

# THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

**WHO IS JESUS?**

Page 17

**After the Flood**

Page 19

**The ABC's  
How to Study**

Page 28

**Redemption  
and  
Election**

Page 34

**Confident  
Soul-Winning**

Page 57

**Part of a Family**

Page 78

**Kenya**

Page 97



# *An Old Man's Prayer*

**James Winniford**

Lord, come walk with me  
awhile.

If I can hold your hand  
I will not fall.

My eyes are growing dim,  
My feet are faltering,  
My strength is fast passing  
away;

So soon I become weary,  
I hear sounds not really there  
And I am deaf to what is;  
Pain is present in my every  
motion

And sorrows await me  
at every turn.

Lord, let me find peace in  
all that has been;

Still, let me find anticipation  
in what may be;

Help me release the spring of the pride of youth  
And the summer of strength and domination;  
Help me to trust in the harvest of autumn  
And thankfully rest in the winter of life finished,  
Knowing that, through it all,  
Somehow, You have granted me safe passage.



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**NEW EDITIONS FOR BRAZIL,  
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**"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).**

**THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST SALUTE YOU (ROMANS 16:16).**

**Q**uestion: Why are there so many different teachings regarding “baptism”?

**A**nswer: God’s adversary — *our* adversary — SATAN wants all humans to be condemned for their sins. The following Scriptures show that baptism is the **new birth** of John 3:3-5, which takes us out of Satan’s kingdom and puts us into Christ’s kingdom (Colossians 1:13,14). If Satan can confuse and obscure *the birth, the door into the church*, he knows he has us forever in his grasp. So he has totally corrupted every part of the Scriptural teaching on baptism. As a result, few people ever find the door.

**D**efinition of the Greek word, *baptisma*: the processes of immersion, submersion and emergence; to dip; to overwhelm (Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words). True baptism is not “sprinkling” or “pouring”, but a **burial in water** (Romans 6:3-8); it is not “a testimony about one’s faith”, nor is it “an outward sign of an inward grace” (that is, “a person is saved and then he is baptized to show that he has already been saved”). Rather, baptism is a **burial in water to wash away the sins of the penitent believer** (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21).



Our Lord Jesus Christ is the authority on Salvation. He gave a very simple statement, an equation:  $1+1=2$ .

$$1 + 1 = 2$$

**“He who believes and is baptized will be saved”** (Mark 16:16).

# The Church — One Church

“...I will build **my church**, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). “And He is head of **the body, the church**: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence” (Colossians 1:18,24; 2:12; Ephesians 3:14,15; 4:4-6; Romans 16:16).



Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that he might **deliver us from this present evil world...** (Galatians 1:3,4)



...and hath translated us into **the kingdom of His dear Son**:...In whom we have **redemption** through **His blood**, even the forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:13,14).

Are you a member of that **ONE** church?



## WHO KNOWS IT ALL?

**J. C. Choate**  
Editor-in-Chief

No one knows all there is to know about anything. In other words, when we have a problem with the engine of our car, we locate a mechanic who knows how to repair it. When our children are ready for school, we want them to have teachers who have been adequately trained to teach them.

Professional sport teams seek a coach who can help them to compete and win. If one is sick or has a life-threatening disease, that person wants a reputable doctor, not a quack or some home remedy. The same would be true in seeking help with numerous other problems. We try to find someone who is trained, qualified, knows what he is doing, and can deliver the desired results.

While most do not claim to be experts in every field of endeavor, *it is an amazing thing that most who have any interest in religion like to pass themselves off as knowing everything of any real importance on that subject.* The sad fact is that they don't have all of the answers and this results in false teachings, division, rejection of the truth, and the vast majority of souls being lost.

Now where do people get the idea

- ✓ that one church is as good as another,
- ✓ that all one has to do to be saved is to believe and to let Jesus come into his heart,
- ✓ that mechanical music is acceptable in worship,
- ✓ that women can take leading roles in the public assembly of the church,
- ✓ that the name one wears religiously is of no importance,
- ✓ that miracles are performed today ...and hundreds of other doctrines not found in the Scriptures?

Not only are these things taught by the masses, but those who teach them make it sound as though they got their information directly from God. Of course many *do* teach *direct divine revelation*. They talk about God speaking to them and telling them what to do or not to do. The sad part is that the majority of the people who hear such things have heard them so often that they sincerely believe them and teach the same things themselves.

Those of you who say that you believe the Bible, **do you believe the Bible?** Do you *really* believe it? Do you accept it as being the **final revelation of God**, as being inspired of God, understanding that we are **not to add to it or subtract from it** (“*For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book*” Revelation 22:18,19), that it is the **final authority** for all that we say or do, and that **we will be judged by it** in the last day?

To further illustrate my point, I have heard preachers talk to their audience about what the Lord requires of one to be saved. They often turn to Acts 16, to the story of Paul and Silas being in jail. A miraculous earthquake released them and, as a result, the jailer fell down before them, asking what he had to do to be saved. These preachers quickly read from Acts 16:31, which is the record of Paul’s answering statement: “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*” After reading those words they explain that **that is all one has to do to be saved: just believe.**

But are these preachers giving a full and honest answer? Who was the jailer? Was he a believer in Christ? No, of course not! Therefore Paul and Silas told him that, *in order to be saved*, he must first of all **believe** that Jesus is the Lord and Christ. Then the record says that they *spoke the word of the Lord* to them *that they might believe*. Paul explained elsewhere that **faith** comes by *hearing the word of God* (Romans 10:17). So as Paul preached the gospel to the jailer and his household, part of that gospel would have been the explanation that they must **repent** and **be baptized** for the forgiveness of their sins. He would have repeated what Christ said in Mark 16:16: “*He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*” If this had not been understood by the jailer, what caused him to do what is recorded in Acts 16:33: “*And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized he and all his straightway*”? Please notice that Paul and Silas had been beaten but now the jailer and his household were washing their stripes. This shows

**repentance.** Because of their conviction that Jesus was the Christ, and their change of heart concerning the “crimes” of Paul and Silas, the jailer and his household **were baptized immediately.** In answer to the same question — “What must we do?” — Peter had said to those in Acts 2:38 that they must **repent and be baptized** that they might have **the remission of their sins.**

Now those who know it all, religiously, those who are experts in telling people what to do to be saved, explain to their hearers that *all one needs to do to be saved is to believe.* They say again and again that that is what Paul told the jailer in Acts 16:31. They are quick to give verse 31 — out of context, and standing alone — as proof that when one believes in Jesus he is immediately saved. But how can anyone *believe* in Him without first being **taught** about Him?

Neither do these experts read the next verse which says that Paul then proceeded to preach the word of the Lord to the jailer and his family. It was only then — when they believed — that they were ready to obey the Lord by repenting and being baptized. How did they know that these actions were necessary? They knew because they had heard the preaching of the word. But most “religious experts” stop with the idea that belief, alone, saved them. They do not go on to read the following verses which explain what really happened.

How sad it is that so many of those who claim to believe in the Lord do not *really* believe in Him. They do not believe what He has said. They do not accept His teaching concerning salvation, His church, worship, and so many other things. They have re-written the scriptures and explained away the teachings of our Lord. But no matter how men deny what God’s word says, *nothing is erased.* All of it will be there to judge us in the last Day, as Jesus said in John 12:48. Those who fail to teach and to obey part of the doctrine of Christ have deceived themselves and they have also deceived most of the “Christian world”.

God has spoken and He has spoken clearly. He has given us His word so that we may read and study and know His will. His message is so plain and so easy to understand. Not only are the truths stated once, but they are stated and explained again and again. One would have to have help to misunderstand, which is the problem: **there are plenty of those out there who are ready to help their hearers to misunderstand.**

I would therefore urge you to be cautious of what you read and hear. You have a mind of your own. You may not know very much about the scriptures at this point, but you can read and study for yourself. Keep an open mind. Just take the Lord’s word for what it says and then *do* what it says. How can you go wrong when you hear and obey Him? †



# THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST – FROM A TO Z

Byron Nichols

I'm confident that every Christian experiences at least occasional difficulty in keeping the mind from wandering from the importance and the

meaning of the unique Christian observance called the Lord's Supper. Let me share with you some thoughts that I hope will be very helpful to you as you eat the bread and drink the cup each Lord's Day. They are in an alphabetical arrangement for easier remembering. While many of these thoughts are my own, some did not originate with me.

**A** can remind us of His **arrest** like a common criminal. It can also remind us of the legions of **angels** who could have been summoned by Jesus.

**B** is for the **betrayal** by a "friend," also the murderer **Barabbas**, perhaps the **blood** that Jesus shed, or the **beating** that He endured earlier.

**C** may make us think of the **cross** on **Calvary**. We might remember the Jewish high priest, **Caiphaz**, before whom Jesus was tried, or the shameful **crown** of thorns that was mockingly put on the Lord's head, or we might recall the Roman **centuri-**

on, who concluded that “*Truly this Man was the Son of God!*”

**D** is for the **desertion** by His **disciples**. This letter might also well be for the **darkness** which enveloped the whole earth for three hours just before His final breath.

**E** reminds us of the **end** which was very near, the **enmity** of the bulk of the Jews, Christ’s **excruciating** pain, or the **eeriness** of the darkness.

**F** makes me think of the **Father** in heaven and how He must also have agonized that day, and I think of the **forgiveness** that Jesus desired even for His killers.

**G** has to make us think of the **Garden of Gethsemane**, the place of the disgraceful betrayal. Of course, there was also **Golgotha**, the site of the crucifixion itself.

**H** is for **Herod**, or for the **hall** where Jesus was mocked, or the **hypocrisy** of those leaders who were responsible for it all.

**I** calls to mind the **innocence** of our Lord, and His name **Immanuel**, meaning “*God with us.*”

**J** is for **Judas**, the trusted friend who turned betrayer. We think also of **John**, to whom Jesus committed the care of His mother.

**K** serves to remind us of the **kiss** of infamy that was placed upon the **King of kings**.

**L** brings to mind the **lies** that they told and the matchless **love** that caused the **Lord of lords** to give His **life** “*a ransom for many.*”

**M** is for **me** – He died for **me!** This letter also is for the **mocking**, the howling **mob**, and for His **mother, Mary**.

**N** helps us to think of the **nails** that were driven through His hands and His feet, as well as the **ninth** hour, the hour of His death.

**O** calls to mind the **opponents** of the Lord, who appeared to be victorious.

**P** has to remind us of **Pontius Pilate**, who released the murderer Barabbas rather than the innocent Jesus. This letter also causes us to remember the **purple** robe that was placed upon the Lord in an act of derision.

**Q** is for the **quaking** of the earth that took place as the shameful deed was done.

**R** has to do with the **rejection** of Jesus by His own disciples and the **release** of the infamous Barabbas.

**S** stands for the **spitting** in the face of the very Son of God! It also stands for the terrible **scourging**, the **spear** that was thrust into the **side** of the **Savior**, and the elite **Sanhedrin** who **sanctioned** such an unbelievable crime.

**T** is for the **tomb** in which His body would soon be placed, the **thorns**, His **thirst**, the false **testimony**, and the **traitor**.

**U** reminds us of the **unjust** trials and the **unspeakable** shame and reproach heaped upon Jesus.

**V** helps us to remember the **vicious vengeance** of His enemies, the **veil** of the temple that was rent at His death, and the great **victory** over death that Jesus would very soon display.

**W** stands for the **water** with which Pilate tried to **wash** his guilt from his hands, and the fact that Jesus was dying for the **whole world's** sins.

**X** stands for the **unknown**, and truly the Christ on Calvary was the **Greatest Unknown**.

**Y** reminds me of the **yells** of the riotous mob as they **yelled** out, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him!"

**Z** is for the **zeal** of His executioners.

Dear reader, many other words could be added or substituted that might be more meaningful to you. Let me just urge all to use this or any other legitimate means to make the death of our Savior more impressive to us and cause us to worship more acceptably and completely as we participate in the Lord's Supper every week. †

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

### GOD

|                                  |                              |    |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----|
| Understand the Concept . . . . . | Samuel A. Matthews . . . . . | 12 |
| Man's Invincibility Vs. . . . .  | Demar Elam . . . . .         | 15 |
| Who Is Jesus? . . . . .          | Parker Henderson . . . . .   | 17 |

### EVIDENCES

|                           |                        |    |
|---------------------------|------------------------|----|
| After the Flood . . . . . | Keith Sisman . . . . . | 19 |
| God Is! . . . . .         | Rex Banks . . . . .    | 24 |

### THE WORD OF GOD

|                                     |                          |    |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| The Words of Christ . . . . .       | Don L. Norwood . . . . . | 26 |
| The ABC's of How to Study . . . . . | Dayton Keesee . . . . .  | 28 |
| How to Know What's Right . . . . .  | David Tarbet . . . . .   | 30 |

### DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

|                                       |                            |    |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|----|
| The Rules of the Game . . . . .       | Donny Weimar . . . . .     | 32 |
| Predestination and Election . . . . . | Frank Chesser . . . . .    | 34 |
| God Tests our Faith . . . . .         | Basil Overton . . . . .    | 36 |
| Metaphors of Heaven . . . . .         | Roger E. Dickson . . . . . | 38 |

### SALVATION

|                           |                         |    |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|----|
| Saved Like Saul . . . . . | A.L. Franks . . . . .   | 42 |
| If He is Wrong . . . . .  | Ancil Jenkins . . . . . | 44 |

### THE CHURCH

|                                  |                        |    |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|----|
| What I Owe My Home . . . . .     | Frank L. Cox . . . . . | 47 |
| Lethargy in the Church . . . . . | Dale Grissom . . . . . | 49 |

### WORSHIP

|                                     |                         |    |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|----|
| Attending Church Services . . . . . | John Thiesen . . . . .  | 50 |
| Profane Fire . . . . .              | Loy Mitchell . . . . .  | 53 |
| You and Worship . . . . .           | Norman Easter . . . . . | 55 |
| Religious Sinners . . . . .         | Max Patterson . . . . . | 56 |

### CHURCH GROWTH

|                                  |                       |    |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|----|
| Confident Soul Winning . . . . . | Kevin Moore . . . . . | 57 |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|----|

### CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

|                                    |                          |    |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| When a Loved One Is Lost . . . . . | Ron Bryant . . . . .     | 61 |
| Quick! Somebody Bring . . . . .    | Maxie B. Boren . . . . . | 63 |

## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

|                                |                               |    |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----|
| The Spiritual Battle . . . . . | John Fernandez . . . . .      | 65 |
| The Prayer Life of . . . . .   | Eugene U. Alleyne . . . . .   | 67 |
| You Never Know . . . . .       | Gary C. Hampton . . . . .     | 69 |
| Declare These Things . . . . . | Hollis Miller . . . . .       | 70 |
| We Were Like Them . . . . .    | Robert Ball . . . . .         | 71 |
| Sojourners with God . . . . .  | Jeril (Polly) Cline . . . . . | 73 |
| Jesus Wept . . . . .           | Albert Gardner . . . . .      | 75 |

### THE CHRISTIAN HOME

|                            |                             |    |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----|
| Part of a Family . . . . . | Kevin Brady Henry . . . . . | 78 |
| Homespun Faith . . . . .   | David Deffenbaugh . . . . . | 80 |
| Zero Tolerance . . . . .   | Jane Maynard . . . . .      | 82 |

### PROVERBS 17:22

|                 |  |    |
|-----------------|--|----|
| Humor . . . . . |  | 85 |
|-----------------|--|----|

### BIBLE QUESTIONS

|                                   |                            |    |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|----|
| Why Are There . . . ? . . . . .   | Owen D. Olbricht . . . . . | 87 |
| Did Mary, the Mother of . . . . . | Wayne Jackson . . . . .    | 89 |

### TEXTUAL STUDIES

|                                 |                            |    |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|----|
| A Joy Transfusion . . . . .     | Clarence DeLoach . . . . . | 92 |
| Formula for Victory . . . . .   | David Pharr . . . . .      | 93 |
| Five Pertinent Points . . . . . | Ken Tyler . . . . .        | 95 |

### FEATURES

|  |                               |              |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------|
| An Old Man's Prayer . . . . .                  | James Winniford . . . . .     | Inside Front |
| Editorial: Who Knows All?! . . . . .           | J.C. Choate . . . . .         | 4            |
| Editorial: The Crucifixion of Christ . . . . . | Byron Nichols . . . . .       | 7            |
| Verse Search . . . . .                         |                               | 31           |
| What Must I Do? . . . . .                      |                               | 33           |
| How Do You Measure Up? . . . . .               |                               | 41           |
| Waiting Room Bible Study . . . . .             | John mark Wilson . . . . .    | 46           |
| Walking by Faith . . . . .                     |                               | 60           |
| Who? . . . . .                                 | Nikki Walker . . . . .        | 64           |
| Who Am I? . . . . .                            |                               | 77           |
| Crisis . . . . .                               | Betty Burton Choate . . . . . | 90           |

### FROM THE HEART OF . . .

|                 |  |    |
|-----------------|--|----|
| Kenya . . . . . |  | 97 |
|-----------------|--|----|

# God:

## *Understanding the Concept of the godhead*

**Samuel A. Matthews**

Let's talk about the Godhead (GOD)! "What is God?" is the central idea to any religion in the history of man. Whether idolatrous, Jehovah-centered, or man-centered, there is always the question of a "supreme object, force, or being" toward whom to pay homage.

The tri-personality of the true God is one of the most mysterious and most difficult concepts to fathom. It has no human analogy to which to appeal for understanding, no parallel to clear away some of the clouds. It is abstract to the zenith. And, since it is an infinite concept, the finite mind of man cannot comprehend it completely.

There is no clear definition of God set forth in the Bible on any one page. If one is looking for a concise, easy definition, he will not find it within the Sacred pages. Yet, man is **TOTALLY** dependent upon the Bible for the proper concept. He simply must look to the revealed word if he is to have any accuracy

in his views. Certainly, man cannot be subjective and try to look within himself for any answers.

There are two ideas that are plain within the Scriptures: (1) there is a Rational, Righteous Spirit, Infinite in attributes; (2) this Spirit is self-existent in three Persons, yet one in substance or nature, with the Persons in absolute and perfect unity. This tri-personality God is referred to as the "Godhead." The term "Trinity," although not used in the Bible, is expressive of an idea which is correct concerning the Godhead.

The Scriptures affirm the existence of the Godhead. By Godhead we mean Deity, Divinity, or Divine substance (nature) as used in Acts 17:29, Romans 1:20, and Colossians 2:9. The Bible teaches that God (or the Godhead) is composed of three distinct members, each of whom possesses the nature or quality which identifies one as Deity. These three distinct members or

## GOD

personalities who share this ONE Divine nature are characterized in the Bible as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

One of the most common objections alleged against the doctrine of the Trinity is that it involves tritheism, or a belief in three Gods. Tritheism teaches there are three SEPARATE but equal Beings known as God.

“They are as separate as husband, wife and child, and one as if only a family unit.” Tri-theism teaches that the oneness involved is “only that of unity, purpose, and will.” This teaching is actually a form of polytheism and is, unfortunately, taught by many who think they are espousing what the Bible teaches.

The fact of the matter, however, is that the true Bible doctrine of the Godhead stands unalterably opposed to tritheism as well as to every other form of polytheism. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit can be distinguished, but they cannot be SEPARATED. They do not merely exist alongside of each other, as did Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin, but they permeate and interpenetrate each other, are in and

through each other.

Friends, as we study this subject together, please understand we are NOT teaching that there are three Gods. We do NOT believe in three Gods. Scripture, reason, and conscience are in perfect agreement that there is but ONE self-existent, eternal, supreme Being (God) in whom all of the divine attributes or perfec-

tions dwell and from whom they cannot be separated. In other words, the Bible teaches that there is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29; 1 Corinthians 8:4; Ephesians

4:6; cf. Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1; 10:30; Philippians 2:5,6). However, there are three who comprise this one Righteous Spirit (Deity) or possess the Divine nature.

The Bible says, “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*” (Genesis 1:1). God is the translation of the Hebrew word Elohim. This word bespeaks the power of God the Creator. El signifies the strong God; and what less than almighty strength could bring all things out of nothing?

Elohim also bespeaks the plurality of persons in the Godhead — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This

*The true Bible doctrine of the GODHEAD is unalterably opposed to tritheism as well as to every other form of polytheism.*

## GOD

plural name of God, in the Hebrew, speaks of Him as many though He is one. The word Elohim confirms our faith in the doctrine of the Godhead, which, though but darkly intimated in the Old Testament, is clearly revealed in the New. John refers to the three persons of the Godhead in his epistle, saying, "*For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one*" (1 John 5:7).

In dealing with this, one can only affirm that there is one Infinite Spirit Being, yet within that one Spirit Essence, there are three distinctions. Each of these is a Person properly called God who has all the essential attributes of the Divine Being. Each of these Persons partakes of the One Divine Substance, Deity. Deity is NOT made up of three parts, rather Deity

refers simply to that One Essence, of which all three Persons partake.

Since the three Persons of the Trinity possess the same identical substance or essence, and since the attributes are inherent in and inseparable from the substance or essence,

*John refers to the three persons of the Godhead in his epistle, saying, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one" (1 John 5:7).*

it follows that the Divine attributes must be possessed alike by each of the three Persons and that the three Persons must be consubstantial, co-equal, and co-eternal. Yet each has His own work

in relation to man: God is the Father; the Word is Mediator and Savior; the Holy Spirit is the source of spiritual life to God's children.

Please SEARCH THE ABOVE SCRIPTURES and see whether these things are so (Acts 17:11). †

**Samuel A Matthews is a Christian living in Connecticut, USA.**

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**Do you think that we, with our finite human minds, can actually comprehend the infinite God and His universe?**

\* \* \*

**Is there any possibility that an ant, with its miniscule ant mind, could ever comprehend humanity and the world, regardless of how eloquently and accurately we explained all things?**



## Man's Invincibility Vs. God's Invincibility

Demar Elam

History has illustrated again and again to man lessons on the impossibility of invincibility. However, man never seems to learn!

The word "invincible" means: "incapable of being conquered, overcome or subdued." This word came to mind as I stood on the magnificent walls of Ft. Pulaski located where the Savannah River meets the Atlantic Ocean on Cockspur Island. I allowed my mind to run with imagination as I reconstructed the assault of the Federal forces on this glorious old fort and its gallant forces near Savannah.

When my thoughts returned to the present I was forced to think of the lesson to be learned from this historical event. Those "in the know" at that time had thought the fort to be impregnable. However, a new weapon — the rifled cannon — brought an end to the era of impregnable masonry fortifications and verified the superiority of the new rifled guns.

Did you know that of the "Seven Wonders of the Ancient World" only one is still standing today, the pyramids of Egypt? Even they have been ravaged by raiders

## GOD

and robbed of their priceless treasures. What do these magnificent structures, Ft. Pulaski, the Titanic, and the great Empires of the ancient world have in common? They were **invincible!** They were indeed capable of being overcome and subdued.

The same is true of man. Man often becomes puffed up and thinks within himself that he is invincible and needs no one, not even God! He convinces himself that he has the world in his pocket, that he is self-reliant and self-sufficient. Yes, he even reaches the point of feeling invincible!

Man's frailty is exhibited daily.

*"...For man goes to his eternal home, And the mourners go about the streets"* (Ecclesiastes 12:5). The preacher went on to say, *"or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the well. Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, says the preacher; all is vanity"* (Ecclesiastes 12:6-8).

As I stood on the walls of Ft. Pulaski and looked out across the marshes, I asked myself, "Where are

the gallant men who manned these walls? Where is that young lieutenant fresh from West Point, named Robert E. Lee, who was assigned to build the dikes and drainage system for the island?" Gone, yes gone! All of these who began constructing this mighty fortress in 1829 have gone the way of all men.

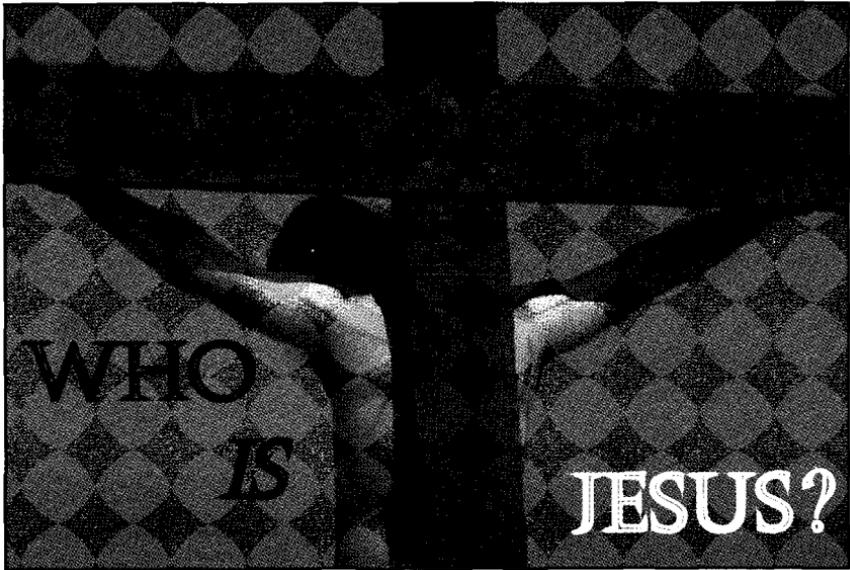
Then I think of God's invincibility, the words of the Psalmist come ringing forth, *"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God"* (Psalm 90:2).

God is from everlasting to everlasting! That is invincibility! God is truly incapable of being overthrown, subdued, overcome, or conquered. Man is here today and gone tomorrow (James 4:13,14), but God is from *"everlasting to everlasting."* The battle of good and evil rages, but God cannot be conquered by the evil one. Here is man's only picture of true invincibility.

I want to serve the invincible God. Do you? †

**Demar Elam is the Director of Mission Studies at Southern Christian University in Montgomery, Alabama, USA.**





## Parker Henderson

The whole world needs to know who Jesus really is. We are confident that every honest person would readily follow Him if he actually knew who He is. The world's greatest book, the Bible, clearly gives the answer to this question.

**Jesus is the Son of Almighty God.** God Himself so stated: *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"* (Matthew 3:17), and *"This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him"* (Matthew 17:5).

Jesus *claimed* to be God's Son. When Peter confessed his belief that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus not only blessed Peter but promised to build His

church upon this bedrock truth (Matthew 16:16-18). He stated that God, His Father, had delivered all things into His hands and He called Himself *"the Son"* (Matthew 11:27). At His trial before the High Priest of the Jews, this claim by Jesus brought the death sentence. (Matthew 26:63-66).

The Holy Spirit inspired those who knew Jesus best to state, over and over again, that *Jesus is the Son of the living God* (Acts 3:26; Romans 1:3; 1 Corinthians 1:9; Hebrews 4:14).

**Jesus is the Master Teacher** (John 13:13; Matthew 23:8). He is the source of all true religious teaching. Even His 12 apostles

were not to be called this but were to acknowledge Him as the true exalted religious teacher. *"But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ"* (Matthew 23:8-10). In reality, Jesus is the "Reverend" Teacher and no man has a right to usurp His place or His title.

**Jesus in the Lord of His people** (Acts 2:36). This fact must be believed before one can become a Christian. He is the ruler and the owner of those who trust Him. *"Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"* (Philippians 2:11). What a wonderful person this Jesus really is!

**Jesus is the Christ.** He is the long-awaited Messiah, the one who was anointed by God to be King. He reigns as king over His kingdom (Colossians 1:13,14) which is called His church (Matthew 16:18).

**Jesus is God** (John 1:1,2,14). He is the God-Man. His beginning was not when he was born of a virgin named Mary. He was *in the beginning with God*, His Father. Jesus declared, *"...before Abraham was, I am"* (John 8:58). Jesus was man, yet not *merely man* but is, in

reality, *"Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us"* (Matthew 1:23).

**Jesus is "the way the truth and the life."** He is the only way by which one may come to the Father (John 14:6).

**Jesus is the Light of the world** (John 8:12).

**Jesus is the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"** (John 1:29).

**Jesus is the Prophet of whom Moses spoke** (Acts 3:22,23). To Him all must hearken or be lost. He is heaven's Apostle and man's High Priest (Hebrews 3:1). Jesus is the one Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5). He is the good Shepherd. He leads men to God! (John 10:11).

**Jesus is the Foundation, Chief Corner Stone and Rock upon which His church is built** (Isaiah 28:16, 1 Corinthians 3:11). He is the *"King of Kings and Lord of Lords"* (Revelation 19:16).

**Jesus is the Savior.** *"He shall save his people from their sins"* (Matthew 1:21) and *"...in none other is there salvation"* (Acts 4:12).

In the light of the above facts, the question for each soul remains, *"To you, WHO IS JESUS?"* †

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# After the Flood

Keith Sisman

Today we have two accounts of history, one we find in our history books and will learn at school. This tells how mankind evolved from monkeys, becoming hunter-gatherers, and eventually, after thousands of years — civilised.

The other account is not found in modern history books, yet it was widely known just a few hundred years ago. It was known in pagan countries that had never heard of Christianity or Judaism, and it was found in other countries that objected to Christianity and Judaism. This history was the account of Noah and the flood, how the gods had objected to the evil ways of mankind and brought a huge flood to destroy all life on the earth; how one man, his wife and their sons and daughters-in-law survived in a huge boat, from which the whole earth was afterwards populated.

In modern day China, the Miautso people remember a man called Nuah, his wife's name is recorded as Gaw Bo Luen. His sons are remembered as Lo Ham, Lo Shen and Jahphu, from which the whole world became populated.

An early British account (Celtic), reads "long before the Kymry (Celtoi) came into Britain, the Llyn Lion, or Great Deep (literally the abyss of waters), broke up and inundated the whole earth. The Island, afterwards known as Britain, shared the general catastrophe. One vessel floated over the waters, the boat of Nevydd Nav Neivion. In it were preserved two individuals: Dwy Van (the Man of God) and Dwy Vach (the Woman of God). By the posterity of these two, the earth gradually re-peopled."

JAPHETH, son of Noah is remembered by the pre-Christian pagans throughout Europe as the god Jupiter. Japheth was the father of what we know today as the Indo-European nations.

In the Danish and Norwegian accounts he is remembered as Seth, Sceaf, Seskef or Scef. Pra-Japati is the ancient Indian name as found in the Sanskrit Vedas. The early Greeks worshiped him as Iapetos or Iapetus, whom they regarded as the son of heaven and earth. The Romans corrupted his name to Iupater and eventually to Jupiter.

## EVIDENCES

Father Jove — Jove pater (father)  
— Jupater — Jupiter.

The false religion of Nimrod, great-grandson of Ham, was the beginning of astrology and necromancy (talking to the dead). From necromancy it became hero-worship, continued today as saint worship.

Nimrod was remembered by the Romans, worshiped as the god Bacchus/Baccus, being the son of Cush = Bar Chus = Bacchus. His name lives on as Chus, Kush and Nubia, countries in Africa today.

Nimrod's name is from the verb "let us revolt". He thought highly of himself and made himself the first king (Genesis 10:10). Nimrod was the instigator of the rebellion against God at Babel. He is also remembered as the god Marduk in Babylon. His wife was Semiramis. In the Babylonian religion, Marduk (Nimrod) and Semiramis were worshiped as god and goddess.

A unique and interesting fact is brought to light through analysis of the history of Nimrod. God had promised that it would be through "the seed of woman" that Satan's head would be bruised. We do not know how much more was privately explained to the early patriarchs about the promised Savior. Surely it is not by coincidence, though, that repeatedly in ancient pagan religions the idea of a virgin birth occurs. This is a strong indication

that "the seed of woman" was understood to mean a miraculous virgin birth for the promised Savior. According to historical accounts, Semiramis, wife of Nimrod, claimed that her son was virgin born, and so a new pagan cult was developed — the worship of "the Virgin and Child".

This Babylonian cult spread to other parts of the earth with the enforced scattering of people by God. It is found in the Egyptian religion as Isis and Osiris. In Greece it is Venus and Adonis, and in the Hindu religion it is Ushas and Vishnu. Because all peoples descended from Noah and his family, and all would have had access to the same knowledge of God's promises, it is not surprising that garbled accounts of these revelations to early faithful patriarchs are found in many parts of the world.

By the time the Catholics were evangelising Europe, worship of the virgin mother and baby were widespread and were simply incorporated into the new Catholic religion. Another example of this was the pagan worship of the Virgin of Guadalupe, a goddess worshiped by ancient Indians in Mexico. Again she was simply replaced by Mary worship when the Catholic priests brought that religion to the "new world".

Mary is known to the Catholics

## EVIDENCES

as Queen of Heaven, a title believed to have been given originally to the wife of Nimrod. Later, it became the designation of the Canaanite goddess, Astarte (plural Ashtaroth), as read in Judges 2:13. Worship to the Queen of Heaven is spoken against in Jeremiah 7:18, 44:17-19, 25. Yet Mary wears this title today, transferred from the goddess Easter, Queen of Heaven. Her chapel is to be found on the eastern side of many Catholic church buildings, where once in pagan temples stood the altar to worship the goddess of the east, Easter.

The Germanic Gauls had many tribes (*Latin Germanus*, a name given to them by their Celtic neighbours). The most famous of these tribes were the Angles from Schleswig, northern Germany (*Latin, Anglus*) and the Saxons, from Saxony, Germany. These tribes invaded England and took control from AD 450 onwards. They are known today as the Anglo-Saxons, and it is from "Angle" that the name of England is derived. These people were pagan. At the time of their invasion of the islands the British were largely Christian, the result of world-wide evangelism by the first-century church.

The Gauls had many gods, including Tiw, the Germanic god identified with the Roman god Mars. Tiw is still remembered

today as the name of the third day of the week, Tuesday. The Anglo-Saxons, despite their paganism, could trace their ancestry back to Japheth. Through the passing centuries, during their travels from the middle east to their settlement of Germany, they retained their knowledge of the flood but had forgotten the true God, just as the majority of humanity had done.

It would seem that during these migratory travels the descendants of Japheth had acquired worship and knowledge of the Assyrian goddess, Ishtar, the same goddess as the Babylonian Astarte, both pronounced in their original languages as Easter (or near enough), to whom it was customary to make fresh or hot buns/cakes (see Jeremiah 7:18 and 44:19, two Biblical passages that refer to this goddess). To the Germanic tribes she became known as either the goddess of spring, or the goddess of the East, called in Germanic "Eostre", or "Estarun", from which the Old English word "Eastre" is derived.

For these ancient pagan peoples, fertility was important because the continuation of life depended on food from their harvests, and their large families. Hence at this time of spring festival, prayers were made to the gods, along with human sacrifice, for the fertility of the soil and of their women.

## EVIDENCES

An increasingly apostate Catholic Church incorporated this pagan festival, as well as the worship of "the Virgin and Child", into its celebrations, "Christianizing" ancient gods and goddesses. Today Semiramis, as Astarte, is still enthroned and worshiped under the guise of Mary and Jesus, and by the yearly celebration of Easter with the making of Hot Cross Buns and painted (chocolate) eggs.

Most "experts" relegate Genesis to the dump heaps of myths. Even many people who claim to be Christians say that the flood is merely an interesting story, despite the warning of the apostle Peter in 2 Peter 3:3-9. There is ample evidence at the time Peter wrote his warning that the accounts of the creation and of the flood were well known amongst the Roman and Greek society.

Throughout the world there are over 280 different Flood accounts. These writers would have been quite unaware of the Jewish Old Testament. The Atrahasis (Babylonian) Epic, written on stone tablets and containing both creation and flood accounts, is believed to date back to 1700 BC. The Acagchem Indians of California say that a powerful being called Chinigchinich created man out of clay which he found on the banks of a lake; male and female he created them. The

Eskimos of Alaska tell of how a spirit named Aselu made a clay man and breathed life into him. The Kumis, who inhabit portions of Arakan and Chittagong hill tracts in eastern India say that God made the world and trees first and then made man and woman, forming their bodies out of clay. The Karens of Burma believe that God made woman by taking a rib from man, and that He had made man by forming him from the earth, having first finished the rest of creation.

Most of these mythical accounts of creation and the flood are pre-Christian in origin. If the Biblical records of these works of God are true, then it is certain that such events would be remembered in the mythology of most peoples! This history, denied by the atheist, *does exist in many records left by the ancients*. It attests to the creation of man by God, to the destruction of the world by the Noaic Flood, and to the dispersion of mankind throughout the world — paralleling the Genesis account to a tremendously corroborative degree.

It is the fool that says that there is no God (Psalm 14:1). Jesus promises that His Word will never fail (Luke 16:17 Mark 13:31), and this prophecy has been proved true time and time again. †

**Keith Sisman is a Christian in Great Britain, doing historical research.**

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**In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.**

**And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights.**

**On the very same day Noah and Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark — they and every beast after its kind, all cattle after their kind, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort.**

**And they went into the ark to Noah, two by two, of all flesh in which is the breath of life....(Genesis 7:11-15).**

# GOD IS!

Rex Banks

Some three millennia ago David wrote: "*The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'*" (Psalm 14:1; 53:1), and a glance at the daily newspaper reveals that this same spirit of atheism is alive and well in the world today. Of course the Word reminds us that in the light of the evidence provided by the Creation, those who deny the existence of God are quite simply "*without excuse*" (Romans 1:20). Since Paul wrote these words, the telescope and the microscope have enabled us to see the signature of God in the vastness of the galaxies and the ordered perfection of the atom. Quite simply, reason points to *the existence of God*.

Let's look at a series of propositions that all *reasonable* men accept:

1). **Nothing produces nothing.**

This is a self-evident truth or an axiom. Just as no reasonable person doubts that the shortest route between two points is a straight line (a self-evident truth) so, too, no reasonable person doubts that NOTHING produces nothing.

2). **The universe Exists.**

3). Since NOTHING produces nothing, and since something exists (the universe), it follows that **something has always existed.**

4). **That which has always existed is *not* the universe.**

"The second Law (of Thermodynamics) states that every system left to its own devices always tends to move from order to disorder, its energy tending to be transformed into lower levels of availability, finally reaching

## EVIDENCES

the stage of complete randomness and unavailability for further work....The fact that the universe is not yet dead is clear evidence that it is not infinitely old. Since it *will* die, in time, if present processes continue, **time cannot have been of infinite duration” (Scientific Creationism by Henry M. Morris)**. The universe, being material, had a beginning, but its existence implies the existence of an immaterial “something” which is eternal. We call it “the first cause”.

**5). This “first cause” must be adequate to explain (directly or indirectly) that which exists.** For instance, only a genius of Shakespearian proportions can explain the existence of the words of Shakespeare; a monkey is an insufficient cause. In like manner, an adequate first cause for man must explain his complexities. Since man possesses rationality, his “adequate cause” must be capable of rational thought. Since man possesses moral faculty, his “adequate cause” must also possess moral

faculty. Again as a creature capable of experiencing emotions, man can know that his “adequate cause” possesses the capacity for emotion.

How tragic when men exchange the truth of God for a lie (Romans 1:25). Look back at Psalm 14 and notice how David continues: *“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’.* ***They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good.*”** David was actually saying that “Their atheism is accompanied by deep moral corruption” (Pulpit Commentary). Brother James Bales observed: “Although there are atheists who are restrained by their background or surroundings from the repudiation of moral law, when the atheist is questioned or challenged on the issue, he denies the reality of moral law...”

Someone said: “If there is no God, all things are permissible.” Maybe that’s why our culture is so aptly named “the permissive society.” †

**Rex Banks preaches for the Peachgrove Church of Christ in Hamilton, New Zealand.**

Who is the King of Glory?  
The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory (Psalm 24).

Christ was and is *the Word of God*. "Word" in the Greek is "Logos" — messenger from God "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God...*" (John 1:1-4).

This Messenger (the Word) became flesh. "*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*" (John 1:14). He was God, the Word, in heaven before becoming a human upon the earth (Philippians 2:5-9).

He was the agent of creation in Genesis 1 (John 1:3; Ephesians 3:9). While on earth, Christ was human and also God (Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:22,23). When He began His ministry, He was given the Holy Spirit without measure (John 3:34,35). His teaching was and is the Holy Spirit-inspired word of God (2 Peter 1:3; Hebrews 1:1). His teaching is God's message of salvation to all human beings (John 7:16; 6:63; Hebrews 1:1).

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John record His birth, childhood, ministry, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. They contain His personal

teaching. How should all people receive His word? (Hebrews 12: 22-28; 2: 3,4). "*How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him?*"

While He was on earth, Jesus selected twelve men to be His special messengers (apostles) to the world. They lived with Him for three

and one half years. They heard His teaching and they witnessed His miracles. They saw Him die on the cross, and they saw Him and talked with Him after He was resurrected from the dead. They saw Him ascend up in to heaven. They received instruction from Him to preach the gospel to the world: "*And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he*

# The Words of Christ

John 6:63

Don L. Norwood

## THE WORD OF GOD

who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:15,16).

From heaven Christ sent the Holy Spirit to these apostles, to guide them in the revelation of all truth (John 14:12; 16:13; Acts 1:5-8; 1 Peter 1:9-12). It is through obedience to the truth that the soul is purified. *"Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever..."* (1 Peter 1:22,23).

While these apostles were preaching the word to the world, the Holy Spirit guided them in writing the New Testament scriptures. *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work"* (2 Timothy 3:16,17). The New Testament contains everything man needs to save him from sin and to guide his life on earth, so that he can live eternally in heaven.

During the Old Testament period of time, God communicated His will to man through prophets (men who spoke God's word, having received revelation of God's will through dreams, visions, voice instruction, etc.) However, according to Hebrews 1:1, we read *"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last*

*days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds."* It is vital that we recognize this change of dispensation and the change of spokesmen.

During the Christian age, the revelations through the prophets have been replaced by Christ's words — the whole New Testament — which are *"spirit and life"* (John 6:63). This means that His words are addressed to the spiritual needs of man. They show us how to be re-born as children of God and how to live a spiritually-minded life before God in this world, in preparation for the eternal world to come (Romans 8:1-14). Read also Colossians 2:11-13; 1 Corinthians 2:1-16. †

**Don L. Norwood does full-time mission work in India.**



**“Oh! Precious Word—  
Eternal Truth in my hand—  
Help me, O Lord, as I read  
To see, to know and to understand!”**

It is tragic that many who may respect God’s Word do not delve into it to be enriched by its blessings and benefits. Some have taught — and too many have caught — the concept that the Bible is difficult to understand. Some conclude this is proven because God’s Word is repeatedly referred to as “*the mystery*” (Romans 11:25; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 1:9; Colossians 1:26,27, etc).

Such thinking ignores what Paul wrote in Ephesians 3:3,4: “*How that by revelation was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words, whereby, when you read, you can perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ.*” When Paul plainly states that we can understand the mystery even as he did, we dare not accept the idea that God’s Word must remain a mystery to us. The problem is not “*can we*” but “*will we?*” To discover how the mystery can be understood, note the following A B C’s of how to study.

### **The “A” relates to Our Attitude.**

In John 7:17 Jesus promised: “*If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.*” God guarantees that if we *want* to know His teaching, He will see to it that we have the opportunity to know, and He assures us we *can* know it! The first Psalm tells us that one who *delights* in the law of the Lord will be both *blest* and *fruitful*. One who *hungers* and

## THE WORD OF GOD

*thirsts* after righteousness will be *blest* and *filled* (Matthew 5:6). The right attitude in study is essential.

### The “B” challenges the student to *Be Diligent*.

When we study (cf 2 Timothy 2:14), we need to “*be diligent to present ourselves approved to God.*” The one who looks into God’s perfect law with no intent to *do* it, deludes himself. The one who looks into that law and forgets to examine himself has no promise of being blest (cf. James 1:21-25). Understanding the word of the Lord means we will look carefully how we walk (Ephesians 5:15-17).

### Therefore, the “C” is *Cooperation*.

We must diligently study with the intent of doing His will. His will builds workers. As Paul put it, “*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of Truth*” (2 Timothy 2:15 NKJV). God’s Word is not to be *altered*, but *accepted*; not *doubted*, but *done!* Jesus said that those who enter the Kingdom not only *call* Him “Lord”, but *do* “*the will of my Father who is in heaven*” (Matthew 7:21).

### The “D” is *Depend on Him, Divine*.

Even with a diligent study of His Word and a desire to do His will, pray the Psalmist’s prayer: “*Deal bountifully with Thy servant, that I may live and keep Thy word. Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things from Thy law*” (Psalm 119:17f). It was when the Psalmist recognized that God “*does teach me Thy statutes*” that he confidently added, “*Let my tongue sing of Thy Word*” (Psalm 119:172f). With God helping as a teacher and with His Word as our course of study, life can be abundantly livable, for He has “*the words of eternal life*” (John 6:68).

Therefore, when you pick up God’s Word: (1) Check your attitude; (2) Be diligent; (3) Have a spirit of cooperation, doing as Divinity directs; (4) Depend on Him to help you. Solomon summarizes the results in these words: “*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths*” (Proverbs 3:5f NKJV). †

Dayton Keese is a gospel preacher living in Midwest City, Oklahoma, USA.

The title is set against a black background. On the left, there are three stylized white question marks of varying sizes, some with decorative patterns inside. The text 'How to Know' is in a large, white, cursive font, and 'What's Right' is in a similar but slightly smaller cursive font below it. To the right of the text, there is a smaller version of the stylized question mark graphic.

# How to Know What's Right

David Tarbet

There is a clear plan in the Bible for determining authority in the Lord's Church. The plan does not include a hierarchy of priests, archbishops, presidents, or councils. It is a simple plan, with Jesus Christ the only head of the Church, Heaven the only headquarters of the church, and the Scripture as the standard for right and wrong, law and grace. Paul, the apostle, spoke of Christ as "*head of the church*" (Colossians 1:18). Jesus said, "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me*" (Matthew 28:18). "*...no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ*" (1 Corinthians 3:10).

There is no place, then, for church councils of men to claim authority to make laws. The apostles, to whom Jesus delegated the right to speak authoritatively (John 16:13), were positioned in the "foundation" of the church: "...and

*are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone*" (Ephesians 2:20).

Today Christians are to build upon the solid foundation laid by Christ, the apostles, and the prophets of long ago. There are no inspired spokesmen for God in this age. Those who understand and respect the divine arrangement will look to the written Word (the Bible) as the only authority for all they do in religion (1 Corinthians 14:37). There is no more fundamental issue in Christendom which needs to be settled than this.

If you have been following the teachings and traditions of human church leaders, why not go back to the Bible, to the only standard of truth? There's so much to learn; now is the time to get started! †

**David Tarbet is a gospel preacher working with the White Rock Church of Christ in Dallas, Texas, USA.**

# Verse Search

Supply the missing information from the book of Acts, chapter twelve NKJV.

1. What did Herod do that pleased the Jews? (Vs. 2,3).
2. Who made constant prayer for Peter while he was in prison? (V. 5).
3. How was Peter secured and guarded while he slept? (V. 6).
4. Who struck Peter on the side and told him to "Arise quickly"? (V. 7).
5. What was Peter not wearing when the angel struck him? (V. 8).
6. What did Peter think about what was done by the angel? (V. 9).
7. What happened when Peter and the angel came to the city gate? (V. 10).
8. From what two things was Peter delivered? (V. 11).
9. Where were many gathered together praying? (V. 12).
10. "As \_\_\_\_\_ knocked at the door of the gate, a girl \_\_\_\_\_ came to \_\_\_\_\_." (V. 13).
11. When the girl recognized Peter's voice, what did she do? (V. 14).
12. What was Peter doing while those inside were discussing whether he was actually at the gate himself, and not his spirit? (Vs. 13,16).
13. What did Herod do to the guards that were responsible for Peter? (V. 19).
14. What did the people shout when Herod sat on his throne and gave an oration? (Vs. 21,22).
15. Why did an angel of the Lord strike Herod? (V. 23). Compare the angel striking Peter and striking Herod.
16. What effect did these events have on the acceptance of the word of God? (V. 24).

[See inside of back cover for answers.]

# The Rules of the Game



Donny Weimar

The Olympic games continue to excite me through the years. My favorite competition is cross-country skiing.

But allow me to pose some rhetorical questions to you for the sake of making a point. Can one compete in cross-country skiing using the rules of hockey? Will the USA hockey team win over China playing by the rules of archery? Would it be fair for the judges to preside over figure skating competition by the rules of speed skating?

Of course, the answer to all these silly questions is no. Similarly, it is ridiculous for you or me to think that we can win a victory over the Devil competing by

worldly rules or human creeds.

The very fact that the Christian life entails a struggle over selfishness implies that we are not capable of writing our own rule books on religious issues (James 1:14-17; 1:23-27). Jeremiah captured this concept when he said in chapter 10 of his prophetic book, "*O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*"

Doesn't it just make sense that if we want to win over death we must walk according to the Book of life? To gain this victory Paul said that he was "*holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in*

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

*vain, neither laboured in vain*" (Philippians 2:16).

An enormous problem has been caused by the doctrines of men (Matthew 15:9; Colossians 2:22). The solution is clear: **to win the victorious crown of eternal life we must determine to defeat our spiritual competitor according to God's rules.**

◆ It is God who will judge us; therefore, it is by His rules that we race. The Judge did say, *"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day"* (John 12:48).

◆ Only those who compete fairly will finish the course. *"Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us"* (Hebrews 12:1b).

◆ Only those who compete according to the right standard will taste victory. *"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain"*

(1 Corinthians 9:24).

Christians who live according to God's Word are already winners. *"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (1 Corinthians 15:57). †

Donny Weimar preaches for the Church of Christ in Collinsville, Texas, USA.

### What Must I Do? Be Buried!

The Scriptures explain in 1 Corinthians 15:3,4 that the "gospel" or the "good news" of Jesus Christ is *"...that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day..."*

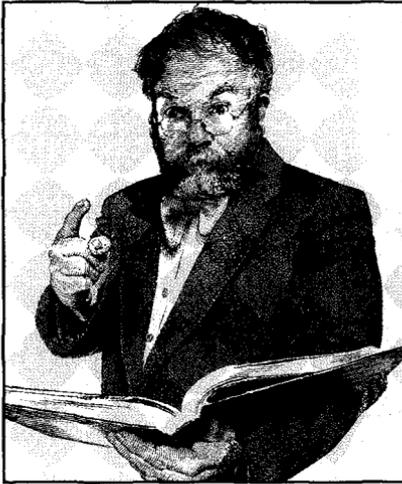
We, as believers, picture this gospel in our own obedience to God. After *"dying to sin"* in our repentance, *"...we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection"* (Romans 6:3-5).

Baptism is also called "the new birth", that is, through baptism we are born as new people into the family of God: *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God"* (John 3:5).

**Next: What does it mean to be "born again"?**

# Predestination and Election

Frank Chesser



On the opening day of school, John Smith stands before his history class and divides the students into two groups. To those on the right, he declares, "I have predetermined that you shall pass. Consequently, in light of my action, there is no possible way for you to fail this course."

Turning to those on the left, he affirms, "I have predetermined that you shall fail. Therefore, there is not one single thing that you can do to pass this course. Though you may not understand my actions, you have no choice but to accept them."

Who would argue as to the total absence of justice in such conduct? Surely, no rational person would view such action as just, fair, and equitable. And yet, in a far more serious vein, there are those who teach that this is exactly what God has done with regard to the priceless souls of men and their eternal destiny.

The Bible definitely teaches the exercise of divine sovereignty in predestination and election, but certainly not the loveless, unjust, arbitrary kind described above. God has foreordained and predestined that **those who demonstrate their divinely bestowed right of free will by rendering obedience to His Word and walking in the light thereof until death will be saved** (Matthew 7:21). The "chosen and predestinated" of Ephesians 1:4,5 and the "ordained to eternal life" of Acts 13:48 constitute an example of such people. Conversely, **those who exercise their free will by rejecting His Word and persisting in such rejection until death shall be lost** (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

In actuality, God has **predes-**  
**tin**ed that Jesus would make provi-

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

sions for man's salvation by means of the cross. Thus, long before the cross became a reality, Isaiah formed a portrait thereof with the brush of prophecy (Isaiah 53). While conversing with the eunuch from this marvelous text, Philip "*preached unto him Jesus*" (Acts 8:35).

The provisions of Calvary embrace the whole world, not just a select group (John 3:16). Jesus tasted death for "*every man*" (Hebrews 2:9). Thus, the Gospel is to be proclaimed to "*every creature*" (Mark 16:15). God is not willing that "*any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*" (2 Peter 3:9). God earnestly desires "*all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*" (1 Timothy 2:4). Therefore, "*whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely*" (Revelation 22:17).

Consequently, **the "plan"** has been *eternally predestined, fixed, arranged, and is immutable*. But not so with **the "man"**. He can either *accept the provisions* of Calvary by complying with the Gospel (Romans 1:16) and remaining faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10), or *he can reject the Gospel* (2 Thessalonians 1:8), make sin a lifelong pursuit, and depart into a Christless eternity (Matthew 25:4).

God grants man the right

to choose between life and death (Deuteronomy 30:19), God and idolatry (Joshua 24:15), one of two masters (Matthew 6:24), and the strait way and the broad way (Matthew 7:13,14). The choice is man's, not God's. Thus, if a man makes the wrong choice, he has only himself to blame.

How thankful each one of us must be that God does not arbitrarily make these eternal choices for us. How thankful we must be that He has granted humans the privilege of "free will". †

**Frank Chesser is the preacher for the Panama Street church in Montgomery, Alabama, USA.**

### Sinner's Plea

Dear Lord, hear my earnest plea.  
Give me strength, take my hand.  
Lead me o'er the stony path  
That marks the way of man.

Without your guidance I will fall  
Into the dark and noisome pit,  
Take my failing hand, dear Lord,  
Support my soul as I submit.

My life, my will, I give to Thee:  
Mine they are no more!  
Lead me, dear Lord, till I arrive  
On heaven's golden shore

— Coleman Cabaniss

# God Tests Our Faith with “Little Things”

**Basil Overton**

Some may wonder why gospel preachers place so much emphasis on the subject of baptism. One reason is because so many preachers and others of various religious groups have emphasized for so long that they think baptism in water is *not important* and is *not necessary* for salvation from sin. What these people think and teach will not be our standard of judgment in the last day. God’s Word alone will be the standard by which we are judged when we all appear before the Lord, when each one of us gives account of himself to God (Romans 14:10-12.)

Those of us who emphasize what the New Testament teaches on water baptism do not do so because we think the teaching is difficult; *it is not*. Probably there is no teaching in the New Testament any less difficult to understand than the subject of water baptism. What the Bible says on this subject is so plain that one who reads it carefully will be convinced that God made sure that he who misunderstands it is without excuse.

## **God Tests Our Faith**

In 2 Kings chapter five the Bible says Naaman, the commander

of the army of the king of Syria, was a leper. Elisha, God’s prophet, sent a message to Naaman telling him to wash or dip himself in the Jordan River seven times in order to be healed of his leprosy. Naaman was furious and went away in a rage. He said, *“Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.”*

Naaman thought there should be a notable display and ceremony to cure his leprosy. As he was going away in a rage, his servants said to him, *“If the prophet had told you to do something great, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, Wash and be clean?”* The Bible then records that Naaman went to the Jordan and dipped seven times, just as God’s prophet, Elisha, had told him to do. After the seventh time, his leprosy was taken away and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a child.

## **One Becomes A Christian By Faith**

The Bible teaches that one

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

becomes a Christian by faith in Jesus Christ as in John 3:16, but this does not mean by faith only. The New Testament teaches that becoming a Christian by faith includes loving the Lord enough to do what He says. Jesus said, *“He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him”* (John 14:21).

Becoming a Christian by **faith** includes faith itself, for we are commanded to **believe in Jesus** as God’s Son, and to **believe God** has raised Him from the dead (1 John 3:23; Romans 10:9). It also includes turning from sins, or **repenting**, for God commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30).

One cannot become a Christian by faith without **confessing Jesus Christ** (Romans 10:9). The Ethiopian treasurer confessed that he believed Jesus Christ to be the Son of God just before he was buried in water baptism (Acts 8:35-39).

The New Testament teaches that becoming a Christian by faith includes being **baptized in water** in order to have the forgiveness or remission of sins (Acts 2:38), which is what Jesus meant when He said, *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”* (Mark 16:16).

It is very unfortunate that so many preachers do not teach people to become Christians as is taught in the New Testament. Instead they tell them to repeat after them, something like: “Lord, I am a sinner, please come into my heart and forgive me.” These preachers then assure those who have thus prayed that they are saved, and that they are Christians. All such people need to carefully read the New Testament and see that no one was told by the apostles to pray such a prayer in order to become a Christian; they need to see that, instead, people were taught what to do to be saved as I have clearly shown above from the Scriptures themselves.

### Conclusion

Yes, God tests our faith with what some may call “small things”. Remember, the standard by which our Lord and Master judges us in the last day will not be what people say in trying to get around doing what God has commanded in His Word, but our standard of judgment will be the New Testament itself!

If you have not become a Christian, contact the church of Christ nearest you, and you will find assistance in attending to this most important matter of all for you. †

**Basil Overton is editor of *The World Evangelist* and lives in Florence, Alabama, USA.**



# Metaphors of Heaven

**Roger E. Dickson**

Through metaphorical statements and words, the Holy Spirit seeks to excite our thinking concerning the nature, environment, and character of heaven. Only through metaphor can He take our minds off this present world to focus our thinking on what is above the environment in which we live. The following are some of the beautiful metaphors that the Spirit uses in order to explain the environment of heaven.

**A. Heaven is a dwelling for  
*a spiritual house.***

In contrast to the physical body we now possess, Paul promised that there is a “house” that is not made with hands which will clothe us in the eternal dwelling of heaven. *“For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”* (2 Corinthians 5:1). It is for this house that we yearn. We

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

seek to put off this tabernacle in order to be clothed with a *spiritual body* that is from God (1 Corinthians 15:44). We yearn for the redemption of this body out of its present environment of death, mortality, and corruptibility.

### **B. Heaven is the place of the temple.**

The word "temple" is used in the New Testament in reference to our body (1 Corinthians 6:19) and the church (1 Corinthians 3:16). Jesus even used the word metaphorically to refer to His own body while on earth (John 2:19). The word "temple" is also used in reference to God's dwelling in heaven. John recorded, "*The temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, and earthquake, and great hail*" (Revelation 11:19).

We would not assume that there is a literal temple of wood and stone in heaven. What John wants us to do is to look beyond the physical temple of Jerusalem to a meaning for which it stands. Jews sought to go to the temple of God in Jerusalem. It was symbolic of God's presence among His people. It was a place of solitude, worship, and closeness to God. All such feelings are with those who will be in heaven. Heaven is solitude, a place of

worship and closeness to God. It is a place where God is among His people.

### **C. Heaven is a country.**

The Hebrews writer referred to those of the Old Testament who sought a homeland, or country (Hebrews 11:14). They never found such in this world. "*But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country*" (Hebrews 11:16).

We seek our own homeland, one in which we can have identity and citizenship with fellow citizens. A homeland means a place of permanent residence, a place in which one is not a stranger or pilgrim. Heaven will be such to all who discover that this world is not their home. To those who "*confess that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth,*" heaven will be a place of permanent citizenship and dwelling (Hebrews 11:13).

### **D. Heaven is a city.**

"*For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come*" (Hebrews 13:14; see Revelation 22:14). This is the "*city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God*" (Hebrews 11:10). It is the city of God that has been prepared for those who have journeyed through the desert of life (Hebrews 11:16). Its foundations have been made by God and are thus sure and steadfast.

Heaven will be such for those

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

who are strangers and pilgrims on a tempestuous journey through life. In heaven we will find that place of destination, rest, and eternal companionship with those who have also struggled through the journey of life. In heaven we will find an existence (house) that is founded upon God Himself. God has built the foundations, and thus, the building is sure, stable, and permanent. Those foundations will not crack or give way as do the foundations of this world that have been made by man's hands.

### **E. Heaven is an *abiding place*.**

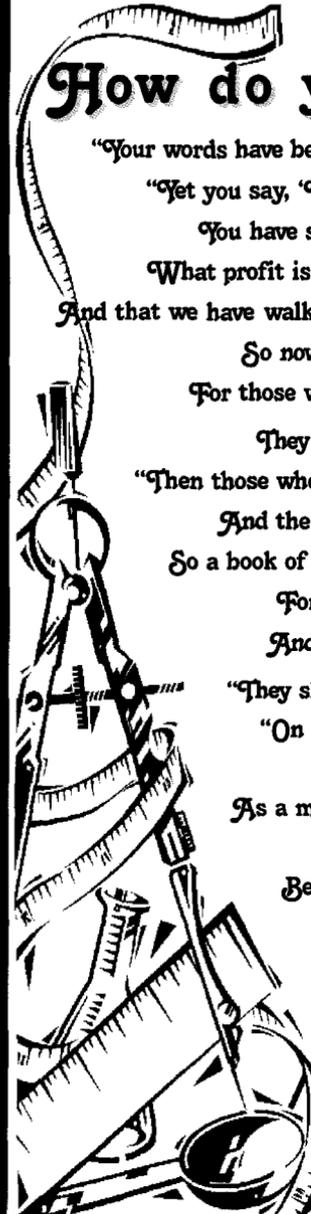
Jesus said to the disciples, "*In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you*" (John 14:2). The Greek word here translated "mansions" by the King James translators means "abiding places". What Jesus wanted the disciples to know was that there was a definite place reserved

for them after this life. He thus sought in John 14 to give them emotional security for the tremendous persecutions they were about to endure.

The preceding metaphors picture heaven as an existence beyond this world. It will be a realm in which our spiritual building (our resurrected body) will dwell. We will be close to the presence of God. We will be where God destined us to be before the creation of the world. We will have arrived at the "city", the intended destination of our journey. And thus, we will dwell or abide with God in a place which has been prepared especially for us. This is the emotional security of the saints. This is the dream that brings Christians together in order to comfort one another in this journey of life. †

**Roger E. Dickson is the director of International School of Biblical Studies in Cape Town, South Africa.**

God is in the commonplace things and people around us. If we will do the duty that lies nearest, we shall see Him.



# How do you measure up?

"Your words have been harsh against Me," Says the LORD,

"Yet you say, 'What have we spoken against You?'

You have said, 'It is useless to serve God;

What profit is it that we have kept His ordinance,

And that we have walked as mourners Before the LORD of hosts?

So now we call the proud blessed,

For those who do wickedness are raised up;

They even tempt God and go free.'

"Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another,

And the LORD listened and heard them;

So a book of remembrance was written before Him

For those who fear the LORD

And who meditate on His name.

"They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts,

"On the day that I make them My jewels.

And I will spare them

As a man spares his own son who serves him."

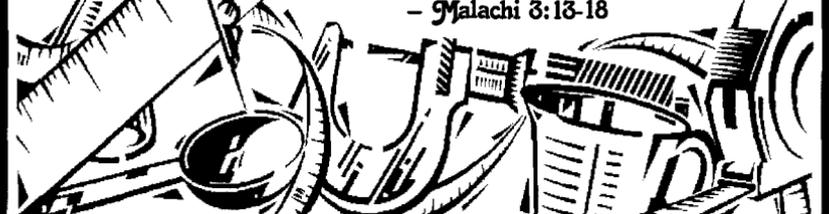
Then you shall again discern

Between the righteous and the wicked,

Between one who serves God

And one who does not serve Him."

- Malachi 3:13-18



# Saved Like Saul

A. L. Franks

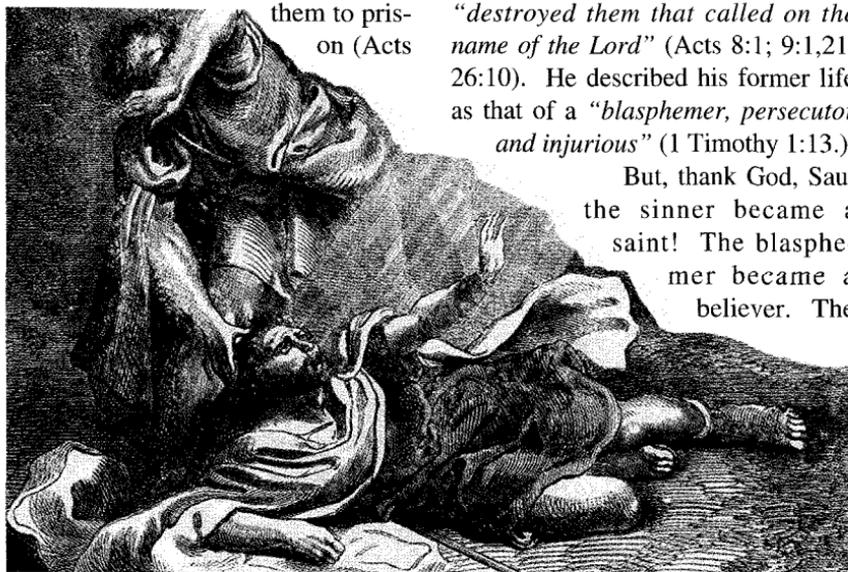
Are you a sinner? Do you want to be saved? Would you like to become a Christian? You can. You can be saved. Like Saul.

Saul of Tarsus (Paul) was once a sinner, in a big way. He described himself as "*chief*" of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). He assisted in the murder of Stephen, a gospel preacher (Acts 7:58). He forcibly entered the homes of Christians, binding both men and women, committing them to prison (Acts

8:3). He was "*exceedingly mad*" against followers of Jesus. He repeatedly used physical force in an all-out effort to get Christians to blaspheme the name of their Lord (Acts 26:11).

This wicked man, Saul, the "*chief of sinners,*" made havoc of the Lord's church. He breathed out "*threatenings and slaughter*" against the disciples. He cast his vote to murder faithful Christians. He "*destroyed them that called on the name of the Lord*" (Acts 8:1; 9:1,21; 26:10). He described his former life as that of a "*blasphemer, persecutor and injurious*" (1 Timothy 1:13.)

But, thank God, Saul the sinner became a saint! The blasphemer became a believer. The



persecutor became a preacher. The chief became a Christian. If Saul could change, so can you. You, too, can become a Christian like Saul.

Saul's change from Judaism to Christianity is detailed in Acts chapters 9, 22, and 26. True, Saul's salvation was special. Miraculous incidents were involved, such as the light, and the voice from heaven which answered, "*I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.*"

Saul then asked, "*What shall I do, Lord?*" Jesus responded, "*Arise and go into Damascus and there it shall be told thee....*"

So, Saul arose, and with the assistance of those traveling with him, he went into Damascus and entered the house of Judas. At the end of the day, sinful Saul was still without sight. He ate not. He drank not. He was in his sins. He still did not know what to do.

Sightless Saul stayed on in Judas' house. Time probably passed very slowly for the praying sinner. He refused to eat or drink. His sins remained with him. He still did not know what to do.

Finally, a reluctant messenger, Ananias, who was sent from the Lord, came to the house of Judas. He inquired for the whereabouts of Saul. The Lord's messenger informed Saul that he had come to bring sight and salvation. He had come to tell him what to do.

Ananias told Saul what to do. The penitent and praying man, who had by now come to believe in Jesus, heard God's messenger both ask and command, "*And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord*" (Acts 22:16). Finally the message had come. Saul now knew what to do. He was told to arise and be baptized.

Saul obeyed. He was saved. Saul, the "*chiefest of sinners,*" the one who had been a blasphemer and a persecutor, arose and was baptized (Acts 9:18). And, as promised by the Savior, he was saved (Mark 16:16) — his sins were forgiven (Acts 2:38) — his sins were "*washed away*" (Acts 22:16). Saul, the sinner, was saved!

Now, if Saul, as "*chief of sinners*" could be saved, so can you. If Saul was saved through believing in Jesus as the Son of God, repenting of his sins, and by being baptized into Christ, you can also be saved through faith in Jesus, repentance of sins, and baptism.

God is no respecter of persons. I ask you, as Ananias asked Saul, "*Why tarriest thou? Arise, be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*" You, too, can be saved — like Saul. †

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# If He Is Wrong, **WHAT DOES THE CHRISTIAN MISS?**

Ancil Jenkins

Doubt is a subtle demon. It creeps in at times of distress, pain, and fear. All who are honest will admit to some period of doubt in their lives. The dishonest will lie about it but will still have had the doubts. Doubting is not sinful; failing to act on doubts is. Honesty demands an examination and a resolution of doubts.

As one examines doubts, his heart is comforted. How? Through confronting questions objectively, sincerely looking for truth. Truth will *silence* doubts, or will show a *different path* that should be taken.

But often the search for truth is a long one, and doubts must be endured until the answer is found. During that interim, how should one reason? Must he abandon his faith until study has removed the last question? Or should he stand firm until his doubts have been substantiated, if that proves to be the eventual outcome?

In answer, let me raise these questions for consideration by those who may be wavering in their faith,

plagued by doubts: **As a Christian, even if the doubts are true, what have I missed through believing in God? Even if there is no God, no true Word, and no heaven, what does a Christian miss by living a righteous, faithful life?**

● **A Christian is far better off physically than an unbeliever.** Our bodies, says Paul, are the temple of the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:1). A temple must be treated with respect and care. Proper diet, exercise, and preventive medicine should be a part of a Christian's life. He will not abuse his body with drugs and other harmful substances. He will avoid putting himself in situations that are evil and hurtful. Drunken driving, fights, and other law-breaking activities can not threaten him physically! Why? Because they are not a part of his life!

● **A Christian is better off materially because of his values.** Basic honesty affects one's business. He does not seek illegal or unethical advantage. He is careful to do what

is right in the eyes of everybody (Romans 12:17). People will want to do business with him because they know they will be treated fairly and truthfully.

God's child is doubly blessed. He has enough for himself and enough to share with those who are in need (Ephesians 4:28). He enjoys the pleasure of having all he requires and the greater blessing of giving to help others.

● **The Christian loses nothing socially by his commitment to Jesus Christ.** Like Jesus, he should grow in favor with men (Luke 2:52). He may not be liked for his faith and practice, but he will be respected for his dedication to what he believes. A man once remarked that he intended to go and hear a certain preacher. Someone asked him why he would go since he did not believe as that preacher did. His response was, "Because he believes what he preaches and I like to hear people like that."

**Christian relationships are not corrupted by many of the practices of the world.** Because he will be true to his marriage vows, the Christian will not know the attendant heartbreak of adultery or sexual perversions and a broken home. *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her...husbands ought to love their own wives as*

*their own bodies..."* (Ephesians 5:25,28). A stable marriage adds to life's pleasures and meaning.

A Christian is also a good neighbor since he loves his neighbor as himself (Matthew 22:37,38).

● **What about a Christian's emotional life?** Emotional turmoil may cause the Christian to seek counsel. There is no shame in this. Yet, Christian counsel will bring insights that will provide help and recovery faster and in a more meaningful, permanent way than the counsel of non-Christian advisors. With God at the center of his life, the child of God is not disturbed and plagued by many of the world's emotional ills.

**What does one lose by being a Christian?** Nothing but negatives and problems! Even if there is no God, no heaven or hell, no biblical authority for moral values, the Christian's quality of life is still far better than that of the unbeliever. The really important question is not "What does **the Christian** lose if the unbeliever is right," but "What does **the unbeliever** lose if the Christian is right?" Even if somehow the unbeliever managed to gain the world, he would lose his own soul, and that is the greatest loss of all. †

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# Waiting Room Bible Study

John Mark Wilson

## The Church

Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build \_\_\_\_\_ church."

Ephesians 5:23 Christ is the head of the \_\_\_\_\_.

Colossians 1:18 The church is called the \_\_\_\_\_.

Ephesians 4:4 How many bodies does Jesus have \_\_\_\_\_?

Galatians 3:27 We get into Christ's body by putting Him on in \_\_\_\_\_.

Acts 22:16 Baptism washes our \_\_\_\_\_ away.

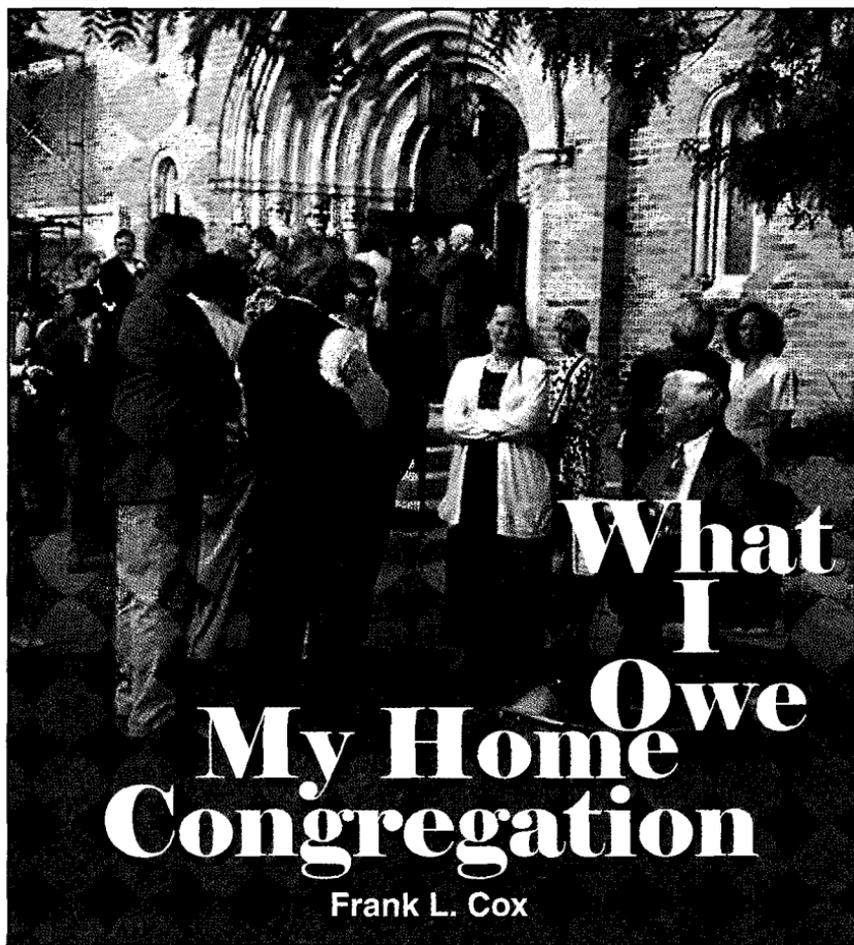
Acts 2:47 The \_\_\_\_\_ adds us to His church.

Acts 11:26 Those in the Lord's church are called simply \_\_\_\_\_.

Matthew 15:13 What about churches planted by men \_\_\_\_\_?

Ephesians 5:23 Jesus is coming again to save \_\_\_\_\_ one body.

(Founded by Christ, Matthew 16:18; In the right place, Isaiah 2:1,2; At the right time, AD 33; Uses only the Bible, 2 Timothy 3:16; Mentioned by name, Romans 16:16; Still Exists Today!)



**Unto the Church of the Lord in every locality, I am under solemn obligation to the extent of my ability, but unto my home congregation, I am under special obligation.**

1. I want my home congregation to radiate a wholesome influence in the community. Therefore, I owe it the example of a good life. For it I must *"live soberly, righteously and godly"* (Titus 2:12 see Matthew 5:13,16).
2. I want the strangers who enter the door of the meeting house to feel at

## THE CHURCH

home, to learn to love us, to return from time to time. They are our guests; I must entertain them. I owe it to them, and to the church to show myself friendly. I must not stand back and wait for others to greet them; this I must do (Hebrews 13:2).

3. No congregation can make progress without faithful and efficient leaders. To a certain extent, the members of the church make or break their leaders. To the end that our leaders may be stronger and more efficient, I must give them my support. I must pray for them. As long as they are true men, I must not embarrass them in the work (1 Timothy 5:19).

4. My home congregation has financial obligations which are due at regular intervals. Whether I give or do not give, these obligations must be paid. If it is right for my congregation to pay its obligations each week, it is right for me to give each week. Though circumstances may force me to be absent at times, my obligations should find their way to the treasury of the church (1 Corinthians 16 :1,2).

5. I know that the very existence of my congregation depends upon the attendance of its members. In fact, the attendance is the life of the church (Hebrews 10:25). For this reason, I must attend the service ... all the services I can. For all that I have, I owe the Lord. I would not have it said that my congregation perished because I would not attend the meetings.

6. I want my home congregation to grow, to multiply in members. Therefore, I must set to the noble work of winning souls for Christ (Luke 19:10). This I can do by preaching and persuading; this I can do by persistent effort; this I can do by bringing them to our meetings.

7. My home congregation cannot thrive in a frigid atmosphere. I must not by my carelessness allow the church to become a place where hearts are chilled. I must make it a place where hearts are warmed. Therefore, I owe it my heart, the warmth of my life. I must forgive and forget, rather than bear grudges and look for reasons to feel offended at others .

**Wishing to be honest, I must meet my obligations to the best of my ability. I must, with the help that God gives, play my part in the incomparable work of building up the body of Christ.**



Frank L. Cox was editor of *Minister's Monthly* while he lived. He was a preacher of the gospel in the state of Texas, USA.

# Lethargy in the Church

Dale Grissom

Webster's defines *lethargy* as sluggishness. Unfortunately, we see much of this in the church today — it seems that some members just can't get moving. They are taught, encouraged, and pleaded with, but nothing seems to move them. They just will not become involved in carrying out work that will help the cause of Christ. Lethargy is not new to the church — it has been with us for many years — and is the main reason the church is not growing in the States as it should.

This lethargic attitude brings to mind the Laodicean church spoken of in Revelation 3:15-17: "*I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth, because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked....*"

Christians do not generally start out being lethargic, but drift into it. Many become weary in well-doing, then begin to ramble along. Many

parents and older Christians do our young people a disservice when they set a sluggish example. Our young people need to see committed Christians at work.

We need to realize the seriousness of the charge God has given us: Take the message of salvation to a lost world. In order to carry out that commission (Matthew 28:19,20 and Mark 16:15,16), we must prepare ourselves to be teachers of the Word and be busy doing the will of our Lord. There is no excuse for us not to know the gospel. In addition to the Bible, we are blessed with excellent preachers and teachers who present the Word to us, trying to help us grow. We are the earthen vessels — the only means. When we fail, the job goes undone.

Men and women are dying every day, not having heard the gospel of Christ. It will be a sad day indeed when we stand before the Lord on that great day of judgment and someone turns to us and cries, "You never mentioned Him to me,!" †

Dale Grissom works with the church of Christ in Dexter, Missouri, USA.



# Attending Church Services

John Thiesen

Is it necessary for Christians to attend the worship services and Bible studies of the church? Why can't we just worship God in the privacy of our home without meeting with other Christians? Since God is everywhere, He can hear our prayers in one place as well as in another. These are important questions which need to be answered from God's Holy Scriptures. In these we learn that there are several vital reasons why faithful attendance at all the assemblies of the church is both important and necessary for our spiritual growth and service to the Lord.

### God Is Glorified in Our Assemblies

Christians form a "*holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*" (1 Peter 2:5). Just like the Levitical priests in the Temple of God in the Old Testament, their profession is to serve in the holy worship of God in God's house, which in our New Testament age is "*the church of the living God; the pillar and ground of the truth*" (1 Timothy 3:15). Their very purpose for existence is to glorify God in worship. "*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood,*

## WORSHIP

*an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). The songs of praise and devotion that we sing to God, the prayers that are lifted up in His presence, and the proclaiming of His Holy Word all are to His glory. How can Christians do this if they absent themselves from the worship assemblies of the church? Their failure to appear before God does not glorify Him, but dishonors Him and belittles His importance in their lives. God is the all-mighty, all-powerful creator*

*law of sin which is in my members” (Romans 7:23). Only Christ is able to free us from the deadly power of sin in our lives. One of His aids to us, in order to help us to overcome sin, is our attendance at the Bible studies and worship services of the church. These meetings provide us with teaching and exhorting which fortify us in our battles with sin. Jesus commanded that those who are baptized into Him must continue to be taught in order to receive necessary instructions in His commandments. “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have com-*

**Only Christ is able to free us from the deadly power of sin in our lives.**

of the universe, from whom come all the good things we enjoy. To fail to show up at a meeting especially designed to honor Him is as offensive to Him as it would be to any of us if people failed to come to a special dinner held in our honor.

### **They Help Me in My Struggle with Sin**

We are all locked in a life-and-death-struggle with sin in a daily war with our enemy, Satan, who seeks our destruction. He is doing all in his power to turn us away from God and righteousness. “*But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the*

*manded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:20). But if we do not show up for the Bible studies, and do not attend worship services where God’s Word is preached, we miss out on teachings and encouragement vital to our knowledge, faith, and spiritual development. Without instruction in Christ’s Word, we become like infants abandoned and exposed to the elements and predatory beasts of the field. We then become vulnerable and easy pickings for that wild beast Satan, who “as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).*

**We Need  
the Fellowship of God's People**

No one is an island. God created us as social beings. From the beginning of the world, God saw that "it is not good that the man should be alone," so He created Eve to be with him and work by his side (Genesis 2:18). From that time until the present, people have operated in association with one another. In the family, on the job, and at play man draws strength in his associations with others. Even at war, men are not sent out to fight alone, but are placed in companies, platoons, and squads to draw strength, cooperation, and encouragement from one another in the midst of battle. Two soldiers together in a foxhole are braver and more determined than one all by himself isolated from the others.

The same is true of God's peo-

ple. We need one another. It would have been easy for God just to let each of us stay at home to worship Him in isolation, but He chose instead the association of Christians together in a local congregation for mutual teaching, encouragement, and correction. The first congregation of the Lord's church in Jerusalem "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

It is for these reasons that Christians are admonished, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).†

**John Thiesen, in Buffalo, MO, is Managing Editor for the Spanish Edition of *The Voice of Truth International*.**

**Dear God,**

I know worship is important, but I need to miss sometimes. I think I should be excused for the following reasons:

- Christmas, New Years, July 4th, other holidays.....5
- School beginning and closing.....2
- Out of town ball games, tournaments.....10
- Family reunions (1 for wife, 1 for husband).....2
- Anniversary.....1
- Sickness (1 per family member).....5
- Unexpected company, bad weather, T.V. special.....8
- House and car repairs.....3
- Time change & alarm not working.....4
- Business trips and vacation.....6

I see the total of **46** is a little high, but You can count on me the other Sundays, if not hindered.



# *Profane Fire*

Loy Mitchell

*“Nadab and Abihu had died before the Lord when they offered profane fire before the Lord in the wilderness of Sinai; and they had no children. So Eleazar and Ithamar ministered as priests under the oversight of Aaron their father” (Numbers 3:4).*

## **I. Who Committed This Sin?**

The two oldest sons of Aaron the high priest. They had been duly appointed and consecrated for this work. This was their only work, and there is no reason to believe they did not know what kind of fire to offer. We, as children of the God

of heaven, must beware, lest we who know that we are to worship God in spirit and in truth fail to worship as taught by the Lord (John 4:23,24).

## II. What Sin Did They Commit?

The passage above says that they “*offered profane*” fire before the Lord. This was fire which was “*strange*” or “*unauthorized*.” The fire to be used was the holy fire from the ever-burning fire from the altar. All offerings to God must be according to His instructions. Thus these two priests acted presumptuously by offering fire not authorized by God. They showed no respect for what God commanded and thus showed no respect for the great God of heaven. Is it not wise for us today to examine everything we do in worship and work and make sure it is authorized by God?

## III. What Was the Punishment for Their Sin?

*“Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the Lord*

*and devoured them, and they died before the Lord”* (Leviticus 10:1,2). What they did was careless and dangerous! God’s punishment was swift and sure. What an impressive and important lesson for the Israelites. God would not accept just any fire. God expects His people to offer what He commands.

I shudder to think of how men today spurn the commands in the Bible of what we are to offer God in worship. Some simply do not wor-

ship. Some are too busy with work, sports, or are just plain lazy. Such people have no hope of living with God forever. They can only have the promise of an eternity in a devil’s hell. Today most churches have changed the worship of God into entertainment times. Little or no thought is given to what the great I AM wants in worship. Have we forgotten what Jesus said? **“In vain they worship me, teaching as precepts the commandments of men. You have forsaken the commandment of God, and are keeping the tradition of men”** (Mark 7:7,8). †

**Loy Mitchell, former missionary to Zimbabwe, now preaches for the Northside church in Topeka, Kansas, USA.**



# YOU *and* WORSHIP

**Norman Easter**



Henry Ward Beecher, the famous pulpit orator, once had to be absent and his brother was invited to speak for him. The church house was crowded, but when it became evident the eloquent Henry Beecher was not going to appear, many started to leave. Beecher's brother was not disturbed. He stood up before the murmuring crowd, called for silence and said, "All who came this morning to worship Henry W. Beecher may now leave. The rest will remain and worship God."

What are we doing in our assemblies? Some, like the Athenians, come only to hear the preacher say "something" (Acts 17:20,21). "Is it relevant?" "Is it positive?" Are mental guidelines used in judging sermons? Some attend to judge the singing, the prayers, or the friendliness of the congregation.

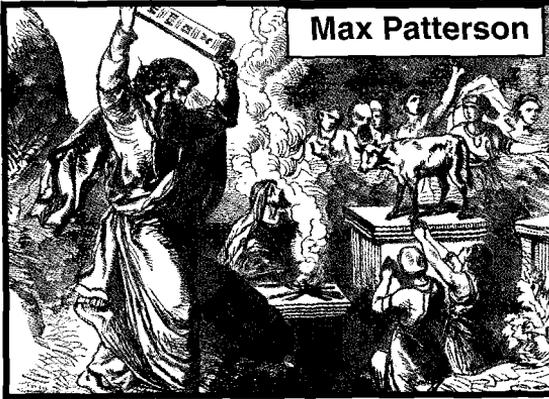
These go away with a host of criticisms, perhaps, or even pride ... but worship has been forgotten.

Why do we gather for worship? Some are here to "get it over with for a week"; to get their tickets validated once more. But those who are here because they need strength in carrying their crosses know the value of true worship.

Worship has nothing to do with the song leader or the talent of the preacher. It has to do with you and your God. Let people do what they will to please themselves. "The rest will remain and worship God." †

**Bulletin Digest, Norman Easter via San Angelo, Texas, USA.**

# Religious Sinners



Max Patterson

*doctrines the commandments of men"* (Matthew 15:9). This is done all the time today in the religious world around us.

### III. By worshipping the right God but not having obeyed the Gospel.

The Gospel is to be preached (Mark 16:15, 16). It is to be obeyed

(Romans 10:16). God will take vengeance on those who will not obey the Gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). There is even an example of people in the Bible who thought they had obeyed the Gospel, but they had not (Acts 19:1-5).

### IV. By worshipping the right God, and by obeying the Gospel, and then by not living up to the standards of Christian living.

Simon made a big mistake after being baptized into Christ (Acts 8:22). We are to be faithful to death (Revelation 2:10).

Let us make sure we worship the right God, worship Him in the right way, obey the Gospel, and live right before God. There is no other way to go to heaven. †

**Max Patterson works with the Lord's church in Neosho, Missouri, USA.**

The title of this article almost seems like a contradiction. However, it is nevertheless true. It is possible to be a religious sinner. There are several ways this can be done:

### I. By worshipping the wrong God.

There are many examples of those in the Bible and outside who worship the wrong god. Men worship idols (1 Kings 18; 1 Samuel 5; Acts 17). Men worship other men (Acts 14:11-15; 10:25,26). Men have even worshiped angels (Galatians 1:6-9). These are honest, religious people. However, only God is to be worshiped (John 4:24).

### II. By worshipping the right God in the wrong way.

There are many Bible examples: Cain, Genesis 4:3-5; Nadab and Abihu, Leviticus 10:1-3; Saul, 1 Samuel 13:9-14. Jesus said that men worship Him in vain, "teaching for



### Kevin Moore

Giving the lost an opportunity to be reconciled to God is the responsibility of everyone who is already reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:17,18). The question is, are you as involved in this "ministry of reconciliation" as you ought to be? The Lord has not given us an impossible task. He has provided the information and resources we need to be successful in evangelism. All that is expected of us is to use what God has provided, do what He has commissioned us to do, and then let Him take care of the rest.

### Fear of Evangelism

Are you *intimidated* by the prospect of talking to people about spiritual things? Are you among the multitudes who have made excuses for not being more personally involved in soul-winning? ("I don't know enough," "I'm too young," "I'm too old," "That's not my talent," "I'm too busy," "I can't handle rejection," "That's the preacher's job," etc.). If you are afraid of doing what God wants you to do and have even made excuses for not

## CHURCH GROWTH

doing it, then you are in good company! Remember **Moses** (Exodus 3:11; 4:10), **Gideon** (Judges 6:15), **Esther** (Esther 4:11), **Jeremiah** (Jeremiah 1:6), and many others. Nonetheless, with the Lord's help these fears and excuses have been, and still can be, overcome. Even Paul admitted that his evangelistic endeavors were carried out "*in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling*" (1 Corinthians 2:3), but look how successful he was anyway!

Fear is just a natural part of being human (Psalm 56:3), and if you are afraid of soul-winning, at least this shows you are taking your responsibility seriously. There are certain things we ought to approach with a sense of reverence and godly fear (cf. Ephesians 6:5; Philippians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:15). Fear is actually a good thing when it leads to greater reliance on God and less on self (Psalm 31:13,14), but it must never be used to justify the sin of omission (James 4:17). We must learn to give our fears over to God. "*I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears*" (Psalm 34:4). If you are afraid of personal evangelism, that's all the more reason to step out in faith and do it.

### Confidence in Evangelism

Another thing that holds many of us back is lack of confidence. Some are afraid that if they say or do something wrong, it might result in a person losing his soul. However, **the best way to ensure that a lost person stays lost is to say and do nothing!** If you humbly and sincerely do your best, I'm not so sure you *can* say the wrong thing. Regardless of how eloquent, skillful and knowledgeable one might be, if a sinner's heart is not open to the truth, there's really nothing that can be said to change that (cf. John 8:47). At the same time, no matter how clumsy, inarticulate and unimpressive one might be, if a sinner is genuinely receptive and searching for truth, he/she will learn the truth in spite of our inadequacies. The Bible says, "*seek and you will find. . .*" (Matthew 7:7), regardless of how unskillful your teacher might be. Jesus declared, "*if anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine . . .*" (John 7:17), no matter how awkwardly that doctrine might be presented. The Lord promised, "*you shall know the truth . . .*" (John 8:32), irrespective of those who make less-than-perfect attempts to communicate it.

### Success in Evangelism

**The only way to fail at evangelism is to not even try.** If you do try, even if you feel that you have not been very successful, you have at least succeeded in trying! When people decline your invitation to study the

## CHURCH GROWTH

Bible, they have still been given an opportunity they would otherwise not have had. If you share the gospel with those who do not obey it, they have at least been given a choice that would have been unavailable to them if you had chosen to do nothing.

**People will not come to God unless we go to them. And once we've done our part, no matter how humble or inept that might be, as long as the truth has been presented nothing more is expected.**

Each of us has a definite role to play in God's scheme of redemption. The Ethiopian official was searching for truth, but Philip had to approach him and offer him a Bible study (Acts 8). Saul was open to God, but Ananias had to confront his fears and go to Saul with God's message (Acts 9). Cornelius was sincerely trying to do right, but Peter had to overcome his prejudice, go to Cornelius' house, and show him the right way (Acts 10). People will not come to God unless we go to them. And once we've done our part, no matter how humble or inept that might be, as long as the truth has been presented nothing more is expected.

Although we are Christ's ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:17-21), each of us must realize that it doesn't solely depend on me. If I do my imperfect best, regardless of how many mistakes I might make, God will take care of the rest. Remember that Apollos was considered an eloquent communicator (Acts 18:24) and Paul was not (1 Corinthians 2:1-4; 2 Corinthians 10:10), but in the end it didn't matter. *"So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase"* (1 Corinthians 3:7). While the importance of methodology and technique shouldn't necessarily be disregarded, and we must all be striving to improve our personal work skills, ultimately these things do not of themselves save people.

Remember that fear of personal evangelism is normal. You don't have to just sit back and feel guilty about it, because with God's help your fear can be overcome. You can have confidence in evangelizing when you realize that it doesn't depend on you alone. **God can work through you and save people despite your imperfections.** The only way to fail at evangelism is to not even try. But the more you try, the more confident you will become, and the more glory you will bring to God. *"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart"* (Galatians 6:9). †

**Kevin L. Moore is a minister of the gospel in Wanganui, New Zealand.**

# Walking by Faith



## Dr. Des Stumpf

### *Our "Beloved Physician"*

Dr. Des Stumpf of Cape Town, South Africa is desperately ill with cancer. He is known and loved by multitudes, both Christians and non-Christians, in our country. Dr. Stumpf is not a doctor just by profession, but a doctor by calling.

A number of years ago, a new love came into his life. It quickly became his first love and virtually consumed him. He became a totally devoted follower of Jesus Christ. After he met the Master, he had a compulsion to introduce everyone else to this new-found Master. Even his patients were diagnosed, prescribed to, and then preached to. He could not rest unless he had shared his faith with another soul. His zeal made him obnoxious to some, but to us who knew him and who shared his sense of urgency, it was the most attractive part of his vibrant personality. We all wished we could be more like he was. It was a moot point as to whether he was a preaching doctor or a doctoring preacher!

Des saw himself as a defender of the faith, a faith that he loved with all his heart. When he observed people victimised and abused by so-called modern miracle workers and faith healers, he became our David against a whole host of Goliaths. The "Night of Broken Hearts", as the Christian City Challenge became known, remains one of the most accomplished moments of his illustrious career. His fearless courage and his disciplined control in the face of such concerted opposition made him one of the greatest men in the South African church in this age. No wonder national TV carried the wonder of the moment to every corner of this great land.

Des became a prolific writer. He loved preaching. He loved laughing, which he called "internal jogging". He had an incredible command of English. He wrote poetry with enviable ease. His puns cracked up the most solemn faces.

Now he lies ill. We pray for Des. We know God can heal him or He can call him home. He is a weary pilgrim who has come a long way with His God. We commit him to God's care.

— Al Horne

# When A Loved One Is Lost

Ron Bryant

No sorrow, no anguish, is greater than that which comes when a loved one dies. No words can describe, nor can any words serve to remove, the burden of grief. No instruction, no schooling, no training, can prepare us for this loss. No plan, no determination, no skill, can serve us adequately in that hour. Only the hope of heaven, the hope of eternal life, of reunion in the paradise of God, can serve to sustain in that moment. Yet, as painful as the loss of a loved one is, there is a greater despair that is known when a loved one dies without Christ, and without that eternal hope.

There are some hard realities that each of us needs to face. Sin is a destroyer of souls. Death is no respecter of persons, plans, or needs. It comes to young and old. Death is to be followed by the Day of Judgment. And death will come to all. *"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"* (Hebrews 9:27). *"We must all appear before the judgment seat*



*of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad"* (2 Corinthians 5:10).

These irrefutable truths should serve to move each of us to grapple with the matter of our own relationship with God. Common sense should lead us to think in terms of preparing for eternity — of preparing for the day of our death and the day of our judgment.

Interestingly, no one talked more about the Day of Judgment, about heaven and hell, about the eternal realm, than did Jesus. His coming to this earth was for the purpose of providing life abundant and eternal (cf. John 10:9,10; Luke 19:10). All that He did was for the purpose of drawing us out of sin and self and into a right relationship with God. He died that we might live unto God. Now, through the Gospel, He calls us to life and peace, to faith and hope. What He did and what He said were not to merely disturb or irritate us, but to

## CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

call us to life. He wants us to be possessed of hope, not despair. However, He pointedly warned of the fate of "outer darkness," "everlasting destruction" as the destiny of the "unrighteous" (cf. Matthew 25:30,46).

The Christian faith is all about the Lord Jesus Christ. It is about His will, His purpose, and His promises. It is all about living "in Christ" and "for Christ" (Philippians 1:20,21; Galatians 2:20; 2 Corinthians 5:14). It is also about hope. It is about "dying in the Lord." The inspired penman wrote, "Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, 'Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them'" (Revelation 14:13).

If the words of Jesus are true, if the words of Scripture are correct, to talk to loved ones about their life before God — to talk to them about their preparation for death and judgment — is finally one of the most loving things anyone can do. This whole matter ought to make each of us weep before the face of our precious loved ones and urge them to yield to God and live for Him. We ought to be doing all that we can to help our loved ones prepare for eternity. Is there anything more important than this? Is there anything

more precious to God than the souls of men and women, boys and girls? Before answering, reflect carefully upon the words of John 3:16,17 and 2 Corinthians 5:18-21.

It is right that each child of God give careful consideration to his or her own life before God. It is also appropriate and God-honoring, and is an evidence of genuine love and genuine care, to seek to help others to know and honor Christ. Only the hope of life eternal, given by God, can sustain us in this life. Only the hope of heaven found in Christ can sustain us in the day of death. God calls us to faith, to love, to hope, and He wants these to be powerful motives in our lives, in our actions.

If we are God's, He wants us to know that He has chosen us to tell the good news, to invite, to entreat, even to plead with our loved ones. Those who love the Lord are privileged to tell of His love and His good will toward all, that all may be sustained in life, and sustained with Him, even in the face of death (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). God wants us to care for the souls of others. He wants us to care about the salvation of our loved ones. He wants to remember that He does not want anyone to be lost. †

**Ron Bryant is the preacher for the Camelback Church of Christ in Phoenix, Arizona, USA.**

# Quick!



But in the darkness, it's impossible to see, so he frantically calls to others who had gathered at the side of the highway... "Quick, somebody bring a light!"

Though the above is an imagined scenario for the sake of this article, yet we know that such can, and most likely does happen. But my primary interest is to make a spiritual application.

In sin, the world has plunged itself into foreboding darkness! Comes the urgent plea, "Quick,

## Somebody Bring a Light!

Maxie B. Boren

It was a pitch-black night, illuminated only by the headlights of passing automobiles. At the wheel of a fast-moving vehicle, a drunken driver crosses the median into oncoming traffic, and then suddenly, the screeching tires...the dreadful impact! The two cars plunge down the embankment into heavy brush, nearly out of sight from the highway. But fortunately, a few people in trailing traffic witness the collision, and motorists commence stopping. One man, rushing and sliding down the embankment with heart pounding, is the first to survey the tangled steel and to hear the moans of the injured.

somebody bring the light!" True Christians just must respond! We can't stand by with callused hearts and fail to help. **We must carry the glorious light of the Gospel to a world that Satan has led into the pitch-blackness of iniquity!**

Through the Gospel of Christ, and by proper example, we must TRY to illuminate the way for others! *"The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day"* (Proverbs 4:18). †

Maxie B. Boren is the preacher for the Brown Trail Church of Christ in Bedford, Texas, USA.

# WHO?

Who made the earth and then decorated it so exquisitely?  
Who painted the light blue sky plashed with vibrant hues of  
Purple, pink, and orange at sunset?  
Who colored the leaves that are sprinkled with an array of  
Yellow, brown, red and green?

Who created emotions?  
Who made the touch of a warm embrace that washes a wave of  
comfort over you?  
Who gave you bittersweet tears that fill your eyes and trickle  
down your face?  
Who placed the giggles and screams of delight into children at play?

Who designed the seasons?  
Who made the white, winter snow that floats gently on your  
eyelashes?  
Who directed the spring months to melt away the snow?  
Who brought the flowers out of hiding and woke up the trees  
Then dashed away?

Who gave you carefree summer days of bright sunshine that  
warms your heart?  
Who ushered in the autumn days  
When summer says, "good-bye," and fall winds say, "hi"?

Who made the twilight sky?  
Who formed the moon that glows so bright and commands  
the tides to stand and bow?  
Who arranged the tiny, twinkling stars that adorn the dark  
canvas of the sky?

## Who?

Who made everything for you?  
He signed everything He created.  
Do you see His signature on you too?

# The Spiritual Battle for Our Souls

John Fernandez

*“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*

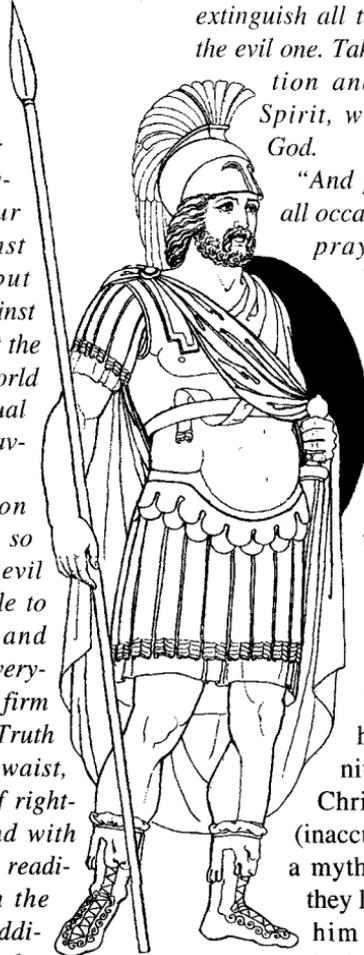
*“Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of Truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the Gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the*

*shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.*

*“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.*

*With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all of the saints”* (Ephesians 6:10-18).

It’s odd. So many Christians believe (accurately) that God is real, that He is seeking the best for us and that He helps us to come to Him and to ultimately dwell with Him in heaven for all of eternity. But, those same Christians often believe (inaccurately) that Satan is a mythical person and that they have no reason to fear him or his evil power. And so, they blindly go off



without the protection of God, right into the jaws of the ravenous lion. Of course, when things go wrong, they will most likely blame God (because Satan doesn't really exist, in their minds), either for being *the author of their problems* or for *not bailing them out when they were sinking*.

It's high time that Christians realize that **there is a spiritual battle going on!** The battle is between *God* and *Satan*. The battleground is *our souls*. Satan is a relentless adversary. He studies our weaknesses and analyzes our belief in God. Then, he steadily — and sometimes viciously — attacks the very foundation of who we are: children of God. We are no match for his cunning, power, and skill. The only way we can ever hope to win is to find someone more powerful than we are and one who can defeat Satan. God is the One who can do that!

There is no question of who will win the battle. The outcome has already been decided and declared. So, really, the only question is *how many people* will Satan take with him into defeat (hell) for all of eternity.

Jesus paid the price to conquer the devil. He took our place and the debt has been paid. There is no need for even one more life to be lost to the evil schemes of Satan.

Let's be diligent in our prayers for our own life, the lives of the

friends, family, acquaintances around us, and for the spiritual life of our local congregations. Only as we let God take control of the battle will we be assured of victory and find completeness in the love, joy, and grace of the one Who made us! †

John Fernandez worships with the Long Island Church of Christ in Bay Shore, New York, USA.

### I hurt

Oh, Lord, I hurt, I hurt.  
I can't find joy in this trial  
You have allowed me.  
The reality and my anger  
break over me in waves  
As I watch my hope  
receding, receding, now gone.  
I am broken.  
I am hollow.  
I am cold.

Heal me, God, who watched  
Your Son in His anguish;  
Fill me, Jesus, who wept  
At the sorrow of others.  
Burn brighter, Spirit, in me,  
Diffusing my anger  
Infusing my joy  
Until I can say,  
"Yes, my God,  
It is well."

— Sherlyn Beth Buckley

After Christ, few are able to command the attention, respect and admiration of Christians as does the apostle Paul. Many books have been written about this follower of Jesus Christ who was so marvelously and completely changed upon his meeting the Lord on the dusty road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-18).

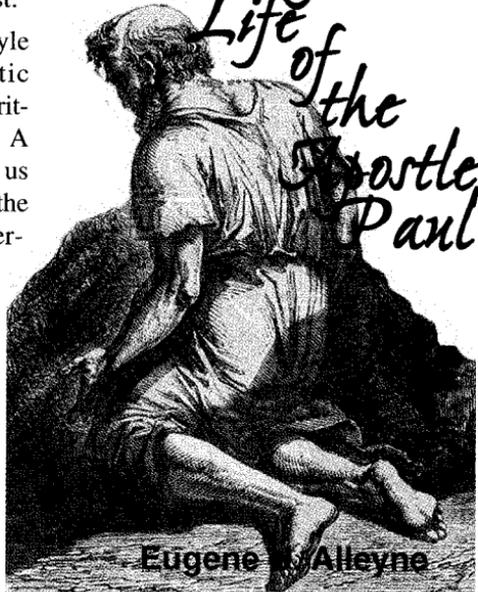
Paul's writings, which account for almost half of the New Testament books, and the book of Acts give us an insight into his approach to life after his conversion. In these books we can feel his passion, power, purpose and his plans for life. He shows us how he dedicated himself to live for his Saviour and dedicated himself to bring as many as possible to Christ.

Many have studied Paul's style of leadership, his evangelistic approach, his method or style of writing and his life-changing message. A study of his prayer life reveals to us what can be safely considered as the ideal prayer life for a spiritual person. Such a study answers questions like: "Should I spend most of my prayer time in supplication for my needs or in intercession for others?" Another question that is answered is, "If I am truly spiritual, will my prayers be answered?" and "Can I have an active prayer life with my very busy schedule?"

Let us begin this adventure by observing that Paul often spoke of prayer in his writings. Notice the following passages: "*First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers*" (Romans 1:8-10);

*"I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, that you were enriched in everything by*

## The Prayer Life of the Apostle Paul



*Him in all utterance and all knowledge*" (1 Corinthians 1:4,5; see also 2 Corinthians 1:11; 12:8; 13:7).

*"Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power"* (Ephesians 1:15-17; see also 3:14-21; 1 Thessalonians 1:2; 5:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:3, 11; 3:1; 1 Timothy 1:12).

*"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence"* (1 Timothy 2:1,2,8; 2 Timothy 1:3 and Philemon 4).

In reading these Scriptures, you would have been able to see the following points concerning Paul's prayers:

❖ Paul said he prayed for various

brethren "always" and "without ceasing".

❖ He "gave thanks" for them and that very often.

❖ His prayers were for others to be strengthened; for them to be faithful and for the grace of God in their lives.

❖ The one time he mentioned praying for a personal need, he demonstrated a positive disposition to accept the negative response.

❖ He encouraged others to pray for him to be bold in his service God. He thanked those who prayed for his successful deliverance from difficulties.

❖ His encouragement was for all to "pray without ceasing" and to pray for every need and to pray for all men.

Finally, he was so very busy, where did Paul find the time to pray so often and for so many? Perhaps it was in his sure knowledge that prayers can cause God to do much more than we could ever do without praying! *"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen"* (Ephesians 3:20). †

**Eugene U. Alleyne is a long-time preacher of the gospel, living in San Fernando, Trinidad.**

# You Never Know

**Gary C. Hampton**

There is, at times, a temptation to think that my decisions impact only *my* future. In other words, if I make good choices or bad, only I will enjoy the rewards or suffer the consequences. However, all of us, especially fathers and mothers, need to realize that someone may be watching our every move to help him decide how he should act.

Batsel Barrett Baxter once wrote: "I remember several years ago, on a Sunday morning after I had preached a sermon, I came down from the pulpit, as my custom was, and sat on the front row while the Lord's supper was being served. There was a little boy, pre-school age, on that front row, who inched over toward me until he sat very close beside me. Then, he leaned close to my ear and said, 'I wish I was you.' Nobody ever said that before and nobody since. Just a little boy whose name I did not even know. I knew his family. I had

seen him a few times, but I did not even know his name. But he had heard me preach about Christ, and he had seen me stand in front of the congregation. It was my impact as a preacher, not as an individual, that had impressed him so deeply. His statement left an imprint on me. I cannot afford to disappoint that little boy, just as you cannot afford to disappoint the people who look to you. Oh, if we could only feel the power of the influence that we wield upon the lives of others. Oh, how much easier it would be for us to be what God wants us to be!"

It is important for me to ask myself, "What would Jesus do?" (1 Peter 2:21), before I take any action, not just for my own sake, but also for those who may be watching me. After all, you never know who may see you as an example to follow! †

**Gary C. Hampton preaches for the Jefferson Avenue congregation in Cookeville, Tennessee, USA.**



A little boy in church today is a busy little lad.  
 He often tries the patience of his mother and his dad.  
 He fumbles in his pockets; he needs some gum to chew.  
 He whispers something funny — he's underneath the pew.  
 He draws a picture of his cat; it looks more like a bird.  
 The preacher preaches on and on; he hasn't heard a word.  
 But try one's patience as he will, he's lovable and dear.  
 He can't sit still for very long, but aren't we glad he's here?

— Anonymous

# Declare These Things

Hollis Miller

The first century pagan world was steeped in base, repulsive sins of the flesh. Thus, the hearts and minds of Christians needed to be retrained to think and act in higher and more noble ways.

In his letter to Titus, the apostle Paul reminded him that the grace of God has appeared, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age (Titus 2:12f). In verse fifteen Paul urged his younger contemporary to declare these things. The language suggests that the declaration was to continue.

Throughout the New Testament, emphasis is placed on the need for Christians to leave the old nature behind and to assume the nature of the new man. Paul stressed that in Christ one is a new creation; the old has passed away, all things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:4,6,22). Peter insisted that converts to Christ had spent sufficient time living as the Gentiles lived, and that they should no longer live by such low standards (1 Peter 4:2f).

The declining moral climate surrounding many modern Chris-

tians should remind us of Peter's words to his brethren. There were those whose eyes were full of adultery and who could not cease from sin. Their hearts had been trained in covetous practices, and they could only be described as accursed children (2 Peter 2:14).

William Barclay has described such individuals thusly: "These people have actually trained and equipped and taught their minds and hearts to concentrate on nothing but the forbidden desire. They have deliberately fought with conscience until they have destroyed it; they have deliberately wrestled with God until they have thrown God out of their lives. Their lives have been a dreadful battle to destroy virtue and to train themselves in the technique of sin" (**The Daily Study Bible**, P. 392f).

As Titus was admonished, we, too, need to declare that "*the grace of God has appeared, teaching us, that denying worldly lusts and ungodliness, we are to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.*" †

Hollis Miller is a gospel preacher living in Cadiz, Kentucky, USA.

# "we were like them that DREAM"



Robert Ball

**T**he psalmist said, "*When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen [nations ASV], The Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad*" (Psalm 126:1-3).

This is a Psalm of thanksgiving for the return of the children of Israel from bondage. They had spent seventy long years in captivity, just as God had spoken through the prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 25:11; cf. 29:10). It isn't surprising that the return to their homeland was a time of great happiness for the Israelites. The joy and thanksgiving were so great that the psalmist described the

people as if they had been dreaming a wonderful dream, but this dream was true. Their mouths were filled with laughter and their tongues were filled with singing. The event was so great that even the people of other nations were saying, "*The Lord hath done great things for them.*"

It was sin against God that had brought the Israelites into captivity (Lamentations 1:5; Ezekiel 8:17,18; 9:9,10 et al.). They had continually chosen to worship idols and to serve the pagan gods of the people around them. Finally, as the ultimate means of correction, God had physically removed them from their land through the agency of the Assyrians and the Babylonians. The result was that the Israelites were not only enslaved to the Babylonians but to

sin as well. Jeremiah, in the Book of Lamentations, pleads with the children of Israel and the nations to understand the seriousness of sin. He urges them to contemplate that it was sin that brought destruction to the city of Jerusalem and its people.

Therefore, before God would bring the Israelites back from physical captivity they would have to turn back to Him spiritually by repenting and confessing their sins, and resolving again to keep the law of God. When the Israelites forsook all other gods, He would see to it that they also were allowed to return to their land and to joyously celebrate their homecoming.

Today, under the new covenant, the most joyful day a person can know is the day he becomes a child of God by hearing, believing, and obeying the gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:36,42,47; 8:29-40; Romans 6:14-18; Galatians 3:26,27). One reason for this joy is that when one becomes a Christian he is set free from the bondage and enslaving power of sin (Romans 6:1-7; Galatians 5:1).

Many of us, however, have witnessed sad days when Christians turn away from Christ and once again become enslaved to sin (Galatians 5:4; Hebrews 3:12). God loves us and desires each one to be saved, but the decision must be made by the individual to accept the provision for salvation that God has

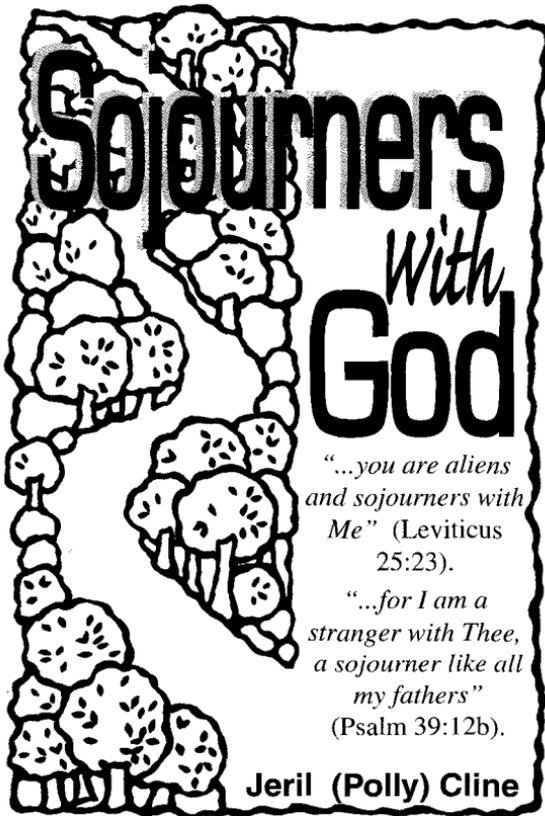
made available.

One of the duties of a Christian is to encourage and edify our faithful brothers and sisters in Christ. Another duty is to admonish a brother or sister who is erring from the faith. James said, "*Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins*" (James 5:19,20).

The word "admonish" means to encourage and to warn. When a Christian admonishes a brother he encourages him to faithfully follow Christ and, possibly, reminds him of the great reward in heaven that awaits the faithful. He also warns the brother in Christ of the consequences of unfaithfulness to Christ. The apostle Paul said to the elders from Ephesus, "*Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn [admonish ASV] every one night and day with tears*" (Acts 20:31).

Brethren, let us busy ourselves with the work of encouraging and warning one another of our responsibilities and privileges as children of God, so that one day we will be "*like them that dream*" and the dream will be true. †

**Robert Ball is minister for the Hialeah Church of Christ in Hialeah, Florida, USA.**



He knew what it was to sojourn in a foreign land, to be an alien, an exile. Though he had once been a prince, a learned man, heir to the great riches of Egypt, Moses was running for his life. He had struck down an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. Now Pharaoh had heard about it and was trying to kill him.

But Moses fled the presence of Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian. While sitting by a well, the seven daughters of the priest of Midian tried to draw water and fill the troughs to water their father's flock.

Some local shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.

When the girls got home earlier than usual, their father Jethro asked how they came back so soon. Their answer is insightful: *"An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds; and what is more, he even drew the water for us and watered the flock"* (Exodus 2:19).

Moses was not an 'Egyptian,' but they didn't know that. He was dressed like one, talked like one, probably looked like one, at least to the daughters of Jethro. And from what Moses called his son, he must have considered himself at home in Egypt and a foreigner, stranger, among these people of Midian. "Gershom," Moses' firstborn by Zipporah, meant *"I have been a sojourner in a foreign land"* (Exodus 2:22).

Egypt was not considered foreign to him, for he had lived there all his life. His parents and his grandparents had lived there all their lives. But Egypt was the foreign land.

God had told Abraham, "*Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years*" (Genesis 15:13).

It would be this Moses whom God would instruct to write, over and over, reminding the children of Israel that they had been strangers in Egypt (Exodus 22:21; 23:9; Leviticus 19:34; Deuteronomy 10:19).

Egypt was where they had been aliens. Perhaps because they had spent so much time and effort and sweat and tears there, Egypt, the familiar Egypt, with all her slavery and oppression, sorrow, and pain, Egypt had come to be "home" while the "homeland" God promised seemed to be a "foreign land."

Now how is it with me? God appeals to me as a "resident alien" in 1 Peter 1:1, and again in 1 Peter 2:9-11: "*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you*

*had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul.*"

Among whom do I feel "a stranger"? What is "foreign" to me? Am I uneasy about the "homeland" God has prepared for those who love His appearing? Do I talk, dress, act, think like the world around me, fit in, and even feel "at home" among those of this world?

Do I need to be reminded, "...*You are aliens and sojourners with Me*"?

**"By faith he (Abraham) lived as an alien."** That is the only way we are going to live as an alien in this world, "*for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth...those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own...a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them*" (Hebrews 11:9-16). †

**Jeril (Polly) Cline is a writer and preacher's wife living in Blue Ridge, Georgia, USA.**

John 11:35 is the shortest verse in the Bible, but it is packed with meaning, for it reveals Jesus' humanity. It says, "*Jesus wept.*"

Jesus loved Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, and His sympathy and compassion are clearly demonstrated. He had no doubts about His power. He knew He would raise Lazarus, but He had pity on brokenhearted people.

Jesus showed us how, and Paul taught us to do it. "*Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep*" (Romans 12:15). "*And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it*" (1 Corinthians 12:26).

None of us will escape trouble of one kind or another. We are not different because some of us have problems and some of us don't. We

all have them, though we may not have the same troubles.

We do have the wonderful promise that God will help us.

"*There hath no temptation taken*

*you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it*" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

God uses people to help people. He could rain manna from heaven, but He does not rescue man

that way now. He wants His people to feed the hungry and care for the physical needs of the unfortunate. He also expects us to minister to their spiritual needs by teaching them the Gospel.

"*As we have therefore opportu-*



## Jesus Wept

Albert Gardner

nity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). Opportunities are constantly with us. Jesus said that you will have the poor with you always. Through no fault of their own, many find themselves in circumstances they cannot handle alone. They need our help. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

The Gospel restates the concern God had for the poor in the Old Testament. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). God has always had a deep concern for and provided for the poor, down-and-out, unfortunate, and if we will be like God, we will do what we can for the needy.

The care we give to the sick, poor, hungry, persecuted, and abused will enter into how well we fare at the judgment. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me...Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me" (Matthew 25:40, 45). †

Albert Gardner is a gospel preacher living in Marmaduke, Arkansas, USA.

## I will do more...

I will do more than belong:

**I will participate.**

I will do more than care:

**I will help.**

I will do more than believe:

**I will practice.**

I will do more than be fair:

**I will be kind.**

I will do more than forgive:

**I will forget.**

I will do more than teach:

**I will inspire.**

I will do more than earn:

**I will enrich.**

I will do more than give:

**I will serve.**

I will do more than live:

**I will grow.**

I will do more than be friendly:

**I will be a friend.**

— Unknown Writer

**Brotherly love is needed  
as well as  
motherly love.**

# Who Am I?

Can you identify me? Read each clue and think carefully. If you guess my name after the first clue, give yourself a score of 100 points. If you know who I am only after the fifth clue, your score is 60, etc.

When you are sure of my identity, look up the passages of scripture following each clue to verify the facts from God's word.

1. **100** My life span was 930 years (5:5).
2. **90** I lived to see eight generations of my descendants (according to biblical chronological records).
3. **80** Lamech, the father of Noah, was 56 years old when I died.
4. **70** Methuselah was my great, great, great, great, great, grandson, and he was 243 years old when I died.
5. **60** As a man I was responsible for my family's spiritual obedience to God, but on one particularly important occasion I failed to exercise my authority (3:6).
6. **50** Was it perhaps a typical "man thing" that I blamed my wife for my weak behavior? (3:12).
7. **40** In jealousy and anger, one of my sons murdered the other (4:3-8).
8. **30** A parallel is drawn between Christ and me in 1 Corinthians 15:20-49.
9. **20** Early in life, I was given greater power and authority than any other man has ever had (2:28).
10. **10** I was married to a perfect and beautiful woman, whose DNA was the same as mine. The ceremony was performed by God, and my assigned work was given by God. Sadly, though, there came a time when God took away my special blessings and even cursed many things because of my behavior (2:15-3:24).



**My Score** \_\_\_\_\_

*See answer on inside back cover.*

I'd like to tell you a story about a ten-year-old boy. This little boy never knew his father. He lived with his mother, brother, and sister. He had never eaten in a restaurant, bought new clothes, been on a family vacation, or had a birthday party. His mom had a problem with drugs, and didn't have any money. It was difficult for her to find a job, so the family had to sell their television to get money for food. They didn't have a car and had to walk wherever they went. He missed school a lot, so it was very hard for him to make friends. He spent a lot of time in alternative school for getting into trouble.

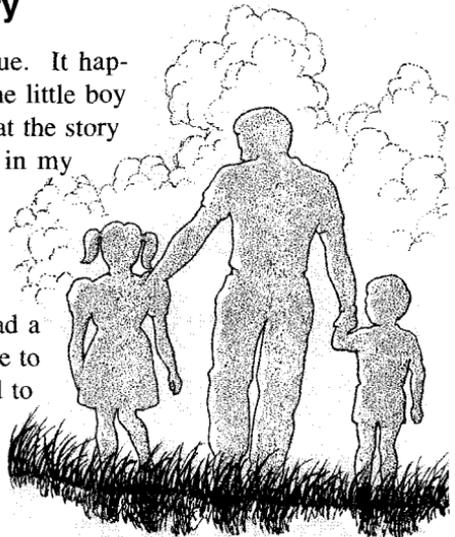
After a time his mom wasn't able to take care of herself or the children. Since this little boy was the oldest, he tried to take care of his mother and brother and sister. He found jobs to make money, and one time he made \$20 to buy tennis shoes. Sometimes he brought food home from the grocery store near his apartment. One day his mother got crazy. She screamed and threw things. The little boy was frightened, so he ran outside and climbed up in a tree.

About a month after his mother started acting crazy, someone took the little boy away to a children's home. He was angry, hurt, and confused.

# Part of a Family

**Kevin Brady Henry**

The story I just told you is true. It happened about three years ago, and the little boy is me. But I am glad to tell you that the story didn't end there. Soon, the boys in my cottage at the children's home were invited to visit with some families for a weekend. We stayed with a couple who had a boy about my age, and an older daughter. We had a great weekend, and when it was time to leave we all felt very sad. I wanted to stay with my new "family", and they wanted me to stay, too. They began to work to make that happen, and in just a few months I came



## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

to live with them. Last year my adoption went through. Now I have a mom and dad, a brother and sister, some grandparents, and many uncles, aunts, and cousins. My adoptive family loves me very much, and I love my new home.

Some kids take their families for granted. They don't know how to appreciate their father making a living and coming home every night. They don't know how good it is to have a mom to remind you to brush your teeth and to help you with homework. They don't thank their big sister for helping them pick out clothes and styling their hair. They don't appreciate having a brother to talk to or play with. They don't even think about having a warm place to sleep. I know how special it is to have all these things.

This could be the happy ending to my story, but can you believe that it gets even better! I started going to church with my new family, and I was baptized. Now I am part of another awesome family — the family of God! I didn't get adopted into it; I was born into this family (John 1:13). God is my father, and I share in the same inheritance as his son, Jesus Christ (Romans 8:17). My earthly family is great, but my church family is even more wonderful. This family is so special because it was bought with the most precious gift God could give — his only Son.

My mom and dad will grow old someday. My big sister will go away to school next year. Even my little brother will someday have a home of his own, but my church family will be together forever. We will share the beauty of Heaven with God our father. It is like the song we sing:

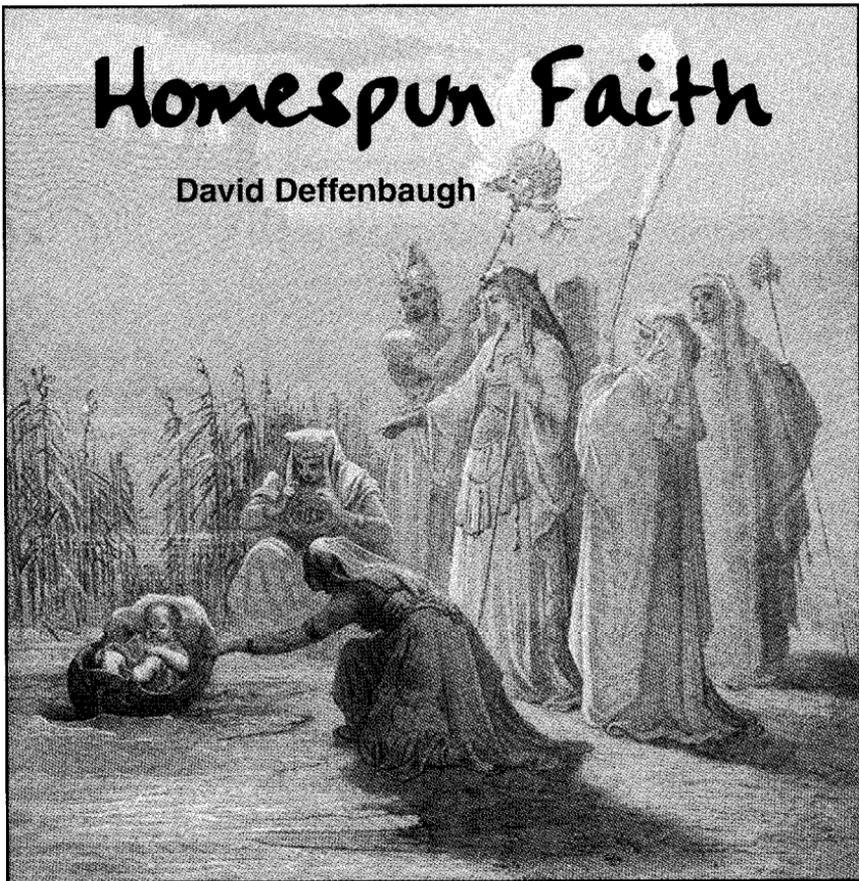
We're part of the family that's been born again;  
Part of the family whose love knows no end;  
For Jesus has saved us, and made us his own;  
Now we're part of the family that's on its way home;  
And sometimes we laugh together; sometimes we cry;  
Sometimes we share together heartaches and sighs;  
Sometimes we dream together of how it will be;  
When we all get to Heaven, God's family.

Now, this is the happy ending to my story. I'm the happiest kid alive because I'm part of not one, but two, wonderful families. I have a mom and dad to take care of me. I have a big sister who thinks I'm special, and I have a little brother to play with and grow up with. But even better, I'm part of the same family that you are — the family Jesus died for. †

**Kevin Brady Henry is the son of Larry and Tammy Henry of Dennis, Mississippi, USA.**

# Homespun Faith

David Deffenbaugh



*“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward” (Hebrews 11:24-26).*

Prestige, wealth, and power were all in Moses’ possession. The short list of coveted acquisitions so universally desired it doesn’t matter if it is an ancient civilization or a modern society — Moses had it all. Then, incredibly, he gave it up for ill-treatment and reproach. What kind of value system prompted Moses to make such a radical deci-

## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

sion? Frankly, it was a decision made by faith. Faith, not sight, allowed Moses to know that the reward for service to God is eternally greater than all the pleasures and wealth this life can provide. Just as significant as the largeness of faith Moses owned is the matter of its origin. How did Moses come to possess such great faith?

As this faith was evidenced when he *"had grown up,"* it is apparent that this faith began as he was growing up. While the details of Moses' years as a youth are scarce, the ones that are provided are significant. So, we are reminded of that thrilling story of Moses placed in a basket in the Nile by parents *"not fearing the king's edict,"* watched by his sister, found by Pharaoh's daughter, nursed by his own mother, then reared in the palace as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

It was there, in his own home,

at the hands of his own parents, that the seeds of faith were first planted, the tender and fragile seedling was carefully nourished and nurtured until eventually faith so strong and resilient emerged that the finest human education, the allurements of privilege, and the sparkling wealth of royalty could not dissuade it. Faith planted and nurtured by loving parents in the atmosphere of home was God's way (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Ephesians 6:4; 2 Timothy 1:5). It still is.

A homespun faith can withstand and overcome Satan's most enticing allurements and severest tests. God's plans are brilliant for their simplicity, and are discounted and scorned for the same reason. But how else can Moses' faith be accounted for? †

David Deffenbaugh preaches for the South College Church of Christ in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, USA.

### Seeking

What things were gain to me I lay  
Lord, at Thy feet, and humbly pray  
That earthly fame, and worldly pelf  
Be all forgot, and even self  
Be lost in seeking, Lord, for Thee.

— Charles R. Brewer

## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

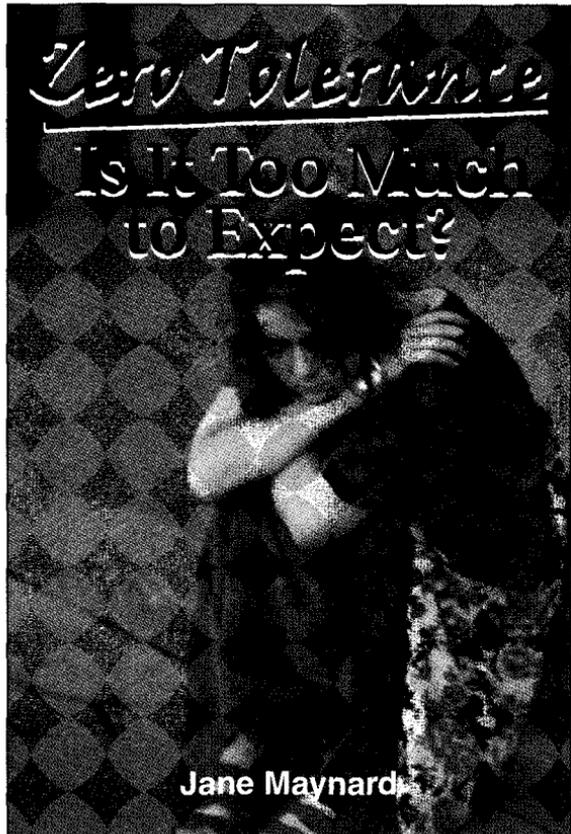
As women of God we could easily become disheartened to the point of despair if we were to dwell on what is happening in society about us regarding *moral integrity*. The statistics are overwhelming, reminding us continually that Americans are at the bottom of the pile when it comes to abuse, crime, divorce, drugs, etc. Our young people, facing an unknown and seemingly dismal future, despair to the point that many commit suicide rather than grapple with the problems of living in tomorrow's world.

Men and women of God face the ongoing challenge of ensuring that their children do not get mixed messages about moral integrity. We know what our society says. The powers that be in media glory in impaneling a gathering of so-called "experts" who refer to well-known people in our world as men and women of honor and of high moral integrity. However, in the next breath they talk of the little lies these people have told or the

affair they have engaged in. Their behavior is excused with the conclusion, "Well, it didn't hurt anyone."

No wonder most of the young people in this nation have no real concept of what true moral integrity is. Society allows for every man and woman to set their own standard according to their own perceptions and values, and somehow they are all supposed to be right.

While society about us will

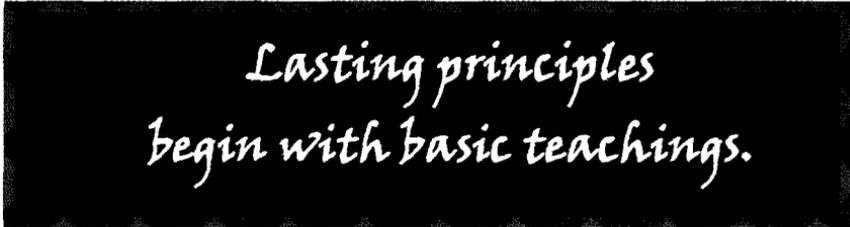


## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

never be changed so that all will accept one standard for right and wrong, surely as Christians we must show our children the correct standard in our own lives. Wise parents realize that there is a definite connection between society's lack of perception of right and wrong and the rapid deterioration of our culture. Therefore, we must arm our children by continual teaching and good example if they are to survive spiritually and carry out their mission for souls in their future. Do we need to be reminded that the best testimony to a high moral integrity

enraged at the teacher for giving him the failing grade he deserved. Such action diverts the focus from the wrong on the child's part. When we do that, what do our actions teach him? They teach that it is okay to lie, steal and cheat. To adults, it was "little things" but to the child it was *his work in his world*, and our behavior sets a life-long standard for him in *other, more important things* and yes, ultimately in *all things*.

The message we must live and give our children is that *it is morally wrong to lie* and we must live such a



*Lasting principles  
begin with basic teachings.*

is a life lived manifesting that high moral integrity? God expects us to exemplify that standard for our children, lest they drown in the abyss of moral decay about them.

Lasting principles begin with basic teachings. We teach our children those principles by the way we deal with them ourselves. It is easy to excuse a child's lies or stealing by the thinking that it was such a small offense that we will ignore it this time, or to excuse his cheating on an exam at school by becoming

life before them that we would not lie even if it would mean that we had to pay dearly for telling the truth. We must teach our children that *it is morally wrong to cheat*, then we must live a life above cheating, even if to do so would in some way bring great personal gain to us.

As men and women of God we must be strong enough in our love for our children that we not only live righteous lives before them, but *we expect the same from them*. We have a responsibility not to excuse

## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

the action, nor to deflect the consequences of wrong behavior. In fact, many times consequences are life's greatest teachers.

We must demand and expect a moral standard as high as God expects, for ourselves first and then for the children He has blessed us with. However, when those standards are violated we must allow our children the privilege of working through (perhaps *suffering through*) the consequences, in their own best interest. This goes against what we want to do, as parents. Many times it would be less painful, personally, to step in and correct things or reimburse losses for them.

Does this sound like "zero-tolerance" for things like simple lies, cheating, stealing, etc.? Yes, it does, but is "zero" too much to expect of ourselves? Zero-tolerance is the only way we can effectively teach and prepare our children, because it is at the most basic level that we are building the future of our children and our world. We have the ability to influence our present world through our own lives, and the privilege of changing the future of our children to a higher moral plain.

Children who are taught early and consistently at the most basic level will grow up to live out those principles. Not only will they *live* them but also they will *teach* them

*to their children.* Society, itself, can be elevated through application of this principle of integrity.

No, "zero-tolerance" is not too much to expect of ourselves, and it is not too much to expect of our children. For their spiritual welfare, we can afford to do no less. †

**Jane Maynard serves as a teacher and counsellor for women in the Mountain Home, Arkansas Church of Christ, USA.**

### Is It Worth It?

*"All liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire"*

(Revelation 21:8)

Spoken lies are very bad,  
They'll get you into trouble;  
The Devil's on the liar's heels  
To catch him on the double.

I wonder if an acted lie  
Is just as bad as spoken?  
It makes folks think what isn't  
true  
And so — the law is broken.

On earth the liar has no friends,  
In Heaven he has no dwelling;  
It makes you lose both Heaven  
and earth —  
— Say! Is a lie worth telling?

— Anonymous

**Experience is a wise teacher,  
but it's a slow hard way to get  
an education...**



Old Uncle Charlie is wiser than some folks give him credit for. For example, I asked him the other day what a cannibal is, and he quickly replied that a cannibal is someone who is fed up with people.

Uncle Charlie also says that an egotist is someone who is usually me-deep in conversation.



Cousin Virgil really has a weight problem. He eats everything he can get his hands on. He eats so much that the government is going to put his picture on food stamps.



Want to know which vehicle is the most expensive to operate per mile? It's the grocery shopping cart!

A husband, trying to prove to his wife that women talk more than men, showed her a study which indicated that men use about 15,000 words a day, whereas women use 30,000 words a day. She thought about this, and then she told him that women use twice as many words as men because they have to repeat everything they say. Rather stunned at this, he said, "What?"



Have you ever wondered why drugstores make the sick folks walk all the way to the back of the store to get their prescriptions while healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front?



My good buddy Harley really is calorie conscious. He always orders double cheeseburgers, large fries, and a diet coke.



SALLY: "Let's get married, Homer. I don't want to wait around till I'm 40, have wrinkles, bags under my eyes, and a pot belly."

HOMER: "Well, if that's the way you're gonna look, what say we just forget it?"

## PROVERBS 17:22

Paw was quizzin' Junior, trying to get him ready for the history test. "Son, here's the first question: What would you expect to find in Ancient Greece?"

Junior thought a minute and said, "Old French fries, I guess."



A certain husband had forgotten his wife's birthday, and when she called this to his attention, he responded quickly and wisely, "How do you expect me to remember your birthday — you keep looking younger every day!"



A little boy was asked to say the prayer before dinner. He thanked God for each of his friends, naming them one by one. He then thanked God for each family member, from his parents to his brothers and sisters, his grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Then he gave thanks for the ham, the mashed potatoes, the corn, the green beans, the salad, the bread, the butter, the pickles, and even the salt and the pepper. Then came a long pause, and everyone waited and waited. Finally, the little fellow looked up at his mother and asked, "If I thank God for the broccoli, won't He know that I'm lying?"

You may not have ever thought about it, but mosquitoes sure can make you like flies better.



Some folks grow old before their time trying to look young after their time.



Two women were talking about their plans for the summer. "Your sister told me you can't afford a vacation in Paris," Anne said to Fran.

Fran shook her head. "No, that was last year. This year I can't afford a vacation to Rome."



### "Points To Ponder"

God has made a history of using the insignificant to accomplish the impossible.

God never asks about our ability or inability — just our availability.

God always gives His best to those who leave the choice with Him.

When God measures a man, He puts the tape around the heart instead of the head.

The man who walks with God always knows in what direction he is going.

Feed your faith and your doubts will starve to death.



# Why Are There So Many Churches?

Owen D. Olbricht

As we travel through our cities, states, and nations, we view the meeting places for many different churches. We may be so used to them we may never ask, "Why are there so many?"

Do we accept this as normal for Christianity? Did Jesus desire that His followers be divided into many groups, following many varied and conflicting teachings?

Evidently He did not, because He prayed concerning those who believe in Him "...that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (John 17:20,21).

Before He built His church, Jesus promised He would build, not many churches, but *only one church*. Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build *my church*" (Matthew

## BIBLE QUESTIONS

16:18). Notice He said, "church," and not, "churches."

The term "body" is used to refer to the church (Ephesians 1:22, 23; Colossians 1:18). The New Testament consistently assures us that there is but *one body* (1 Corinthians 12:12,13,20; Ephesians 4:4).

If Jesus built only one church, His body, then why are there so many churches today?

*Different churches exist because of false teaching.*

If everyone taught the truth, we would all be one. Jesus (Matthew 24:11,24) and almost every writer of the New Testament, including Peter, Paul and John, warned against false teachers (2 Corinthians 11:13,15; 2 Timothy 4:3,4; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1). False teachers have created different churches by obtaining their own following. Paul warned, "*For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them*" (Acts 20:29,30).

*Separate churches exist because Jesus is not respected as the head of the church.*

Paul wrote to the Colossians that they should not let any beguile them of their reward by "not hold-

*ing the Head*" (Colossians 2:19). Instead of traditions of men, they were to follow Jesus (Colossians 2:8). As head of the church, He is to be submitted to by the church (Ephesians 5:24).

*Divisions come from people walking as worldly men.*

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "*For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*" (1 Corinthians 3:3).

*The existence of many churches is the result of failure to realize that we are complete in Christ (Colossians 2:10).*

The only teaching we need is that which Jesus revealed through the writers of the New Testament. All the other writings that are called inspired are false, and bring about divisions.

### *Conclusion*

The many churches about us exist because the one and only true leader, Jesus Christ, has not been respected as the only standard for Christians. If we all would be drawn to Him and follow Him, we would all be drawn together into unity and harmony with each other. †

**Owen D. Olbricht is a writer living in Sherwood, Arkansas, USA.**

# Did Mary, the Mother of Jesus, Ever Sin?

Wayne Jackson

**Question:** A friend teaches that Mary, the mother of Jesus, never committed a sin. Would you comment on this?

**Answer:** The Catholic Church teaches two errors with reference to Mary's alleged sinlessness.

**First**, it argues that the mother of Jesus was conceived "immaculately", i.e., she did not inherit, as others supposedly do, the guilt of Adam's "original sin".

**Second**, the Roman Church contends that Mary never committed an actual sin.

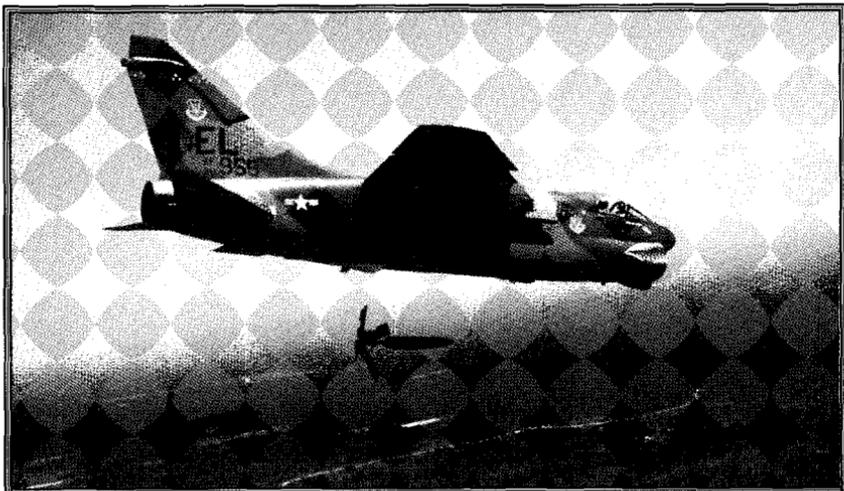
Both of these views are false. It is true that Mary did not contract the guilt of Adam's original sin, because nobody has. But that has nothing to do with Mary's conception. Guilt simply is not inherited. The child does not bear the iniquity of the parent. *"The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself"* (Ezekiel 18:20).

Human beings go astray; they are not born that way (see Isaiah

53:6). One is spiritually dead because of his personal sin (Ephesians 2:1), not due to the sin of others.

Further, it is not true that Mary never committed an actual sin. In her magnificent psalm uttered while carrying the Christ child, she exclaimed: *"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior"* (Luke 1:46,47). Observe that she referred to the Lord as "my Savior" — not merely "a Savior," or "the Savior." No sinless person needs a Savior. Clearly this statement implies that Mary was a sinner just like the rest of us (Romans 3:23). Doubtless she was one of the noblest ladies ever to grace this planet; nevertheless, she was not without sin. 1 John 1:8,10 says, *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ... If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us"*. †

**Wayne Jackson is the editor of Christian Courier and is a preacher in Stockton, California, USA.**



## *Crisis*

*Oh, God, again, it has happened:  
The shattering of normalcy,  
The sudden crisis,  
The end to routine days,  
The threat to life itself.*

*Behind closed doors  
We wait in horror  
Watching movements on the street,  
People walking  
Running,  
Trucks of soldiers,  
Weapons raised, the rapid crack of firing,  
We cringe and wonder  
And we wait,  
Praying.*

*Reports from other places  
Tell of fires  
Of lootings*

*And of beatings,  
Of hundreds dead and wounded;  
We smell the smoke  
And hear the sirens,  
We watch the tanks  
And wait and pray.*

*We remember other days  
And other crises,  
Other times of curfews,  
Of blackouts and of falling bombs,  
And the waiting  
Somehow mixes all together  
So that all the wars  
And screams and hurts  
And all the blood and death  
Of all the world  
And all of time  
Cry hopelessly around us.*

*— Betty Burton Choate*



# A Joy Transfusion

Clarence DeLoach, Jr.

*"It is right for me to feel this way about all of you"*  
(Philippians 1:7).

Philippians is a remarkable book of the New Testament, saturated with joy. Though written from prison by a man who had experienced tremendous hardship, it resounds with joy. The letter of 104 verses has no reference to self-pity or remorse. It reverberates with confidence, certainty, and joy!

In our time of frustration, stress, and worry, the reading of this book will help us keep our focus in a sinful world. It will give us a "joy transfusion"! Can you imagine what this letter did for those Christians at Philippi? Wouldn't you think that their attitude of joy was brought to the highest level? If one who was confined and chained to a soldier could be so positive, so encouraging and comforting, surely those who live in freedom could be more joyful. Why was Paul so joyful? Scanning the book, three reasons emerge:

**1. Paul was joyful because of the pleasant memories of people.** He said, *"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you"* (1:3). Paul's work in Philippi had placed him in contact with many people. He

preached to them, converted them, worked and served with them, and suffered with them. Good memories bring joy!

**2. He was joyful because of a firm confidence in God.** *"I am confident,"* he said, *"that God will finish the work He has begun in you."* He firmly believed that God was in control. Such confidence gives a solid foundation for our lives and work.

**3. He was joyful because he had such a warm affection toward his fellow saints.** Paul communicated on the deepest level and longed for them with the affection of Christ (1:7,8). He had deep feelings for them, and said, *"It is right for me to feel this way about all of you"* (Philippians 1:7). Sadly, many of us never communicate on the level of "feelings".

What an example of joy — this Paul. Confident, though a victim; joyful in spite of others; hopeful regardless of circumstances, and contented because Christ is in control. ✠

Clarence DeLoach, Jr. works with the church in Dickson, Tennessee, USA.

# Formula For Victory

David Pharr

***“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (Revelation 2:7).***

The theme of the book of Revelation is victory. To each of the seven churches there is a special promise to “*him that overcometh.*” For example, “*To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God*” (2:7). Satan’s attacks may be through persecutions, temptations, false doctrines, discouragements, or lukewarmness. Only by overcoming these things can we enjoy the heavenly city (21:27).

Chapter 12 shows that the issue of **redemption** has been settled *in heaven* (12:7-10). Now **the battle for the souls of men** is being fought *on the earth* (12:12). Satan has not given up. The conflict continues and people are surely lost today when they are defeated by the devil’s weapons of temptation, error, and complacency, just as they were in the long ago when they surrendered to the threat of persecution. How can we overcome? What is

the formula for victory?

*“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death”* (12:11).

From this verse let us see that the formula for victory has three ingredients:

■ ***“The blood of the Lamb.”*** Men are powerless to overcome sin without His blood. Only in the death of Jesus is there victory over sin’s damning captivity. “*In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins*” (Colossians 1:14).

■ ***“The word of their testimony.”*** This points to the word of the Gospel. Only by the Gospel can men believe and obey, that the blood might be applied. The “*victory that overcometh the world*” is “*our faith*” (1 John 5:4). And “*faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (Romans 10:17).

■ *"They loved not their lives unto the death."* This is personal commitment, and is surely the ultimate commitment: that one is willing to die for Christ. And if Jesus is worth dying for, certainly He is worth living for! Only by full commitment can one be assured of final and eternal victory. Jesus said, *"If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple"* (Luke 14:26).

It is wonderful to rejoice in the saving blood of Jesus and to feel confident in the knowledge of Gospel truth. But there must also be the kind of life-long commitment described in Revelation 12:11. All

three ingredients are necessary. We cannot be eternally saved without them. †

David Pharr is the editor of *Carolina Messenger* and preaches for the Charlotte Avenue congregation of the Lord's church in Rock Hill, South Carolina, USA.

## 'Tis Joy To Die

Why should I dread to pass the silent portal  
That opens up the pathway to the great beyond,  
To tread the road proclaimed for every mortal  
When unshackled spirit bursts its earthly bond?  
Do I not know that when this life has ended,  
And every shadow of its care has fled,  
When all we love, with whom our souls have blended  
Have sunk to rest with "those whom we call dead",  
That in that land, beyond the mystic river,  
Absolved from error and devoid of stain,  
Blessed by the bounty of the mighty Giver,  
A brighter life shall dawn for us again!  
That there the wounded heart that well nigh perished  
Beneath its load of suffering and of wrong,  
Sustained by faith and by affection cherished,  
Shall thrill the heavens with its grateful song.  
That there the stricken souls who vainly waded  
Tumultuous waters in life's stormy sea  
Shall know at last a peace that's unabated  
Through endless ages of eternity.  
No longer, then, will doubt's destroying power  
Obscure the radiance of the future's sky,  
But let me wait in patience for the hour  
That kindly teaches me, "'Tis joy to die."

— J. H. Gray

# Five Pertinent Points

Ken Tyler

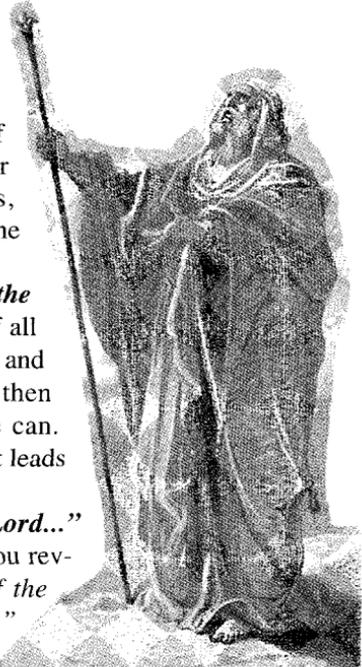
***“Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way: only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you” (1 Samuel 12:23,24).***

Listen carefully to these great words of Samuel, *“Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way: only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you” (1 Samuel 12:23-24).* Five important points are made by Samuel in this passage. Let’s examine each one.

**1. Samuel said that he would not cease to pray for them.** What a beautiful thought! Samuel was busy praying for Israel. He was deeply concerned because of their wickedness. Do we pray for our brethren? Hebrews 13:18 simply says, *“Pray for us...”* Brethren, let’s pray for one another.

**2. Samuel said, *“...I will teach you the good and the right way...”*** The purpose of all our lives should be to teach others the good and right way. We must begin at home and then reach out to as many other people as we can. The good and right way is the only way that leads to heaven. We must never forget this.

**3. Samuel said, *“...only fear the Lord...”*** Today, do you stand in awe of God? Do you reverence Him? Solomon said, *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge...”* (Proverbs 1:7). May we all be wise by



## TEXTUAL STUDIES

fearing God and not be as the fool who says in his heart, "...*there is no God...*" (Psalm 14:1).

4. **Samuel said, "...serve him in truth with all your heart..."** In this statement we see the two essentials in pleasing God — **truth** and **heart**. The truth, of course, is God's Word (John 17:17). "With all the heart" means that we are sincerely dedicated to His purpose. Joshua said, "*Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth...*" (Joshua 24:14). Today, are you serving God in truth with all your heart?

5. **Samuel said, "...for consider how great things he hath done for you."** What a statement! Why should we serve Him in truth with all the heart? The answer: because of what He hath done for you! Samuel was telling the Israelites to just stand back and look at what God had done for them. This is what we all need to do. John said, "*We love him, because he first loved us*" (1 John 4:19). If

we will consider what He has done for us it will make a great difference in our lives.

I think you will agree that 1 Samuel 12:23,24 is a tremendous passage of Scripture. Samuel was a great man. May we listen to him and follow his example. †

**Ken Tyler is the preacher for the Lord's church in Arab, Alabama, USA.**

### Gethsemane David Newell

That night the moon shed forth its light  
Between the branches of the trees;  
Beneath them, there a lonely Man,  
The Man of Sorrow, on His knees.

That night the trying hour had come  
When He, the Son of Man, would yield  
Himself, to do His Father's will,  
And thus, the Scriptures would fulfill.

That night He prayed again, again,  
"If now Thou canst, this cup remove,  
But if it is not now Thy will,  
I'll drink it all, My love to prove.

That night He prayed and prayed again,  
'Til sweat poured forth like drops of blood.  
This soul was in an agony;  
The Son of Man, the Lamb of God.

That night He took our load of sin,  
And bore it to the cross of shame;  
And there He paid our awful debt;  
Oh, let us praise His holy name!

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

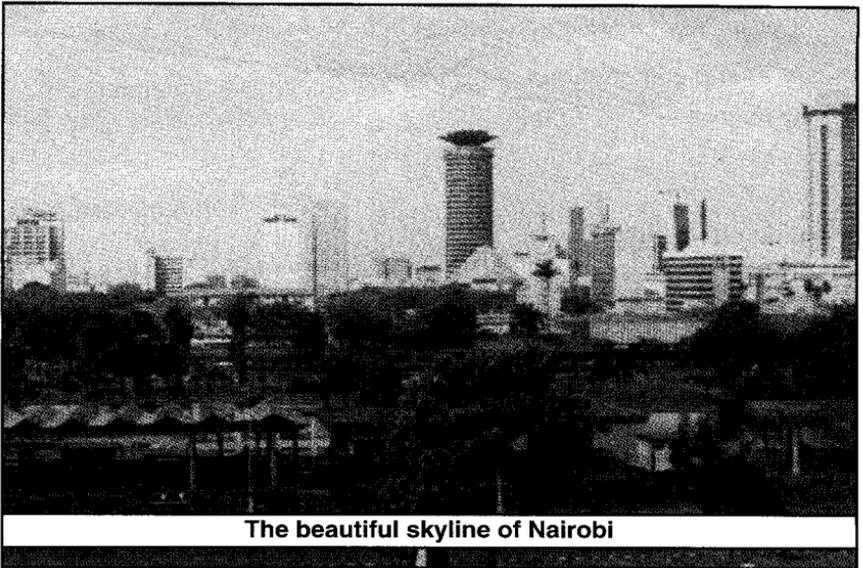


As early as the eighth century, Arab merchants exploited the country that is now Kenya for its spices and its people, whom they sold as slaves. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the area came under the control of Britain, but was granted independence on December 12, 1963. Four years had passed since the Mau Mau rebellion for freedom.

Jomo Kenyatta became the president of the country and led it through a number of years of growth in agriculture and industry. There was political stability with a developing private enterprise system. However, President Kenyatta died in 1978, leaving the government in the hands of the vice president, Daniel Arap Moi.

From the mid-seventies, opposition groups began to raise charges of corruption. Growing instability, unemployment, and inflation, as well as tribal conflicts, have plagued Kenyans in the past decade. In the western part of the country, especially, many thousands died in these struggles for power, and many more thousands became refugees. Elections have consistently been marred by charges of fraud and irregularities, resulting in clashes, violence, and death.

The average annual per capita income in Kenya is estimated to be \$360. Less than 28% of the population has reasonable access to uncontaminated water supplies. In the rural areas, even fewer people (15%) have access to



safe water. Contaminated water supplies account for more than 80% of all disease in Kenya. In many villages infant mortality rates are as high as 30%.

Though poverty is rampant, and physical life is difficult, the response of the people to the Gospel has been very heartening.

## **Overview of the Work**

**Dan Bell**

Churches of Christ have been present in Kenya from 1965, registered governmentally under "Kenya Church of Christ". The emphasis has been to establish local congregations and equip Kenyans to lead and become faithful men who in turn will teach and equip others. In addition to evangelism there are other areas of good works, done primarily among agriculturists and pastoralists, though some programs have also been developed for urban areas. There is a sharp difference between urban and rural works.

Recent studies estimate the number of congregations throughout Kenya to be approximately 850. Here in Kisumu in 1991 we had 120 congregations and now there are 260.

Educational works include schools, literacy programs, reading rooms, printing, adult education, women and family training, polytechnic training,

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

and deaf works. There is a Leadership Training program which begins with a two year preacher training program called Nairobi Great Commission School in Nairobi. In other areas, leadership training centers follow this setup by extension. In Kisumu there is a program called LTE (Leadership Training by Extension) that is administered through the postal system. Its curriculum consists of 34 books written by missionaries.

There are applied technology works that include building technologies, agricultural technologies and manendeleo projects (self-help programs). We help construct church buildings and have medical clinics, orphans' homes and orphan day-schools, refugee work and relief work as needed. There is a video/audio work in the making of teaching by videos and audio cassettes. The church operates under the banner of "Evangelism, Leadership, and Development". It addresses both the spiritual and physical needs of the people it seeks to serve.

[Note: Dan and Beverly Bell and some Kenyan brothers have a printing ministry in Kisumu. They print songbooks, tracts, study guides and other materials to help the churches. They also operate a correspondence school with several hundred students and more than 30 study booklets, with students earning a certificate for their studies. The Bells also maintain as much contact as possible with more than 200 churches in their area of Kenya.

# Winyo Church of Christ

**Charles Ngoje**

Winyo Church of Christ was planted in 1974 by two American missionary families, James and Wanda Moore and Lawrence and Faye Barr. It is one of the oldest churches of Christ in Kenya, and with a membership of 260, it is one of the largest congregations as well.

The Church has a wonderful youth ministry which was started by Ken Bolden Ngoje. It has about 25 committed youths.

Another ministry of the church is Winyo Christian Academy. This is a service to the Winyo community funded by the church. The school is now in grade two, and we plan for it to grow into a full primary school in five years. Our particular goal is to assist the orphans in the community to have a quality education.

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

The Church has also sent Charles Ngoje, Mark Sure and Joseph Ochola as missionaries to Moshi in Tanzania. They have planted there a Moshi Church of Christ with a membership of about 41 adults.

This team of missionaries is overseen by the elders of the Winyo Church of Christ who include Zachariah Ngoje, James Karunga, Joseph Ochari and Joshua Otieno.

# From the World and into Christ

## Nyabuto Marube

My name is Nyabuto Marube, a WBS student of Agatha Stout of Springfield Missouri. I was only 19 years old when I met Agatha through WBS correspondence lessons, seventeen years ago. I am thankful that I was interested in the lessons which resulted in my accepting Christ. It took me seven good years to make the perfect decision of becoming a child of God. I now minister at the Kayole Church of Christ in the suburbs of the city of Nairobi.

I remember the tracts that I regularly received from Agatha asking me to "attend the church of Christ" near me. I liked the lessons from the tracts but I never thought a church of Christ existed in Kenya. Sometime in 1985, I received a letter from Larry Stephens and Dick Boyd inviting me to attend a one week "Back to the Bible" course. The letter stated that they had received my name and address from my friend in the USA. I worked at a textile factory as a machine attendant and could not get permission to go to the classes. Similar letters came the following years but still I could not attend.

Then in March 1989, I remember I was reporting to night duty and a workmate gave me a handout that some Christian had given him. He came straight to me and said; "Take this, Mr. Nyabuto. I know it will interest you because I always see you reading Bible things." He was right. The flyer was an invitation to attend worship services at the church of Christ located at East end of 5th Street, Eastleigh Section II. It was this flyer that made me realize that there were churches of Christ in Kenya!

I left my work place the next day and went straight to find the location of this church that I had been searching for, for seven years. I learned that this was where the invitations to the Bible courses had come from! The watchman at the church gate gave me a very warm welcome and, within a few minutes, we became good friends. We discovered that we lived close to each other, and he invited me to worship the next Sunday. I was baptized

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

one week later. My watchman friend is now a computer teacher at the Kenya Christian Industrial Training Institute (KCITI) which is housed in this same church building at Eastleigh Section II. His name is Benjamin Okasirimi Atela. We often remind each other of the day we first met.

In 1992, the leadership of the Dandora Church of Christ told me that I had been considered for a two year training in Bible and Missions at the Nairobi Great Commission School. I had to resign from the textile factory to go to Bible School.

The Kayole Church of Christ was established in 1992. The missionary who played a major role in the planting of this church (Claude Cecil Hull) was taken away from us by malaria one year later. His legacy of charity and commitment is cherished by those of us who worked with the late Claude. The Campaign for Christ workers have helped some in evangelism and moral support that resulted in the acquiring of a half-acre piece of property



The picture is of a group of Nairobi church leaders and wives. We have committed ourselves to meet together and bring understanding, friendship and unity to the congregations in Nairobi. We had a great time getting to know one another.

The people are Peter and Asynah Macharia from the Jogoo Road Congregation, Wilmore and Annah Kiplagat from the Rainbow congregation, Larry and Hollye Conway from Jogoo Road, Samson and Sharon Owino from Mathare 4A, Franklin and Praxcedes Were from Lucky Summer, Bob and Michelle Bentley from Koma Rock, Nyabuto and Pamela Marube from Kayole, Martin and Nancy Phiri from Embakasi, Mark and Debbie Nicholas from Koma Rock, Francis and Mauryn Mbuvi from Kamulu, Bill Searcy from Rainbow, Tabitha Waithaka (her husband Anthony was away teaching a Bible course) from Koma Rock, John and Hannah Wambu from Kamulu, and Solomon Makaya (his wife Joyce was ill) from Mathare 4A.

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

where the temporary iron-sheet walled church building now stands. We have a regular membership of a hundred and forty.

The 'stretched arms of Jesus' extend to the community in the form of a preschool program that admits children between the ages of 3 and 6. The program is a blessing to both the church and the community.

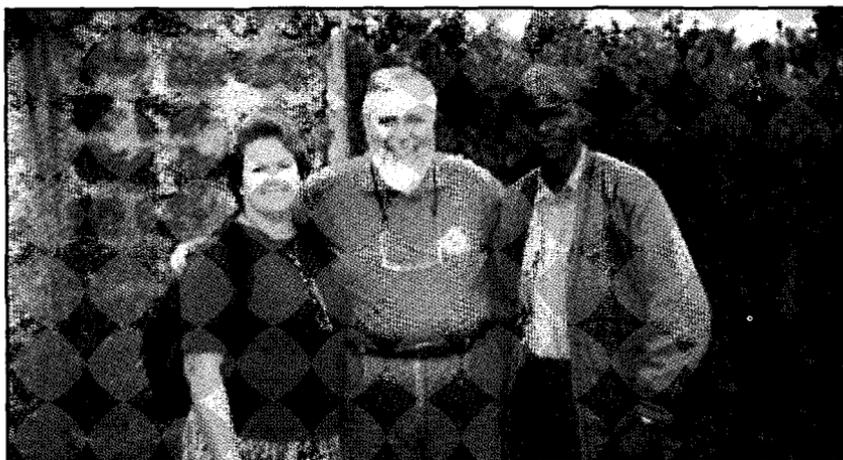
# Evangelism

**David Marube**

Kisii is the name of a region, the name of a city, the name of a tribe, and the name of the local language spoken in the area. According to the last census conducted here in Kenya in 1999, Kisii alone had around 5 million people.

## HISTORY OF THE LORD'S CHURCH IN KISII

The first church in the area (Tabaka Church of Christ) was planted in 1977 when a native preacher — Nicholas Onsomu — came from a neighboring country (Tanzania) where he had become a Christian. An American missionary — Roy Lane — came in 1981 and left in 1995. Even now, there are only 18 congregations in the area, with a total membership of about 800. Some of the congregations have grown to the extent that they have appointed elders and deacons. Local native brethren are now doing the work of evangelism, church planting, and maturing.



**Brother and sister Ken Bolden with David Marube**

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

### ANNUAL FELLOWSHIP MEETINGS

Churches of Christ in Kisii work very closely together. We hold “Fellowship Meetings” annually, where members from each congregation come together; study together; eat together; sing together; pray together, and do several other activities together. We rotate from one place to another. These are meant to be fellowship meetings for Christians but some non-Christians choose to attend, too, and, in fact, there’s something very good with that — several souls have been won to Christ in such gatherings! For instance, nine were baptized in our 2001 Annual Fellowship meeting held at Gesonso.

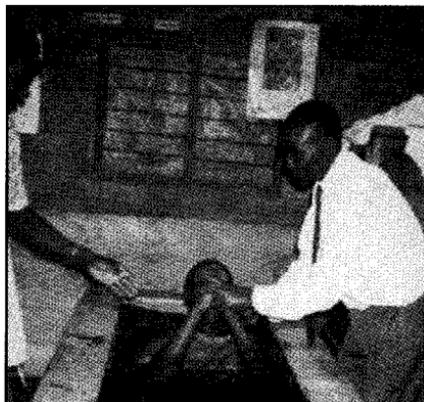
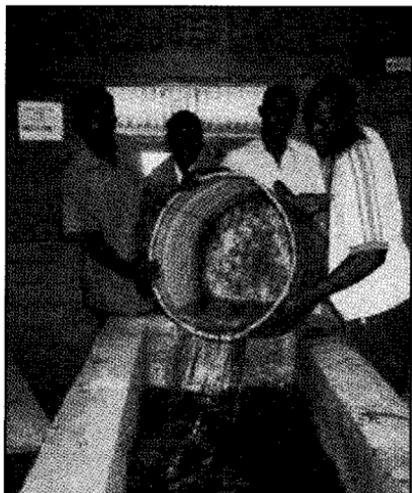
### LEADERS’ WORKSHOPS

Leaders from the 18 congregations come together every three months for one week of fellowship — prayers and Bible studies that focus on evangelism and church growth. Ladies, too, hold their joint “Ladies’ Retreats” and the youths hold “Youth Meetings” regularly.

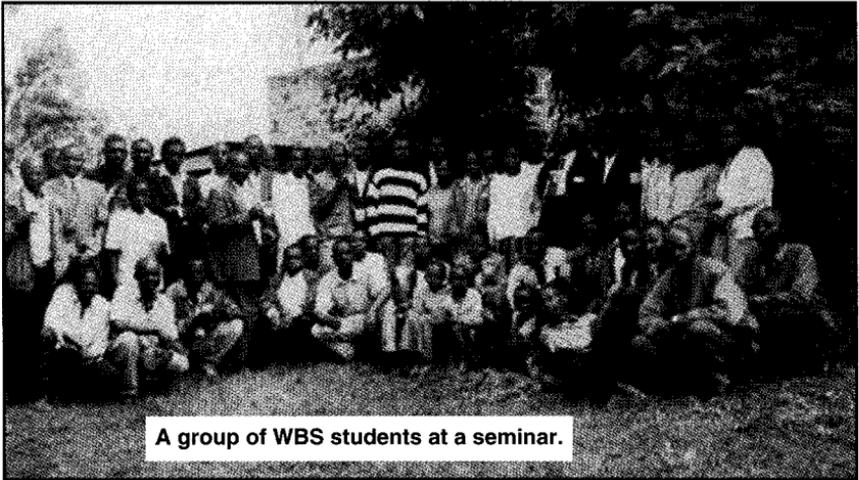
### WORLD BIBLE SCHOOL

There are more than 25,000 WBS students in Kisii, but locally we have contact with only about 5000. Most of these students are denominational church members, some are already members of the church, and others do not worship anywhere. Though we meet individually with many of the students, most are contacted personally during a WBS seminar.

A typical seminar begins with



Filling the baptistry for the happy occasion of a new birth.



A group of WBS students at a seminar.

introductions — each student gets a chance to greet others and say where he/she is from. Then it is time for the WBS teacher to give his lesson. At our most recent seminar I shared from the book of Genesis, chapter 19 about Lot and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and how the story relates to us.

**“Who else have you here?”** (v 12) We have family members, relatives, neighbors and friends whom we need to “go out” and warn. Unfortunately, oftentimes we sound to be just “jesting” (v 14) whenever we tell people that this world is not our home! On the other side, sometimes God’s messengers appear to be just “joking” whenever they warn us to flee the Sodom of fornication, lying, stealing, etc!

**“But he hesitated”** (v 16). Satan deceives people that there’s “no hurry” obeying the gospel, ‘no hurry’ repenting of some sins, “no hurry” carrying on the great commission of our Lord Jesus Christ, “no hurry” — and as a result, many have been lost in the “time not yet — no hurry — do it someday” trap!

**“Do not look behind”** (v 16). The Christian walk calls for “backward never, Forward ever” commitment.

My lesson was well received. We then got into Bible discussions, questions and answers session. The students who came from various denominational backgrounds had several Bible questions to ask, particularly concerning salvation and baptism: “When is one saved, is it after or before baptism?” and “Do I need to be baptized ‘again’ if I was baptized in the Catholic church?”

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

After our late lunch break, we went down the 'Lake Victoria' where we witnessed baptisms of: Tobias Owego (27 year-old), Philip Nyadiero (60), and Kopiny and Benard Otieno (18). About 30 students were able to accompany us to the lake to witness the baptisms.

The church in H/Bay, which hosted the seminar, was started through WBS follow up and now has more than 30 active members. Alfayo Walala Bodi, a WBS student of John Defore, is the evangelist there. He is a very able and dedicated brother.

### RESTORATION OF THE ERRING

A few months ago, I started thinking about what to do with those who were once active members here at Nyamue but for one reason or another became unfaithful. I have been visiting these people, encouraging them to come back to the church, but all my efforts have been unfruitful.

Then I thought of a different method — invite some evangelists from neighboring churches (Samuel Mong'are from Nyamatuta Church of Christ, Eric Oronyi from Mesei Church of Christ), who have a primary gift in encouragement, so I could use them to restore the erring Christians. We managed to meet and talk to twenty-eight people. One encouraging thing was that all were very positive and humble enough that they allowed us to spend some time with them in Bible study and prayer.

Fifteen of the twenty-eight pledged to come to worship the following Sunday — and three actually kept their promise! It was a real joy for the church! Our worship service became a celebration with lots of worship choruses! Each one of the three brothers made some public confession and they all asked the church to hold special prayers on their behalf, so they could grow strong in the Lord.

[**Editor's Note:** We want to express sincere appreciation to brother Marube for the work he has done in the past three months to solicit articles and pictures from brethren concerning the development of the church in Kenya.]



Two deaf brothers, singing, as another brother translates.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

## **“Made in the Streets”**

**Charles Coulston**

Darlene and I have been in Kenya for almost 10 years now and enjoyed it very much. For the past 5 years we have been part of a ministry to street children in Nairobi. We are working together with 19 other Kenyans to minister to the children and teenagers who are actually sleeping on the streets. We visit where they sleep, called “bases,” and we help with First Aid, some food, getting national identity cards, reconciliation with families and other needs. We also have a boarding school for up to 26 boys, and at another location we have a place for up to 18 girls. It’s an exciting time.

We also work with World Bible School. We have signed up more than 15,000 new students in the past three years, and have baptized more than 400. We have helped WBS students start 30 congregations in the past 3 years. Three Kenyans work with me on this project that is sponsored by the Golf Course Road Church of Christ in Midland, Texas, who are also our personal sponsors.

We began in 2000 a series of cell churches here in the Eastleigh section of Nairobi, which have now grown to 8 cells and show great vitality, minis-



**The current group of boys and girls, taken with a juvenile court judge who committed these kids to our care.**

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

tering to the poorest of the poor in this slum area of Nairobi. A Kenyan brother oversees the cell churches and trains new cell servants and assists the cells as they prepare to multiply.

The concept for Kenya Christian Industrial Training Institute was formulated by Preston Hemphill and a group of Kenyans. Later Berkeley Hackett raised much of the funds for the buildings, and the first principal was Dick Boyd, who handled government approval and opened a wood-working program. Dr. Charles Coulston served as Principal during the years, 1992-95, after help from two California elders turned the industrial school into a computer and electronics college. In 1996 Berkeley Hackett became Principal, and the school has continued to grow. Bible is taught along with the technical courses, and a two-year diploma in ministry is offered by Ted Ogle and those who teach with him.

Siriati Bible College lies on a beautiful piece of property near Sotik, Kenya. David Tanui is Principal, and they now serve about 60 students per year, who study Bible and ministry as well as tailoring and other skills.

An orphanage near Kitale has served the needs of homeless children and

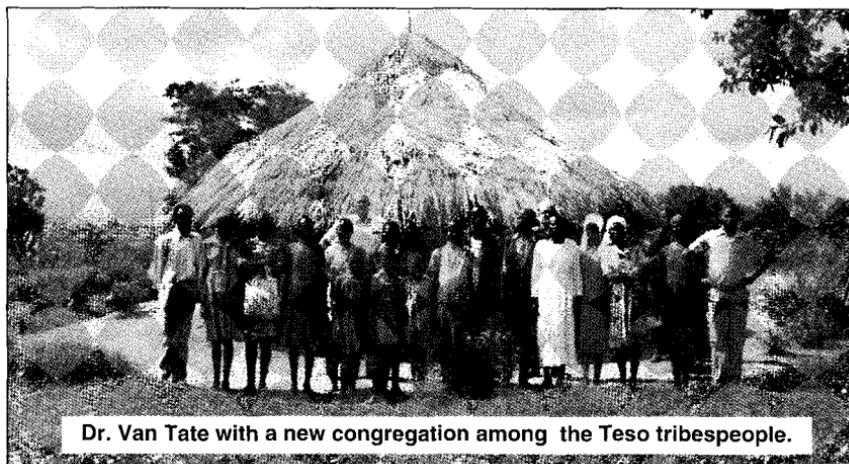
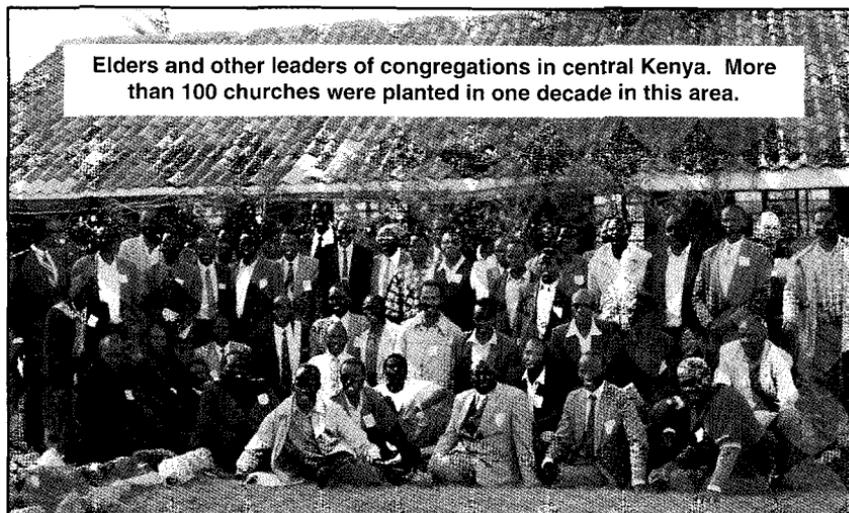
**The crowd of people attending the Siriati Bible School graduation ceremony at the college compound.**

**Graduates who received their certificates for work done well.**



poor families for more than 10 years. Several missionaries as well as dedicated Kenyan families have been closely involved with development of the home.

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .



Made in the Streets began as a ministry for kids sleeping on the streets at KCITI in 1995. In 1999 it moved off campus, and in August moved into its own facilities. This work of Kenyan men and women who love the Lord serves about 500 street children and youth at any one time. Charles and Darlene Coulston work with the Kenyans as Advisors. In 2000 there were 25 children reconciled to families. Four cell churches currently meet at "bases" where the kids sleep, and one former street youth has a cell meeting

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

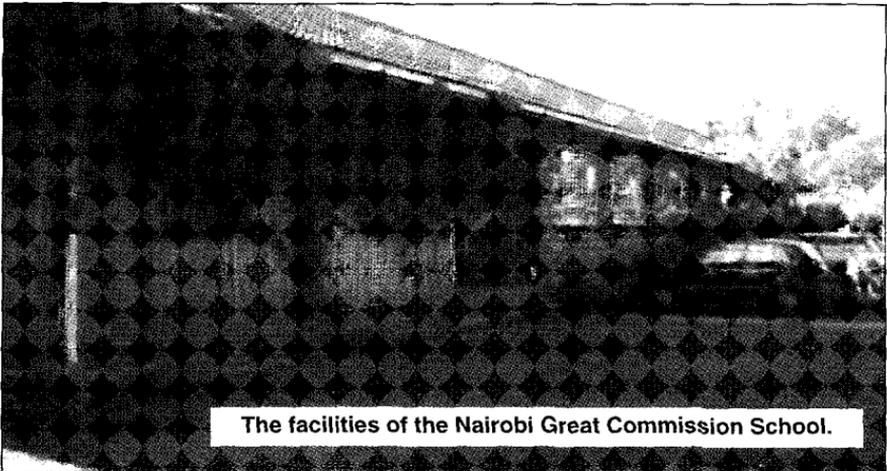
in his home two nights per week. At the Eastleigh location, 16 boys are currently housed, fed, trained, and taught. At the Kamulu location on the eastern edge of Nairobi, 6 girls are housed and cared for; they are training in tailoring and agriculture.

# Nairobi Great Commission School

**Bill Searcy**

The vision for NAIROBI GREAT COMMISSION SCHOOL (NGCS) began in 1988 when national leaders of the Kenya Churches of Christ together with some of the missionaries saw the need for further training of church leaders. Many people realized that the church could not move forward into the 21st century without well-trained and equipped leaders. Excellent training had been done on the local church level and in provincial areas. Nevertheless, it was time to move a step beyond that level into a higher program of education in Bible, Missions, Church Ministry and Leadership that would balance quality academics with practical experiential training. This training would give national church leaders credibility as well as equip them for the task of planting and maturing new churches in Kenya, East Africa, the continent, and beyond.

These national church leaders and missionaries spent the year of 1989 talking with other church leaders and missionaries throughout the country. From those meetings what is now NAIROBI GREAT COMMISSION



The facilities of the Nairobi Great Commission School.

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

SCHOOL was established and opened in January of 1990. The dream of becoming international was a reality from the beginning, with students from Kenya, Ethiopia and Zaire (Congo). By December 1999, NGCS added Uganda, Rwanda, Zambia, Sudan, South Africa, Botswana, Ghana, Tanzania and the USA.

In six sessions from 1991 through 1999, the school graduated more than 125 students from more than 25 tribes. Most of the graduates are working effectively for the church or in church related ministries as elders, deacons, preachers, counselors, leaders and teachers.

Primary health care was added to the curriculum in 1998 when a collaborative effort took place with the Masters in International Nursing program at Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas. The NGCS primary health care courses and the street clinic and counseling services are offered at the Rainbow Church of Christ. Since July 1998, NGCS and Abilene Christian University (ACU) in Abilene, Texas offer the Masters in Biblical and Related Studies degree, accredited by ACU. Dr. Gailyn Van Rheen of ACU and Dr. William (Bill) H. Searcy of NGCS coordinate this program.

Imagine for a moment a church in Africa with no expatriate missionaries. Who will plant churches? Who will train others to do so? Who will evangelize the next tribe or the next country? The answer, of course, is **INDIGENOUS NATIONAL CHURCH LEADERS**. It is the vision of NGCS to see Africans Claiming Africa For Christ! In April of 1992 the school helped sponsor a missions conference with that title. Twenty church leaders representing 16 African nations, containing 6,564 churches of Christ, met for two weeks to discuss, pray and plan concerning the growth of the Kingdom of God on the continent of Africa. This task is still enormous. Much of French Africa and Muslim Africa have not been penetrated with the good news of Jesus. Who will go?

It is our belief that it should not be Western missionaries, but rather it will and should be Africans. Many expatriate missionaries and board members of NGCS see the vision of when we're old and can hardly walk, we'll hear the news of how our African brothers who were students at NGCS have faithfully spread the gospel throughout much of the continent because they obeyed their Lord's command in the Great Commission. Yes, when we are old we want to hear of how they:

WENT . . . AND WENT . . . AND . . . WENT  
PREACHED . . . AND PREACHED . . . AND PREACHED  
AND MADE DISCIPLES . . . DISCIPLES . . . DISCIPLES. †

# Do You Want to Reach out to Others, but . . .

How often do you meet up with a friend or a relative, or simply develop a conversation with a stranger and, because of your concern for their soul, you turn the topic of discussion to spiritual things? But little can be said in those few minutes, and there is a desire to leave them with something to guide their thinking after you part ways. What can you do?

We have a suggestion. Keep copies of **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL** in your hand-bag, ready to share with those who show an interest. It is so easy to offer it, with the words, "I'd like to share this special magazine with you and to invite you to study with us. Here, at the back, is a contact address, phone number....."

**For \$25 a month, you can personally receive 35 copies of each issue — 35 copies to share with the precious souls you want to teach!**

(Return this form in an envelope, along with your check, to the following address)



**THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL**  
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Springfield, MO 65809

Att. Byron Nichols

## Dear Sirs:

I want to subscribe to the quarterly magazine, **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL**. Enclosed is my check for \$12.00 for four issues, or \$20.00 for eight issues, starting with Volume \_\_\_\_\_. **My address is given below.**

I want to order the complete set of volumes in print (32 issues) for the reduced price of \$80.00. **My address is given below.**

Please send special prices for WBS teachers and their students.

I want to MAKE A GIFT SUBSCRIPTION of **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL**. Enclosed is my check for \$12.00 for four issues, or \$20.00 for eight issues, starting with Volume \_\_\_\_\_. **The address is given below.**

I want to send \$25.00 per month (or a multiple), for a box of 35 copies (or multiples) of each issue of the magazine as they are printed. Churches are also urged to use boxes in this way.

Please use my special contribution to send more copies of this issue to the mission fields of the world.

Please accept my check to send a bundle to our missionary. **The address is given below.**

As a congregation we want to help print and circulate 100,000 copies of each issue of this magazine by making a special contribution to this effort. We can specify where the copies we pay for will be used, whether in our personal work, in jail ministry, overseas, or . . .

This congregation wants to have 1000 copies (for \$1000 plus shipping) special-printed of the next issue, with our (our missionary's) address, to be shipped directly to us or to him, as per instructions.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STREET \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_



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## ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

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*Verse Search* — 34 (from page 31)

Who Am I? (page 77)

1. He killed James, the brother of John with the sword as he continued his policy of harassing the church.
2. Constant prayer was offered to God by the church. See for comparison Acts 2:42.
3. He was chained between two soldiers, and other guards were before the door.
4. An angel of the Lord who stood by him as a light shone in the prison.
5. His sandals and garment. The angel told him to tie on his sandals and put on his garment.
6. He did not think it was real, but thought it was a vision.
7. It opened to them of its own accord. This was a miracle as the gate was made of iron and was, no doubt, very heavy.
8. From the hand of Herod and the expectation of the Jews.
9. In the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark.
10. "*Peter; named Rhoda; answer.*"
11. She did not open the gate but ran inside and announced that Peter was there.
12. He continued knocking at the door.
13. He had them put to death because he blamed them for allowing Peter to escape.
14. They shouted, "The voice of a god and not of a man."
15. Because he did not give glory to God, but was pleased to accept such praise for himself. The angel struck Peter to awaken him; the angel who struck Herod brought about his sickness which resulted in his death.
16. It grew and multiplied. This is seen on other occasions such as Acts 6:7 and Acts 19:20.

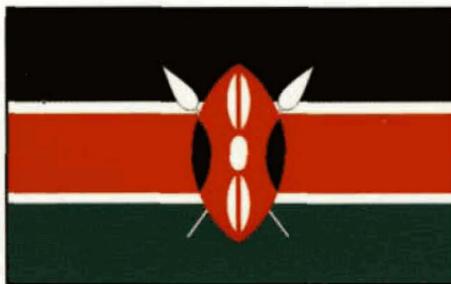


Adam

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**



## Republic of Kenya



**Government:** Republic  
**Head of State:** President Daniel arap Moi

### Secular Facts:

**Location:** East Africa on the coast of the Indian Ocean.

**Land Mass:** 224,961 square miles.

**Population:** 30,400,000; 130 per square mile.

**Major Cities:** Nairobi, Mombasa.

**Language:** English and Swahili (official); also Bantu and other local languages.

**Literacy:** Males, 83%; females, 67%; education is free and compulsory.

**Religion:** Protestant, 38%; Roman Catholic, 28%; indigenous beliefs, 26%.

**Ethnic Groups:** Kikuyu, 22%; Luhya, 14%; Luo, 13%; Kalenjin, 12%; Kamba, 11%; also Asian, Arab, European.

**Economy:** *Industries:* Tourism, agricultural processing, oil refining; *Agriculture:* Coffee, corn, tea; cut flowers; *Communications:* TVs: 18 per 1000; Radios: 103 per 1000; Telephones: 1 per 111 persons; Newspapers, 39 per 1000; *Transportation:* 271,000 private cars; *Health:* Life expectancy, male, 58; female, 61; infant mortality: 59 per 1000.

**Monetary Unit:** Kenya shilling.

### The Church:

**Congregations:** In excess of 850, with approximately 23,000 Christians throughout the country.

**History:** The first missionaries of churches of Christ to enter Kenya arrived in 1965. In the following years, as many as 53 families or singles worked in the country at one time. Most of the outreach has been among the poor in rural tribal areas. With few exceptions, the missionaries adhered to principles of fitting into the local culture through learning the language and living among the people. They aimed at planting indigenous churches that would be self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating.

During the first two decades the focus of missionaries was on evangelism and establishing congregations, initiating only those projects that could be supported from local resources, in order to minimize outside dependency. In the 90's more work has been done toward leadership development, social works and other projects which require outside funding.

Current programs of work include primary and secondary schools, orphanages, vocational training, ministry training schools, medical clinics, a film and media studio for the production of Christian media, and a business training center.