of course, his favorite topics were about his family. While he was at Lakeshore, I discovered we had a common love?. Ice cream! Every Friday, there was an ice-cream social where ice-cream and toppings were available to all residents. Most of the residents were complaining that the servings were too large. Bob, however, finished two bowls and then spent a minute or two making sure he got every drop out of the last bowl.

I have the utmost assurance that Bob is now with the Lord. In that, I feel joy. However, I do miss having the opportunity to visit him.

I thank the Lord for the life of Bob Johnson and also for the opportunity that I was able to be a small part of it.

Carrie Thornthwaite - September 19, 2012 at 12:05 PM