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I Have Turned My Face Toward Heaven

Michael R. Norwood

I have turned my face toward heaven
While I walk the narrow path;
No worry for the future,
Nor grieving for the past.

He is walking right beside me;
I will never be alone
Till we cross the River Jordan
He will safely lead me home.

I have turned my face toward heaven
And I sing as on I plod
Of the one who died at calvary,
My Savior and my God!

I will never cease to praise Him,
I love Him and I know
I've a home prepared in heaven
Where someday I'll surely go.

Chorus:

I have turned my face toward heaven,
I am walking in the way;
While I listen to my Master
I can hear Him gently say:
"Here I am, my child, I'm with you
Every step along the way,
Listen closely now, look homeward
As you follow day by day."

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

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Outside of Christ, there is death.

What do we have when we are in Christ?

- All spiritual blessings... (Ephesians 1:3).
- Chosen from the foundation of the world (V.4).
to be **holy**
to be **without blame**
- Adoption as God's children (V.5).
- Acceptance in the Beloved (V.6).
- Redemption through His blood (V.7).
- Forgiveness of sins (V.7).
- Gathered together (in **one family**) (V.10).
- The **inheritance** (V.11).
- We **trusted** in Him after HEARING the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation in whom we also BELIEVED in whom we were **SEALED** with the Holy Spirit of promise (Acts 2:38); (Vs.12,13).
- **Kindness** toward us (2:7).
- We were **created** for good works (V.10).
- We were **brought to God** by the blood (V.13).
- The **oneness** of man, (and peace) created in Him (V.15).

"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27).



"We are all
ONE
IN
CHRIST
JESUS..."
(Galatians
3:28).

When a person is baptized into Christ,

WHERE

will He put that new child of God?
Can you imagine Him saying these things:

Acts 2:47



One Lord, one faith,
one baptism

Ephesians 4:4-6



"I'll add this one to this
community church."



"And I'll put this one over here
in this independent church!"



"This one can go into
this new church, start-
ed just last year!"



"Upon this rock I will build
MY CHURCH":
His body, His bride, His family.
(Matthew 16:18; Ephesians
1:23; 1 Timothy 3:15)



"I'll put this one in this
church, if its earthly head
and headquarters approves
his membership."



"This one can go into
any one of the thou-
sands of denomina-
tional churches."



"Even though a
man (or woman)
started this
church, I'll put
this new
Christian here."



"This church does
not wear My name
and it follows
some doctrines I
didn't authorize,
but I'll put this
woman here."



WHY ARE WE LOSING OUR CHILDREN?

J. C. Choate
Editor-in-Chief

The story is the same in home after home, congregation after congregation. We as the Lord's people are losing our children — 70% by the time they are independent adults! Our most precious possessions grow up and leave home and leave the Lord. Why? How can this be? Don't we love them? Aren't we providing the very best for them? Aren't we giving them spiritual guidance? Don't we care for their souls? Don't we want to see them go to heaven?

Surely we think we are doing all of these things, but still, we are letting them slip away from us to be lost in this life and in the world to come. What a heartbreaking tragedy! They could have been such a blessing to us, to their own families, and to the world, and to the Lord's cause if they had only stayed true to their commitment to God. Through their faithfulness, their families and many others under their influence could have been added to the Lord. Instead, their apostasy will affect many souls for many generations. How heartbreaking this is!

Our children are our treasure. They bring joy and happiness to our lives — but what happens in so many cases? It seems that they are “here today and gone tomorrow.” With our jobs and with our busy lives, we let the years slip away. We had great plans for our children. We wanted to give them the best — and maybe we thought we were, but maybe there was too much emphasis on material things and not enough permeation of the spiritual in our daily lives.

Of course we loved our children, but maybe we didn't take the time to show that love. We gave them material things, but did we give them our time? Did we supervise them as we should have? Did we let them see TV programs that were not good for them? Did we allow them, year after year, to be taught evolution and other atheistic beliefs in school, without provid-

ing a strong enough foundation of faith and true scientific knowledge to enable them to withstand the onslaught of error?

Did we allow them to be involved in social activities that were not good for their spiritual welfare? Did we allow them to have the kind of friends that were a bad influence?

We took them to worship but did we teach them *how* to worship? Did we teach them the deep reverence and love for God that they need in this world of evil?

Did we set the kind of faithful example before them that they needed? If we were erratic in attending the assemblies, or were hypocritical or lukewarm in the living of Christianity, our children would certainly have spotted the sham. If we were spiritually weak ourselves, we would have been unable to give them the discipline they needed. Is it any wonder, then, that in many cases as soon as our children go out on their own, they leave the Lord behind and begin to live the worldly life that their new freedom allows them?

Of course the foregoing description is of the typical nuclear family with both father and mother in the home — what we would call a stable environment. But there are many children today who grow up in a one-parent household. This happens in some cases in spite of every effort for it to be otherwise. But with single fathers and single mothers, with the necessity to earn a living to provide for the needs of the family, and with the resulting lack of time for the children, the probability of giving them the needed spiritual and ethical foundation is greatly reduced.

There are other children who are mistreated or abandoned by their parents, and they may become wards in foster homes; or if they are old enough, they may become “homeless”, without supervision, provision for their physical needs, or any spiritual guidance. Tragically, many of them end up on drugs, with a promiscuous life-style, victims of sexually transmitted diseases, participants in gangs and crime so that prison or death is their lot.

This is a bleak picture, isn't it? Yes, it is. But how can we turn it around? Can it be turned around? Can we save our children? Is it too late?

For some it is already too late; for others there is still time, but it will not be easy. We are faced with a wicked, materialistic world, a world of drugs, sex, lack of discipline, and lack of respect for God and his Will. Where is it going to end? We as parents are going to have to wake up to what our children are facing, the kind of temptations and challenges they are dealing with every day of their lives. We are going to have to love them passionately, and give them the kind of foundation, training, and discipline they need. We are going to have to take the time to read and study the Bible with them, to instill in them a deep love for God and His word, to pray with

them, to train them in spiritual work, and to give them secular work and responsibilities that will make them strong men and women.

But that's not all. We are going to have to help them make the type of friendships that will bring out the best in all involved. We must monitor their school work, what they are being taught, and how they respond to it. We have to get them involved in a spiritual perspective to life, all day, every day — not just to be seat-warmers in the various assemblies. We must teach them by example and logical explanations to dress modestly and neatly, rather than faddishly. And children must be taught to respect their elders and those in authority.

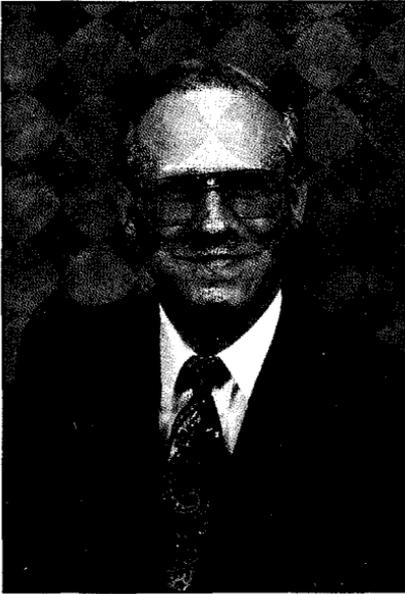
The church also has a very important role in this crucial education. The elders, deacons, preachers, teachers, and all of the members must be aware of the children and young people, committed to working with them and helping them to grow in spiritual and moral knowledge and application. Our children deserve sound Bible teachers and classes that will lead them to spiritual maturity. They don't need entertainment programs that will constantly be focussed on trips and fun and games and food. Children who are trained in involvement in spiritual service projects, Bible bowls, youth meetings, Bible camps, gospel meetings, and campaigns for Christ will mature to be hard-working Christian adults. In contrast, too often when entertainment is the focus in activities, they lose interest when the entertainment ends.

Children must be brought up in an atmosphere where they enjoy being with the Lord's people and engaged in His work. They need to be able to hear missionaries and to be challenged to be a part of world evangelism either by preparing to go themselves or by helping support those who are going. They should be encouraged to attend a Christian college or university, to better prepare themselves for the work they have chosen to do. Congregations would do well to provide Bible Chairs and Christian Student Centers in all of the States Colleges and Universities throughout our country, for those who cannot attend Christian colleges.

Both the parents and the church need to show paramount concern for our young people, realizing that we have a very short period of time to ground them in the truths so vital to their souls. Oh, there are so many things that need to be done, and can be done — **someway, somehow, we must save our children!**

Remember that Paul said, "*Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. HONOUR THY FATHER AND MOTHER; which is the first commandment with promise; THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH THEE, AND THOU MAYEST LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH. And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*" (Ephesians 6:1-4).





THE MATTER OF MEDIOCRITY

Byron Nichols
Managing Editor

We tend to like the feeling of not being different from others, not standing out in a crowd. It can become disturbing to us and to others if we are significantly different from them in terms of attitude, behavior, appearance, or ability.

As a result, we may engage in the practice of refraining from doing or being or looking our best, because if we succeed in becoming or performing above the norm we endanger our standing with others.

This can even happen in the church. We might prefer to appear to be “average” in our talents, in our commitment, in our spirituality; this way we can avoid possibly making others feel that we are trying to “show them up.” Perhaps the best or safest approach to it all is to just try to be an “average” Christian.

If you might be tempted to think along these lines, let me just mention these three facts:

- (1) The average religious person of Noah’s day drowned in the flood.

- (2) The average religious person in Abraham and Lot's day burned in Sodom.
- (3) The average religious person in the last days of Jesus shouted, "**Crucify Him!**"

Surely history would tell us, then, that being mediocre or average in our Christianity is not going to get the job done. The Lord does not call folks to be "average religious people." Rather, He has called us out of an average life to one of real discipleship. He has called us to forsake all and follow Him (Luke 14:33; Matthew 16:24). He has called us to be "*His own special people*" (1 Peter 2:9).

Probably it would be well for us to define a word or two before proceeding further. The words "average" and "mediocre" are synonyms — they have basically the same meaning. Webster says that these words mean "of a middle quality; indifferent; ordinary; commonplace; usual; normal." The word "mediocrity" simply means "the quality or state of being mediocre."

To be sure, it really doesn't seem, on the surface, that being average or mediocre should be viewed as being all that bad. However, consider again the definition and synonyms of mediocre. Dare we believe that the Lord is happy when His followers are "ordinary, indifferent, or of a middle quality?" Perhaps we can get some idea about His attitude toward such as we read once again from Matthew 22:36-38 as one of the Pharisees asked Jesus a question: "*Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment.*" Wouldn't loving God with all our heart necessitate our giving Him our best in everything? Surely it would.

On another occasion Jesus said, "*He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters*

abroad" (Matthew 12:30). Many want to be in the middle as far as actually serving Him is concerned — basically for Him, but not with much enthusiasm or fervor. But Jesus says that the middle ground is off-limits; we must make a definite choice to either be **for** Him or **against** Him, for **Him** or for **Satan**.

Please understand that the mediocrity under consideration here is that which is **willful**, not that which results from a lack of ability on our part and occurs in spite of our best effort.

Contentment promotes mediocrity. But someone says, "Now wait a minute! The Bible teaches that contentment is good, that we are to learn to be content." That is absolutely correct. The apostle Paul said, "*But godliness with contentment is great gain*" (1 Timothy 6:6). Paul also stated in Philippians 4:11 that he had learned to be content in whatever situation he found himself. Contentment is great, to be sure, but it can be abused and misunderstood. Too many are content with mediocrity, but the Bible never approves of this. Instead, God and His inspired writers are continually exhorting us to greater effort and better service.

Contentment encourages us to give less than we are capable of. Thomas Edison wisely said, "Show me a thoroughly satisfied man, and I will show you a failure." Someone else said, "Not failure, but low aim, is crime." To try and fail is not mediocrity. Mediocrity seldom even tries. It was Lloyd Jones who said, "The men who try to do something and fail are infinitely better than those who try to do nothing and succeed."

Let us all strive to help one another overcome the temptation to be satisfied with mediocre service for our Lord.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, inasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). †

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"Phillip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.' And Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Phillip said to him, 'Come and see'" (John 1:45).

Nathanael's prejudice should not be viewed with overt criticism. After all, he was a product of the world in which he lived, a world that had been overrun with false prophets, governed by tyranny, and influenced by self-

Philip's *"Come and see"* was the best possible answer he could have given — no frail attempts at convincing arguments, no expression of impatience with Nathanael's skepticism — just the simple, forthright challenge to observe for himself. How can we learn from Philip's reply?

There are many today who do not know Christ because they are held at bay by

COME AND SEE

Joe C. Magee

...serving religious leaders. The thoughts of the Son of God coming from unlikely circumstances left this young man with understandably cautious optimism, at best. It speaks well of his character that he asked, *"Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"* Unlike the adamant unbelievers that would later come upon the scene, at least he asked.



GOD

those who practice a kind of religious "Churchianity" and who seek to guide them through a maze of religious practices and holy impressions: "Our preacher", "our program", until the seeker is ready to cry out, "Where is Jesus?" We need more simple New Testament Christians who are willing to open their Bibles and reverently say, "Come and see".

A careful reading of the briefest Gospel, Mark, would reveal to the inquirer a character unlike any other that ever lived. None other has ever filled the world with such benevolence, such profound teaching, and such a high standard of moral living as the carpenter of Nazareth. Ponder the claims, the evidence in proof of those claims, and be convinced of His divine nature and unquestionable authority.

Come and see what Christ was and is.

Come and see what Christ was and is. No other ever graced the earth with more changing influence upon the lives of more people. His enemies hated Him with heated passion equal to none other, while His followers loved Him with a self-sacrificing love not before seen in the world. They still do. He who never traveled in His adult life more than a hundred and fifty miles from His place of birth has pressed His influence into the four corners of the earth. He who never wrote anything except the unknown inscription in the dirt is the most written about character who ever lived. And with every new generation there is a new chapter written.

Come and see what Jesus can do for you.

Come and see what Jesus can do for you. Look into the life and light of God's precious gift. See what His friendship and fellowship can do to uphold your hopes in times of doubt, to give you strength to endure beyond the common bounds of endurance, to see the light of eternity while others grope in darkness, to rest in the comfort of His assurance while unbelievers agonize in fits of uncertainty.

Come and see, with open eyes and an honest heart, free of prejudice. Come and see, and rejoice! †

Joe C. Magee serves the Lord in Yale, Oklahoma, USA.

Golgotha!

Ardron Hinton

Golgotha — place of a skull — even the name is ugly.
 Shall we call it Mount Calvary to hide the ugliness?
 "Mount" is deceitful for a bleak, barren, rocky hill.
 "Calvary" changes the language, but not the meaning.
 Nothing can hide the ugliness of this place of death.
 Not just any death, but pain-filled death on a cruel cross;
 At a chosen site — outside the city to avoid defilement,
 Yet beside the main road to add humiliation to the pain —
 To such a place mindless sheep drove their Shepherd.

Golgotha — place of a skull — a living thorn-crowned skull,
 A bloody, beaten, nail-pierced body, in total agony;
 Lifted up that all might view the shame and suffering,
 And add mockery and slanderous insult to the burden.
 No criminal was on the middle cross that fateful day,
 But One who spoke as easily to the Father as to people,
 Whose load of human sin-guilt added to the ugliness,
 So the Father draped the disgraced region in darkness.

Near violent Golgotha, a quiet garden was in readiness,
 Ready with a new rock tomb, suitable for the King.
 Golgotha and the tomb were only for an earth moment.
 A righteous resurrection brings victory that is timeless.
 The victory over sin and death won on that bloody cross
 And in that sealed tomb was the victory of the faithful —
 Believing, trusting, obeying the thorn-crowned King!

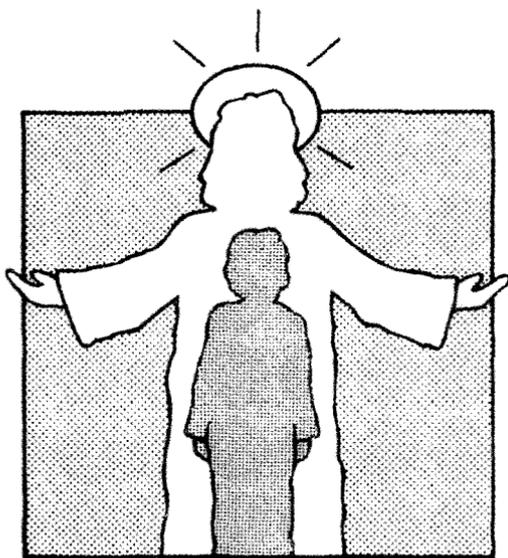
Ardron Hinton publishes "Mountain Echoes" for congregations of the Lord's church in Blair, Oklahoma, USA.

GOD

Be Imitators of God

Thomas R. Dohling

Seeing Jesus is what Christianity is all about. Christian service in its purest form is imitating Him Whom we see. To see His majesty and to imitate Him — this is the sum of Christianity. Getting a vision of your Maker can be



like starting a whole new life. It can be like a new birth. In fact, Jesus Himself said: *“Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”* (John 3:3).

Man was not meant to live in ignorance of his Maker. That is why God came near — so that man may see and know Him. Yet, man was reluctant to acknowledge his Maker; he still is.

The reason for this reluctance is spiritual blindness caused by the deceiver, Satan. He has deceived man into thinking that he was not cre-

ated but that he has evolved, that he is still evolving into superior beings and that he can be self-sufficient apart from God. This is a lie. Man, apart from God is in darkness (Romans

1:21). God knows it. That is why through His Son, Jesus Christ, God came to man as the Light of the world to enlighten him, to make him aware of his need for God, to make him aware of a higher, better, more abundant and everlasting life (John 8:12).

The higher and better life to which man is called is possible only when he discovers his weakness and impotency in the flesh — life apart from God — and desires, instead, to be born anew in the spirit of his being.

In order for him to be saved

GOD

from himself (from his carnal life), God's plan for man's salvation was put in place before time began. In the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ — the Son of God and the Son of man — man is saved and becomes a new spiritual being, a child of God Himself. The new Christian discards the 'self' (carnal life) and clothes himself with Christ (spiritual life). His nature begins to undergo a metamorphosis. Just as an ugly caterpillar emerges from the apparently dead cocoon, changed into a beautiful butterfly, so also carnal man emerges from the watery grave of baptism a metamorphosed beautiful creature after the nature of Jesus Himself!

This dramatic change is effected by God, through His Spirit, contained in the word. It occurs in the real person, i.e., in the soul, so it is not physically apparent and doesn't take place instantaneously. The transformed man now desires his Creator only and how he might please Him. Little by little, over a period of time, the nature of the carnal man is replaced by the nature of God as revealed in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Such a new creature has little patience with, or interest in, the works of the flesh or 'highs' of this world. His only goal now is to patiently wait on His God in absolute surrender and marvel at the countless blessings that he now

enjoys in continuous fellowship with his Creator.

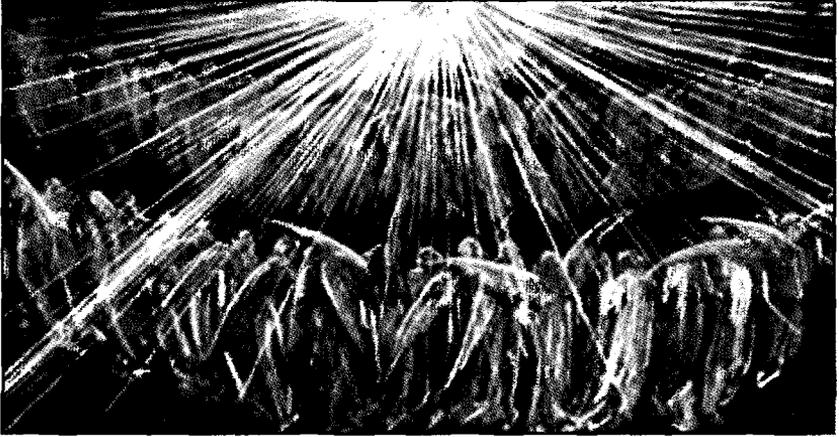
In Ephesians 5:1-5, the apostle Paul says, *"Therefore, be imitators of God as dearly loved children and live in love, just as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God. But among you there must not be either sexual immorality, impurity of any kind, or greed, as these are not fitting for the saints. Neither should there be vulgar speech, foolish talk, or coarse jesting — all of which are out of character — but rather thanksgiving. For you can be confident of this one thing: that no person who is immoral, impure, or greedy (such a person is an idolater) has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God."*

What a contrast is presented in the above passage between the godly and ungodly lives! The first refers to love and sacrifice for others; the second refers to the carnal life, lived for the gratification of fleshly desires. To the spiritual man, the carnal life is immoral and impure and he can no longer be attracted to it, having found the higher, better life in his Lord Jesus. He lives to please his God and always thanks Him for His love, mercy, grace, and providential care. †

Thomas R. Dohling is a Christian living in New Delhi, India.

What Will Heaven Be Like?

Charles E. Burch



The Bible pictures heaven as a place of eternal joy and happiness. Yet, much of what is written about heaven is hard to comprehend. We are creatures of time; that is, our lives revolve around a 24-hour day, but heaven is eternal. Let us notice some passages from God's word that reveal some wonderful things about the greatness of heaven.

John, in speaking of heaven, wrote,

"And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And God shall

wipe away all tears from their eyes; there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.... He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son ... And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.... And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there is no night there"
(Revelation 21:2-25).

GOD

These beautiful verses of what heaven is like create within us a stronger desire to go there. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2).

Think how wonderful it is going to be to enter that prepared place! Let us notice some of the great blessings listed in the promises of Revelation:

"There shall be no more death." We have all been touched in some way by death. We know the sorrow that it always brings to our hearts. But, in heaven, death will not be known.

We also read, *"neither sorrow, nor crying."* There will be no kind of sorrow to cause anyone to cry, tears will be gone forever.

Notice the verse again, *"neither shall there be any more pain."* We cannot fully comprehend a place where pain is a thing of the past, forever. In this life we all suffer from time to time. Pain is not limited to any specific age group, but all experience it to some degree, and many times throughout life. But to live eternally without a headache, sore throat, or backache sounds almost too good to be true — yet we have God's word and we know it will be as He said.

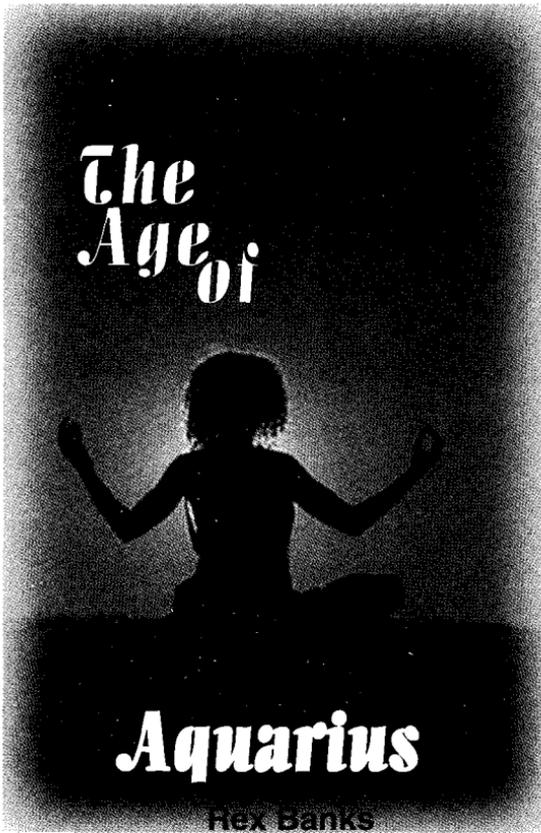
Jesus reassured His disciples,

"Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. 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. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3). This passage reveals that the saved will dwell in spiritual mansions, where Jesus will be also. Romans 8:16,17 promises, *"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together."*

These are just a few of the verses that speak of heaven. It will be far greater than our wildest dreams. *"...as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him'"* (1 Corinthians 2:9).

But, the most important thing of all: **everyone must prepare to go there.** Don't let anyone deceive you: obedience to the gospel is a **must** in order to go to heaven, the place of the final homecoming for the children of God. †

Charles E. Burch works with the Bellingrath Church of Christ in Mobile, Alabama, USA.



Now that's the scary stuff for those of us who recall that first Satanic lie ("You shall be like God..." Genesis 3:5), but for a growing army of "New Agers" this doctrine that man is God lies at the very heart of what they call "the Perennial Philosophy."

It gets even scarier. Listen to a leading high priestess of the New Age Movement. "Because life does not have a purpose per se, you are free to assign it one at will... (You are the all and the everything and you cannot oppose yourself.) In this as in all things, your will is God's will and Thy

"When a man realizes his (God) identity, a race of gods will rule the universe" (John Randolph Price; The Superbeings).

"There is only one question. And once you know the answer to that question there are no more to ask... 'Who am I?' And to that question there is only one answer — I am God!" (Meher Baba).

will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven" (Terry Cole Whittaker).

This, then, is the glorious gospel of the new "Aquarian Age"; the good news that man, having realized that he is God, will usher in the golden age of

GOD

peace, harmony and joy, forever freed of the ugly shackles of the "Picean Age" with all its talk of "sin", the "curse" and the need for "atonement".

Now there's really nothing new about the basic tenets of the so-called "New Age Movement," but this hodge-podge of paganism, satanism, mysticism and naturalism has become enormously popular in the West as men have fled from the sterile "God Is Dead!" philosophy. Man's Creator "*has...set eternity in (the) heart*" of men (Ecclesiastes 3:11) and thus "it lies in his (man's) nature not to be contented with the temporal ... In fact the impulse of man shows that his innermost wants cannot be satisfied by that which is temporal" (Keil and Delitzsch). Sadly, in a reaction to the dead, barren, Godless philosophies spawned by evolution, an increasing number of men and women in the West have embraced a potpourri of Eastern mysticism, spiritualism and the like, rather than turning to the one, true God, Jehovah in whom "*we live and move and exist*" (Acts 17:28).

The "good news" of the Aquarian gospel — that man is God — is of course a blasphemous, soul-threatening form of pantheism. Frighteningly, "Pantheism declares that there is nothing but God; he is not only sole cause but entire effect; he is all in all" (Augustus H. Strong: **Systematic Theology**). Thus pantheism "...contradicts the affirma-

tions of our moral and religious natures by denying man's freedom and responsibility; by making God to include in himself all evil as well as all good..." (Strong).

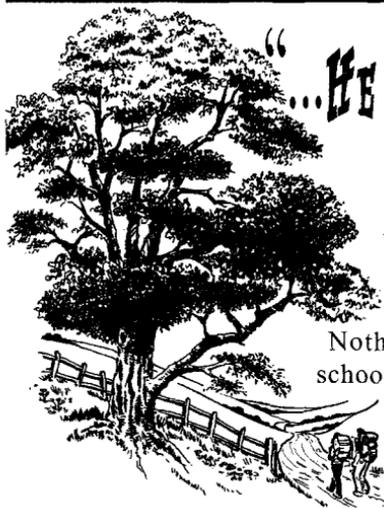
Double blasphemy! Not only is man God, but God is a composite of good and evil!

Now because "New Ager" use terms like "the resurrection" and "the second coming", and speak of "God" and "Christ", many Bible-believers have been fooled into thinking that the disciples of Jesus and members of this occult movement share common ground. This is certainly not the case. **Man is not God!** He is a creature whose role it is to worship and adore the Creator (Revelation 4:9-11; 5:13,14). God made all things, including man (Genesis 1:1ff; Psalm 8:1ff; Colossians 1:15ff). While God does not change (Malachi 3:6), the created realm is subject to decay and dissolution (Romans 8:18ff).

Nor is God a composite of good and evil. Completely holy (Leviticus 19:2; 1 Peter 1:16), He is incapable of lying or behaving in any false way (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18; 1 John 1:5).

Sadly the Age of Aquarius is not the dawn of a new golden age, but the same old Satanic lie wearing new garments. †

Rex Banks is a preacher of the gospel in Hamilton, New Zealand.



“...HE LIFTED UP HIS EYES...”

Betty Burton Choate

Two men walked along a road on a bright summer day. Bob stooped to retrieve a small sheet of paper fluttering at his feet. “What’s this?” he asked. “Oh. Nothing important — just a young child’s school paper, maybe even homework. Look, what a struggle it was to form the numbers — he’s probably in first grade. And here he’s missed an addition problem: $2+2=5!$ Wrong!” he laughed.

“No, *your* explanation requires purpose and intelligence,” Bill disagreed. “I would say that over several million years that paper slowly and gradually formed itself. What seems to be a child’s writing and arithmetic problems is only the effect of weathering through the ages.”

Bob looked incredulous, but he said nothing. A little further down the way they topped a rolling hill. Stretching away as far as the eye could see were fields of knee-high ripening grain. “The man who runs this farm is a powerful organizer!” he remarked. “What kind of planning and equipment would it take to cultivate and harvest thousands of acres like this?”

“You’ve got it wrong again,” Bill responded. “This just *looks* like a farm, but it isn’t that at all. Millions of years ago little rows began to develop, and then finally when the soil was just right seeds began to blow in from great distances and to settle here. The result is what you see, but it took millions of years to happen.”

“Do you mean no thought and no expertise went into this at all?” Bob asked.

“Nope. It just happened. You know, given enough time, *anything can happen!*”

Just then a sporty red car whizzed past, and Bob jumped aside to keep from being hit. “Man! Did you see that?! He must have been going a hundred and fifty miles an hour! I wonder who made a car with that powerful an engine, to go that fast?”

EVIDENCES

“Well,” Bill answered, watching the car whip out of sight, “nobody made that car. You know, given enough time, things just gradually evolve. Through a natural selection process, they improve themselves, so that now you see that bright red car flying down the road at a terrific speed. But such a marvel didn’t happen overnight! It took hundreds of millions of years.”

Topping another hill, they could see the outline of a city in the distance. “You know, some smart architects designed those buildings,” Bob said. “It’s a huge city, but beautiful. Sometimes I wonder how anybody has the daring or vision, or whatever it takes, to launch into the planning and construction of such monstrous complexes. I wouldn’t know where to begin!”

“Where you begin is billions of years ago, when all of this was a primordial plain, with cooling volcanoes and hot-house gases,” answered Bill. “You know that physics and chemistry contain all the laws necessary to pull these elements together. Being here, and given enough time, those laws *demand*ed that things come together like this — and so, there you have it! There was no great architect behind the design! And there was no mighty builder laying foundations and putting up walls and making it happen. It *had to happen* because the laws of the universe demand that it happen — given enough time.”

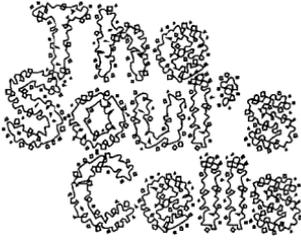
By the time night fell, Bob and Bill had reached a wooded area beside a stream. They set up their tent, built a campfire, cooked and ate their dinner, and then stretched out by the fire for a period of relaxation. “You know,” Bob said thoughtfully, “when I look up at the stars like this, I’m overwhelmed at the greatness and the power of God! They say there are hundreds of millions of galaxies, that space is endless — yet God had the power to make not only all that is out there, but everything that is in every microscopic cell of every living thing! It makes you wonder what it will be like, one day, to actually *be in His presence, to see Him as He is!* What will it be like to be judged, to answer for the way we’ve lived the life He gave us?”

“When I look at those stars,” Bill said with a laugh, “I think of the fourteen and a half billion years it took for all of this to make itself! And I don’t think of God at all. I made up my mind a long time ago — there’s not any God! We’re never going to round a corner of existence and suddenly open our eyes to see some powerful spiritual Being whose presence is everywhere. When the writers of the Bible talked about Him being so great and glorious that everything around Him just automatically fell at His feet and worshiped Him, they were lying. There’s no great God, and there’s no Jesus Christ!”

That night Bill died, and “...*he lifted up his eyes...*” (Luke 16:19-31). †

Betty Burton Choate is the wife of J.C. Choate, missionaries to India.

EVIDENCES



Donny Weimar

It's like we have invisible cells too.

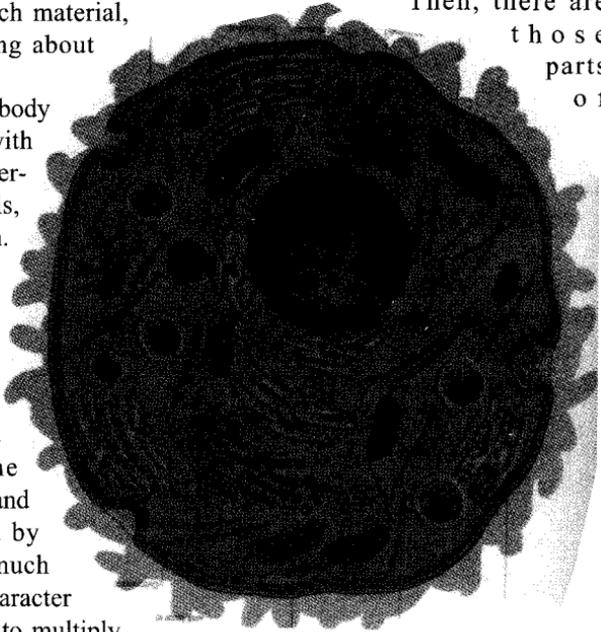
The number of physical cells scientists report to be in us is prodigious; 25,000,000,000,000 red blood corpuscles alone, in the average man. What if the soul also has tiny structural units? How many would you suppose there would be? I'm not saying our souls are made of such material, but there is something about them that is striking.

Every cell in our body is strictly regulated with respect to growth, interaction with other cells, and even its life span. Some of them live only a few days, others are never replaced and so tend to live as long as the individual himself. It is normal that the body's cells wear out and die and are replaced by reserves that retain much of their embryonic character and their early ability to multiply

and to differentiate appropriately. The body governs what the reserves become, do and how long they live.

When it comes to the soul, it is the mind that is in control. Every part of the spirit in man is tightly regulated with respect to growth, interaction with other spiritual organisms, and even its lifespan. For the penitent-minded soul, there are parts that live only a little while, during those crescents of temptation and dark feelings. These are needed for humility and discipline, but are discarded by the mind that they may be replaced by the babe-like reserves. It is normal Christianity to crucify parts of oneself in order that we may take new life in the Christ.

Then, there are
t h o s e
p a r t s
o f



EVIDENCES

the soul that never die. These spiritual units, as they might be called, are never in need of replacement and they live on even after the physical body passes away. Like parts of the nervous system, they carry messages back and forth between the mind, the heart, the soul and the Creator. Perhaps, too they are the spiritual units making up the soul's veins in which freely flows the water of life. Invisible cells or not, the mind is still that part of us that guides life and death in the soul.

Cancer occurs when a type of cell has lost normal control mechanisms and grows in a way that the body can no longer regulate. Scientists tell us different kinds of cancer have different signs, symptoms, treatments, and outcomes, depending on the type of cell involved and the degree of uncontrolled cell growth.

Sin in the soul is the same as cancer in the body. When it grows in such a manner the mind can no longer regulate it (repent of it), the spirit spins out of control. Uncontrolled sin growth has the same destination as cancer run amuck in the body. The soul enslaved to sin cannot free itself; it needs Medical attention.

God can do for his children what we cannot do for even ourselves. His scalpel opens the soul and spirit; His blood never has the

threat of contamination; His Son is the Perfect Surgeon. He cuts out the sin, stops the spread. The incision leaves no scar. Life starts again, anew.

It's like we have invisible cells. It's like we have a Doctor who can see them. †

Danny Weimar is a preacher of the gospel in the USA.

NEARNESS

I know not what Time is
But by the ticking of a clock.
I know not what Matter is
But by feel of wood or rock.

And yet I live in Time
And Things I feel and see
And what I hear in Rhyme
Is melody to me.

Yet Things I do not see
Or hear or taste or feel
Mean so much, so much to me
They are very, very Real.

A goal beyond my reach
A dream I cannot hold
Ideals towards which I stretch
And Memory's perfect gold.

And so it is with God
I see Him not nor hear.
Yet every moment of my life
I know that He is near.

— Charles Brewer

Till the End of Time

Hollis Miller

From Pentecost till now there has been only one message to preach — Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The same will remain true till the end of time. God has no other message for us to proclaim. *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12).

All who preach the Gospel serve God well when they focus on Jesus Christ and remove themselves from the multitude of other messages that are vying for their attention. If it be declared that men will no longer listen to such a “simple” message, then the fault lies not with the messenger, but with the listener. The Jews, not Jesus, were the ones who had a problem. The Athenian philosophers, not Paul, were the ones who had been carried away by worldly wisdom. When men demand last minute field goal excitement, theatrical showmanship, and perpetual “up-to-dateness” from those who proclaim Christ, the problem lies in the demand and not with the proclaimer.

The message, “Christ and Him

Crucified,” is now two thousand years old. During the interval separating Pentecost from today men have learned to fly in machines, send voices and pictures around the world in an instant, walk on the moon, pictorially investigate neighboring planets, and compute astronomical figures with speed exceeding that of a flying bullet. These and other advances have ushered us into the 21st century. No longer are we satisfied with today, or 100%. Our offerings must now be placed in future time, and our measurements must be at least 110%. The world has indeed swept us into its tailwind.

But Christ and Him crucified is still back there, indelibly printed on the sands of time. The message is as fitting for our day as when camels carried passengers from place to place and papyrus was laid on a scribe’s lap. It still has the power to convert the soul and to straighten the path. But as in days of old, men must first remove the veil from over their eyes before they can see its strength and its beauty. †

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

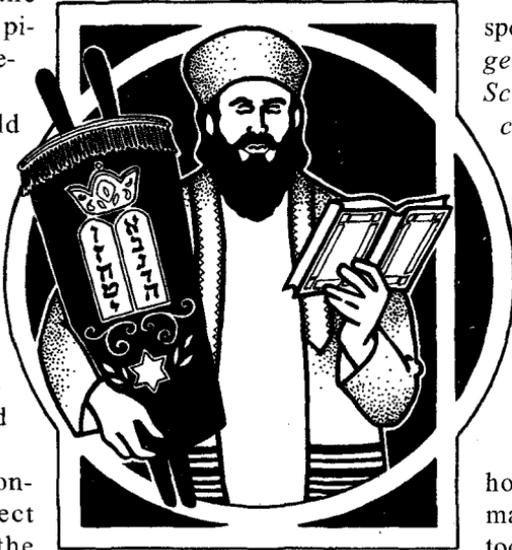
THE WORD OF GOD

Why crucify Jesus? Were thieves and thugs and hardened criminals in control of the circumstance? No! It was the religious people of the day — the spiritual leaders of the people — the pious and the devoted!

How could this have happened? How is it possible that good people could possibly have been so far off with their reasoning and their actions?

There is only one correct answer to the

glory? And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself” (Luke 24:26,27).



Again He spoke, “*You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me...*” (John 5:39).

I wonder how far astray many have gone today simply be-

Uneducated Devotion

Jack W. Carter

question. They simply did not know the Scriptures. God had provided the necessary information through His recorded Word. They either were totally ignorant of what that Word said, or else they had blinded themselves by their own agenda.

Christ spoke regarding Himself: “*Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his*

cause they do not really know what the Scriptures teach? As before, many of these are the religious leaders of the masses.

Can you see once again how important it is for you to be a careful daily student of God’s Word? †

Jack W. Carter preaches for the church of Christ in Castle Rock, Colorado, USA.

Verse Search

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

1. Leaving Athens, Greece, Paul went to _____ (V. 1).
2. He found _____ and _____, who had left Rome because of what edict? (V. 2)
3. Why did Paul stay with them? (V. 3).
4. While Paul awaited the arrival of _____ and _____ from _____, what did he do? (V. 4,5).
5. After their arrival, _____, _____, what did he do? (V. 5).
6. When the Jews, as a whole, rejected Paul's message, what did he say and do? (V. 6).
7. "Then _____, the _____ of the _____, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many Corinthians, _____, _____, and _____" (V. 8).
8. What message of guidance and encouragement did Paul have, and from whom? (Vs. 9,10).
9. How long did Paul remain in Corinth? (V. 11).
10. What happened when Gallio became proconsul of Achaia? (V. 12).
11. What was their accusation? (V. 13).
12. Why did Gallio drive the Jews out of the place of judgment? (V. 14-16).
13. What did the Greeks do to the Jews in response? (V. 17).
14. After remaining yet for a good while, Paul took leave of the _____ and sailed for _____, accompanied by _____ and _____ (V. 18).
15. Paul had cut his hair in _____, as token of a _____. (V. 18).
16. Paul then stopped in _____, on his hurried way to _____, then went to _____, then passed over the regions of _____ and _____, strengthening the disciples. (Vs. 19-23).
17. Who was Apollos? Tell two things about him (Vs. 24-28).

[See inside of back cover for answers.]

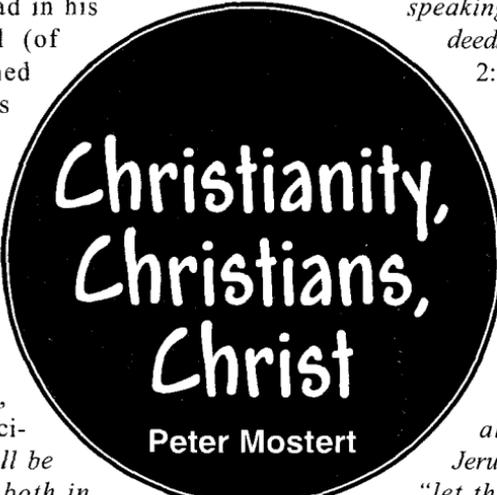
DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

First converts to Christ were people either living or sojourning in Jerusalem in 33 AD. Luke, a physician and historian writing to someone called Theophilus (Lover of God), as he had in his earlier gospel (of Luke), explained how the apostles began preaching the "good" news of the recently crucified Jesus Christ.

Jesus, in a final encouragement, said to His disciples: *"You shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth"* (Acts 1:8). Earlier He had told them, *"opening their minds to understand the scriptures, that repentance and forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations — beginning in Jerusalem"* (Luke 24:45-47).

Jews and proselytes (converts to Judaism), Cretans and Arabs, from many countries had gathered in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Many had remained from Passover some fifty days earlier. These had heard extraordinary things from the

disciples who were speaking miraculously in many languages so that all who were there heard them in their own language. *"We hear them,"* they said, *"in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God"* (Acts 2:11).



Christianity, Christians, Christ

Peter Mostert

Peter, along with the support of the other apostles, was the first to make a stand testifying about Jesus. *"Men of Judea, and all who live in Jerusalem,"* he said, *"let this be known to you, and give heed to my*

words... Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst... you nailed to the cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death... God raised Him up again... therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ — this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:14-36).

"When they heard this," Luke says, *"they were smitten in conscience; pierced to the heart, and said*

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?'" (Acts 2:37).

"Peter," Luke adds, "said to them, 'Repent, and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself.' Then those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day three thousand souls" (Acts 2:38-41).

water, and had baptized Jesus in water (Matthew 3:15-17). Water is a physical element that symbolizes cleansing. Peter explains that baptismal water is not for the purpose of *washing the body* (1 Peter 3:23), but Paul was told to arise and be baptized and *wash away his sins* (Acts 22:16).

* **The gift of the Holy Spirit** is God's confirmation that Christians belong to Him. This is a spiritual element whereby God seals those who are saved. Paul said, "*He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Holy Spirit in our*

"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

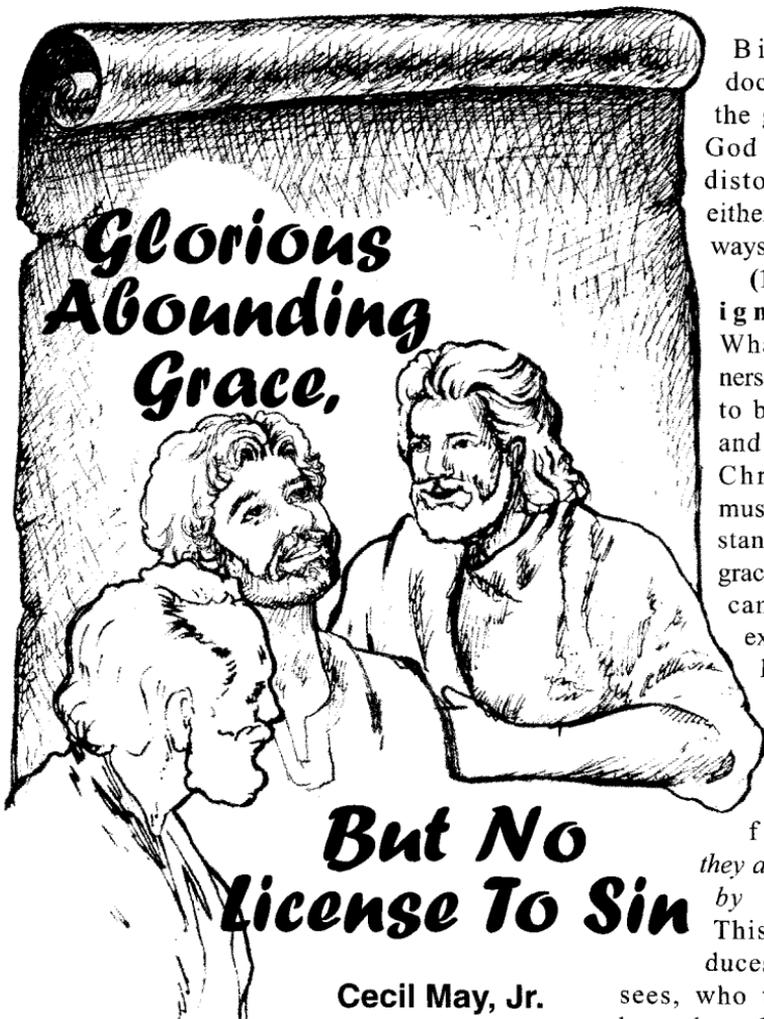
From Luke's writings we are able to determine that Christianity began in Jerusalem, as Jesus had predicted, shortly after His death, burial and resurrection — on Pentecost, 33AD — and that those who were added, or included, as Christians had repented and were baptized. As a result of their obedient faith, their sins were taken away and they were recipients of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

* **Baptism**, as described in scripture, is a full immersion into Christ, or the new birth in Christ. Jesus said that "*one must be born again of water and the spirit*" (John 3:3-5). While preaching, John the Baptist was found baptizing where there was much

hearts as a pledge" (2 Corinthians 1:21,22). Paul, affirming Peter's statement to the Jews, added: "*Having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise*" (Ephesians 1:13).

Christians owe their Christianity to Christ who first made the way for those in Jerusalem to be saved. The same message — and good news of salvation from sin — exists today, as recorded in Holy Scripture for those who would also follow after Him as did those sincere people in Jerusalem on that long-ago day. †

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The Biblical doctrine of the grace of God can be distorted in either of two ways.

(1) Grace ignored.

What sinners must do to be saved and the life Christians must live to stand in the grace of God

can be so exclusively emphasized that hearers forget

they are saved by grace.

This produces Phari-

Cecil May, Jr.

sees, who trust in themselves that they

are righteous and despise others (Luke 18:9), who, being ignorant of God's righteousness, go about to establish their own righteousness (Romans 10:3).

(2) Grace used to excuse sin (Romans 6:1). The grace of God can be used as license to sin (Jude 4). This produces Gnostics (those who deny that Jesus came in the flesh, saying that all that is of a physical nature is evil), whose lives are no different from the world's (1 John 2:6), who deceive

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

themselves if they think they are in Christ (1 John 1:6).

Grace must be received (Ephesians 2:8) **and continued in** (1 Peter 1:5) **by obedient faith.**

Everybody is a sinner. We need to know this, lest we think we cannot possibly be saved and cease trying to do the impossible. We need it, too, to increase our understanding and compassion for others. However, if we use it to excuse either ourselves or others who continue in sin, we change the grace of God into licentiousness.

Everyone is wrong about some things. That needs emphasis, too, lest we close our ears and hearts to opportunities to learn the truth about things of which we may be ignorant or mistaken. It helps us understand others who are mistaken, enabling us to treat them as we want to be treated in the things about which we may be mistaken. However, if we use it as an excuse to remain in ignorance of things about which we could learn better, or to refrain from teaching others what they need to know, we turn the grace of God into license to sin.

We are all human beings. It is human to satisfy our wants by every possible means. When somebody hurts us, it is human to hurt back. When others have food, shelter, and clothing, and we have none, it is human to covet what is theirs, and,

if there is opportunity, to take it for ourselves. To recognize our humanity is to guard against temptation and to know we are not gods. However, if we use it to justify walking in the flesh and not after the Spirit, we distort the grace of God into sensuality.

* Let us rejoice in God's grace and come boldly to the throne to receive it, for where sin abounds, grace much more abounds (Romans 5:20).

* When we know we have sinned, let godly sorrow work repentance and let us receive grace with joy.

* When we suspect that, even in some things in which we think we are right, we may be wrong, let us trust God's Word to show our attentive and obedient heart the truth.

* Walk in the light, to be cleansed of the sins that are there still, even as our walk is in the light.

* However, let us never use grace as an excuse for sin, nor as an excuse for not continuing to learn and to teach others all we can of the will of God.

* Let us not turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, thinking mistakenly that we may "...continue in sin, that grace may abound", for "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1,2). †

Cecil May, Jr. is Dean of the Bible Department at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Alabama, USA.

Desired Deception

Frank Chesser

As black clouds of judgment hovered over Judah, Jeremiah was often found interceding for his people. On one occasion, he strove to focus God's attention on the false prophets whom he felt to be primarily responsible for the back-slidden state of the nation. "*Then said I, Ah, Lord God, behold, the prophets say unto them, ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine, but I will give you assured peace in this place*" (Jeremiah 14:13)

The false prophets of Judah had only one sermon. It was a peace and prosperity homily that ignored the sinful state of the nation and scorned the very concept of judgment. God proceeded to stress that though the prophets were certainly liable, the people were as responsible for being deceived as the prophets were for deceiving them (Jeremiah 14:16).

The prophets in Judah had no evidence to sustain their prophecies. However, the masses believed them anyway **because they were affirming exactly what they wanted to hear**, "*The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people live to have it so*" (Jeremiah 5:31). Judah desired

deception.

The black shroud of chaos and confusion hangs over modern religion like the pinion darkness over ancient Egypt. False teachers abound. The world is immersed in religious error. Denominational dogma, tradition, and human reasoning have robbed the Bible of its rightful place in the hearts of men. Advocates thereof have no biblical evidence to substantiate their claims. Yet the world, and even some in the church, listen, heed, and hearken, *determined to be misled*. They *desire* deception.

Preachers do not constitute God's authoritative source in matters religious. It is the height of folly for one to view a preacher's word as law and Gospel. Driven by a longing to appease man rather than please God, some preach to satisfy wants rather than fulfill needs. Human whims take precedence over Divine Will. Such people want to be deceived, and such preachers are happy to oblige them. Both need to reflect on how it shall be "*in the end thereof*" (Jeremiah 5:31). †

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

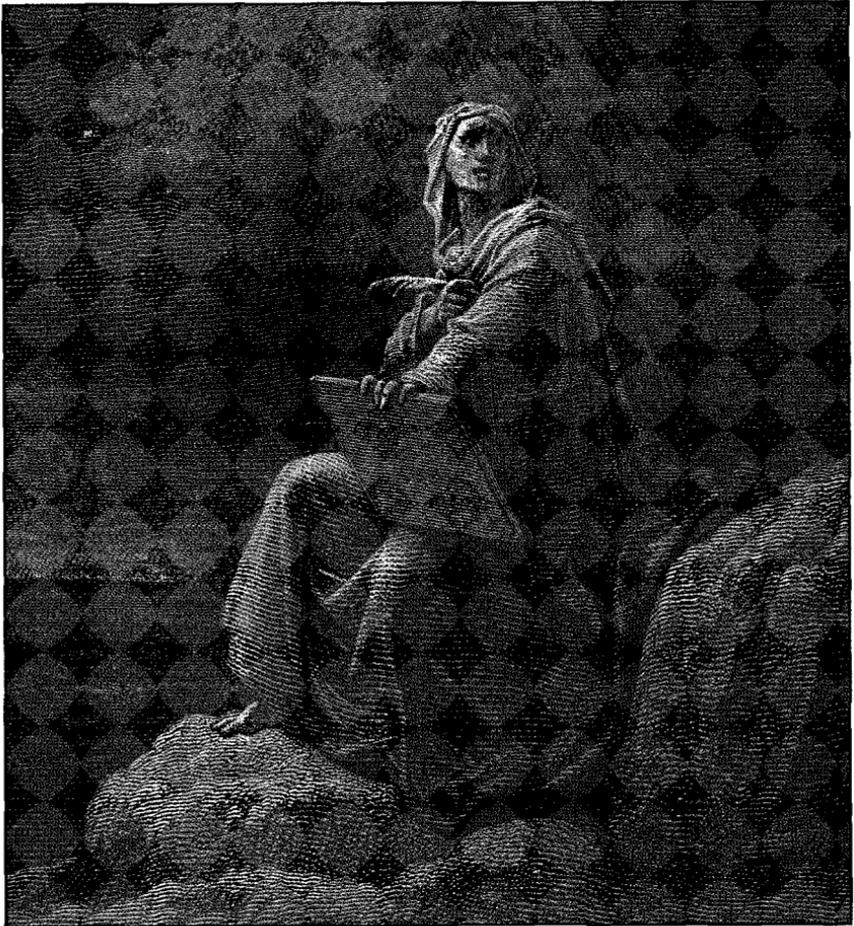
DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

The Challenge

Avon Malone

Avon Malone departed this life on June 16, 2003, after having served the Lord as truly a masterful teacher and preacher of the Gospel, as well as a gifted scholar and writer. This dear friend will be deeply missed by many. The following words from his pen are a typical expression of his conviction and passion for his Lord.

– Managing Editor



DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

Long cherished convictions — in our country and in the church — have been largely lost. Strangely and steadily, widely held beliefs have dwindled and diminished, and ultimately, in the case of many, completely disappeared. Convictions rooted squarely in Scripture have been challenged and rejected by masses of people who would describe themselves as “believers”.

What has caused this shift in contemporary thinking? Is this an orphan generation that has lost its hold on the past and its hope for the future? How do we account for this change with its loss of conviction?

More than three decades ago, in his book **The God Who Is There**, Francis Schaeffer was writing about a “change in the concept of truth.” Before this shift in the concept of truth, it was generally conceded that “there really are such things as absolutes.” Remember; absolutes imply antithesis. If a thing was true, the opposite was false. As regards to ethics, if one thing was right, its opposite was wrong. The Bible speaks in terms of absolutes and antithesis (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 1 Peter 3:10-12; Matthew 25:46). Christianity stands on absolutes (John 14:6; 20:30,31).

Will Durant has said; “Nothing is certain but defeat and death — a sleep from which it seems there is no awakening. Faith and hope dis-

appear and despair becomes the order of the day.”

Andre Maurois raised a question to which he himself gave answer: “Why are we here on this puny mud-heap spinning in space? I have not the slightest idea, and I am completely convinced that no one else has the least idea.”

Paul would say, “I have an idea. We are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28). But Paul’s response rests upon absolutes — a denial which kills hope and brings despair.

If there is a God, there are absolutes. Paul asserts that His existence is self-evident; His power and divinity, as seen in His creation, are undeniable (Romans 1:20). The majestic words, “*In the beginning, God...*” (Genesis 1:1) point to that One who is changeless (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17). His Word partakes of His very nature and is therefore immutable.

If we, like Isaiah (Isaiah 6:3), would be confronted with God’s absolute holiness, we too would cry from contrite hearts, “*I am undone; for I am of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.*” Such a confrontation as this would leave us with no doubt about absolutes or our accountability to the Holy One. †

Avon Malone, Christian and preacher of the gospel, deceased.



How do you measure up?

Hear my prayer, O LORD,

And let my cry come to You.

Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my trouble;

Incline Your ear to me;

In the day that I call, answer me speedily.

For my days are consumed like smoke,

And my bones are burned like a hearth.

My heart is stricken and withered like grass,

So that I forget to eat my bread.

Because of the sound of my groaning

My bones cling to my skin.

I am like a pelican of the wilderness;

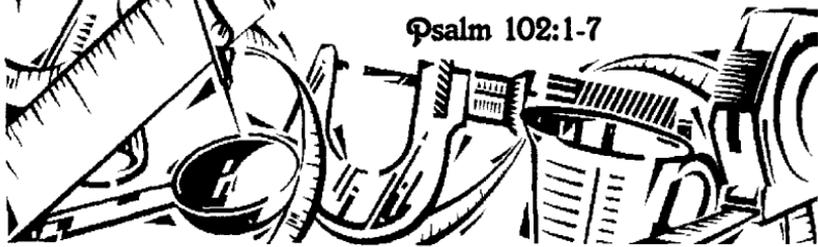
I am like an owl of the desert.

I lie awake,

And am like a sparrow

alone on the housetop.

Psalm 102:1-7



SALVATION

One of the sternest and most sobering warnings in the New Testament for the Christian is given in Hebrews 5:12-6:8. The danger of a child of God falling away without the possibility of renewal and restoration is discussed in these verses.

When does this happen? The writer says in Hebrews 6:4-6, *"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy*

Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and powers of the age to come, if they fall away to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put him to an open shame."

The warning is followed with an indication of what one must do to prevent such a falling. Hebrews 6:9 says, *"But beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner."* What are these things that accompany salvation? The text suggests several that we will consider.

First, the warning starts in

Hebrews 5:12 with the statement, *"For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food."* Some

Christians fail to grow spiritually and never reach their potential of being teachers of others. These fail to help others, but instead, demand help from others. They have refused to study God's Word and fail to grow.

How much should we study? At least, we must know (1) the reason for our hope (1 Peter 3:15), (2) how to rightly divide the Word (2 Timothy 2:15), (3) the things that thoroughly equip us for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16,17), and all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). With this knowledge, we can then live and worship faithfully and teach others to do the same.

Second, the text implies that, though being warned, they were unable to advance beyond the discussion of elementary principles of Christ (Hebrews 6:1). Again, they were not growing and developing as



Things That Accompany Salvation

Wayne Barrier

SALVATION

they should. We need to be able to focus our attention on the all-important mission of the church — spreading the Gospel to those who have not been taught. There is simply not enough time to spoon-feed and provide “baby care” to those who refuse to exercise and feed themselves as needed in order to grow.

Next, the writer refers to the things that some were doing that are worthy of mention. In Hebrews 6:10-12, *“God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister, and we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”* Some were working as expected and needed. They were ministering to the saints, consequently demonstrating their love and care for one

another, for God, for Christ, and His kingdom. This too, accompanies salvation.

We must do the things that accompany salvation. This will serve to increase our faith (John 7:17, Romans 12:2) and will help perfect our hope and love (Romans 5:1-5). We must be careful to avoid slothfulness. We have excellent examples to imitate, servants of God who, through faith and endurance, will inherit the promises. Some of these are referred to in Hebrews 11 and include Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, David, and others.

The warning is strong and serious. Because of God’s love and care, we can enjoy His blessing every day on earth, with hope of eternal life when our time on earth ends. Let’s do the things that accompany salvation. †

Wayne Barrier lives in Florence, Alabama, USA., and is part of the World Evangelism team taking the Gospel throughout the world.

Even when there is no physical or secular peace, a man can rest in a relationship of trust in God.

BBC



to Seek the Lord!

Richard May

"In whom ye also [trusted], after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest (the guarantee) of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." That was what Paul wrote to the Ephesians in chapter 1, verses 13 and 14.

I like guarantees, don't you? When I really want something to work, when I am eager for something to happen, when I can receive a guarantee, I'm a happy camper. In this case, a happy Christian! Paul said that the Holy Spirit is given as a seal. A seal does several things. It indicates ownership. That's why in the Revelation, John the Revelator talked about the evil of the mark or seal of the beast. When a man received that mark on his head or on his hand, he was showing to whom it was that he belonged. When the Christians received the seal of God, they were shown to belong to God. Paul says here in Ephesians 1 that the Holy Spirit is given to show that the recipient belongs to God. A seal also confirms and authenticates. In this case, the seal proves that we are God's and that we are saved.

Paul continued to say that the Holy Spirit is a deposit guaranteeing the receiver's inheritance. If you've bought a house, you might have had to give some *earnest* money, guaranteeing that you were going to buy that

SALVATION

house if the loan would come through. That word "earnest" is used in some translations in this verse. The idea presented is that since the "redemption of God's possession" (the resurrection / judgment day) has not yet occurred, the Spirit is given to guarantee that those who have the Spirit will be redeemed.

Obviously, what we should want to know is, "Who receives the Spirit?" Let's take a look. The beginning of this passage tells us who receives the seal, the deposit, which is the promised Holy Spirit. Paul said that those who **heard the word of truth**, the gospel of salvation, and **believed were marked**. When the gospel is read or heard and believed by an individual, he is marked as God's possession. What wonderful grace!

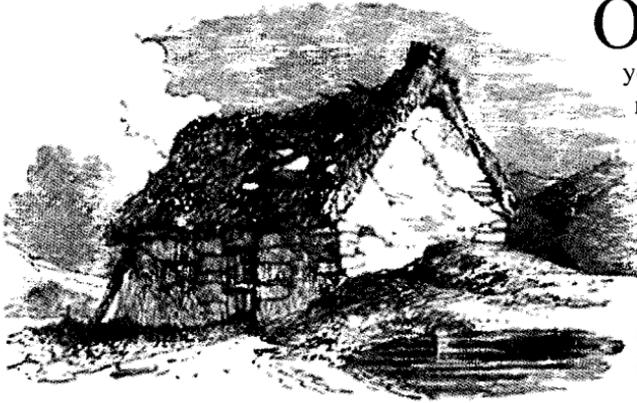
It's necessary at this point for me to show you that much of the modern teaching about *belief* in Jesus is **not** the belief of the *scripture*. Many today teach that **all one has to do to be a believer is to admit that Jesus is the Son of God**. While that certainly is a part of believing, it is not all. Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, "*Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven*" (NIV). James said in James 2:24, "*You see that a person is justified by what he*

does and not by faith alone" (NIV).

In the New Testament, belief in Jesus means "trusting" in him. *Trusting* that he is the one who can reconcile you to God means **obeying his commands**. Jesus told His apostles to go and preach the gospel. Whoever believes the gospel and is baptized will be saved, He said. "Wait," some say. "I thought we only have to believe." If you understand that genuine belief demands obedience, then believing is what you must do. When the people in Acts 2 heard the gospel, they were afraid and asked, "*What must we do?*" They believed, otherwise they would not have been asking the question. Did Peter say, "You are believers, you've done enough. You have been saved"? No! He commanded them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ **for the forgiveness of your sins**. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (NIV).

I hope that you have heard the word of truth, the gospel of salvation. Moreover, I hope that you will believe it, repent of your sins, and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins. Then, God will give you the Holy Spirit, guaranteeing your redemption †

Richard May works with the church in Yukon, Oklahoma, USA.



One cold and stormy night many years ago an elderly man lay dying in the rugged highlands of Scotland while the wind shrieked and howled and the snow veiled the humble cottage in which the man

Let us thatch our house now

G. F. Raines

lay, calmly awaiting his departure. His loving daughter brought his precious Bible to his bedside and said, "Father, shall I read a chapter to you?" The dying man, being in much pain, said, "Na, na, lassie, the storm's up noo. I theeked (thatched) ma hoose in the calm weather."

Those who thatch their spiritual house in calm weather are the wisest of all people on the earth.

Amos, a great Hebrew prophet, says: "...prepare to meet thy God" (Amos 4:12). We must prepare to meet God because "he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

To truly prepare to meet our God, we must come to Him through our Lord Jesus Christ by obedience to the Gospel (John 14:6; Romans 1:16,17; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-41), and then "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" (see Titus 2:11,12; 2 Peter 1:5-11).

If you are not in the right relationship with God, you are in exceedingly critical need of making the necessary preparation to meet God today. The Book of God says: "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Proverbs 27:1). †

G.F. Raines, retired preacher of the gospel, lives in Celina, Tennessee, USA.

RESTORING "THE FAITH"

Ancil Jenkins

In the very early part of the nineteenth century, an idea grasped the mind of several men in different parts of our young country. The idea — restore New Testament Christianity by restoring the teaching and practice of the first century church. These men preached this idea and began a movement that swept across the frontier. For the first half of the century it was one of the most vital forces in religion.

The idea of restoring the New Testament church did not originate with these men. As far back as the sixteenth century men were preaching this idea. Even today, one of the fastest growing religious movements is a charismatic group attempting to pattern itself after the New Testament church. In light of past and present acceptance of this idea, it is interesting that some among us today are denying the validity of this principle.

"Which church," some ask, "should we restore?" "Do we restore Jerusalem, or Corinth, or Thessalonica?" These churches, some tell us, held different ideas and were corrected about some of their practices. It is true that there was some seeds of division even in



the New Testament churches. We read, concerning the church in Corinth, for instance,

"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

"For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, 'I am of Paul,' or 'I am of Apollos,' or 'I am of Cephas,' or 'I am of Christ.'

Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Corinthians 1:10-13).

In fact, some even held false doctrines and were filled with immorality (1 Corinthians 5:1; Revelation

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2:14,15,21). These errors were not approved by God, and instructions were given through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to correct them. The Lord's grace, however, tolerated the situations long enough to allow Christians to grow to maturity to see the error of their ways and repent (Revelation 2:21).

The "**New Testament church**" was simply the body of fallible people who had been born into God's family. Not only was it possible for them to fall short of living the "ideal" of Christianity, they *did* err often and in many ways — as do Christians and congregations today.

But the "**New Testament doctrine**" was from God, not from man. It portrayed, to all the world and for all time, the "ideal" that God wants to see in individual Christians and in the church. There is no error in that model.

Therefore, let us not look to the **practices** of the New Testament church to find our example — unless those practices had God's spoken approval. Instead, we must look to **the doctrine** they held. All New Testament churches held the body of teaching inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Biblical writers called this body of teaching "the faith". At least twenty-eight times this phrase is used in the New Testament.

A study of these passages shows "the faith" to be a body of truth that

is held as a standard of faithfulness and fellowship (2 Corinthians 13:5; 1 Timothy 4:1). "The faith" was not *a product of the church*. The churches were **the result of teaching and believing "the faith"**. This truth was clearly defined.

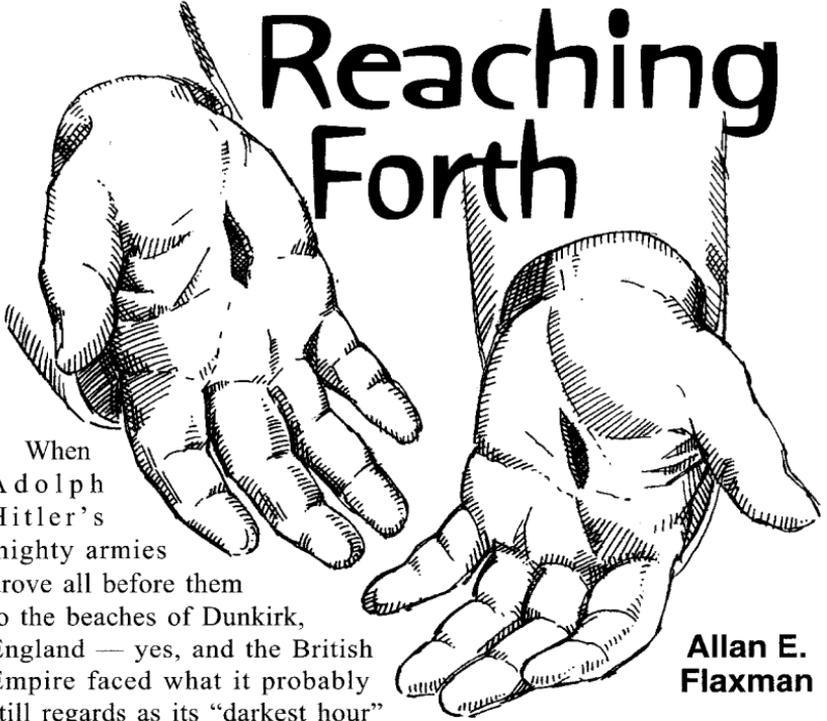
The early Christians' understanding of "the faith" was so clear that any deviation of teaching was condemned in the strongest possible terms. The "anathema" of God rested on those who deviated from the Gospel, or the first principles (Galatians 1:7-9). Those who went beyond or corrupted the fuller teaching of the doctrine of Christ were likewise condemned (2 John 9-11).

The doctrine that produced Christians was fully revealed and delivered to man in the apostolic days, through the **spoken word** of inspired men and through their inspired writings, both messages being the product of the **Holy Spirit** (Jude 3).

What does this mean to us today? Discovering what "the faith" is should be the object of our intense study, meditation, and prayer. When we hold "the faith" the first century church held, we will have restored New Testament Christianity. To be satisfied with anything else is to accept failure and eternal loss. †

Ancil Jenkins is a writer and preacher in Jamestown, Tennessee, USA.

Reaching Forth



When Adolph Hitler's mighty armies drove all before them to the beaches of Dunkirk, England — yes, and the British Empire faced what it probably still regards as its “darkest hour” — the British land forces were stranded on the beaches, with the ocean in front of them and the German hoards bearing down on them from behind.

It is true that those British soldiers were rescued by a flotilla of little, privately owned boats, but the nation was now threatened with a German invasion, and ill-equipped to repel it.

Winston Churchill was then Prime Minister of England, and had he come “on air” with a doleful, pessimistic message, all might have truly been lost. Fortunately for all

of us, he did NOT do that. Rather, he said with a firm and courageous voice, “We will fight them on the beaches, we will fight them in the streets, ...we will *never* surrender.” His stirring, inspiring, motivating message gave encouragement and hope to a nation on its knees, and brought that nation forward to final victory.

In the days of the church's infancy, despite remarkable growth, there was much reason to expect despondency and even pessimism. Think of it. At various times the apostles were imprisoned (Acts

**Allan E.
Flaxman**

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5:18), Stephen was stoned to death (Acts 7), James was beheaded (Acts 12:2), the Jerusalem church was scattered abroad, leaving only the apostles there to begin all over again (Acts 8:1).

But pessimism and despondency did **not** prevail. Though scattered far and wide, Christians with amazing courage “*went everywhere preaching the gospel*” (Acts 8:4).

Amongst all this persecution, Paul and Barnabas set off on their missionary journey (Acts 13). What a positive, optimistic, courageous attitude in the face of enormous opposition! Later, the apostle Paul wrote with great conviction, “*This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press toward the mark...*” (Philippians 3:13,14).

What should our attitude be in this 21st Century? There is much to discourage us. The Lord’s church is showing serious signs of weakening. Many make only a frail defense of the truth. Others have capitulated to error already. How often, these days, do we hear the cry “We speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where the Bible is

silent,” and/or “For us, the Bible alone is final and binding,” and/or “No book but the Bible, No creed but Christ,” and other such words of determination to stand firmly on the word and will of God? Not nearly enough!

Let’s take the courageous attitude of the infant church. We rub shoulders with the lost every day. May God give us the courage we need to mount a real effort to take the Gospel message to our neighbors and to the world. Through this means alone — as our hands become the nail-pierced hands of Christ — can we snatch them from the flames of hell, before it is forever too late. †

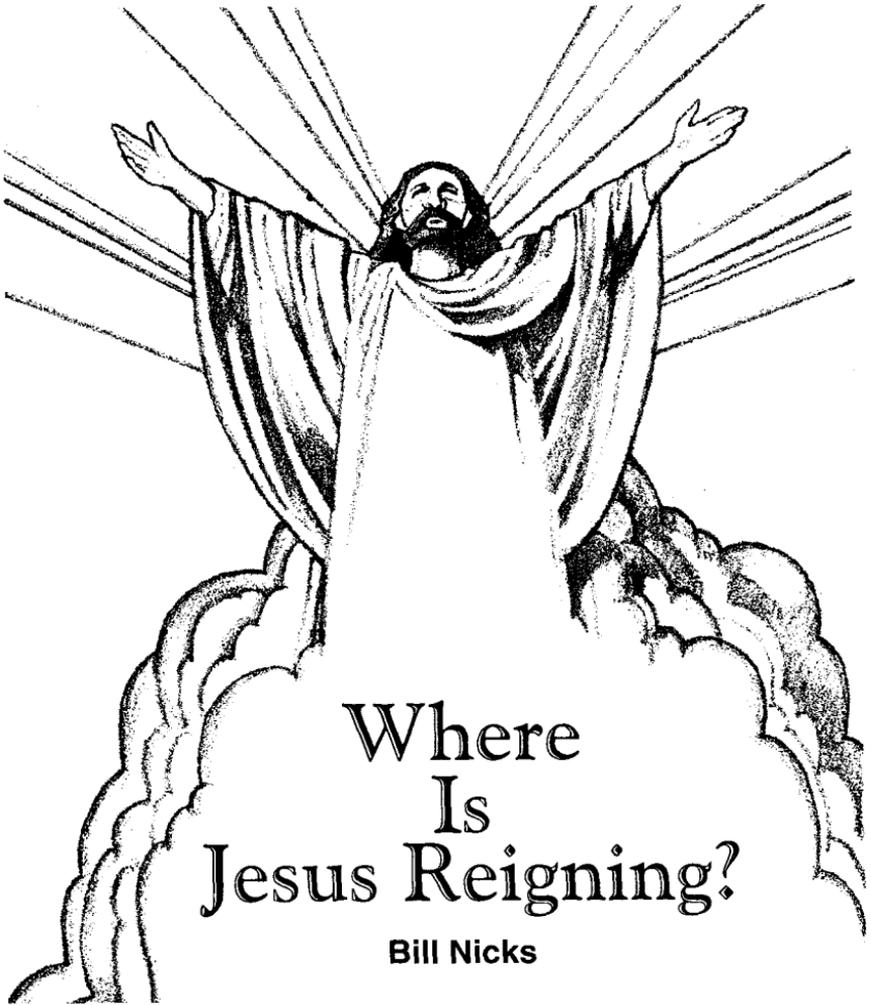
Allan E. Flaxman is a gospel preacher in New South Wales, Australia.

**My life, whilst thou preserv’st my life
Thy sacrifice shall be;
And death, when death shall be my lot,
Shall bring my soul to Thee.**

**Guarded by Thee, my dying day
Shall need no help beside;
Thy rod and staff shall be my stay;
Thy light shall be my guide.**

**Yea, though I walk in death’s dark vale,
Yet will I fear none ill;
For Thou art with me, and Thy rod
And staff me comfort still.**

— author unknown



Where Is Jesus Reigning?

Bill Nicks

On Pentecost of A.D. 33, Peter affirmed that God had sworn that *"He would raise up the Christ to sit on his (David's) throne"* (Acts 2:30-35). He quoted David's prophecy in Psalm 16:8-11 to prove that David was not speaking of him-

self, but of Jesus.

The reign of Christ began when *His kingdom* was established on Pentecost with 3,000 people responding to the gospel as preached by the apostles (Acts 2:37-47). His reign will continue *"till he has put*

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all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:25f).

But there are many who contend that Jesus postponed His kingdom because the Jews foiled His plan by crucifying Him. This impugns the integrity and foreknowledge of God who taught through the apostle Paul that the church was "*according to the eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Ephesians 3:10f).

According to this theory, the Lord is yet to set up His final kingdom, which they hold to be an earthly kingdom in which He will reign from Jerusalem upon His second coming, a kingdom that will last 1,000 years. This is a popular theory, but is absolutely without Bible proof. It is actually anti-scriptural for it runs counter to all passages **before** Pentecost which prophesied that the kingdom was "*at hand*". It also counters all passages **after** Pentecost showing the kingdom to actually be in existence (Colossians 1:13f; Revelation 1:9).

It will not be possible for Christ to reign on a literal throne in Jerusalem on this earth upon His return. The following passage in Jeremiah 22:28-30 shows this to be true:

"Is this man Coniah (Jeconiah) a despised broken idol — a vessel in which is no pleasure? Why are they

cast out, he and his descendants, and cast into a land which they do not know? O earth, earth, earth, Hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord: 'Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not prosper in his days: for none of his descendants shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David and ruling any more in Judah'". Coniah descended from David and Christ descended from Coniah (Matthew 1:6-12).

This is indisputable proof that Christ is now reigning in heaven over a spiritual kingdom, which is His church. He has been reigning since Pentecost after His resurrection from the dead. He will continue His reign until He returns to take His saints with him, both those who have died and those who are living, "*and so shall we ever be with the Lord*" (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17).

Truly, the Lord is reigning in heaven now as "*King of kings and Lord of lords*" (1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 19:16). We must be "*born of water and the Spirit*" in order to enter into that kingdom (John 3:5). Then we must be faithful to the end. "*If we died with him, we shall also live with him. If we endure, we shall also reign with him. If we deny him, he also will deny us*" (2 Timothy 2:11f). †

Bill Nicks has done mission work in Africa and Trinidad, and is now living in Hobe Sound, Florida, USA.



Worship in Which God Delights

Bobby Dockery

The Bible teaches that worship rightly given brings joy to the heart of God (Proverbs 15:8). Jesus said that worship which pleases the Father must be offered in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

Often, however, that which goes by the name of worship falls far short of the Father's expectations. Richard Adams, in his novel **Shardik**, perceptively observed: "Worship yields nothing to the slipshod and halfhearted. I have seen worship which if it had been a roof they had built would not have kept out a half-an-hour's rain; nor had they the wit to wonder why it left their hearts cold and yielded them neither strength or comfort."

Consider some essential components of worship which delight the heart of God.

WORSHIP

1. Worship Requires Relationship. Jesus spoke of the One we worship as “Father” (John 4:23,24). This implies that a relationship exists between the worshipper and the One who is worshipped. Only those bound to God by close family ties can approach Him in adoration and praise. It is tragic that many people try to worship God without ever having established a relationship with Him. Their efforts are doomed.

2. Worship Requires Preparation. Jesus said that God was to be worshipped in spirit and truth (John 4:24). To worship “*in spirit*” means that worship must come from the heart; must be offered with the right attitude. Anything worthwhile requires preparation. We prepare for careers, for marriage, for social occasions. Surely, then, we must prepare before entering the presence of the Creator of the Universe. We must anticipate our appointment with God! Before we seek His presence we must rid our lives of sin. We must cleanse our hearts (Hebrews 10:23). Then we must focus solely on God!

**The only way we can know how to please God
in worship is for Him to show us what He wants!**

3. Worship Requires Obedience. Jesus taught that we must worship “*in truth*” as well as “*in spirit*” (John 4:24). Worship involves our response to truth. We must accept the acts by which God has authorized us to approach Him in worship. God is Spirit. Our experience of the spiritual realm is necessarily limited. The only way we can know how to please God in worship is for Him to show us what He wants! The New Testament reveals a pattern for our worship. We are taught not to go beyond that which is written (1 Corinthians 4:6). Worship must recognize and submit to the sovereignty of God! Worship is not concerned with what **I like** or what **I want**, but what **God wants!**

William Temple provided a classic definition of worship in these words:

*To worship is to quicken the **conscience** by the **holiness** of God,*

*To feed the **mind** with the **truth** of God,*

*To purge the **imagination** by the **beauty** of God,*

*To open the **heart** to the **love** of God,*

*To devote the **will** to the **purpose** of God.*

Such worship brings joy to the heart of God!



Bobby Dockery is a writer and preacher in Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA.

No moment in the week can be more sacred to the disciples of Jesus than when we gather at the Lord's Table. Here we meet to partake of that which feeds the soul, not the body. This weekly observance came to be called, in the early centuries of the church's history, "the Eucharist," this being the Greek word "Eucharistia" with an English pronunciation. It means "thanksgiving" or "the giving of thanks". It must be admitted by all that a very prominent feature of our Lord's memorial supper was the giving of thanks. Before breaking the bread and drinking the

fruit of the vine, our Savior offered thanks to His Father (Mark 14:22-24; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

This should emphasize to us that we are to remember, with thankful hearts, what the bread and cup symbolize. While we may remember many things for which to be thankful, these are not to be our concern as we prepare to eat the bread and drink the cup of the supper. Our minds and our utterances of thanksgiving need to focus specifically upon the symbolic elements and that atoning sacrifice which they silently declare. Prayers for the orphans and

The Real Thanksgiving Feast

Hershel Dyer

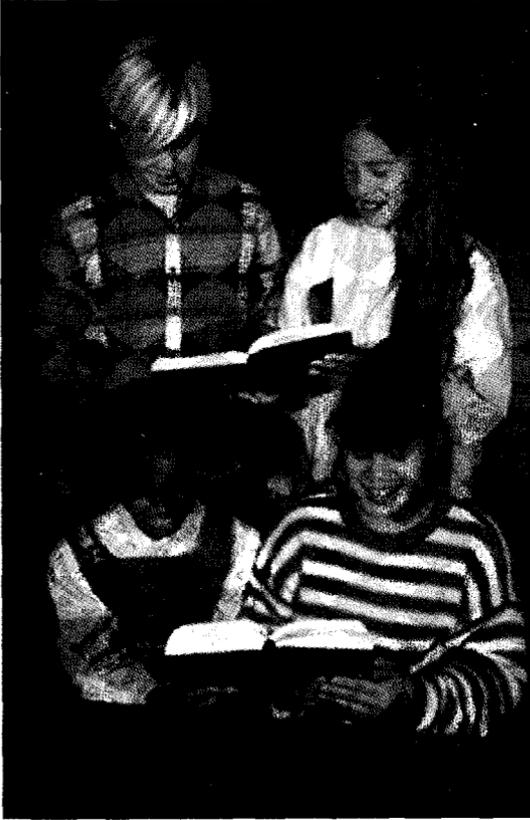


I
am the
RESURRECTION
and the
LIFE,
He who
believes in
me will
LIVE,
even though
he dies.
John 11:25

the missionaries and gratitude for our jobs and our families are much in order at other times during the worship hour, **but not during the solemn moments of this holy feast.**

At no time do we show our consciousness of God more than when we meet together at the Lord's Table. The supreme sacrifice of Jesus, the unfathomable love of the Father, and our own unworthiness fill our hearts and flood our souls. This being the case, thanksgiving for such a Savior and for so great salvation cries out for expression! †

Hershel Dyer has preached for many years in Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA.



The New Testament is the way God communicates His will to us regarding how we are to worship Him. Man has **never** been at liberty to **worship God any way he pleases** — worship must be *as God has authorized in the Bible*, or it will not be accepted by Him. We learned this principle long ago in the Old Testament, Genesis 4, when Cain and Abel offered their worship before God. He accepted Abel's worship, and rejected Cain's. Why? Abel offered what God asked, while Cain did what Cain preferred.

"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained

Singing in Worship

Glenn Colley

witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh" (Hebrews 11:4).

God is not **obligated** to accept our worship merely because we offer it. We must worship according to the Bible pattern.

This truth is borne out in both the New and Old Testaments. In John

WORSHIP

4:24 Jesus taught us, “*God is a spirit, and they who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.*” To worship in spirit would mean to worship from the heart. To worship in truth means to worship according to the instructions given in His Word.

This principle is certainly true about music in worship. We aren’t at liberty to do anything we please and simply expect God to accept it. What are the Biblical guidelines?

“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19).

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:16)

From this worship pattern given by God, we learn several important factors concerning acceptable worship in music:

1. **It is to come from our hearts.**
“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...”
2. **It involves the entire church.**

“Speaking to yourselves... admonishing one another...” (This is a command to the whole church in Ephesus, not just a few).

3. **Vocal music is specifically what God requires.** *“Singing with grace...”* (There are other forms of music, but this is what pleases God).
4. **It requires using words.** Humming and whistling won’t accomplish God’s purpose. *“Teaching and admonishing one another...”*
5. **It is to be done to the Lord.** *“...in your hearts to the Lord.”*

God gave us our voices and then asked us to use them to praise Him. In view of these verses, we should never say, “I don’t sing in worship to God. I don’t sound very good.” God made your voice, and He wants to hear it.

Psalm 100 begins, *“Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands; serve the Lord with gladness, come before His presence with singing.”* †

Glenn Colley is the preacher for the West Huntsville Church of Christ in Huntsville, Alabama, USA.

Sing praise to the LORD, You saints of His, And give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name
(Psalm 30:4).

The Secret to Waking Up



the Pew Potatoes

John-Mark Wilson

Evacuating the Padded Pew

Part Two: Dealing with the Rotten Potatoes

As you know, one rotten potato can ruin the whole bin full! Therefore, it's important that we have a section on how to deal with those not interested in reaching the lost. With any size congregation, there are always some who aren't

interested and by their actions try to halt the spread of Christianity. Most of these people aren't aware that's what they're doing. They think they are protecting the way things have always been done. They are comfortable and don't want anything to change with their standing in the church. They are more concerned with self-interests, traditions or finances than reaching out into the community. Even though these members will cause friction from the very beginning, their negative influence can be overcome through time and prayer. You need to make your intent clear, from the very start, that you are interested in saving souls and that it is your ultimate goal!

As you are preparing the building and the minds of the members for work, keep your goal ever before them. Most of all, don't let their

CHURCH GROWTH

discouragement get you down. Spend time with the members who are excited about recapturing the vision. **It's this handful of excited Christians who will make the difference in your vision and goal toward saving souls.** They will give you the energy boost to overlook the narrow vision of others and keep you running toward the goal at hand. *"...one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of*

the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.(Philippians 3:13,14).

Beloved, growth can happen in spite of those with limited vision! One of the things you should never stop doing is **praying for all those in the congregation you attend** (Luke 10:2). *Prayers must be offered for members to increase in love and interest toward the lost in your community.* †

John-Mark Wilson works with the Apple Hill Church of Christ in Jonesboro, Arkansas, USA.

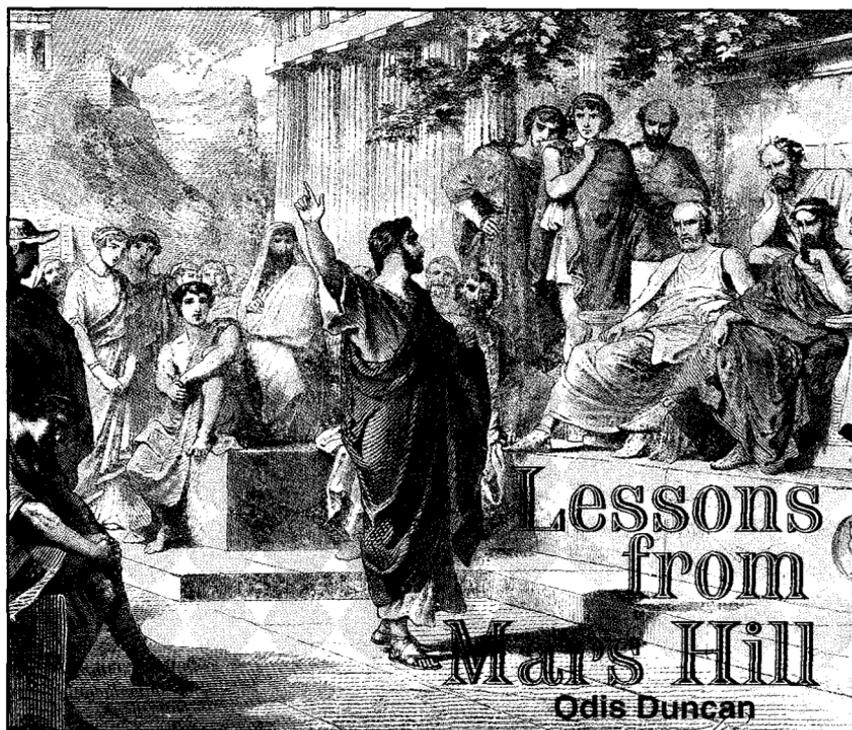
Have you ever noticed ...

... that a "new" involvement, event, commitment — and especially a dispute that has resulted in division — comes with its own aura of excitement? The new undertaking dominates the thinking of those involved. They discuss it, make elaborate plans, and put in long hours of hard and often sacrificial work in order to achieve success.

In any new project, what are the keys to success? **Faith** in what one is doing, and **commitment** to invest **time, talents, energy, and money.**

Sometimes we feel discouraged when the congregation of which we are a member seems stagnant and is not growing. Must such a sad plight continue? No! The direction *can* be reversed! There can be excitement, growth and happy expectancy concerning the church. How? By catching that "fever" which pervades every NEW undertaking. When we PRAY fervently for the church and for the lost souls around us, when we SET GOALS for reaching out to others, when we LIVE and BREATHE concern for spiritual things, both we and the church will "come to life".

Unless we catch that "fever", we may drift into spiritual death...



The depth of God's Word continues to amaze me. No matter how many times one reads the same passage, if he is honest and observant, he will always find something to increase his understanding. The Word cannot be mastered, it must master. Such is the case with Paul's message on Mars Hill. It serves as an outstanding model to be used in personal evangelism.

Notice three things Paul did:

◆ He started at the religious point where he found his listeners. The audience that surrounded Paul was

full of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers who were curious at all times to hear something new. They were people who were religious, or superstitious to a fault, also.

The residents of Athens were so concerned that they might offend a god by not recognizing him that they built an altar "To the Unknown God". One will notice, it is at this exact point that Paul began his message (Acts 17:22,23). The same observation may be made of Peter in Acts 2. It was not necessary for either spokesman to begin with

CHURCH GROWTH

proof that God existed; the audience already believed in deity. They needed only to direct their belief in the right direction.

◆ Secondly, Paul did not try to teach his audience the entire Word of God in one sitting. He began with a discourse on the first principles (reminiscent of 1 Corinthians 15:1-5), leaving other things to follow (v. 32), and yet he led some of his audience to belief, which was his goal. He began by explaining that the "Unknown God" is the one true God who created and cares for men (v. 22-29). Within this context, he explained that it is man's duty to search for and find Him (v. 27). Then, Paul explained that man must repent (v. 30) because there is a day appointed when all must appear before the Creator (v. 31a). The basis of this judgment will be the righteousness that comes through Jesus, a man proven to all by His resurrection (v. 31b).

We see, by analysis of Paul's lesson, that the job of the evangelist is to take the Gospel to the world and make disciples of hearers, leading them to belief in the Son of God (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19) and baptizing those who do believe (Matthew 28:19). If this cannot be done, all other discourse will prove futile. It does not matter what one believes about culture and religion, the Lord's Supper, the resurrection

on the last day, etc., if he is lost. It was after baptism (Matthew 28:19,20) that Jesus instructed His followers to teach the new converts all the things that He had taught them.

◆ Finally, Paul's last lesson is this: No matter where the discussion begins with an unbeliever, the goal must be motivational belief (Acts 17:30-34). The teacher is not there to win an argument, debate, or explore various points in a theological discussion. He is there to convince the hearer that Jesus is truly God's Son and that there is no other way through which one can gain forgiveness of sins. When a person is convinced of these truths, his heart will be melted to repentance, and he will be ready to respond in overt obedience to the Gospel. Following his new birth into the family of God, he will be ready to partake of more spiritual food and grow from babyhood to maturity.

When these points are applied to self-maturation, the lessons are similar: One must work from where he is to where he needs to be. He must never forget the first principles. (Paul did take time to remind the Corinthians of these.) And finally, everything studied, learned, and applied must be governed by and based on belief in the Son of God and the Truth He brought to the world (John 16:13). †

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“ . . . but encourage one another day after day . . . ”

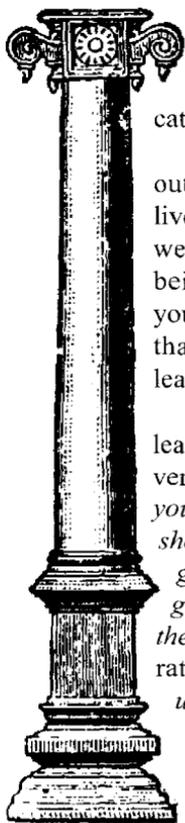
Hebrews 3:13

Somebody once observed: “Church members are either pillars or caterpillars. Pillars hold up the church, caterpillars just crawl in and out.”

Christians ought to be doing more than crawling in and out. Conversion to Christ should make a difference in our lives — not only in *our* lives, but also in the lives of others as we lose ourselves in service to Christ and our fellow human beings. Jesus didn’t die on a cross because I’m okay and you’re okay. He died because there are some things about us that need to change. As someone noted, “If your religion leaves you unchanged, you need to change your religion.”

Titus 3:8,9 describes two kinds of religion — one will lead you to change, the other will leave you unchanged. The verses say, *“This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men. But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law: for they are unprofitable and useless.”* Note the two ways Paul rates religion: “good and profitable” or “unprofitable and useless”.

Thirty years in the church of our Lord has taught me that some church members help hold up the church, some are content to crawl in and out, and a few seem bent on tear-



Are You a Pillar or a Caterpillar?

Dan Gulley

ing and slowing her down. It should sober us to realize our religion can be “good and profitable” or “unprofitable and useless”.

Are you a pillar or a caterpillar? Three times in Titus 2:14-3:14 the



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apostle Paul emphasizes that Christians should stay busy working for the Lord. They should be “*zealous for good works*” (2:14); “*be careful to maintain good works*” (3:8); “*learn to maintain good works*” (3:14).

Colin Powell once observed, “Freedom to be your best means nothing unless you’re willing to do

your best.” Jesus Christ has given us freedom to be our best. At the cross, He “*gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*” He freed us to be our best — Are you doing your best? Are you holding up the church — or just crawling in and out? †

FAITH

A sick man turned to his doctor as he was preparing to leave the examination room and said, “Doctor, I am afraid to die. Tell me what lies on the other side.”

Very quietly the doctor said, “I don’t know.”

“You don’t know? You, a Christian man, do not know what is on the other side?”

The doctor was holding the handle of the door, on the other side of which came a sound of scratching and whining. As he opened the door, a dog sprang into the room and leaped on him with an eager show of gladness.

Turning to the patient, the doctor said, “Did you notice my dog? He’s *never* been in this room before. He didn’t know what was inside. He knew nothing except that his master was here, and when the door opened he sprang in without fear. I know little of what is on the other side of death, but I do know one thing: I know my MASTER is there, and that is enough.”

— Unknown

God's Dream for Mankind

Demar Elam

The Hebrew writer penned these words in Hebrews 2:9,10, "*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*"

God's dream for mankind is to bring many sons to glory. We need to catch hold of that dream and realize our mission as Christians today. This is a time for great vision and for dreaming great dreams! We have a stewardship entrusted to us: God's dream for the lost of this world.

Some of our outstanding scholars in the church, such as the late Foy Wallace and the much alive, learned and capable Johnny Ramsey, have said that the greatest question in the Bible is found in Hebrews 2:3,4 which reads: "***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, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various***

miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?"

Here is a great warning against neglecting salvation. Multitudes are doing that very thing. The Hebrew writer states that the message was confirmed by signs, wonders, and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit. All of this was done to establish the authenticity of the message of salvation through Christ. Verse nine states that Jesus was made lower than the angels for the purpose of suffering and death. Then He was crowned with glory and honor that, by the grace of God, He might taste of death for everyone.

That is the message this old world needs: that Jesus Christ came to this earth with a purpose, an eternal plan. This is an exciting age of opportunity and empowerment through the marvelous tools of technology available to us, and we have a stewardship of our times that challenges us to fulfill Christ's mission on this earth. **His** mission must also be **our** mission: to take the message of His gospel to the world and to bring many sons to glory. †

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

A Captive Audience

Stanley Mitchell

"Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the Gospel. As a result, it has become clear to the whole Palace Guard..."

(Philippians 1:12,13).

There was a man who smuggled Bibles into the Soviet Union. I remember that he described what happened when the authorities questioned him. He would be in one of those rooms with a glass window, rather like the interrogation room depicted on police shows on television. Realizing that there were probably several of the interrogator's superiors on the other side of the glass window, he decided to preach the Gospel. Thus he neatly turned the tables, changing them from captors to a captive audience.

I can just picture Paul, chained to a grim Roman soldier, a member of the Praetorian guard — a sort of Green Beret division of the Roman army. Every day, while Paul consulted with Christian brethren who visited, the guard was forced to listen. When Paul offered Biblical solutions to church problems, he overheard. He couldn't help it! When one of Paul's antagonists entered, the guard had to observe Paul's use of scripture and Christ-like love to win him over.

So what could Roman authorities do? Replace an increasingly sympathetic soldier with another? Sure! And Paul would influence him, too! And the next, and the next, until the whole "palace guard" had heard the Gospel! I can almost detect the twinkle in Paul's eye when a new guard — the evening shift — would come in and growl: "Give me your arm, preacher man. I'm chaining you up."

Soldiers changed from physical to spiritual warfare. Captors became captive to Christ. Iron chains became bonds of God's love. What hordes of Barbarians had failed to do in a frontal attack on the Imperial Palace, the prisoner-preacher had done with his message!

Do you have an audience? They will hear *only if you speak!*

†

Stan Mitchell preaches the gospel in Borger, Texas, USA.

ANOTHER USE FOR THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

Dayton Keesee

It was the first leg of my journey home after five months at Nigerian Christian Bible College. On the seat of the Nissan pickup were two copies of *The Voice of Truth International*. I soon found out they were there for a purpose.

Since Nigeria recently opted for a civilian government to replace the military regime, some military men find themselves with different duties. Many soldiers man periodic roadblocks, checking out varied concerns related to the flow of traffic on busy roadways. At the first roadblock the soldiers were busy with traffic in the left lane, waving to Edet, the driver, allowing us to proceed without stopping. However, a few miles further we were stopped.

A soldier stooped down to collect information. Rumor states that some soldiers seek a bribe. Since brethren prefer not to pay bribes (see Psalms 26:10,11), Edet had a plan. After some discussion, he handed the soldier a copy of *The*

Voice of Truth International. A brief explanation followed about the Lord's church, Nigerian Christian Bible College, and how that publication was a teaching tool for people who longed for truth. Another soldier suddenly appeared, wanting the other copy. To my surprise, Edet said he could only give one — knowing the other copy might be needed at another roadblock before we got to our destination at Port Harcourt.

As I flew out from Port Harcourt that evening, I happily reflected on how smoothly Edet had avoided paying a bribe, gave a well-received testimony about the church and Nigerian Christian Bible College, and urged some soldiers to read God's plan for man as found in *The Voice of Truth International*. May such experiences be multiplied to His glory! †

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

PROVERBS 17:22



Wife: "Every night when the 10 o'clock news comes on that dog next door barks. It's uncanny. You could set your clock by him."

Husband: "Yeah, I know. Must be a watchdog."



The fellow in the line ahead of me at the airport walked up to the ticket agent and said, "I want my black suitcase to go to Dallas, the blue one to go to Atlanta, and the brown one to go to Seattle."

The agent replied, "We can't do that. All of your bags have to go to the same destination. We're not the post office, you know. No sir, we can't do that."

The man answered, "Well, why not? That's what you did the last time I flew this airline."

Moses had to have been the most proficient lawbreaker in the Bible. He broke all Ten Commandments at once.



Aunt Nell certainly is smart. She says, "Birthdays are good for you; the more you have, the longer you live."



If you take an Oriental person and spin him around several times, does he become disoriented?



The reason Noah didn't go fishing should be obvious to everyone who knows anything at all about the Bible.....he only had two worms!



A little boy got lost at the YMCA and found himself in the women's locker room. When he was spotted, the room burst into shrieks, with ladies grabbing towels and running for cover. The little boy watched in amazement and then asked, "What's the matter? Haven't you ever seen a little boy before?"

PROVERBS 17:22

Little Gregory, a cute 4-year-old, ran out of the bathroom and yelled to his mother that he had dropped his toothbrush in the toilet. She managed to get it out and threw it in the garbage. Gregory stood there for a moment, and then he ran to his mother's bathroom and came back with her toothbrush. With the cutest little smile, he held it up and said, "We better throw this one away, too, 'cause it fell in the toilet a few days ago."



Joe: "Has college been of any value to your son?"

Jim: "Sure has. It stopped his mother from bragging on him."



Question: Where is the first tennis match mentioned in the Bible?

Answer: When Joseph served in Pharaoh's court.



All of the airlines are trying to cut expenses. On my most recent flight, instead of there being a movie available, the pilot just asked all the passengers to pass around pictures of their family.

A man in Atlanta recently saw a wild dog attacking a small child, so the man somehow was able to grab the dog and killed it with his bare hands. A newspaper reporter just happened to be driving by and witnessed the event. He stopped and congratulated the man for his heroic deed and told him that the headline the next day would read, "Local Man Saves Child by Killing Vicious Animal."

However, the hero told the reporter that he wasn't from Atlanta. "That's OK," said the reporter, "we can change the headline to, 'Georgia Man Saves Child by Killing Dog.'"

"Well, actually," the hero responded, "I'm from New Jersey."

"In that case," said the reporter, "the headline will read, 'Yankee Kills Family Pet.'"



You can be young only once, but you can be immature forever.

Live each day so that you will neither be afraid of tomorrow nor ashamed of yesterday.

We could learn a lot from crayons: some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, some have weird names, and all are different colors...but they all exist very nicely in the same box.

The Beauty Of Silence

Owen D. Olbricht

The hymn, "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind," is taken from a poem by John Greenleaf Whittier. Some song-books contain the third verse which is as follows:

"O Sabbath rest by Galilee,
O calm of hills above,
Where Jesus knelt to share with thee
The silence of eternity
Interpreted by love."

Phillips Brooks wrote, "O Little Town of Bethlehem." Verse three states:

"How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heav'n;
No ear may hear His coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will
receive Him, still
The dear Christ enters in."

At various times Jesus left the noise of the crowds so that in quietness, away from civilization, He could communicate with the Father in a wilderness (Luke 5:16), in a mountain (Luke 6:12), while alone (Luke 9:18), before His transfiguration (Luke 9:28), in a place where His disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray (Luke 11:1), and alone in the garden before His crucifixion (Luke 22:40, 41). Jesus found the need for quiet time to spend with the Father.

Probably the noises of our age that bombard our ears are the worst of all

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

hindrances to our sharing spiritual moments with the Father. Such noises tend to capture our attention and shut out God. He is more easily found in the quiet moments of life or in the melodies of the sounds of nature than in the continual clamor of the world.

David wrote, *"Be still, and know that I am God"* (Psalm 46:10a).
"Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still" (Psalm 4:4b).

Solomon wrote that there is *"a time to keep silent"* (Ecclesiastes 3:7).

Isaiah stated, *"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength"* (Isaiah 30:15).

Habakkuk assured Israel, *"But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him"* (Habakkuk 2:20).

Time away from constant noise is essential to our well being. Eda J. LeShan observed in **The Quotable Woman – 1800-1975**, "We have kept our children so busy with 'useful' and 'improving' activities that we are in danger of raising a generation of young people who are terrified of silence, of being alone with their thoughts..."

If Jesus felt the need of being away from the constant noises of society so He could enjoy quiet moments in solitude, we should realize the importance of such moments also.

Andy T. Richie, former professor at Harding University, used to quote a poem that ably describes the blessings that come through solitude.

"In silence comes all loveliness;
The dawn is never still;
No noise accompanies the dew
That glistens on the hill.

The sun comes up quietly;
The moon is never heard,
And love that animates the eyes
Surpasses any word.

The prayer is best in solitude
And seems so very odd
That long before I knew the words
In silence I found God."

—author unknown



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

Incremental Lostness

Van Ledbetter

I listened the other day as a political “spin doctor” explained how those he represented were planning to get their program across. He understood, he said, that the American people wouldn’t accept it in one huge dose. But, he said, “We’ll implement it incrementally.”

What he meant was this: *They won’t approve our plan if we give them the whole thing up front, so we intend to give it to them a little at a time until we have the whole thing in place without their realizing what’s going on.*

Isn’t that the way Satan works to destroy Christians’ faith? See, very few will just leap wildly into apostasy, and Satan knows that. But he also knows that he can, sometimes, get us to accept sin in small doses, then in greater and greater doses, gradually, until we’ve finally gone all the way in departing from the living God.

A worship assembly skipped here; a little wrong thing done there. A seemingly innocuous but spiritually detrimental attitude adopted here; an “insignificant” unbiblical belief accepted there. And the next thing you know you’re a lot farther from faithful discipleship than you ever thought, in your wildest dreams, you could go.

What’s the difference really, whether you surrender totally and immediately to the evil One, or take your trip down the Broad Way to the Bad Place one “little” step at a time? The end result is all the same, isn’t it? †

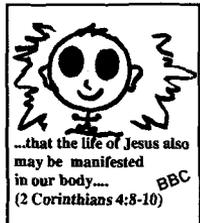
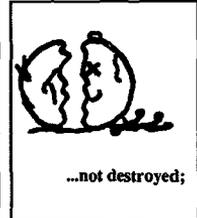
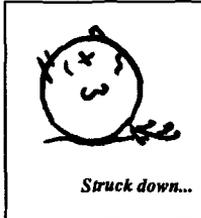
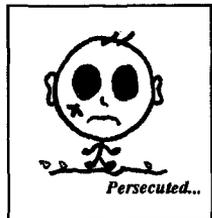
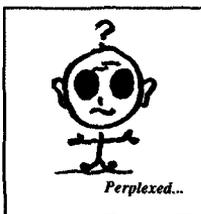
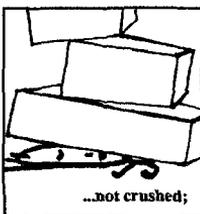


Van Ledbetter works with the church in DeQueen, Arkansas, USA.

Don't Quit

Francis David

One of the finest examples we find in the Scriptures is of the apostle Paul who was a courageous man and was so bold that he never thought of quitting his job, in spite of hardships and trials. We read in 2 Corinthians 4:8-10 his experience while working for the Lord. He says, "*We are **hard pressed** on every side, yet **not crushed**; we are **perplexed**, but **not in despair**; persecuted, but **not forsaken**; struck down, but **not destroyed** — always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.*"



Paul was faithful and diligent in preaching the gospel. His sufferings did not stop him from doing the preaching or cause him to quit working for the Lord.

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

In 2 Corinthians 6:4-10, he talks about his patience, *"But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in watchings, in fastings, by pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed. As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor; yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."*

As a Christian, you may be facing some problems. Do not give up. Don't get discouraged. Many lose heart and leave their faith. Timothy was told, *"If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny him, he also will deny us"* (2 Timothy 2:12). In the congregation where you worship you may have had some hurtful or disappointing experiences, but that doesn't mean that you have to stop worshipping there. You must continue to be faithful to the Lord and do your job and the victory will be yours. Keep pressing on.

Writing to the Christians at Philippi, Paul says, *"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting*

those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13,14). Let us forget the negative experiences and go forward in order to get the prize that Christ has promised to us.

Sometimes preachers get discouraged and want to quit. Maybe some might go against you, but that doesn't mean you have to quit. You may suffer unjustly, but you should be glad because you can say we are counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the Lord (Acts 5:4). We must learn from the apostle Paul how, in spite of trials, he did not quit but advised his fellow Christians, *"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."* So, let us fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:12). If we do this, we would be able to say this with Paul, *"I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. Finally there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing"* (2 Timothy 4:7,8). †

Francis David works with the Lord's church in New Delhi, India.

Get a Life

J. Randal Matheny

“I need to get a life!” People grow frustrated with their lives or feel that things are not going the way they should. They sometimes express their frustration with the above phrase which suggests that one can go out and buy a new life. Or switch life out as you would replace a car part or a piece of equipment.

You cannot snap your fingers or clap your hands and make a new life appear. A magician cannot wave a magic wand so that a life will pop out of a hat. Nor will you find a new life in the next box of cereal.

What does God’s Wonderful Message say to a person who really wants to “get” a life?

First, your desire must be more than a mere wish.

First, your desire must be more than a mere wish. Your frustration with your life as it is must motivate you to decide to change. Desire is not decision. Feelings of frustration or sadness about your life do not mean that change will occur.

Jesus knew that. He came for this very reason. He said, “*I came that they [all people] might have life, and might have it abundantly*” (John 10:10, NASV).

We can have this new life only if we are willing to give up the old one. It’s a tough decision, but a necessary one.

Second, know what life is.

Second, know what life is. It is not getting rid of problems. It is not acquiring wealth and material possessions. It is not doing less work and finding more time for recreation.

Real life is defined for us. It is called eternal life. In the gospel of

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John, it is described, "*And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent*" (John 17:3).

This life is called eternal because it shares the character of God. It is both quality and quantity. It is eternal because it is life with God.

Third, you cannot get a life, as the phrase suggests, but you may receive it.

Third, you cannot get a life, as the phrase suggests, but you may receive it. Man's efforts to build a life are futile and useless. We receive this life with God when we are born again (anew) in baptism (John 3:3,5). "[T]he Son also gives life to whom He wishes" (John 5:21).

Our obedience to the gospel means that we reject our own attempts to produce a satisfying, lasting life in order to be blessed with the free gift of living with God.

Fourth, a life is built one thought, one word, one action at a time.

Fourth, a life is built one thought, one word, one action at a time. We do not stumble suddenly upon the right kind of life or wake up one day and discover we are exactly what we would like to be.

Jesus says that those will live forever "*who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life*" (John 5:29). Paul tells us that salvation (a synonym for God's life) must be "worked out" or developed because God is working in us (Philippians 2:12,13).

Character is the sum of our thoughts, words, and actions. **God's character is produced in us when we think like Jesus, talk like Jesus, and act like Jesus.**

Don't try to *get* a life. We all need life. But we can only *receive* it from the hands of Jesus Christ. He said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life*" (John 14:6). †

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"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). This small passage written by the Apostle Paul is so full of meaning. *"And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"* (1 John 2:1).

Jesus said, *"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"* (Matthew 6:14,15). The Christian does not select when

THE BEAUTY AND NECESSITY OF FORGIVENESS

James Farris

The fact is that all have sinned, and since sin is the agent of separation between man and God, (Isaiah 59:1,2) there is a great need for atonement, sanctification, justification. These come about by forgiveness through the blood of Jesus Christ (1 John 1:7; Colossians 2:13; Ephesians 1:7). Just think for a moment what life would be like without forgiveness from God! We would still be lost in sin, and carrying our crushing burden of guilt. What a horrific picture that is! Surely, the reality of forgiveness is beautiful to us.

How do we approach making forgiveness real in our own lives? Forgiveness is not to be something at our discretion to give or deny. Forgiveness is a command of scripture for the child of God. When we forgive another, we are enacting the greatest gift God has ever given to the world by our own example. Notice

forgiveness applies. It is simply the case that forgiveness is necessary in whatever the situation. When pride or stubbornness stands in the way, every child of God should see those things as hindrances to the forgiveness that we all require.

If God was able to forgive me of all my trespasses, then surely I am able to forgive my fellow man of some small transgression. It is a shame when people allow pride to come between them and someone of this life. It will be a shame if we fail to gain our reward because we failed to forgive? You see, forgiveness — by that I mean the way God forgives — is the example we are to allow others to see living in us. What a beautiful and necessary thing forgiveness is! †

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Woman's Role in Ministering to the Elderly

Jane McWhorter

Most of us are so busy in our daily activities, surrounded by loved ones and caring friends, that we often forget how it feels to be alone. Loneliness can be as crippling to the emotions as many diseases are to the physical body. Elderly people

are especially susceptible to loneliness as the aging process takes its toll on the body, making it increasingly difficult to move around and put forth the effort to mix and mingle with others. Their lifetime friends gradually pass away and

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they are left alone with neither the energy nor the means to stay in touch with people.

Helping to fill these needs is important work that Christians can do to make a real difference in the lives of the elderly. While this field of service is certainly open to both men and women in the Lord's kingdom, women, with their caring, nurturing natures, seem to instinctively recognize needs. Perhaps these suggestions will help you find additional avenues of service.

should. A home-cooked meal, fixed by someone else, tastes so good!

3. Ask several other women to join with you in giving a small birthday party at the home of a shut-in. Everyone likes to be remembered on a birthday, especially those who would otherwise probably spend the day alone. Bake a cake and wrap some inexpensive presents to brighten the day.

4. Sincerely offer your help in transportation. Those of us who are constantly on the go often

Each act of kindness that we render is equivalent to doing it for Christ.

1. Adopt three or four elderly people. Sometimes we become overwhelmed by the number of people whom we could serve. Consequently, we do nothing. Each week, put the name of one person in a prominent place (dash of the car, bathroom mirror, over the kitchen sink, etc.). Try to run by to check on that person this week and see what you can do to help. A visit of five or ten minutes means so much to someone who is all alone.

2. When you are preparing a special dinner for your family, fix a plate for one of your special elderly friends and take it by their house. People who live alone often do not cook for themselves as they

fail to realize that not everyone can come and go as they please. Take some of your elderly friends to the services of the church. Get a group of them together to attend a function for ladies at another congregation. Invite them to join you in visiting a nursing home or attending a funeral. Give them a ride to the grocery store. Occasionally offer them transportation for a fun activity, such as eating lunch out together.

5. Host a luncheon for widows in your home. Most of our entertainment is geared toward couples. The days become very lonely when one is no longer part of a couple and the invitations dwindle.

6. Encourage the elderly to

be actively involved in many of the activities of the church. Check with your elders for avenues of service that these women can do at home. Many of them can cut out materials for Bible classes, make costumes for Vacation Bible School, contact (by telephone or mail) children who have missed Bible classes, prepare materials for the audio-visual room, or do countless other tasks that Bible class teachers are often too busy to do. Encourage the elderly women to become involved, and take the materials to them.

7. Team up with an older woman who may be living on a limited income if you are a younger working woman with small children. You can buy the food, let your special friend prepare it, then you can deliver it to someone who is sick or bereaved in the names of both of you. You may want to furnish get-well cards and stamps for her to send with both of your names.

8. Adopt several lonely people in the nursing home. If you don't know which ones need some special attention, ask the director of the nursing home. There are many who seldom receive visits and who are in need of small acts of kindness. Drop by for a brief visit every week or two. Some need such basic

supplies as toothpaste and deodorant, and they have no one to buy it for them. When you visit, be alert to their physical needs, but most of all, they just need someone who cares about them. One Christian woman rendered a service by writing a postcard every few weeks to an out-of-town relative of the patient, just to let her know how the nursing home resident was feeling.

9. Save the change from your billfold. At the end of each day drop the coins into a special container. Periodically take the container by the bank to exchange the contents for larger bills. Nothing brings as much enjoyment as purchasing a "no special occasion" gift of lotion, flowers, balloons, etc., for someone who is in the nursing home or who is confined to their home. This is special **extra** money, and you don't feel guilty for using it in this manner instead of applying it to groceries or bills that have to be paid.

Remember that each act of kindness that we render is equivalent to doing it for Christ. *"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me"* (Matthew 25:40). †

Jane McWhorter is a Christian writer and the wife of a gospel preacher, and they live in Fayette, Alabama, USA.



Before and After: The Prophet

Dear Mother,

I read every article, pamphlet, and book I could
As my children began to grow up and leave home:

"How to 'let go' and 'Let them go'"

And still, happily, survive.

But, Mom, in all of my reading

I never ran across any words of wisdom
That taught me, as an adult, as your child,

How to give up a mother.

But, dear God,

I had to learn!

And I did!

I had been looking in all the wrong places;
Otherwise, I would have found my answer,
The comfort in Your promise.

I claimed it!

For me!

I proclaim it

to others who grieve:

*"He will keep him in perfect peace
Whose heart is set on Him."*

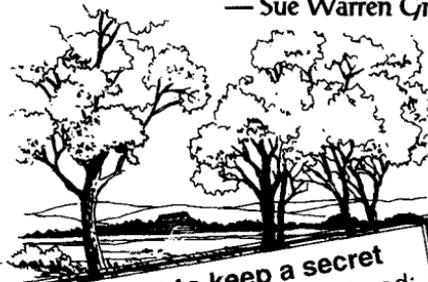
— Sue Warren Green



Adoration

I heard the trees
clap their branches.
I heard the hills
and the mountains
shout for joy.
I heard the birds
sing praises
In adoration

— Brunice C. Cole, Jr.



If you want to keep a secret
Keep it locked within your head;
Three may keep a secret only
If two of them are dead.

— John H. Erwin

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

The dictionary defines the word "honor" as high respect, recognition, distinction, and esteem. It seems natural to apply these terms to royalty, heads of state, or important people in our community. How often do we think of honor beginning at home?

Foremost, those who are followers of Christ give honor to God, our Father, and His Son. In fact, we are commanded to do that. Christians realize that all things come from God and they continually give Him thanks, honor, and glory. We teach our children in their first Bible classes that God and Jesus love them and provide for their needs.

When God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, He gave them rules to follow. He wrote the commandments on tablets of stone and gave them to Moses to give to the people. The first four rules concerned their treatment

of God. The fifth commandment says, "*Honor your father and mother.*" He added... "*that your days may be long and that it may be well with you in the land the Lord is giving you.*" These words seem to indicate that the length and conditions of the children's lives depend upon how they treated their parents.



In Leviticus 19 other rules for morality are listed. Second among them is the admonition to show reverence to parents. Grandparents and older folks

also are mentioned in verse 32, pointing out that a person should rise in their presence and give them honor.

This law is carried over to the New Testament in Matthew 15:4, where Jesus teaches that if a person does not honor his father and mother, he should be put to death. Paul writes in Ephesians 6:1 that this is

Frances Parr

Honor in the Home

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

the first commandment with promise. In other words, the reward for honoring parents is a fulfilling, long life. He also gives advice to parents about their treatment of their children. In 1 Peter 3:7 husbands are taught to honor their wives, so their prayers would not be hindered, and wives should submit to their own husbands.

Since there is much said in God's Word regarding giving respect and honor to others, we must realize how important it is to Him and for our own well-being. The lesson is summed up in 1 Peter 3:8. *"Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another, love as brothers, be tender-hearted, be courteous."*

As we have already seen, respect for others begins at home during earliest childhood. By honoring others, we give honor and glory to God, to whom it belongs (Revelation 19:1). He, in return,

bestows honor upon us. Jesus said, in John 12:26, *"If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor."*

What could provide a greater incentive to honor the ones you love in your home? †

Frances Parr is a Christian writer living in Eldon, Missouri, USA.

ARE ALL THE CHILDREN IN?

I think of times as the night draws nigh
Of an old house on the hill,
Of a yard all wide and blossom-starred
Where the children played at will.
And when the night at last came down,
Hushing the merry din,
Mother would look around and ask,
"Are all the children in?"

'Tis many and many a year since then,
And the old house on the hill
No longer echoes to childish feet,
And the yard is still, so still.
But I see it all, as the shadows creep,
And though many the years have been
Since then, I can hear my mother ask,
"Are all the children in?"

I wonder if when the shadows fall
On the last short, earthly day,
When we say good-bye to the world outside,
All tired with our childish play,
When we step out into that Other Land
Where Mother so long has been,
Will we hear her ask, just as of old,
"Are all the children in?"

— Unknown

“Rear ’em Right!”

Wm. Hoyt Nelson



“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:1,4). “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:61).

The rearing of children is an awesome task and a monumental responsibility. As Christians we assume that task and responsibility when we bring them into the world. They don’t ask to be born ... we, as parents make that decision on our own. But we have the responsibility to prepare them for a peaceful and productive life. Such preparation requires a lot of any parent. The following are a few suggestions.

- ◆ Give plenty of love. Nothing else provides such a sense of security, belonging, and support.
- ◆ Clearly instill morality. Discuss and try to live up to a clear set of values. Insist on being treated with respect, and return the favor.
- ◆ Set clear, understandable rules and enforce them. When possible, explain the reason for the rules.
- ◆ Teach them that love is not always manifested in “things”. Children need to learn to listen for love. “No” often is an expression of parental love. So is: “Tell me where you are going and with whom you plan to go.”
- ◆ Teach them that they have a responsibility to other members of the family. Young people cannot expect a healthy future if they do not learn responsibility to and respect for other members of the family.

This list certainly is not exhaustive ... but it is a foundation for the structure of the family — a good starting place! †

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By What Standard?

Charles E. Cobb

Jesus said, "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*" (Matthew 4:4). There is no higher standard than that here given by the Savior of the world — "*...by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*"

Our society has lost sight of the divine standard by which men are to live. We can see this manifested in the home, school, and religious institutions of the land. The wisdom of men has been exalted above the wisdom of God (See Isaiah 55:8,9; 1 Corinthians 1:20,21). Because of this attitude, our society has reached the low level of seeking to live and work by that which is inferior and self-destructive. Where there is no standard, a society finds itself in total chaos. Without respect for and submission to the way of God, man is groveling in the mire of divergent opinions which are bred and then discarded as the finite minds of men are blown about by the winds of change. Stability is sought, but not found, in the thoughts of men without God.

Centuries have come and gone and histories have been written, but we have refused to learn from those experiences. "Our way" has been

given top billing, and God's way has been discarded to languish in the dust. Humanism, idolatry, and infidelity rule in the minds of men who have forsaken God, or who have never acknowledged Him.

What real standard of life and moral conduct is certified by humanism or promoted by idolatry or encouraged by infidelity? Is a dog, sheep, or hog not as well off as those who stand in defiance or unbelief of God's perfect standard? If not, why not?

Quality does not trickle uphill. Quality comes from having a perfect standard, tried and true, that sets our goals and establishes our priorities. We cannot expect to drink pure water from a mud hole.

"*Let God be true...*" (Romans 3:4). He is the source of all good, of all right. His will should be the foundation of all our endeavors in living in a society properly motivated and controlled.

Rejection of the divine standard leads only to eventual destruction. God's way is our protection in an evil world. †

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Is Premarital Sex Wrong?

Jerry Jenkins

Today we hear much rationale for sexual experience in non-married relationships. Some affirm, "times are changing." The basis for such an attitude is that nothing today is white or black, but everything has faded into a dull gray of permissiveness.

Though teens and young college students might affirm that premarital sex is harmless, more and more psychologists and psychiatrists are raising the flag of doubt. They affirm, "The premature consummation of sex, that is, before a real relationship has been established, often prevents a man and a woman from becoming acquainted with each other." Regardless of how enlightened people claim to have become, or how blasé, sexual activities before marriage take something away from the marriage experience.

Setting aside the thinking of psychologists and counselors — whether pro or con on this subject — if one accepts the Bible as the Word of God and a guide for life, he

has instructions from God on this important matter.

For one to consummate a relationship physically before the pronouncement of the actual formal marriage ceremony is a sin against God. Fornication is condemned 39 times in the Bible. Not once does God say it is acceptable.

Fornication is a work of the flesh. "*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, **fornication**, uncleanness, lasciviousness...*" (Galatians 5:19). The penalty for practicing works of the flesh, without repentance, is clearly defined; "*...I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God*" (Galatians 5:21).

In addition: "*But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, **and fornication**, and things strangled, and blood*" (Acts 15:20). "*It is reported commonly that there is **fornication** among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the*

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*Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife" (1 Corinthians 5:1). "But **fornication**, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints" (Ephesians 5:3). "Nevertheless, to avoid **fornication**, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband" (1 Corinthians 7:2).*

One old-timer expressed it succinctly when he stated: "God said it; I believe it; that settles it." However, another made an even more accurate statement when he said, "God said it; that settles it, whether you believe it or not."

God made food and, properly used, it is good; but improperly used, it destroys health; God made fire and, properly used, it is good, but improperly used, it destroys life

and property; God made sex and, properly used, it is good, but improperly used, it brings AIDS, syphilis, gonorrhea, abuse, rapes, molestation, broken hearts, broken homes because of infidelity, forced marriages, guilt, and shame.

Sexual appetite can exist without love. Too often physical desire is equated with love, but the truth is that love is far deeper and more meaningful. It includes the desire for physical union, but that is not its major attribute. One who truly loves another person will not ask him or her to do that which will blight life and conscience, putting guilt feelings in the heart that perhaps can never be erased. †

Jerry Jenkins is the preacher for the Roebuck Parkway church in Birmingham, Alabama, USA.

What Love Is

*It is silence when your words would hurt,
It is patience when your friends are curt.*

*It is being loyal when scandal flows,
It is thoughtfulness for others' woes.*

*It is being there when stern duty calls,
It is courage when misfortune falls.*

The Myths of Grief

Ron Williams



“If it is not a human death, then one ought not to grieve!”

Many people mistakenly think that grief is caused and/or justified only when a human death occurs. Even then, many people become quite impatient with those who are grieving and perceive them as “whining babies” if they are not “over” their grief within a few weeks or months (A person getting “over” grief is another myth to be discussed some other time).

But alas, this myth becomes an obstacle to individuals who are seriously grieving over other “real losses” in their lives. Friends and relatives who have no clue of what grief is and of how powerful it can be may not recognize and allow these griefs as “legitimate”. By way of increasing our own understanding, let us consider a few of those real losses which can result in overwhelming pain.

A person gets a pink slip from the plant at which he/she has worked for many years. You say, “Well, it’s just a job!” No; more than that, it may well be the loss of a person’s (and family’s) lifestyle, self-confidence, income, social status, financial and emotional security, and of a long history

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of always having a job to go to and to do well.

A pet dies. This pet has perhaps taken the place of children running around the house since the children have grown up and left home. It has become more than just a pet; it has become a personality of its own and an integral part of the owner's life. You say, "But it was just a pet!" No, it was a companion that gave warmth, love, comfort, and unconditional acceptance which cannot easily be relinquished or replaced.

A house is destroyed by wind, rain, fire, or some other disaster. You say, "But it was just a house!" No, it was a place where life was lived, where the kids grew up, a place which perhaps the person had built with their own hands, a place that became home because of what occurred there for many years, and now it is gone and one is afraid the memories may go along with the house as well.

A member of one's family leaves the church. The Bible calls that apostasy. You say, "But he/she didn't die!" No, the person hasn't died physically, but I can guarantee you that their faithful family members are dying a slow death of pain, shame, and even guilt that maybe they didn't do enough teaching or that they failed in their example of the Christian life before their fallen loved one. They continually pray (as should all who love them) that their loved one will come back to the teachings they had learned earlier in life, before it is eternally too late.

A person loses his/her health. It may be a mastectomy in which a part of the body is surgically removed. It may be a stroke that causes a person to become homebound and immobile. It may be Alzheimer's or dementia, resulting in the gradual fading of the mental faculties. Regardless of what the health crisis may be, the stricken person and all who love him know that a tragedy has taken place. You say, "But at least he/she is still alive!" Yes, that is true, but something "life-changing" has occurred that will debilitate that person and all around her for years to come.

These are but a few of "other kinds of losses" that can produce enormous grief and agony. Regardless of whether or not we can comprehend what a person is experiencing in these crises, we need to avoid being judgmental concerning their feelings of loss. Rather, as Christians, let us *"Rejoice with those that rejoice, and weep with those that weep"* (Romans 12:15). Those Christians who fall into these categories of grief will be glad that we did simply that! †

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Authentic Faith

J. Lee Roberts

PETER SAYS we should rejoice when our faith is tested, that its genuineness may be manifest (1 Peter 1:6-9). Today young and old alike are subject to failing health, injury, pain and, eventually, to death.

UNTIL WE FACE suffering and death, it is difficult to know how we will respond. Jesus declares that *the true believer* will never really die (John 11:25,26). To be counted as a true believer we must possess an authentic, living faith that obeys the Father out of love (Galatians 5:6). Even faith as small as a mustard seed, when it is genuine, is sufficient to give us access to God's marvelous grace and comfort (Matthew 17:20; Ephesians 3:11,12). The believer with a mature faith and a strong obedient love for God will overcome the fear of suffering and death (1 John 4:16-19). That doesn't mean that he will not be concerned with pain and the 'process' of dying! But death will have no terror for him, only the knowledge that he will be released from the pains of this body of clay and be found in the presence of his Lord.

What a glorious hope! What a marvelous thing to trust that after leaving this body, we will know delights that cannot be explained by our experience of life here on earth, and that even now nothing can separate us from God's eternal love (Romans 8:28-39).

FAITH IN THE GOODNESS of our loving Father is really our only refuge against the fear of what can happen to us. True faith believes that ultimately everything works for our good as the Lord's plans unfold in our lives. We can understand that our suffering may be the only thing that will influence those we know to comprehend Christ's suffering for them. Perhaps in this way we do share in the sufferings of Jesus (Philippians 3:10; 1 Peter 4:13). Of course, our suffering does not cover anyone's sins, but it may be used as His instrument to bring others to know what Christ did for all of us in His sacrificial death.

The list is long of those who suffered patiently as their faith was tested. Think of Job who never received a specific answer to his questions but who understood finally that God can be trusted completely, as He said: "*Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him*" (Job 13:15). And we cannot forget the tremendous faith of the three young men about to be thrown into the fiery furnace. They declared that their God *could* deliver them, but that if He

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chose not to, they would not deny Him! (Daniel 3:17,18). According to Hebrews, vast numbers have suffered torture and martyrdom, with steadfast courage and faith, and without apparent relief; yet they maintained their trust in God's way of handling their situation (Read Hebrews 11:36-38).

AUTHENTIC trust and true faith in God enable us to accept what may appear as a negative response to prayer, just as surely as we accept an immediate and positive reply! Christ's request that "*this cup pass from me*", was answered in a way that brings salvation to us because He also prayed that the Father's will be done and not His own (Matthew 26:39). "*And he was heard ... and became the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him*" (Hebrews 5:7-9). We, too, must entrust our all in the hands of Him who is faithful and just!! (1 Peter 2:23; 4:19). †

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"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4).

Whistle While You Work

Olden Cook

I grew up chopping cotton! Nearly from the time I could walk, I was given a short-handled version of a cotton-choppin' hoe. Chopping cotton is, I will admit, one step above picking cotton, but just a step. Both are drudgery! Well, to lighten the job, we concocted — or had handed down to us — a little ditty that went like this:

"Whistle and hoe, sing as you go!

Shorten the rows by the songs that you know."

And do you know what? It did make the rows seem shorter and the load seem lighter as we whistled and sang up and down those cotton rows.

Do you have a hard row to hoe? Don't let discouragement creep in. Buckle down, sing and whistle a little as you can, and the row will get shorter and the load will get lighter. The story is told that the devil put all his tools up for sale except for one. **Hatred, envy, jealousy, malice, deceit**, and many other implements were put "on the block". But **discouragement** was not for sale at any price, for the devil said, "It is more useful to me than any other tool. With **discouragement** I can stop more good works, and accomplish more for the cause of evil than with any other tool known to man or to the princes of darkness. **Discouragement is not for sale!**"

So whistle as you work! Sing a song as you struggle along! The rows will be shorter and the burden will be lighter. "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*" (Philippians 4:13). †

Quick Commentary on Crucial Verses

Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man — and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting: being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

Romans 1:22-32

There are those, even in positions of leadership in denominational churches, who say that God is not judgmental about the lifestyles of people, that God is loving, forgiving, tolerant, and understanding — and that humans should be loving, forgiving, tolerant, and understanding as well, regardless of what others choose to do in their behavior. **That description of God is a blatant lie!** The Scriptures portray God as forgiving **when people repent and turn away from their evil — but the Scriptures are filled with warnings of the eternal hell awaiting sinners who refuse to repent.** This passage in Romans is a graphic description of how God feels about sin.

Dealing particularly with the question of homosexuals and lesbians, they are described as **“receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.”** Coupled with this behavior is a list of every type of vile sin, with the conclusion that **“knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.”** **God’s rules do not bend to fit man’s low standards.**



**Trust
in
the
Lord
and
You
Shall
Receive
Blessings**

Sixto Rivera

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord and depart from evil” (Proverbs 3:5-7).

I. “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart.”

- A. Trust is to have faith, have confidence in, to rely upon God, believing He wants to do good to you. *“Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man’s friend by hearty counsel” (Proverbs 27:9).*
- B. How? With all your heart. *“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God*

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:30,31).

- C. Why with the heart? To give the heart is to give all.
- D. Do you trust in God?

II. *“In all thy ways acknowledge Him.”*

- A. Acknowledge Him — In His name, with God’s approval.
- B. In what? In everything, because that which is of God is everlasting. *“Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain” (Psalms 127:1).*
- C. Christ is the pilot — I must put Christ first before myself.
- D. Prayers of thanks should be given continually.

III. *“And he shall direct thy paths.”*

- A. He directs your paths — He will take care of you.
- B. The roads of that time were bad.
- C. Our lives are directed — Tinsley.
- D. God is the Good Shepherd — Psalm 23.
- E. God promises that all things work together for good to those who love Him (Romans 8:28).

Conclusion

- A. When you trust and seek His blessing, *“He shall direct thy paths.”* He takes care of you.
- B. Trusting in the Lord with all your heart involves putting God before all.
- C. Acknowledging Him in all your ways is to seek God’s blessing in all that we do. †

Sixto Rivera serves the Lord in the Saturn Road Church of Christ in Garland, Texas, USA.

**Two people can't hate each other
if they both love God.**

The Lord's Supper and Foot Washing

E. Claude Gardner

I. Introduction

- A. Must the church observe the Lord's Supper and foot washing?
- B. Since washing of feet and the institution of the Lord's Supper took place at the last Passover, why are not both observed as acts of worship?

II. Discussion

- A. Jesus washed the disciples' feet (John 13).
 - 1. He washed the feet of Peter who was impulsive.
 - 2. He washed the feet of Judas, His betrayer.
- B. Three reasons why the church has no such practice in worship:
 - 1. The Lord's Supper was commanded to the church and there is an approved apostolic example (1 Corinthians 11:23; Acts 20:7), but this was never the case with foot washing.
 - 2. Jesus did not institute foot washing. It had been an act of hospitality for centuries (Genesis 18,19).
 - 3. Washing of feet is included in the same category as other acts of service and not a church ordinance (1 Timothy 5:10).
- C. What did Jesus teach the apostles and us (John 13:7,12)?
 - 1. Humility.
 - a. The disciples had argued about who is the greatest (Luke 22:24-27).
 - b. As Master and Lord, He demonstrated humility through this object lesson.
 - c. Peter learned the lesson (1 Peter 5:5,6).
 - 2. Service.
 - a. Render service wherever there is a need.
 - b. Jesus said do "as" I have done, not only what I have done. Serve others (Matthew 25:31-46).
 - c. Jesus served Judas who mistreated Him, which is an example of how to treat an enemy (1 Peter 1:23; Matthew 5:38ff).

III. Conclusion

- A. Happiness will come to those who serve humbly (John 13:17).
- B. We must love, obey and serve Jesus the Lord (Mark 16:16; John 13). †

E. Claude Gardner is Chancellor of Freed-Hardeman University, Henderson, Tennessee, USA.

God Speaks to Us

Jerry L. Davidson

Introduction: Acts 2:38,39; 2 Peter 1:3; Hebrews 1:1,2

I. God Speaks — The Giver of the Word

- A. Hebrews 6:17,18
- B. 2 Timothy 3:16,17
- C. Romans 3:4

II. Through Christ — The Perfector of God's Plan

- A. Hebrews 12:2
- B. John 7:16
- C. John 14:6
- D. Colossians 1:13,14

III. By the Holy Spirit — The Revealer

- A. John 14:26
- B. John 16:13
- C. Mark 9:1
- D. Acts 1:8

IV. To the Apostles — The Messengers

- A. Acts 2:1-4
- B. Acts 2:42
- C. 2 Peter 3:1,2
- D. Jude 17

V. Giving the Word — The Power to Save

- A. Acts 2:41
- B. Romans 10:17
- C. 1 Peter 1:22,23

VI. To the World — The Receivers

- A. 1 Thessalonians 2:13
- B. James 1:21
- C. 1 Corinthians 15:1,2

Conclusion: If we are wise hearers, we will be obedient to the message of God as He has spoken and continues to speak through these voices. †

Jerry L. Davidson teaches at Heritage Christian University, Florence, Alabama and is the Director of French World Bible School work.

Noah's Flood — a Type of the Second Coming of Christ

John Thiesen

The Flood (Genesis 6)

Widespread Sin (Genesis 6:5)
A Long Waiting Period (1 Peter 3:20)
People Warned by Preaching (2 Peter 2:5)
Sudden Judgment (Matthew 24:36-39)
Few Saved (1 Peter 3:20)
Saved in an Ark (Genesis 7:23)
Noah Builder of the Ark (Genesis 6:14)
Few Enter the Ark (Genesis 7:7)
Noah Finds Grace with God (Genesis 6:8)
Noah Saved by Faith (Hebrews 11:7)
Saved by Water (1 Peter 3:20)
Saved by Obedience (Genesis 6:22)
A Cleansed, Renovated Earth (Genesis 8:15-19)

The 2nd Coming of Christ (Matthew 24:37)

Widespread Sin (Romans 3:23)
Long Waiting Period (2 Peter 3:3-9)
Warned by Gospel Preaching (1 Corinthians 1:21)
Sudden Judgment (1 Thessalonians 5:1-4)
Few to be Saved (Matthew 7:13,14)
Saved in the Church (Ephesians 5:23)
Christ Builder of the Church (Matthew 16:18)
Few Come into the Church (Matthew 22:14)
Find Grace in Christ (Romans 5:2)
Saved by Faith in Christ (Romans 5:1)
Saved by Baptism (1 Peter 3:21)
Christ Saves the Obedient (Hebrews 5:8,9)
Inherit a Heavenly Land (2 Peter 3:12,13)

John Thiesen, long-time missionary to Malawi, is now the Managing Director of *The Voice of Truth International*, Spanish Edition.

Miracles



Hugo McCord

A "miracle," says Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, p. 1147, is "an event or effect that apparently contradicts known scientific laws and is hence thought to be due to supernatural causes, especially to an act of God."

The New Testament uses the word *semeion*, a sign, to describe a miracle. The word is used "of miracles and wonders by which God authenticates the men sent by him, or by which men prove that the cause they are pleading is God's" (Thayer, p. 573). The New Testament uses the word "signs" (and so, "miracles") to validate the work of Jesus and of His apostles.

1. Jesus' Miracles

Jesus' first miracle was to replenish the supply of wine at a wedding in Cana (John 2:1). Six jars of water, each holding 20 or 30 gallons, Jesus instantly converted into "good wine" (John 2:10). This miracle was "*the beginning of signs*", proving that Jesus was God in the flesh (John 1:1,14; 2:11).

A list of some of Jesus' miracles, substantiating His deity, during His years of personal ministry on the earth (possibly 25-30 A.D.), is given by the four gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The list is climaxed by Jesus' dead body coming to life again (Luke 24:44-48). "*Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. If each was written, I suppose the world itself would not have room for the books*" (John 21:25).

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2. The Apostles' Miracles

The "*all authority in heaven and in the earth*" that the Father had given to Jesus before he left the earth (Matthew 28:18), Jesus exhibited in giving miraculous powers to the apostles: "*after he had given orders through the Holy Spirit to his chosen apostles*" (Acts 1:2).

Then "*many wonders and signs [miracles] were done by the apostles*" (Acts 2:43), beginning with their being baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5) on Sunday, Pentecost Day, possibly May 28, A.D. 30. "*Tongues like fire were distributed, and rested on each one of the [apostles]. All were filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages as the Spirit empowered them*" (Acts 2:3,4).

People visiting Jerusalem, from some 20 or more nations (Acts 2:7-11), exclaimed, "*We hear them [the apostles] speaking in our languages the mighty acts of God*" (Acts 2:11).

The apostles were the official representatives of Jesus, binding and loosing the guilt of sin (Matthew 16:18; 18:18; John 20:23): "*What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven*" (Matthew 18:18, ASV, and other versions). The ASV translation gives the meaning that the binding and the loosing

would follow the apostles' pronouncement. A more accurate translation says that the binding and the loosing spoken of by the apostles had already taken place in heaven: "*whatever you bind on the earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you release on the earth will have been released in heaven*" (FHV). The apostles' words were merely a ratification, by the direction of the Holy Spirit, of what had already been done in heaven.

The apostles' miracles were associated with casting out demons, taking up serpents, drinking deadly beverages, and healing the sick (Mark 16:17,18). The apostles "*went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them,*" and confirming the word of the 'great' salvation "*by signs and wonders and various miracles and gifts from the Holy Spirit, according to his will*" (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4). The apostle Peter raised the dead body of Dorcas (Acts 9:26-41).

The apostles could transmit miraculous powers by laying their hands on people (Acts 8:16,17). The fact that "*the Holy Spirit was given*" miraculously "*through the laying on of the apostles' hands*" (Acts 8:18) very likely explains how Mark, James, and Jude became empowered to write New Testament books, and Luke to write two New Testament books, and someone (we

BIBLICAL QUESTIONS

know not who) became empowered to write the book of Hebrews. Indeed, Christ "gave some to be apostles" (including Matthias, Acts 1:26; 2:1-4), and likely he gave some, through "the laying on of the apostles' hands" (Acts 8:18), "to be prophets, some evangelists, some shepherds and teachers" (Ephesians 4:11). "He did this to equip the

and the [miraculous] gift of languages" would "cease" (1 Corinthians 13:8). In the meantime (30-57 A.D.), the time Paul was writing: "Now we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when the whole arrives" [96 A.D.], when the 27th New Testament book would be written, "the part" (piece-meal) "will pass away" (1 Corinthians 13:9,10).

Thus, when the last apostle died, and the last person on whom apostle's hands had been laid (Acts 8:18) died, miracles ceased. The written word had been confirmed (Mark 16:20).

saints for a work of service, for the building up of Christ's body, until we all [62 A.D.] reach the oneness of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God [96 A.D.], to become grown up, to have a measure of Christ's fullness" (Ephesians 4:12,13).

3. Cessation of Miracles

But the apostles did not live forever! The miraculous powers they had received from Jesus ceased with the death of the apostles. Biblically, there was no successor for any apostle. Thus, when the last apostle died, and the last person on whom apostle's hands had been laid (Acts 8:18) died, miracles ceased.

The miraculous "gifts of prophecy and of knowledge," wrote Paul in 57 A.D., would "pass away,

"Now we see indistinctly in a mirror; but, then face to face. Now [57 A.D.] I know in part, and then [96 A.D.] I shall know fully, even as I am fully known" (1 Corinthians 13:12).

The 27 New Testament books, completed with the writing of the book of Revelation about 96 A.D., were miraculously written (2 Timothy 3:16), and they have great power to save souls (1 Corinthians 1:21; James 5:19,20), but they have no miraculous power in them! In God's plan, all miracles have ceased! †

Hugo McCord was for many years a professor of Bible at Oklahoma Christian University, but is now retired and lives in Vancouver, Washington, USA.

WHO WERE THE NEPHILIM?

Wayne Jackson

What is your understanding of Genesis 6:1-4, particularly the "Nephilim" mentioned there?

The context of Genesis 6:1f speaks of the "*sons of God*" who took wives of the "*daughters of men*." Subsequently, the record reveals that in those days "*the Nephilim were in the earth*." From these phrases, it has been assumed by some Bible students that certain fallen *angels* ("sons of God") mated with women of the earth ("daughters of men"), and that to these unions was born a sort of hybrid race called the Nephilim.

There is no evidence for this theory, and it runs counter to numerous biblical facts. Note: (1) Angels are spirit beings (Hebrews 1:14). As such, they do not consist of flesh (Luke 24:39); hence, they are incapable of a physical relationship. (2) Christ Himself plainly said that angels do not marry (Matthew 22:30; Mark 12:25; Luke 20:34-35). (3) There is, in fact, nothing in Genesis 6:4 that indicates the Nephilim were offspring of the marriages suggested in this context. (4) The word "Nephilim," usually identified as "giants" (ASV footnote), is a term of uncertain meaning. Likely it suggests the idea of strength and

prowess. It is used in Numbers 13:33 of certain inhabitants of Canaan whom the Israelite spies encountered in their survey of the land. The context indicates that they were merely "*men of great stature*" (verse 32), and nothing hints there that they were the progeny of angels.

The most reasonable view of Genesis 6:1f is that the allusion refers to the fact that some men, from the godly lineage of Seth, called "*sons of God*" (an expression denoting those in covenant relationship with Jehovah — cf. Deuteronomy 14:1; 32:55), began to pursue fleshly interests, and so took wives of "*the daughters of men*," that is, those who were unbelievers.

Is there any principle that we can learn from this? The subsequent context seems to suggest that it was this carnal trend that ultimately brought the Flood — which prompts this interesting question: If the "*sons of God*" were angels, how did the Flood serve as a judgment upon them? Can angels drown? †

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

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** I was an educated man, a scribe (Jeremiah 36:26).
2. **90** My father's name was Neriah (36:32).
3. **80** I lived in Judah, in the last years before the Babylonian captivity began (37:1).
4. **70** I became the friend and supporter of God's prophet, Jeremiah (32:12).
5. **60** In my office as scribe, I recorded what God instructed Jeremiah to say, and I also read it to the people (36:4,6).
6. **50** Jeremiah was hated and rejected as a traitor because he said that Babylon was an instrument of discipline for Judah, in God's hands, and that they should surrender to Nebuchadnezzar (37:13-21).



7. **40** When Jehudi read for me the prophecies God had given to Jeremiah, King Jehoiakim cut up the scroll, burned it, and had both Jeremiah and me thrown into prison (36:23).

8. **30** Being so well connected, as far as my family was concerned, I began to feel self-pity that my situation was so bad, simply because I had done the right thing (45:2,3).

9. **20** After chastising me for my self-pity, God promised that I would escape with my life (45:5).

10. **10** With the passing of the centuries, the Jewish people came to respect me greatly. My seal, which reads, "_____ son of Neriah the scribe" was found in Jerusalem.

See answer on inside back cover.

My Score _____

THE STUDY OF BIBLICAL CHARACTERS

Dalton Key

The Bible contains the names of 2,930 people. These characters provide us with a rich and wonderful opportunity for study. Some of them are merely mentioned by name and we know little, if anything else, about them. Others have their stories told in brief fashion. And still others are major biblical characters, their lives chronicled more exhaustively in Scripture.

The Word of God is a profitable book, suited for our teaching, our correction, and our instruction in righteousness, so that we will be thoroughly equipped for every good work in life (2 Timothy 3:16). *"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning"* (Romans 15:4). As we study the lives of those men, women, and young people of the Bible, we learn vital principles for life and living which the Lord would have us know.

G. C. Goodpasture, beloved preacher of years past, once commented, "There is no more fruitful

subject of study than the great persons of the Bible. We can best appreciate principles when we see them expressed in terms of human conduct."

It is true that abstract ideals are more vividly etched upon our minds as we see them lived out in the lives of Bible characters. We think of faith, and our minds go back to Abraham. We ponder patience, and we remember Job. We consider complete and unwavering obedience, and we think of Noah. Undaunted courage is expressed in the lives of the Hebrew youths, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Daniel.

Emerson observed, "All history revolves itself very easily into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons. Properly there is no history; only biography." This is especially true with respect to the history of the Bible. †

Dalton Key is the editor of *Old Paths* and preaches for the North Amarillo congregation in Amarillo, Texas, USA.



An Example in Prayer

Betty Tucker

Stephen was a man of valor. He did great wonders and signs among the people (Acts 6:8). Then he was accused of blasphemy, and brought before the Sanhedrin.

When asked, "*Are these things so?*" Stephen referred them to

Abraham. He pointed out that God called Abraham, and he pulled up stakes and moved (Acts 7:4).

Stephen spoke of Joseph and Moses. But, he concluded that "*the most high does not dwell in temples made with hands...*" (Acts 7:48).

BIBLE CHARACTERS

Now, Stephen's tone changes. "*Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears...!*" (7:51). His accusers saw the point: God does not need a temple. But they did not like what they heard.

They were cut to the heart, and gnashed at him with their teeth (7:54). Can't you see them waving their fists, coming at him like a pack of wild animals? They were in a frenzy. They dragged him out of the city and stoned him to death!

Stephen's Prayer

God permitted Stephen to glimpse into heaven. He saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God (7:55). That vision gave Stephen the courage to accept these awful things that were happening in a world too harsh to endure.

Stephen's prayer was simple — "*Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.*" One last request this man of valor made: "*Lord, do not charge them with this sin*" (7:60). With these quiet words, this first Christian martyr passed from a hateful and sin-sick world into that eternal world.

His last words beautifully demonstrated the Sermon on the

Mount: "*Pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you*" (Matthew 5:44).

When our little day is done on this earth, do we not look forward to meeting Stephen? What lessons we learn from one who was willing to forgive even the very ones who took his life!

This forgiving spirit is the quality that distinguishes heroes. It enables man to "*turn the other cheek*" when he is wrongfully treated.

It keeps him from lashing out at his enemies and enables him to forgive. It helps him to endure the trials of life, and it molds his character into an attitude that is a habitual pattern of thought.

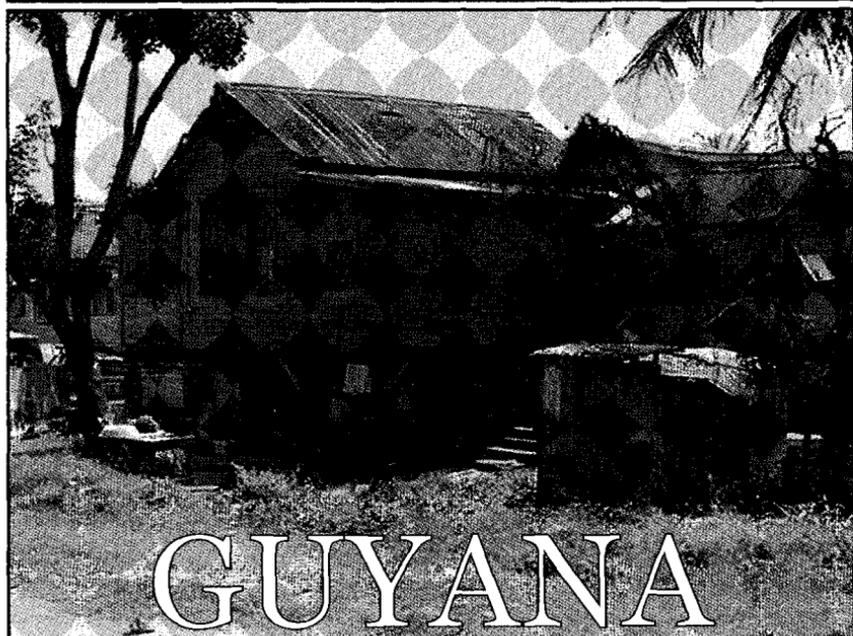
Let us remember Stephen and learn from him to have a forgiving spirit. It is not a lesson easily learned. It may take us a lifetime to truly be able to forgive those who wrong us. But, it will serve us well in this life, and point us toward heaven. †

Betty Tucker is a Christian writer living in Linden, Tennessee, USA.

O Thou who art at home
Deep in my heart,
Enable me to join you
Deep in my heart.

— The Talmud

FROM THE HEART OF ...



Dr. Demar Elam

Guyana is a nation of lush tropical rainforests, said to be the world's most virgin. The narrow coastal belt is intensely cultivated, with approximately 90% of the 759,000 population living in that region. Guyana is referred to as the "land of many waters" because of its many rivers and streams. The coastal belt lies several feet below sea level and at high tide is dependent on an elaborate system of dams, walls and canals to protect it from the Atlantic Ocean. From the coast, the land rises to a plateau of dense equatorial forest and swamp where bauxite, diamonds, gold and manganese are mined.

Guyana gained its independence from the British on May 26, 1966 and became a Republic within the Commonwealth on February 23, 1970. For many years the political situation in Guyana has been unstable and at times turbulent. There is political unrest between the races, particularly the blacks and East Indians.

Guyana is often called, "land of six peoples" because its population is composed of the original Amerindians, as well as people of African, Indian,

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

Chinese, Portuguese, and British descent, all retaining elements of their original cultures. Guyana seems, though, to have a fairly high tolerance of the different traditions in their land. Even in the small villages you will often see a Hindu temple, a Muslim mosque, Catholic and various "Protestant" church buildings.

The people are challenged economically. Under the leadership of President Hoyte's "Economic Recovery Program", privatization has helped the economy, but Guyana's high debt to foreign creditors has impacted their ability to import needed items, thus reducing production and increasing unemployment. All of these things bring hardships. This is unfortunate in one sense, but perhaps adversity causes realization of the need for God. He has made a tremendous **OPEN DOOR OPPORTUNITY** in Guyana. Writing to the Corinthians Paul stated, *"For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries"* (1 Corinthians 16:9). This describes Guyana today.

Open Door Ministry— Bringing Many Sons to Glory in Guyana

The Open Door Ministry team decided to enter Guyana in July of 1997. We traveled to Village No. 64 to assist them with congregational problems they were experiencing. We took in eyeglasses for the people and over-the-counter medicines. Guyana is a third-world country and the wonderful people there need such assistance. This was the beginning of what has proven to be a fantastic harvest of souls for Christ. Because the needs of the people were so great, we returned home and began preparing a large crate of clothes to be sent into Matthew's Ridge to aide the poor and needy. Many of the children there had no clothes at all. Under the leadership of the Lake



Stan Hogan and Demar Elam baptized this couple after personal studies with them.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .



Demar Elam distributing Bibles among new converts.

Tarpon Church of Christ in Tarpon Springs, Florida, clothes, food, Bibles and religious materials were gathered.

In 1999 we took 21 workers to Guyana, with the mission-minded elders of the West Hobbs St. congregation fully supporting 12 foot-soldiers with that

group. We had 58 baptisms, two restorations, one prayer request, and three marriages (the people of Guyana living in adultery are willing to come out of it and marry or live apart). A new congregation was established and it was named the Village No. 2 Church of Christ.

The Open Door Ministry joined forces with the "Partner's in Progress" program and together we conducted 15 crusades in 2001. When the closing crusade ended we had baptized a total of 279 and two new congregations had been established.

A new 40'x 80' tent and 200 chairs were purchased for the June 2002 crusades. In the Bartica Village No. 2 congregation we had 59 Baptisms, seven restorations, and three marriages. God is good! The building we had previously rented could no longer accommodate the church, so we merged it with the Cumberland church, located just nearby. The combined group is now called the Canje Church of Christ, because of their location in the Canje region.

A new building scheme (residential area, to Americans) that will accommodate thousands of people is being built at Tuschen. The wise and dedicated elders at Westside (Griffin, GA) have purchased two lots, side-by-side, planning for the establishment of a new congregation there in 2004.

Although the Open Door Ministry is involved in many open door opportunities around the world, all participants are working hard in Guyana bringing many sons to glory! †

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

Down the East Coast in Guyana

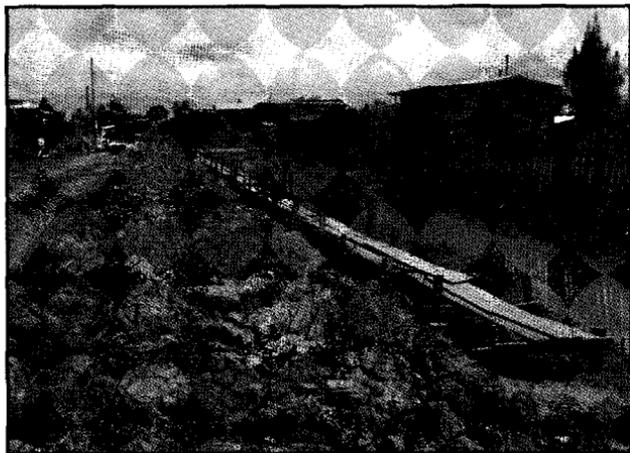
Jim and Sue Crabtree

In 1990, Wayne Pruette convinced us to go to Guyana for a two-week campaign. We went and have been going since that time, mainly to the coastal areas of Berbice and Corentyne. We found that great crowds of two to three hundred would attend tent revivals, and there would be people waiting to be taught. One could teach all day and into the night. People were open to the gospel and eager to hear. We remember Wayne saying that we needed to get to them before television arrived and while they wanted to hear!

The first year we were there, a lady was converted from a village where there was no church, so we decided to go to that area and establish a church the next year. A team went from Citronelle, AL, led by Brad Brumley, to Rose Hall, and there a church was started. We met one woman who became a Christian, in spite of the fact that her husband was a strong Hindu and told us that he would die a Hindu. To our joy, he became a Christian about three years later and now he preaches for the church at Rose Hall/Williamsburg.

We have worked in campaigns, medical missions, follow-up, vacation Bible schools, conducted marriage seminars and have gone from door-to-door. We have given out at least 1000 correspondence courses. The people are very loving, hospitable and receptive. From all the money, energy, and time that has

been given to Guyana, it seems that the churches should be stronger and there should be more Christians. However, when we read the parable of the lost sheep, we remember that one soul is worth it all. The work has been a very rewarding experience for us. †



Getting into various villages and homes is very difficult when there are heavy rains. Often villages can be reached only by boat or air, or by walking.

Report of the Work in Northwest Region 1 **James and Sara Cox**

We went to Port Kaituma in Northwest Region 1 of Guyana in March, 1995. We had a very warm reception as we taught the Good News of Jesus Christ. People obeyed the gospel — and we saw immediately that we needed help! We asked Kishore Etwaroo and his family to move to the Port Kaituma area. By the time the Etwaroo family arrived, we had groups meeting in Port Kaituma and Turu Mission, located on the canal bank of the Kaituma River. We had been to Seabi, a river village about 30 miles away, and found interest there.

We spent 3 years in the region of Port Kaituma, establishing, teaching and strengthening the churches. After our work there, we moved down-river to Hosororo to help teach and strengthen a few small, struggling churches that had been established since 1994.

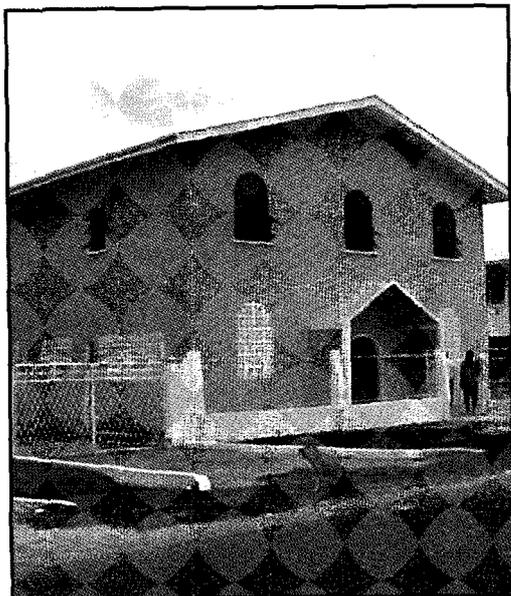
Teaching is a slow process in Northwest Region 1. Many of the people have not had opportunities for much schooling, and therefore, are non-readers or poor readers. We are trying to start a program involving more of the native men in Bible training for leadership roles. We invite men from each congregation in the region to come and study the Bible four times each year for a week at Hinterland Bible Learning Center at Hosororo. The only qualifications required to attend are a desire to learn more of God's word and a desire to learn how to please Him.

Transportation is a difficulty in the region. There are a few mini-buses and the roads are often muddy and impassable. Walking, or riding a dugout log, are the usual modes of transportation. Some of the churches are located on the riverbank and can be reached only by boat. Our greatest need is for faithful men who will teach in the learning center. †

Guyana International Bible Institute **(Georgetown)** **Jerry Cantrell**

Guyana International Bible Institute (GIBI) was established in 1985 to train preachers and church leaders and to assist in the maturing of the young congregations in Guyana. Bennie Mullins directed the school from 1985-1994. In 1994 Jerry Cantrell became the director. In January 2003 he turned that job over to his son, Kyle Cantrell, and he assumed the role of Chancellor.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .



Since 1985, 138 students have graduated from GIBI. Twenty-seven of these have been women. A few have modeled Demas and have forsaken the church, but the majority of the graduates have remained faithful. There are 41 men preaching full-time for 83 congregations in Guyana, which means there is still an urgent need

This building houses **GUYANA INTERNATIONAL BIBLE INSTITUTE** in which young men and women are trained in Bible knowledge and Christian values.



Chapel gathering at GIBI. 138 students have graduated from this training school since 1985. Forty-one men are now preaching full-time.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

to train more faithful men to preach the Gospel of Christ. Several of our graduates have immigrated to the Caribbean Islands, Canada, Suriname and the USA where they are preaching or serving the Lord in other capacities.

While there is a great need for training preachers, the more urgent need is to train “leaders”. Over the past 35 years, no elders have been appointed in any congregation in Guyana. The church moves aimlessly because there are no leaders to give it direction. We are now focusing on developing “leaders”, and much of our teaching will be directed toward the older men in the local congregations who can qualify for the eldership. GIBI has several teachers who are themselves qualified as elders, equipping them with wisdom and experience to share with these older students.

We still solicit qualified teachers from the USA to come and help us. †

Amerindian Mission

Jerry O. Davidson

Since 1990, the Fairhope Church of Christ has been involved in evangelizing Guyana. Over these years, about forty of our members — men and women — have gone on the mission trips. From the beginning, a vital part of our emphasis has been to provide Bibles for the new Christians. Brethren have contributed funds to purchase hundreds of giant print Bibles for \$10.00 each. Some religious leaders in Guyana do not want their members to have a Bible. We want to saturate the Amerindian villages with copies of God’s Word!

Over the past thirteen years, we have been able to bring Guyanese citizens to the United States to have surgery unavailable there. Through appeals to doctors and hospitals in the Mobile, Alabama area,



Both old and young participate in the campaigns led to Guyana by various American brethren, and all take part in the teaching of contacts.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .



Brethren have been generous in donating clothing, medicines, Bibles, class materials, song books, computers and other needed items for use in Guyana.

we have been blessed to get surgeries and treatment without charge. Cornea transplant surgery, orthopedic surgery, plastic surgery, lens implant surgery, and vocal cord nodule removal surgery have all been provided.

Also, there is an extreme need for eyeglasses. In Guyana, eye care is so expensive it is not even an option for most of the Guyanese. Through various agencies and individuals, we have been able to take 300-400 pairs of eyeglasses each mission trip. If you didn't have glasses, could you read this article?

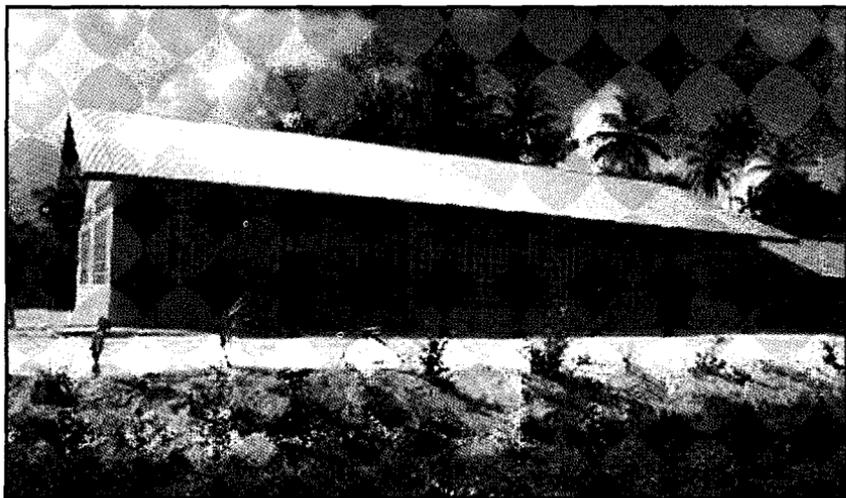
All who have gone on a mission trip to Guyana are aware of the extreme poverty of these people. We have become involved in shipping crates filled with usable items for distribution. To date, ten forty-foot containers have been delivered to around thirty congregations. The contents are not only given to the Christians but are also shared in their communities. This is a very labor-intensive task, but the benefit to our brothers and sisters in Guyana, and the appreciation they express makes it worth all the effort. The Fairhope church has been assisted in this effort by congregations in Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Tennessee and Arkansas who have provided

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

clothing, shoes, song books, communion trays, Bibles, computers, and other usable items. Several congregations have contributed funds to pay for the shipping costs. Also local businesses and people in our community have been very generous in their donations to this effort. A large supply of medicines and medical equipment have also been donated to the hospitals in Guyana as gifts from the churches of Christ.

In 1997, we were offered an opportunity to have a thirty-minute television program on DTV-8 in New Amsterdam. At Fairhope, we produce a program entitled "A Return to God's Biblical Foundation" with the help of a retired television engineer, which airs in Guyana each Sunday night at 8:00 p.m. We thank God for this amazing opportunity to preach His Word. Also, each Monday night, the television program "Preaching the Gospel with James Watkins" is on at 8:30 p.m.

In 1998 our focus shifted from working in New Amsterdam to working in the Amerindian villages in the interior of the country. When we began planning the mission trips to these villages, we learned that there was no electricity, no running water, no hotels and no restaurants, requiring that we take in air mattresses and other necessities for daily living. For the most part, traveling to these villages (over one hundred and fifty in the jungles of Guyana, and they all speak English!) is by boat or airplane. We have been



With monetary help from the U.S., Guyanese congregations provide the manpower to construct cement block buildings like this one.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .



The Lord's church is growing among the various ethnic groups of Guyana.

involved so far in working in eight: St. Cuthbert's Mission, Moraikobai, Paramakatoi, Monkey Mountain, Orealla, Moco Moco, Lethem, and St. Ignatius.

Our group first went to St. Cuthbert's Mission, an Amerindian village about 60 miles from Georgetown, the capital city. There we found a small group of Christians meeting with Ernest Dundas, who graduated from the Guyana School of Preaching. In 1999-2001, three campaigns were conducted with 149 people being taught and baptized into Christ in this village. Following our first effort, plans were laid to build a new church building. In 2000, this 33' X 80' concrete block building was constructed of hand-mixed cement! Finances for the materials were donated by churches in the U.S. and all of the work was done by the local brethren — men and women!

The Lord's Church was established in Moraikobai Village in October, 2001 with brethren from Guyana, Trinidad and the States working together, during which time fifty-one precious souls were baptized into Christ. Troy Anthony, a graduate of the Surinam School of Preaching, began working with this congregation of new-born babes.

Before our return in March 2002, twenty-nine additional members were added to this body, and during our campaign forty-four more were baptized, including twelve couples who were married and became Christians. Also

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

of the twelve village leaders, six are now members of the church of Christ.

In September, 2002, a church building like the one in St. Cuthbert's Mission was built in Moraikobai, with Ernest Dundas and other brethren helping with the construction, which was accomplished with one major difference — a cement mixer had been sent to Guyana in one of the shipping containers!

As our work of evangelizing the Amerindian villages of Guyana continues, we have new Christian brothers who want to preach the Gospel. We decided to set up the World Video Bible School in each new village as the church is established. With a generator, television set, DVD player and the curriculum from World Video Bible School, local men can study God's Word and learn to become preachers. Also, all the members of the church and individuals who are not Christians (yet!) are taking advantage of this program.

My growing desire to help with the evangelization of the Amerindian villages has prompted me to resign as pulpit minister of Fairhope and to devote full time to that work, under the oversight of the Fairhope elders. †

Amerindian Mission

Harold Cook

After several years of participating in crusades in Guyana, I decided about seven years ago to concentrate my mission work among the Amerindian people. At that time very little mission work had been done in the interior due to the difficulty in reaching the Amerindian reservations and the lack of Amerindian preachers. You must be an Amerindian to live and work on the reservations.

The Lord has richly blessed our efforts to bring the Gospel to these isolated tribes, in villages located primarily on rivers and creeks. To aid in this effort we have purchased boats and motors for the use of our congregations. Where, in the past, it took two days to paddle their dugout canoes to a town, they can now get to a doctor or store in a few hours. At the present time, we are working with five Amerindian preachers who have a combined Sunday morning attendance of about 350.

The Bell Shoals congregation has been sending teams to Guyana for several years, conducting VBS for the Amerindian children. The teachers have a culture shock in going from America to the jungles of Guyana, where there are none of the conveniences we take for granted. Despite this, they are always eager to return to Guyana and spread God's Word. †

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

Dixie's Guyana Impressions

Dixie Elam

The tarantula spider creeping around overhead on the rafters as I slept was definitely memorable, but not the most memorable event from my recent mission trip to Bartica, Guyana.

I have dozens of memories, mostly good ones. There were a few inconveniences, such as not having any electricity after 5:00 in the morning and no hot water at night for showers. There was so much rain and humidity that everyday was a "bad hair" day and our clothes were almost continually damp either from rain or humidity or both. Our shoes got so dirty from stepping in unavoidable mud that they had to be scrubbed with a stiff brush each night. There were periodic reports of "banditos" in Georgetown and on the river. However, these hardships were more than offset by the overwhelming love and sincere appreciation we received from the Guyanese people.

If you would not be happy to crowd into a hot van, with no seat belts, and fly down a dirt road full of enormous potholes, then Guyana may not be for you. But if you would like to teach Bible stories to some of the most unspoiled children on God's good earth, come go with us.

If you would be fearful of traveling down a South American river at night in torrents of rain so thick that the shoreline is completely obliterated, and skimming along in a boat with almost no lights, then you won't enjoy a mission trip to Bartica, Guyana. But if you would love to have an opportunity to share the Gospel with some of the most generous people you'll ever meet — people who love to give despite their own deep poverty — then start making your plans to go to Guyana.

I can promise you that if you enjoy good clean fun and fellowship and laughing with other Christians, you'll love a mission trip to Guyana. If you love to see some poor lost soul obey the Gospel because you were there, you'll love a mission trip to Guyana.

I began this article by saying that the spider was not my most memorable event in Guyana. The memory that will stay with me the longest was the way Christian people who have met for the first time can join hands and work together just as if they have known each other for years. That is what being "brethren" means. We can have instant joy and love for one another when we are working together to share the Gospel in a country like Guyana that has been in spiritual darkness for years. Come go with us! †

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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 500 copies (for \$500 plus shipping) special-printed of the next issue, with our (or our missionary's) address, to be shipped directly to us or to him, as per instructions.

NAME _____

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ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

Verse Search — 40 (from page 27)

1. Corinth.
2. Aquila and his wife Priscilla; because of the edict of Claudius, commanding all Jews to leave Rome.
3. Both they and he were makers of tents by trade, so they not only lived together but they also worked together.
4. Silas and Timothy from Macedonia; he reasoned with both Jews and (proselyted) Greeks in the synagogue every Sabbath.
5. "...*compelled by the Spirit*"; he testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ.
6. He shook his garments and said, "*Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.*"
7. *Crispus; ruler of the synagogue; hearing, believed and were baptized.*
8. "*Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent: for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.*" The Lord.
9. A year and six months.
10. The Jews rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat.
11. "*This fellow persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.*"
12. He refused to make judgment based on Jewish religious law.
13. They caught Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat, but Gallio ignored them.
14. Brethren; Syria; Aquila and Priscilla.
15. Cenchrea; vow.
16. Ephesus; Jerusalem; Antioch; Galatia; Phrygia.
17. A Jew, born in Alexandria, eloquent in the Scriptures; knew only the baptism of John; was taught by Aquila and Priscilla; vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.



Baruch

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Guyana



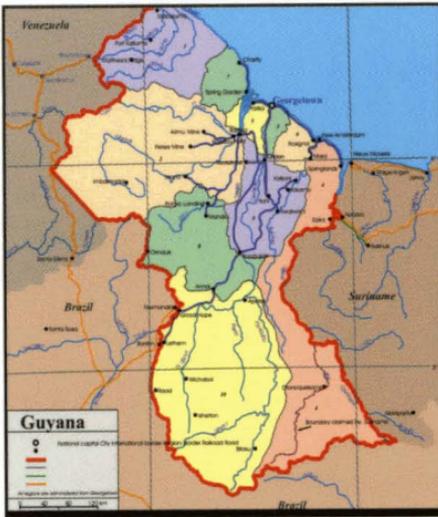
Government: Republic

Head of State:

President Bharrat Jagdeo

Head of Government:

Prime Minister Samuel Hinds



Secular Facts:

Location: North coast of South America, on the Atlantic Ocean, bordered by Venezuela, Brazil, and Surinam.

Land Mass: 76,000 sq. mi. About the size of Great Britain or Idaho.

Population: 759,000, with 28% of the population under 15 years, and 5% over 65.

Major Cities: Georgetown.

Language: English, Amerindian dialects.

Literacy: 95%, education is free, ages 5-14.

Religion: Christian, 57%; Hindu, 33%; Muslim, 9%.

Ethnic Groups: E. Indian, 49%; black, 32%; mixed, 12%; Amerindian, 6%.

Economy: *Arable land:* 2%; *Agriculture:* Sugar, rice, timber; *Mining:* Bauxite, gold, diamonds; *Labor force:* 39% agriculture, forestry, fishing; 24% mining and manufacturing; *Per Capita Income:* \$4,800; *Communications:* TV's: 197 per 1000; Radios: 454 per 1000; *Telephones:* 155,200; *Transportation:* 24,000 private cars; *Health:* Life expectancy, male, 60; female, 65.3; infant mortality: 38.4 per 1000 live births.

Monetary Unit: Guyanese Dollar.

The Church:

Congregations: Approximately 83, with several hundred Christians worshipping each Lord's day.

History: Early efforts by churches of Christ to evangelize Guyana included mission trips and World Bible School ads in the local newspaper. In 1982 Wayne Pruette and other U.S. preachers, accompanied by four graduates of the Trinidad School of Preaching, entered the country to follow-up on study requests that had, by that time, exceeded 1000. Nine were baptized, and John Lewis, a graduate of TSP, settled in Georgetown.

In 1983 Don Starks led what developed into a lengthy series of campaigns, taking American Christians to Guyana for two to three weeks, in order to teach new contacts and to strengthen those who had already been converted. The idea of such small, short-term campaigns spread in American churches, with the result that many Christians have had a taste of "mission work" and a "foreign field" through going and teaching in Guyana.

Because of the extreme poverty, medical missions have also played a great role in evangelizing the country. "Partners in Progress" took a team there in 1987 and has continued to supply medicines as well as the services of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, preachers and teachers.

Front Cover: Sleeping babies — their parents are now Christians.