

Restitution

Journal



My Opinion

By Kent Ross, Editor

We live in a bountifully blessed land with a wonderful heritage based upon a faith in God, but something has gone terribly wrong. Newspaper columnists write about it, television commentators wring their hands about it, but no one is offering much in the way of suggestions.

It perhaps is simplistically naive to suggest that we've been searching in the wrong areas, and looking in the wrong direction. Pastor Wally Winner, of Guthrie Grove, recently spoke in Atlanta Bible College's chapel service and referred to Jeremiah 6:16ff,

This is what the Lord says: Stand at the crossroads and ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, "We will not walk in it." I appointed watchmen over you and said, "Listen to the sound of the trumpet!" But you said, "We will not listen." Therefore hear, O nations, observe, O witness what will happen to them. Hear, O earth: I am bringing disaster on this people, the fruit of their schemes, because they have not listened to my words and have rejected my law.

We need to call an entire nation back to seeking for God, but before we do that we must do something else. We must be called back to God as a church, and as individuals. It is not correct that we stand in judgment and waggle our fingers at others when there is a great spiritual emptiness amidst us.

When churches fight internally,

fire pastors, split into separate congregations, it is evident that our spiritual walk is not what it ought to be. That is not aimed at anyone in particular, but at all of us in general. Which of us feel comfortable that we're searching the scriptures, as did the Bereans? Which of us can feel any empathy for Paul's admonition for "praying unceasingly?" Where are the elders and deacons that can and do meet together to delve deeply, with their pastors, into the Word of God? Where are the young people so concerned about spirituality that they organize themselves to be Bereans, after Acts 17:11?

Thank God that there are some that yet remain and are being faithful to the calling of Christ, but I fear they are precious few. We need grandparents to love their own children and grandchildren back to this walk. We need parents to model that lifestyle that "Loves the Lord with all their heart and soul and minds." We need young people who want to be spiritually-minded and are willing to pay the price.

It appears that a time of persecution is coming in which we will be tested for our faith. Anthony Buzzard reports that some 4,500 in Malawi hunger to know God's Word for man. May that be true for us, that we might once again "hunger and thirst for righteousness;" that we might with the Psalmist say, "Oh, how I love your law. I meditate on it all day long"; that we might be more completely the Church of God . . . loving not just "with words or tongues, but with actions and in truth" (I John 3:18).

Kent Ross

Reader's Response

TO THE EDITOR:

I appreciated Gary Burnham's article in the RESTITUTION HERALD. Its appraisal of the problems facing today's pastors was both realistic and much-needed.

Gary's call for pastors to "build a leadership team in the church to share the burden of ministry" is right on target. This will be a difficult task, however. Old traditions die hard, and the belief that "the pastor" does the work of the church will certainly be one of them.

I believe that the most effective way to build these leadership teams in our churches is to abolish the distinction we have traditionally made between "pastors" and "elders." Pastors are elders *and* elders are pastors (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Pet. 5:1, 2). As such, no New Testament church was ever run by a single pastor attempting to shoulder all the burdens of the church; the pastors of first century churches were always plural in number.

Furthermore, the job of pastors is not primarily to minister, but to equip God's people to minister (Eph. 4:12). The practical corollary of "the priesthood of all believers" is that in the Christian church, there is no "laity"; our churches are not to be filled with "laymen" but with "ministers." I wholeheartedly concur with Gary that we must "settle for nothing less than the church being a body — as God intended — each member serving according to their God-given gifts."

— Mark Mattison

THE Restitution

HERALD

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THE RESTITUTION HERALD advocates:

- the oneness of God (1 Cor. 8:6);
 - the Holy Spirit is God's power (Acts 1:8);
 - Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son (Matt. 16:16), and is our Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5);
 - the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16);
 - the mortality of man (Job 4:17; Psa. 146:4);
 - the near return of Christ (Acts 1:11), and life only through Him (Col. 3:3);
 - the literal resurrection of the dead (John 5:28);
 - the immortalization of those in Christ (1 Cor. 15:53, 54);
 - the destruction of the wicked (Rev. 21:8);
 - the final restoration of Israel as the Kingdom of God under the kingship of Christ (Luke 1:32);
 - the church to be joint heirs with Him (Rom. 8:17), and Israel to be made head over Gentile nations (Isa. 60:1-3);
 - the "restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21).
- It also firmly advocates repentance and immersion in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), and a consecrated life as essential to salvation.

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Our Christian Heritage

A young man came to America to look for his greatness. He looked in the courts. He looked in the voting chambers. He looked in the businesses. Finally, he found the fire in our pulpits.

If you have travelled across our nation, have you passed through a village so small that it didn't have at least one church? Even small villages may have several churches.

If you compare the currency from every nation, you will find that we are the only one that has "In God We Trust" printed on every coin and bill.

Our nation is at the crossroads. If we want to retain this Christian heritage, we must follow the courage of our forefathers and get involved, even if it is only to write a letter to our congressman or begin each day by reading the Scriptures.

Exactly what kind of men were responsible for the founding and leading of our country?

Christopher Columbus authored a volume called *Book of Prophecies*. In it he said, "It was the Lord who put into my mind (I could feel His hand upon me) the fact that it would be possible to sail from here to the Indies. All who



By C. E. Lapp,
Troy, OH

heard of my project rejected it with laughter, ridiculing me. There is no question that the inspiration was from the Holy Spirit, . . . [which] comforted me with rays of marvelous inspiration from the Holy Scriptures. . . .

"I am a most unworthy sinner, but I have cried out to the Lord for grace and mercy, and they have covered me completely. I have found the sweetest consolation since I made it my whole purpose to enjoy His marvelous presence. For the execution of the journey to the Indies, I did not make use of intelligence, mathematics, or maps. It is simply the fulfillment of what Isaiah had prophesied.

"No one should fear to undertake any task in the name of our Saviour, if it is just and if the intention is purely for His service."¹

The Mayflower compact written by the early Pilgrims stated, "In the name of God, amen. . . Having undertaken, for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian Faith . . . [we] do by these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic . . ."

On board the *Talbot* in 1629 the Puritan John Higginson wrote, "We go to propagate the gospel in America."

Governor John Winthrop preached from the decks of the flagship *Arbella*: "The Lord will be our God and delight to dwell among us, for we consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us."

However, prosperity led to a dry formal religion. Michael Wigglesworth wrote,

Our healthful days are at an end
And sickness has come on
From year to year because our hearts
away from God are gone.

Around 1740 the preaching of Jonathan Edwards and George Whitfield were instrumental in kindling the Great Awakening. Whitfield blamed the lukewarm clergy: "The reason why congregations have been so dead is because they had dead men preaching to them. How can dead men beget living children?"²

Patrick Henry spoke to the House of Burgesses on March 23, 1775: "Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death."

The Declaration of Independence of 1776 says, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. . . ." Yet evolution is now taught in most of our schools, and there have been penalties inflicted on those who

have promoted creation. However, in the last few years evolution has been disproved. The missing links are still missing, etc., but the message has not gotten to the schools.

Thomas Jefferson spent many evenings in the White House condensing the gospels into a volume called *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*. However, he was a humanist and a Unitarian and strenuously objected to the inclusion of phrases in the Declaration of Independence referring to God. But Congress prevailed.³

In 1789, when our first president, George Washington, was sworn in, he put one hand on the Bible and one on his heart. It is now a tradition which President Clinton also followed.

Pastor Henry Muhlenberg, a Lutheran minister and contemporary of

Washington, said, "His Excellency General Washington . . . does not belong to the so-called world of society, for he respects God's word, believes in the atonement through Christ, and bears himself in humility and gentleness. Therefore, the Lord God has also singularly, yea, marvelously, preserved him from harm in the midst of countless perils, ambuscades, fatigues, and has hitherto graciously held him in His hand as a chosen vessel."⁴

John Quincy Adams converted the Psalms into hymns.

Woodrow Wilson read a chapter of Scripture every night.

Theodore Roosevelt annotated passages in the King James Version which he read regularly.

Dwight Eisenhower was a Quaker. His mother could quote more than

1,000 verses from memory, and his father could read the New Testament in the original Greek.

Harry S. Truman had a collection of 500 Bibles.

Abraham Lincoln said, "It [the Bible] is the best gift God has given to man. All the good the Savior gave to the world was communicated through this book."⁵

If our church is to go forward, I must become dedicated. I must tithe (the only promise given with a challenge). I must read my Bible, and I must pray. A fire starts with one match. ^{PH}

¹David Allen Lewis, *Prophecy 2000*, New Leaf Press, PO Box 311, Green Forest, AR 72638, pp. 106-107.

²David Allen Lewis, pp. 108-109.

³David Allen Lewis, p. 110.

⁴David Allen Lewis, p. 112.

⁵*Guideposts*, Feb. 1992, p. 17.

FEATURE

The Perilous Times of the Last Days

PAUL THE APOSTLE wrote his last epistle, Second Timothy, while he was a prisoner in a Roman dungeon. Tradition says he was beheaded shortly thereafter. In this letter to Timothy, Paul gives us a detailed description of the perilous times of the last days.

"You must face the fact: the final age of this world is to be a time of troubles. Men will love nothing but money and self; they will be arrogant, boastful, and abusive; with no respect for parents, no gratitude, no piety, no



By Hollis Partlowe,
Oregon, IL

natural affection; they will be implacable in their hatreds, scandal-mongers, intemperate and fierce, strangers to all goodness, traitors, adventurers,

swollen with self-importance. They will be men who put pleasure in the place of God, men who preserve the outward form of religion, but are a standing denial of its reality. Keep clear of men like these" (2 Tim. 3:1-5, NEB).

The apostle gives us 19 moral signs indicative of the closing of this age. Being warned, we must prepare for a turbulent journey ahead. Make no mistake the closing days of this world system will be stormy.

The story is told of an Arab who awakened in the middle of the night and was very hungry. He lit a candle, and began to eat dates that were beside his bed. He took one, held it up to the light, and saw that it had a worm in it. So he threw it out of the tent. Then he took another date, held it up to the light, saw a worm in it, and threw it away. The same thing happened a third time. Then he blew out the candle and gobbled up the rest of the dates.

(Continued on Page 15)

The Development of Biblical Unitarianism

Part One: Europe

Defining Biblical Unitarian Theology
Biblical Unitarian belief can be briefly summarized as follows:

- That the Father alone is the One True God;
- That Jesus Christ is the *human* son of the One True God, (but NOT God the Son);
- That Jesus was miraculously begotten of a virgin mother by the power of the One True God;
- That before His begetting Jesus did not exist in personal form, either as part of the Trinitarian God, or as the Arian spirit-being. Rather He was planned by God from the beginning, and spoken of by the prophetic Word of God as the *future* MAN who would become the saviour of sinners and inherit the world.
- That Jesus began His existence (as all other men do) at His birth, when the Word spoken by God was fulfilled.
- That Jesus was not the two nature "God-Man" of the Trinitarian creeds, but was born with only one nature (human).
- That as a man, Jesus was made (created) exactly like all other men, mortal, subject to temptation, capable of sin, and needing to learn obedience.
- That the source of His perfect obedience was not in some inherent "hybrid divinity," but in His perfect love for the One True God, His Father.
- That the Holy Spirit is not the third person of the Trinitarian Creeds, but the divine presence and power of God, through which He works to achieve His purpose in His creation.

This theology is almost always accompanied by the doctrine of "Conditional Immortality." A proper understanding of human mortality is highly relevant to our appreciation of the complete humanity of Jesus and the

RECOGNIZING Unitarians Today
We use the term "Unitarians" to describe those who reject the doctrine of the Trinity, in favor of belief in God as one person only. However, to avoid confusion we also need to define the difference between *two* sorts of Unitarianism. In this article we are mainly concerned with *Biblical* Unitarianism, and we use that term to avoid confusion with the other stream, which we will call *Rationalist* Unitarianism. Historically, they began as virtually identical in theology and practice.

In past times all Unitarians appealed to the Scriptures, interpreted by reason. However, in the 19th century, the Rationalist Unitarians began to lay rather more emphasis on *human* "reason" and personal experience, than on belief based on an inspired Bible. Most contemporary Rationalist Unitarians now follow this line. They can usually be identified by the use of the actual word "Unitarian" in naming their churches.

Today, amongst the Rationalists it is no longer essential to believe in a personal God, the Virgin Birth, miracles, or the inspiration of the Bible.



By Allon Maxwell,
Australia

For some, absolute standards of morality are rejected and left to individual "conscience." Many are "Universalist" in their expectation of salvation. What began as a Christian movement is no longer entitled to that description.

Biblical Unitarians, on the other hand, have survived as Bible centered groups, maintaining a determined stand for faith in the One True God, His Virgin born Son, and the truth of the Bible. The Biblical Unitarians do not reject reason, but they do accept the authority of the Scriptures as the sole source of revelation about God. Although their theology is Unitarian, in the older sense of the word, many are careful about using the word at all, lest they be confused with the Rationalists and Universalists. In this article we shall concentrate our attention on the *Biblical* Unitarians.

meaning of salvation. This doctrine is briefly stated below:

- That God (the Father) alone has immortality.
- That mankind does not possess inherent immortality, or an "immortal soul."
- That the human race is mortal and that death is a sleep in which no part of the human personality survives the death of the body.
- That for all men (including Jesus,) immortality is a conditional gift, imparted at the resurrection of the body, and reserved only for those who believe and obey God.

All reject infant baptism and most, (but not all) practice believer's baptism.

Origin

Unitarian theology is not new. It dates back to the beginning of time. The God who created the world is defined by Moses as ONE. There is no other (Deut. 6:4). The writers of the New Testament were also Unitarians. Jesus Himself confirmed the unitarian theology of Moses, when He directed attention to the worship of the same ONE LORD (Mark 12:29-30). Belief in Jesus as a subordinate being, distinct from God, continued to be the majority

opinion until well into the third century. The doctrine of the Trinity, as we know it, did not exist

Suppression

Belief in a Jesus who had no real humanity, but was a pre-existent spirit who merely assumed the appearance of a man, surfaced towards the end of the first century. It was this heresy which motivated the Apostle John to write his Gospel and his three epistles, repudiating the teachers as "antichrists" and labelling the doctrine itself as "the spirit of antichrist" (1 John 2:18; 4:3).

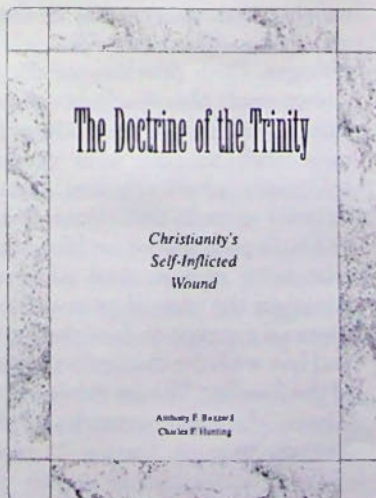
However, despite John's rejection, the doctrine of a pre-existent Jesus continued to invade the Church. It gradually changed form until, in the Fourth century, Jesus was elevated to a place in a "Tri-une" Godhead. In the theological jargon of the "scholars," this *new* Jesus is said to have "impersonal human nature," without actually being a human person!

Attended by political intrigue and much bloodshed, the doctrine of the Trinity became the compulsory majority opinion. By Imperial decree it was enforced under threat of death. Although the initial suppression was primarily directed against Arians, other "heretics," including Unitarians, also found themselves under threat.

For more than a thousand years, evil men in the Trinitarian mainstream used this evil law to justify the murder of "heretics." Both Arianism and Unitarianism were effectively suppressed.

It is doubtful whether Unitarian teaching was ever quenched totally, for the true light is never overcome by darkness (John 1:5) Darkness is certainly the proper biblical label for the murderous hatred in which the majority sought to destroy all opposition (1 John 2:8-11; 3:13), thinking that they did God service (John 16:2)! (Twentieth-century "cult busters" beware!)

However Unitarianism does not surface again to any major degree, in the visible history of the church, until the 16th century. This is perhaps understandable. In the face of potential martyrdom, most Unitarian believers would have kept a fairly low profile! Possibly also, the relatively few who might have existed were lost sight of in the broader general persecutions by the mainstream church against other "heretics." It was the custom to burn the writings of "heretics" and to erase their memory from the record, as far as possible. Whatever the facts, this writer does not have access to enough of the history to do more than speculate (perhaps a little wishfully,) about this period. **RF**



Now Available From Atlanta Bible College . . .

The Doctrine of the Trinity

By Anthony Buzzard and Charles Hunting

A biblical and historical examination of the doctrine of the Trinity, including a discussion of a contemporary scholarly trend towards biblical unitarianism. Of special interest to former Jehovah Witnesses, and those exiting the Way International and the Worldwide Church of God. Essential reading for all in search of the God of the Bible. 8 1/2 x 11 format, tape-bound, 174 pages, copious footnotes and bibliography. \$9.95, plus \$1.05 postage. Please order from: Atlanta Bible College, P.O. Box 100,00, Morrow, GA 30260. 1-800-347-4261.

REMEMBERING THE PROMISE



By Steve Jones

Out of no-where comes the sudden realization that God's promises are trustworthy, and we are comforted again. It's as if we had forgotten that God is faithful. A petty crisis steals our comfort. We meditate upon it and it looms larger. Before long it dwarfs God Himself and we feel as if we live in a universe gone mad, spinning out of control.

But God is faithful, even when we aren't (2 Tim. 2:13). He calls to our mind some promise of the Bible. It has been familiar to us. It is a truth, forgotten in the midst of trouble.

We recall that God is in charge of this universe, and that "nothing will be impossible with God" (Luke 1:37). We may even chide ourselves that we forgot such a thing. Our Father parted the sea for the Israelites, sent fire from heaven at Elijah's prayer, struck down the host of Sennacherib and raised Jesus Christ from the dead. And we fret over trivia.

It may also occur to us that God is sovereign. We see God enthroned in the heavens (Psalm 93:1), though He

has been silent for a little while. The earth's inhabitants are as grasshoppers before Him (Isa. 40:22). No one can hold back His hand and prevent Him from helping us (Dan. 4:35). The situation is perfectly under His control. He works all things together for good to those of us who love Him (Rom. 8:28).

Maybe we dwell for an unhappy time without a sense of His presence in our lives. Our prayers become stilted, our commitment to the gospel, lackluster. Jesus, salvation, the eternal Father, the power of God, all appear theoretical.

Then, once again, the promises of God come to mind. "I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you" (Isa. 41:10). "I will never leave you or forsake you" (Heb. 13:5).

On another occasion, temptation threatens to swallow us up. The lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life suddenly become more interesting than virtue.

Then God sends Scripture into our thoughts and we are encouraged—encouraged enough to keep fighting. "For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace" (Rom. 6:14). "You will cast all our sins into the

depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19).

Sometimes we fall. We make a mess of things. We wonder how God can ever bless us again. A little of this is appropriate. We should feel miserable after we sin, as David, Peter, and others have. But before we lapse into excessive sorrow, heaven sends a message of grace and mercy: "But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love" (Neh. 9:17). "If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

I believe we could greatly accelerate the encouragement process by studying and meditating upon Scripture. The more we meditate on such things, the more likely we are to remember them at an opportune time. Jesus defeated the devil in the wilderness with the Scripture—He knew His Bible. If we want to emerge victorious we must live, move and have our being in God's promises.

This can only happen as we study, as we call to mind the promise of our covenant-keeping God. Ours should be the attitude of the Psalmist: "I treasure your word in my heart so that I may not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11). ❧

MAKING SENSE OF LIFE'S CHANGES



By Michele Millard

Change is in my thoughts. The office window I look through has changed. This summer, I transitioned from one job to another, and from one perspective to another. I previously was

counseling on campus, helping people deal with issues. My new task, training students to help other students, is proactive and involves groups, marketing, public relations and administration. I have also moved from part time to full time. This is a lot of "shifting gears."

I am not alone. A thousand freshmen are on campus in a new environment. Fall itself shows change with turning leaves and shortening days. We all change—that may be one of the few

consistent elements of life.

Why can change be difficult? Both positive and negative changes create stress. I see several reasons for that:

1. Even positive change is more work. A new routine does not come naturally.
2. Changes create losses. A baby's birth means loss of freedom and sleep; a new job means the loss of familiar places and people.
3. Change requires discomfort. William Bridges, in *Transition—Making Sense of Life's Changes*, gives the analogy of a trapeze artist. He releases one bar, and until he grabs another he is in transition. You let go of the familiar, go through insecurity, and then grab something that helps you feel secure again.
4. Many areas of life can change at once, taking even greater energy for response.
5. Some people are more adaptable, and handle changes more smoothly than

others who need structure and routine.

Positive aspects to change include new challenges, new opportunities for growth and learning, and a fertile ground for developing faith. Christians have a supernatural resource for dealing with changes in life—the One who never changes. Faith provides stability when things seem chaotic. It keeps us tuned into ourselves, understanding that we may need to take care of ourselves spiritually, physically and emotionally in order to make transitions. Faith gives us God's perspective on life—changes that seem monumental to us may be trivial in the eternal perspective. Faith gives us courage to face the unknown, and live with the discomfort of letting go of the familiar. We are reminded of Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever. ❧

CAN THE FLU BE USED AS A MINISTRY?

Recently, I was very ill with the flu. It all began early on a Monday morning. It was a day full of appointments and commitments, nothing unusual for me. I had decided to make chili in the crockpot for the family dinner. But before I could finish the task, I was running to the bathroom. I had all the typical symptoms of the classic flu. It didn't take me long to realize I would have to rearrange my day! My two daughters became my nurses. Alisa (10) made me tea and dry toast and took my temperature frequently. I dozed in and out most of the day, when I wasn't running back and forth!

Tuesday morning I was worse. Alisa was really worried. She sat next to me on the bed and asked, "How long are you going to be sick?" I told her I had hoped to be better today. Tears swelled in her eyes as she approached her second question. "Are you going to . . . will you . . ." "Die?" I asked her. Alisa fell apart at this point and she didn't make me feel any better! I reassured her that with her excellent nursing skills I'd be fine. Sarah (13) was a great secretary. She talked to my boss for me, took notes over the phone and answered phone calls all day. Poor Jim is not used to coming home

and doing my work too, but he pitched in as well.

Late Tuesday evening I got much worse, and Jim talked me into going to the emergency room. The doctor confirmed it was a viral infection I would just have to ride out. I was sent home with the comforting thought that it could take another couple of days for me to feel some relief.

I am not a quitter but I had to give in to this bug and let other people handle my life for me. I had to let others care for me. When you are a care-giver it is hard to accept care from others. But I had hit bottom and really didn't care about all the other "things" in my life. I had to think about getting better and everything else would take care of itself. So I began to cancel or postpone everything. Even if I thought I might feel better in two or three days I still rearranged. This bug had finally gotten my attention — or was it the Lord? Did He want my attention? He could have sent me to Hawaii for a week — I would have listened! Or would I?

The weekend was approaching. The four of us had planned to go to my in-laws in Pennsylvania for the annual family picnic. I was in no condition for travel, food or people. I graduated to solid food on Friday and although I was very weak, I

could get around slowly and do simple things for myself. I had not had a fever for 24 hours and I felt that finally this bug was giving up. I thought Jim and the girls should go on up to Pennsylvania. It was only for overnight and I could call friends if I needed help.

The weekend alone gave me time to think about a lot of things. First, how blessed I am in my family. It really was hard on them to have me down and out for so long. But it gave the three of them a chance to minister to me. I had never thought of the flu as an opportunity for ministry, but stranger things have happened I suppose! I had many nice phone calls from friends concerned about me. But most important, it gave time for my Lord and I to spend quality time together, time for me to listen and takes notes.

I still say if He had given me tickets to Hawaii I would have listened! Thank you Lord for the time to rest and listen to You. I love you Lord. **RH**



By Janice Hart

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO OUR YOUNG ADULTS?

In the past several months I have preached at a number of churches, ranging from Methodist to United Church of Christ. The same unsettling phenomenon exists in these churches as in many of our churches. Hardly any young adults (ages 18-35) were present at the services.

The pastors said that this was normal, which raises questions. What has happened to our young adults? Where are they? How can we bring them back? I may possibly answer the first two questions. But the third will need to be answered by each church. When they answer that question an aggressive campaign to retrieve those young people can begin.

Recently I have had a number of job offers in management with industries in my area. I turned them down, due mostly to one factor. Many industries

are compelling the workers to put in significant overtime. Many of our young adults do not have the option to decline such employment.

One company works 12 hour shifts, three days on and two days off, then the cycle repeats. There would be lots of overtime pay, but little time for a family life, and worship of God on a Sunday would be rare. At another plant 10 hour shifts were the norm, with Saturday work nearly always mandatory. Sleep in after working six days in a row, or go to church — it should be obvious which option is being selected. At one factory I saw a young church member whom I had not seen for quite a while. He told me his average work day was 15 hours, including Saturdays and Sundays. Plus he had worked several "24 hour shifts." (Not long afterward he changed jobs.)

Most likely many employees, throughout the country, are having the demands

made of them that I found in Marshall County, Indiana. Scripture says "the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6:10). Have employers opted to work people for such long hours because of profit? The obvious answer is "yes."

When working such long hours there is little time for extras. One of the "extras" is the worship of God. That may not seem logical to you, but I can only recommend to the church leadership to look around. If not many young adults are involved in the church, find out where they are. Once you do you can try to bring them back into the church, even if they are working those long and tiring hours. **RH**



By Don Nunemaker

The Trinity Doctrine and Salvation

“YOU CAN BE wrong about a lot of things, but if you are wrong about who God is, you are wrong enough to lose your soul for all eternity.”

Those were the words of a well-know cult hunter who was consigning to eternal punishment all who disbelieve the Trinity dogma. In one utterance, he had severed all Unitarians from the body of Christ. The words hit me with a due sense of alarm as I listened on my cassette player to his tapes on “the cults.” After all, I didn’t want to lose my soul. I wanted to be orthodox, not cultic.

For years, I had this sentiment burned into my conscience. Anyone who dared question the Godhead of Christ was lost, damned, deceived and not to be listened to. The psychological barrier between me and the truth of Scripture was nearly impenetrable. No wonder. It was a barrier of fear and intimidation. Such walls fall hard.

It should come as no surprise to us that orthodoxy uses such tactics to keep its fold hedged in. The Protestant denominations can ill afford to have church members truly practice the *sola Scriptura* of the Reformation. The Trin-



By Steve Jones,
Jonesboro, GA

ity is built on flimsy biblical evidence — a stray proof-text here and there. To examine the doctrine critically is to kill it. Orthodoxy apparently knows this and resorts to terrifying threats to prevent any real scrutiny.

It is my contention, however, that the orthodox claim is not only manipulative, but false. Even if the Trinity dogma were true, a belief in it could never be a requirement for salvation. This is the case for several reasons. The first is that *the doctrine is not plainly revealed in Scripture*. Does God bind redemption to a teaching that is not spelled out for us unmistakably? Would He place our salvation in such a precarious position? We deny that this is consistent with the one whose “statutes are trustworthy, making wise the simple” (Psalm 19:7).

Even the most ardent defenders of the Trinity will admit that the doctrine is not taught explicitly anywhere in Scripture. They confess to us that this crucial tenet, necessary for eternal life, is “inferential.” It must be dug out and pieced together by theologians. After much cross-referencing, highly selective proof-texting and philosophical explanation, this doctrine so necessary for our salvation slowly emerges. The question here is almost too obvious to ask: Why didn’t Jesus or the writers of the New Testament just come out and state it plainly? We would expect this of a doctrine so indispensable for our eternal well-being. To obscure it would be to imperil us all, especially those whose intellects cannot readily extract this “inferred” teaching from the pages of Scripture.

Some may object that the collective minds of the Church settled the matter long ago and it remains for us to simply receive it. But the corrupt medieval church made this same claim about transubstantiation, the adoration of Mary and indulgences. The Berean spirit will not tolerate the idea: “believe it because the Church in general does.” Thoughtful Christians respond to biblical proof, not appeals to tradition and fallible church councils. Protestants, especially those enamored with Luther’s heroic stand, should be ashamed to employ such an argument.

A second reason that the Trinity, even if true, could not be necessary for salvation is that *it gives the philosopher and scholar an advantage over the common folk*. As stated earlier, the Trinity is a doctrine that must be constructed carefully in the scholar’s study. It is not readily discovered by the unintelligent. But this would hopelessly contradict Paul’s teaching: “Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?” (1 Cor. 2:20). Innate wisdom

and genius are not necessary to discover the saving truth of the gospel. The dullest intellect as well as the most acute can savingly embrace the message of Christ. This is part and parcel of the gospel's universality.

The Trinitarian claim is a tacit denial of this wonderful truth. We must understand the notion of "hypostasis" and the plurality of persons in the Godhead, they say. We must plumb the depths of Nicene innovations, constructed almost wholly from philosophy, if we wish to inherit life eternal. We must bear in mind that Jesus sometimes speaks as man, sometimes as God — even though the Scripture never indicates this for us. And how many can comprehend such things? It is a complaint from Trinitarians' own lips that so few orthodox Christians can understand, articulate and defend the Trinity dogma. This is surely an indictment against the idea that such a doctrine could be necessary for salvation.

Thirdly, the Trinitarian claim is false because *it contradicts the simple conversion accounts in the New Testament*. Nowhere do we ever hear Jesus or the apostles demanding belief in the Trinity before a sinner can be saved. Jesus told Zaccheus, the woman at the well, the woman weeping at his feet and many others that they had received life eternal. Their faith had saved them (Luke 7:50, e.g.). What was the essence of this faith? Did Jesus announce to these saved people that He was God the Son, Second Person of the Trinity? Did He tell them that He was "fully man and fully God" and demand that they believe it on pain of damnation?

When Saul was converted on the Damascus road, there was not one word mentioned to him about Jesus being the "God-man." Not a syllable about "One God in Three Persons." Certainly Saul, as a monotheistic Pharisee, would have needed such instruction. Jesus gave him none. How then, could such a teaching be necessary for salvation? Peter preached the gospel to Cornelius' family and they received the Spirit. Again, the Trinity doctrine is missing from his sermon. There is nothing in the entire account about Jesus being of "one substance" with the Father. Despite this, the family praised God, spoke miraculously in other languages and was baptized into Christ. They were saved without the Trinity dogma. This is the case in all the sermons of the book of Acts.

Finally, the Trinity doctrine cannot be required for salvation because *it is not among those things that are clearly stated as non-negotiable, saving truths*. John says that we must believe that Jesus is the Christ (1 John 5:1), come in the flesh (i.e., human — 1 John 4:2), the son of God (4:15). It is significant that he says nothing of a required belief in his Godhead. Why would he omit such a truth, if it is a truth?

Most biblical examples of Christians shipwrecking their faith involve immorality, not the failure to receive certain metaphysical propositions. Demas loved the world and forsook Paul. Others denied the Lord and turned grace into lasciviousness. But

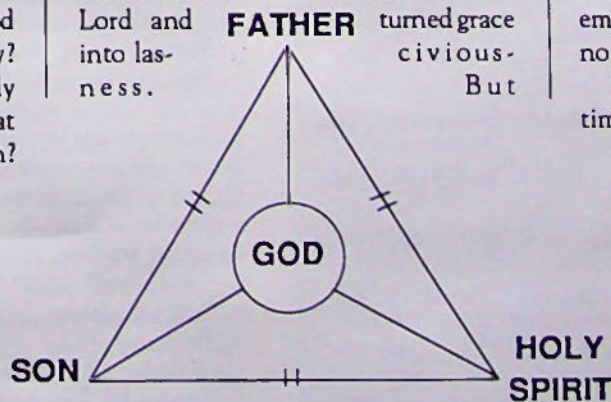
nowhere do we read that someone was lost because he did not believe in the Tri-unity of God. Never.

Some Trinitarians try to build a case from John 8:24: "I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am [the one I claim to be], you will indeed die in your sins" (John 8:24 NIV). They will point out that the original reads only "I am," a designation God gives Himself in Exodus 3:14. But the translators, themselves Trinitarians, admit that "I am" implies "I am he," or "I am the one I claim to be." To assert that Jesus here is claiming to be the very God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob does not fit His declarations in this very chapter. For example, He says that the Father *sent* Him (v. 16), implying subordination. He says that He "came from God" (v. 42), implying a distinction from the one God. Jesus also says, "If I glory myself, my glory means nothing" (v. 54a); but if He were God, His glory would be perfectly meaningful.

In this chapter supposedly teaching His underived Deity, Christ says that the Father — not Himself — is the God the Jews claim as their God (v. 54b). Amazing that the requirement of believing in Jesus as God is surrounded by statements making Him a subordinate man distinct from the God of Israel!

After all is said, orthodoxy's threats disappear like the morning fog. They are based on nothing but party spirit and love of dominion. They are hollow, empty, unscriptural and should frighten no one who loves the truth.

Let no Unitarian Christian be intimidated by such rhetoric. **RE**



TV'S DANGEROUS INFLUENCE

I am among those impressed by your January 29 feature articles on the tremendous cost of TV ads during the Super Bowl: Pepsi-Cola, \$7.2 million for six brief spots, Alamo Rent-A-Car, Inc., \$2.7 million for one 90-second spot, etc.

And why these massive expenditures, at the 1994 rate of \$900,000 per 30 seconds? Obviously, it is the expectation that even these brief exposures will influence the viewing public to return their ad investments by the purchase of their goods or services — and probably we will.

But how ironic that much of that same TV industry continues to reassure that same American public that seconds, minutes, even endless hours of TV violence do not influence the viewing public toward violent behavior, nor our children [toward accepting violence and thus becoming] more inclined to become brutal toward their peers, parents, teachers and other authority figures.

If the TV industry is right in this respect, then corporate America is wasting its money, but if Pepsi and others are right, then the TV industry should be called to accountability for the torrent of violence, promiscuity and individual and corporate abuse which it models to an impressionable public.

—Carl Mesle, in a letter to the editors of the *Kansas City Star*

A NATION UNDER GOD: ARE WE INDEED?

At the present time, do you think religion as a whole is increasing its influence on American life or losing its influence?

Increasing	21%	Both	2%
Losing	65%	Unsure/refused	8%
Neither	4%		

Would you say that you have been born again or have had a born-again experience—that is, a turning point in your life when you committed yourself to Jesus Christ? If yes, was this a sudden experience, a gradual experience, or both?

Yes/sudden	13%	No	51%
Yes/gradual	20%	Unsure/refused	3%
Yes/both	13%		

Do you believe in God?

Yes	95%	Unsure	2%
No	3%		

Which of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible?

A) The Bible is the actual word of God to be taken literally, word for word.

B) The Bible is the inspired word of God, but not everything in it can be taken literally.

C) The Bible is an ancient book of legends, history, and moral precepts, recorded by man.

Actual word	34%	Other	2%
Inspired word	46%	Unsure	3%
Legends	16%		

TELEVISION VIEWING

Analysis: Americans are watching nearly two hours more television per day than they did three decades ago. Today, the average American watches nearly 50 hours a week of television—ten hours more than the average work-week.

Perhaps more important than the quantity of television is the quality. Today, there is more brutal violence and explicit sex on television than ever before. It has been estimated that by the time the average child reaches age 18, he will have witnessed more than 15,000 murders on television or in the movies. Research shows that children and even teenagers have a difficult time distinguishing between what is fiction and what is reality. According to researchers, "... heavy exposure to televised violence is one of the causes of aggressive behavior, crime, and violence in society. Television violence affects youngsters of all ages, of both genders, at all socioeconomic levels and all levels of intelligence. . . . It cannot be denied or explained away." In addition, a 1991 survey revealed that only 2 percent of respondents thought that television should have the greatest influence on children's values, but 56 percent believe that it has the greatest influence—more than parents, teachers, and religious leaders combined.

— Bennett, William, *The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators*, p. 21

Average Daily Television Viewing (per household)

Year	Average hours per day
1960	5:06
1965	5:29
1970	5:56
1975	6:07
1980	6:36
1985	7:07
1990	6:55
1992	7:04

— Source: Nielsen Media Research

Do you think a person can be a good Christian or Jew if he or she does not attend church or synagogue?

Yes	82%	Unsure	7%
No	11%		

Some people describe themselves as having traditional moral values and as accepting God's authority as recorded in the Bible. Others describe themselves as having moral values drawn from a more individualistic search for meaning. Which of these best describes you?

Traditional	51%	Neither	2%
Individualistic	38%	Unsure	5%
Both	5%		

From a *U.S. News and World Report* survey, cited in *Religious Broadcasting*, July-August 1994.

YOUR VALUES AND THE VALUES OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

By Gary Bauer

If you are like most Americans today, you are skeptical about Washington, D.C., and rightly so. However, I am not sure that you realize just how different your values are from the values that prevail in the nation's capital.

You believe that government is a limited instrument. Washington, D.C. believes that government can create a utopia on earth.

You believe in a thing called "truth." Washington, D.C. believes in the all-importance of moral relativism.

You believe in the importance of faith, community, and family. Washington, D.C. believes in the all-importance of the state and the "new world order."

You believe that America could once more be the shining "city upon a hill" that its first settlers strove to build. Washington, D.C. believes that it is that city.

Am I exaggerating? In recent years, you have been able to see all sorts of indications that the values of Washington, D.C. are not yours. You have watched, for instance, how the men and women who produce the goods and services we all benefit so tremendously from have been branded as "greedy capitalists" because they have dared to succeed. These are the individuals who have driven the economic machine that makes possible all the grand schemes of Washington bureaucrats, but they have been condemned nonetheless.

You have watched while the Boy Scouts of America — of all people! — have been treated like criminals. You see, the Boy Scouts are stubborn as well as backward. They still insist on following all sorts of outmoded practices, like using the word "God" in their oath of allegiance and refusing to allow homosexuals to serve in leadership positions. So they have been hauled into court after court in California, Illinois, and other states to answer for their crimes. And President Clinton has punished them by refusing to address their annual jamboree (the first time a sitting president has done so in this century).

You have watched while the condom (not Pepsi) has become the symbol of a new generation — a symbol deliberately and enthusiastically promoted by Washington, D.C., with your tax dollars, in the name of "sex education." Neither you nor your children can escape it because it is everywhere — on radio, on television, in films, in magazines, in schools.

So, you say, "What can I do?" The real answer is to fight for the things you care about. For most Americans, life isn't executive orders, congressional legislation, agency regulations, or judicial decrees. It's a helping hand and good neighbors. It's bedtime prayers and lovingly packed lunch boxes. It's hard work and a little something put away for the future. No government commands these things. No government can replicate them. They are done naturally, freely, out of love, concern, and commitment.

Stand for those things. Believe in those things. Insist that the politicians who ask for your votes defend those things without shame or embarrassment. Teach your children those things. Inspire them to love what you love and to honor what you honor. If you will do these things, then this great experiment in liberty will survive, and we will again be that shining city upon a hill.

"GOOD MORNING, MRS. JONES"

By Gary Bauer

You probably worry about the economy, about jobs, about the deficit. You worry about earning a living wage, about owning a home, about saving for your children's education. But you should worry most of all about what has gone wrong with the heart and soul of America.

Washington, D.C. does not have the answers — it isn't even asking the right questions. The right questions were asked recently in a letter to the *Los Angeles Times* written by a school teacher. Mrs. Jones told the editors that she had taught in the public school system and enjoyed a successful and rewarding career. It was her habit to enter the classroom each day and address her students by saying, "Good morning, class." The students would respond, "Good morning, Mrs. Jones." Then they would get on with the day's tasks. This happened for many years until she finally retired.

In the fall of 1993, Mrs. Jones decided that it was time to go back to teaching. She was, of course, a bit nervous about facing students again, so she prepared very carefully. She was relieved when she finally entered the classroom and saw all the bright, young faces. Certainly, the clothes and the hair styles were much different, but she reminded herself that these things always changed from year to year. With growing confidence, she said in a friendly tone, "Good morning, class." And a student sitting in the front row shouted, "Shut up, bitch!" All the other students laughed.

The first question Mrs. Jones asked the *Los Angeles Times* editors was: "What happened in America between 'Good morning, Mrs. Jones' and 'Shut up, bitch?'" And her second question was: "Who is going to do something about it?"

BLAME IT ON SOCIETY

By Gary Bauer

Not too long ago there was a trial in Washington, D.C. that made the national news. It involved a school teacher who had initiated sexual relationships with three of his students. Once, he would have been a pariah; now, he is a celebrity who has gone on the talk show circuit to smugly defend his actions. First, he alleged that although he knew there was a law that prohibited him from sleeping with his students, he thought that no one paid any attention to it any more. Second, he alleged that his conduct was excusable because girls are a lot more sexually active these days. Third — and this is "modern man" in all his glory — he alleged that he suffered from a mental disorder and could not control himself when forced to be around beautiful young females. It was not his fault, you see, it was society's.

How things have changed! My father was an uneducated man. He dropped out of school in order to help his family through the Great Depression. I don't think he ever finished reading a book in his life. But he gave me some of the soundest advice a parent can give a child. He told me again and again: "You are going to make mistakes. Everybody does. But when you make a mistake, take responsibility for it. That's the mark of a man." What happened in America between the time when people owned up to their mistakes and when they started blaming it on society?



Peace: Rhetoric or Reality?

I AM A CHRISTIAN pastor who is part of an adventist group. That means I am anticipating the literal return of the Lord Jesus Christ to reign and rule the earth [The word advent means "coming."] The divine promise given at His ascension was, "This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

In harmony with my biblical adventist hope I always have an outlook on news events which may be fulfillments of important prophetic signs of Jesus' coming. One of those important indicators occurred the last few days of July when King Hussein of Jordan and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel signed a declaration on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, D.C.

That action made Bible prophecy students think of 1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3: "For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, 'Peace and safety!' then destruction will come upon them suddenly." The term "day of the Lord" refers to God's day of judgment and the coming of Jesus Christ. It will be preceded by



By Stephen Bolhous,
Fonthill, Ontario

pleas and promises for "peace and safety."

Consider the rhetoric of peace we have heard regarding the nations of the Mideast. In 1979 the Camp David Accord was signed by US president Jimmy Carter, Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin. It was a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. In 1991 at the Madrid peace conference the super-powers decided to become catalysts in compelling the Mideast parties to negotiate with one another and work out a peaceful settlement to their differences. In 1993 an agreement was ratified between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO] granting self-government for Palestinians. Now, in 1994, a declaration has been issued by Israel and Jordan renouncing the "historic belligerency" of a 46 year long state of war and pledging to work

for a formal peace treaty.

It is interesting to note that the peace agreements of 1979, 1993, and 1994 were all formally signed at the same White House desk. At the most recent ceremony there was an abundance of peace rhetoric. Rabin: "Another nightmare of war may be over." Clinton: "A new currency of hope is surging through the Middle East." Hussein vowed to bring an end to bloodshed and sorrow between Jordan and Israel.

Peace is finally coming to the troubled Middle East, say the politicians. The words of Bible prophecy are blaring like fire alarms in the minds of all who anticipate the return of Jesus — "while they are saying, 'Peace and safety!'" While they are continually talking (and talking, and talking), then comes sudden destruction, the day of the Lord begins.

Does the reality of peace agree with the rhetoric? Consider these three Bible truths about peace and the future,

1) The Bible warns of a FALSE PEACE which is connected to the emergence of the Antichrist (the impersonator of the true Christ and King). The Old Testament prophet Ezekiel portrays Israel in the end times as a land of unwallled villages, at rest, living securely without walls, bars or gates (38:11). It is then that the sudden destruction of an invasion from the north interrupts their false peace. [That force from the north may be former member nations of the Soviet Union. War may be their antidote to a failing economy.] Daniel (9:24-27) foretells the making of a covenant (treaty) between Daniel's people (Israel) and a "prince" (Antichrist) for one "week," literally for one "seven." The most logical way to understand this time period, and the way that best harmonizes with the whole of Scripture, is a period of seven years. Look for some sort of seven year treaty between Israel

and an international politician. [Will there be a White House ceremony using the same desk again?] The false peace of that covenant will end with "the wing of abominations . . . one who makes desolate." "While they are saying, 'Peace and safety!' then destruction will come upon them suddenly."

2) The rise of *ANTI-SEMITISM* means the reality of peace does not fully exist for the Jewish people. The *Toronto Star*, July 23 issue, reported an explosion in Buenos Aires:

About 100 people died in a bomb blast at Argentina's main Jewish center, making it the worst attack against Jews outside Israel since the holocaust.

[The center was used for worship, administration offices of Jewish social agencies, and the tracing of Nazi war criminals who escaped from Germany to Argentina.] On July 26 Reuter's wire service reported that the Israeli ambassador to Germany had visited the former Nazi death camp at Buchenwald to express his country's outrage over a weekend rampage by neo-Nazi skinheads. About 20 neo-Nazis had stormed

through the camp shouting "Sieg Heil," throwing stones at buildings and giving the Nazi salute. He stated: "We are concerned because we are seeing these things in different parts of Germany too often to regard them as chance." The reality of peace does not match the rhetoric. Anti-Semitism is growing around the world. As it grows true peace for Jews is in global decline.

3) Only the *PRINCE OF PEACE* will bring lasting peace to our troubled world. The ancient prophets foretell the peaceful reign of Jesus, the Messiah, when he comes again.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold your king is coming to you . . . the bow of war will be cut off and He will speak peace to the nations (Zechariah 9:9, 10).

Micah 4:2, 3 "Many nations will come and say, 'Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord' . . . then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war."

There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore (Isaiah 9:7).

Much of humanity is ignorant of all these things, expecting that the present order of life will continue indefinitely. Jesus said,

The coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah . . . they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage . . . and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be (Matthew 24:37-39).

Do not fail to understand that apart from the reign of Jesus this planet will not know true peace. It matters not how many signing ceremonies occur on the White House lawn! Only King Jesus will bring and establish genuine peace between the nations. When Jesus, the King of kings comes again to reign, peace will be more than rhetoric — it will be reality! ❧

The Perilous Times of the Last Days

By Hollis Partlowe

(Continued From Page 5)

Denial is the number one escape hatch for us humans. Noah's generation lived as if God did not exist, unaware that judgment was hanging heavily over their heads. Don't make their mistake!

Just as the final minutes of a closely fought football game are the most exciting, so also knowing that the end is "near" makes our Spiritual commitment all the more

acute. As we wait for Him, let's avoid prophetic burnout while always being on prophetic alert.

No matter how dark the night, we know that God is still in control. Although the coming years will no doubt bring more social upheaval, economic turmoil and further moral decline, we know that nothing can separate us from God's love (Rom. 8:35-39). Because He is with us, we

need not dread the dark.

As we look ahead, we must realize that the world's worst days and best days are future, with believers on the winning team. There is terrible uncertainty for many, but then there is Jesus Christ. Clasp your hand in His and let Him lead you gently down life's pathway into eternity. ❧

Prophecy and Politics

IN HIS OUTSTANDING book *Our Father Abraham*,¹ Marvin Wilson writes:

The Christian community needs to give far more attention to the practical implications of premillennial thought on the concepts of history and social justice than they have given in the past.²

This is an important point, and it is particularly relevant to us. Through the years we have spent considerable time studying Bible prophecy and the events surrounding Jesus' Second Coming. However, we have been less quick to grapple with the social and ethical consequences of our prophetic faith. The obvious danger of this deficiency is that we may be tempted to draw simplistic political conclusions from our study of prophetic details.

I believe that according to Bible prophecy, a last-day Arab confederacy will attempt to annihilate Israel (cf. Psa. 83:1-8). I also believe that the antichrist himself will be a Middle-Eastern personage, probably an Islamic Arab.

What political ramifications am I to draw from this? Like many Christians, I could conclude that God is siding



By Mark Mattison,
Grand Rapids, MI

with the modern state of Israel against the "evil" Arabs. I could then respond by endorsing any and every one of Israel's actions, no matter how immoral or unjust. Ironically, I could then end up siding with unbelieving Jews against Palestinian Christians!

This type of conclusion would be at odds with the rest of my Christian faith. How, then, may I reconcile my prophetic convictions with my convictions about the gospel?

In his sermon to Cornelius' household, Peter said: 'I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right' (Acts 10:34, 35, NIV, emphasis mine). In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, American nor Arab, Russian nor Iraqi. "God does not show favoritism."

Accordingly, if the final enemy of God (according to prophecy) will be an Arab leading an Arab empire, this does not mean that all present-day Arabs are enemies of God. Nor will it mean that every Arab will be evil when that time does come. During the holocaust, not every German was a Nazi. Some German Christians protested Hitler's actions.

Similarly, not every Jew or modern Israeli is a child of God. In John chapter 8, several Jews talking with Jesus said "Abraham is our father" (v. 39, NIV). Jesus disagreed: "You belong to your father, the devil" (v. 44, NIV). "He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God" (v. 47, NIV).

God is not on the side of modern Israel as over against the Arabs; He is rather on the side of His children, those from all nations who have called on the name of Jesus (Rom. 10:11-13). This is not to say, however, that God has rejected Israel according to the flesh: "Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself," Paul wrote, "a descendent of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew" (Rom. 11:1, 2).

There remains, however, a great tension in my prophetic outline. For if I am interpreting Bible prophecy correctly — and I'm thinking primarily of Daniel and Matthew 24, as well as passages like Psalm 83 — then God will be on the side of Israel as opposed to the hostile Arab forces. How is this tension to be resolved?

There is only one way I know to resolve the tension, and that is to close the gap between modern unbelieving Israel and the "saints" of Daniel 7. That is to say, unbelieving Israelites must become Christians in order to be "on God's side." How else could the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem be a "holy place

(Matt. 24:15)? How could Israel's religion be a "holy covenant" (Dan. 7:28) if it were not the new covenant sealed in Christ's blood? Thus, if our understanding is correct, before the tribulation begins many Israeli Jews will become Christians. (This will be difficult if Trinitarian Christianity is their only option, which is something for us to think about.)

This type of "implied" prediction is not new to us. Our belief that the Jerusalem Temple will be rebuilt is based on similar reasoning. No New Testament passage predicted that the Temple would be destroyed and rebuilt prior to the tribulation and the Second Coming. However, the New Testament does predict that the Temple will play an important role in that period (Matt. 24:15; 2 Thess. 2:4). Thus, we conclude *by implication* that it must be rebuilt, although it is not specifically stated.

Similarly, the Bible nowhere predicted that Babylon would be rebuilt prior to the tribulation. However, the Bible clearly portrays Babylon as a powerful nation in the last days (Isa.

13:6-13; Rev. 17, 18). As Iraq has grown more powerful in the last few years we see that Babylon is indeed being rebuilt, probably in preparation for the tribulation.

So it is with the creation of the State of Israel. The Bible nowhere predicts a restoration of Israel in a state of unbelief; yet if the Jews in Israel were to be persecuted in the tribulation period, surely there had to be Jews in Israel.

One by one we have seen major political events which bring the world's nations closer into line with the picture of Bible prophecy. The restoration of national Israel and the rebuilding of Babylon are two of these events. The rebuilding of the Temple and the widespread conversion of Jews are two such events which we may expect to see in preparation for the tribulation period.

In the meantime, however, remembering that God is not "on the side" of unbelievers, we must caution ourselves against championing nationalistic states when their actions are ungodly. Bible prophecy happens on God's timetable, not ours. Some Christians seem to want so badly to see Armageddon that they

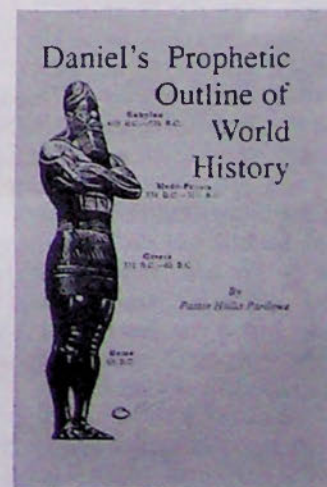
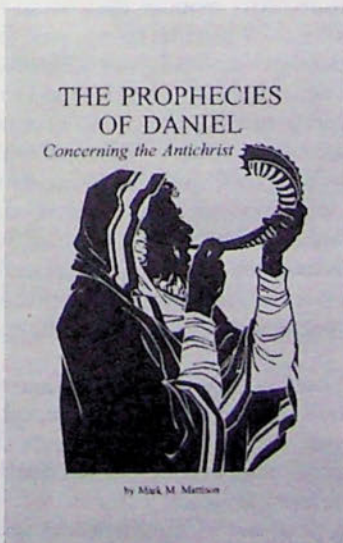
are willing to hasten us toward it. God's people must not organize more "Crusades" such as we saw in the Middle Ages. Daniel wrote that in the last days, "the people who know their God will firmly resist" the antichrist (11:32); but their resistance is not said to be with violence. Christians resist evil with good (Rom. 12:17-21). While we wait for God's plans to unravel in His time, our duty is to spread the gospel and work for peace. As Marvin Wilson wrote:

God is on the side of justice. He loves all people. One cannot be pro-Arab and anti-Israel; neither can one be pro-Israel and anti-Arab. What, then, is our responsibility? It is to pray, to encourage, and to work for a permanent and fair sharing of the land between two peoples, Arabs and Jews, with a maximum of justice and a minimum of injustice.³ RH

¹ (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Pub. Co.), 1989.

² *Ibid.*, p. 266.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 275.



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DOES POPULAR CHRISTIANITY MAKE ANY SENSE?

Jesus, the Son of God, who is the eternal God and immortal, died so that you, who are already immortal, can gain immortality. If you don't accept the death of the immortal God, that God, who is full of compassion and merciful, will torture you in fire and brimstone forever and ever.

If you accept the death and resurrection of the Second Person of the Triune God, Jesus, you will at death enjoy bliss in heaven, although Jesus promised his followers that they would inherit the earth (Matt. 5:5). Although you will not really die, but live on as a disembodied immortal soul, you will also need to be resurrected to gain eternal life when Jesus returns.

Jesus, as God, was omniscient, but as Son of God, i.e., God, he said he was ignorant of certain facts (Mark 13:32).

Love is the mark of true Christianity, but if any one disagrees that the One God of the Bible is really three Persons, he must be rejected as a heretic and should expect to burn forever.

The wicked will be judged and punished forever when Jesus returns, but the wicked dead are already undergoing everlasting punishment, before the return of Jesus.

If you have difficulty believing that the eternal immortal God died or that the all-knowing God, Jesus, did not know certain facts (Mark 13:32), or that the all-merciful God intends to torture for ever and ever many of his creatures, you may wish to seek a saner and sounder way of understanding the Bible.

— Anthony Buzzard

SPACESHIP EARTH CAME WITH INSTRUCTIONS

Americans, pick a day — any day. Pick a newspaper — any paper. Fighting in Israel. Hatred in Haiti. War in Bosnia, Yemen, and Rwanda. Fraud in the U.S. and the U.K. Neo-fascist in Italy. Neo-communist in Poland. Lawsuits, racism, scandal, and drugs. Singapore's senior minister, Lee Quan Yoo recently observed: "Human beings, regrettable though it be, are inherently vicious." And on this planet in rebellion, he is right, of course. Crime, divorce, abortions, scandal, incompetence, greed, irresponsibility come naturally to us.

Public officials seek remedies for ills we seem helpless to prevent. We pile laws on laws seeking salvation by legislation because the ten Moses brought down from the mountain are too simple to be significant.

So, how do we make self centered whiners into self disciplined adults? More government programs? More regulations? Well, communism tried that and failed. What if, as a last resort, we go back to the book shelf, to the back of the book shelf, because spaceship earth came with a book of instructions. Maybe we ought to see what it says. It says we should not be slothful in business; in fact, it says he who does not work let him not eat! It says women should wear modest apparel. It says don't steal anything. It says ANYTHING! It says don't get drunk, period. It says you sleep only with your own wife. It says you don't do what you want — you do what you ought. And for those whose consciences are anesthetized, it specifies which is which.

So Americans, if that Book, that neglected Book were not a divinely inspired road map from here to hereafter, it would still be the best rulebook for a good life here. We can ignore that Book or deny it. We can challenge it, revile it, rewrite it, reject it. But when we've done our worst, it will still be there — waiting for us. Haunting us. Calling out to us. Behave or be damned. Believe and be saved.

—From Paul Harvey's radio broadcast of May 28, 1994

WHEN CHILDREN RAPE

by Don Fay

Central Pennsylvania television stations carried the story of three thirteen-year-old boys accused of attempted rape of a classmate in the school dark room. The incident raised questions how such an unthinkable thing could have happened, and it shook the complacent community. The administration set in place procedures to reduce the risk, but neither the community nor the administration addressed the school's part in the incident or looked at causes.

Consider: In science class, the boys learned they were not created in the image of God, but were animals, accidents of nature. Any wonder they acted like beasts?

In social studies they learned to not pass judgment on the behavior of others, that all behavior is equally acceptable, all lifestyles are equally valid. They learned to choose the lifestyle that gives greatest pleasure, to demand the right to decide for themselves what is right and what is wrong. So these teenage boys took the right to satisfy the pressure of their newly developed sex drive in this offensive way.

In health class they learned it is natural, healthy, and good to satisfy sexual desire without the restraint of moral repression, which is evil, destructive, and sinful itself. They accepted this permission to express their new, deep feelings.

Teach young people they are animals, then expect them to act like animals. Teach them sexual morality is only a matter of personal preference, then expect them to live without restraint — that unique human quality supposed to distinguish us from animals.

Teach young people it's OK to become sexually active outside marriage, then expect them to aggressively force themselves on the defenseless.

We can't have Christian behavior without teaching Christian values. We reap what we sow, not what we refuse to sow!

NOTHING LIKE A CRYING BABY TO KILL THE MOOD

By Christina Cheakalos

An unemployed rocket scientist has invented a deliciously devious way to deter teenagers from having babies. "Baby Think It Over" is a deceptively adorable 8-pound doll, a so-ugly-you-got-to-love-it kind of creation with a wicked — and apparently effective — twist.

This high-tech newborn, which has a microprocessor in its back, shrieks a high-pitched cry at random intervals day and night, and can be silenced only by being "fed." Feeding this baby demands that the teenager insert a key into its back and hold it for 20 to 30 minutes — the average time it takes to feed a real newborn.

The doll may just accomplish what advocates of abstinence and crusaders for condom use only dream: that their message to "wait until you're older" be heard.

Anecdotal evidence from field studies with home economics students in a San Diego school indicates that "Baby Think It Over" is a screaming success.

Teen-age girls were asked to take the "baby" home for three days. The girls still had to attend their classes, bringing the "baby" and its requisite paraphernalia — diaper bag, stroller, car seat — with them.

Three days — and long nights — later, the temporary "moms" nearly hurled "Baby Think It Over" at their home economics teacher.

Staggering with fatigue and downright surly, they said they were going to postpone motherhood. ("I'm gonna wait at least 10 years," declared one girl. "Never," vowed another.) A sophomore "mom" pronounced the baby "basically a big pain in the butt."

Maria Mitchell, who supervises a pregnancy prevention initiative that works with Atlanta school students — finds the invention intriguing.

"Even when they plan to get pregnant, they don't plan to be parents," she said. "The more you can simulate reality the more you can get the message across."

"I can't wait to get them," said Rebecca Rhodes, an Alabama home economics teacher, who has ordered six.

"The unending demands, the fatigue and emotional stress that come with caring for a newborn will provide them with a realistic experience that all the lecturing in the world can't provide," she said. "We'll have the boys take the dolls home, as well as girls. After all, the girls don't act alone."

GENETIC SIN?

Just where our pervasive failure to develop an inner life is leading us is evident in the *Time* magazine cover story "Infidelity: It May Be In Our Genes." The article, excerpted from a new book by Robert Wright, examines the "emerging field" of evolutionary psychology and presents studies that contend monogamy and faithfulness in marriage are the exception and adultery and divorce are "natural."

Wright asks us to accept this view because we are supposedly related to birds. Because some birds are found to be promiscuous, Wright reasons, many humans are, too.

"It is to man's evolutionary advantage," says Wright, "to sow his seeds far and wide." And what has been the sociological impact of that view? Fatherless children growing up in undisciplined homes and the evolution of crime into a serious threat to the general welfare.

From birds, Wright moves on to gorillas. He asks us to consider studies on the size of gorilla testicles. The bigger they are, the more likely male gorillas are to fall for many female gorillas. From there we move into "genetic legacy."

Though the *Time* article does have a sentence or two about morality and how it battles against human nature, and Wright correctly notes "we are not naturally moral animals," he largely ignores the need to infuse the "natural" person with a moral compass — for our own good. "According to evolutionary psychology," he writes, "it is natural for both men and women — at some time, under some circumstances — to commit adultery or to sour on a mate . . ."

It may be natural, which is why we need something more than nature, perhaps something supernatural, to help us fulfill the marriage vow "as long as we both shall live."

Even Wright has trouble making his own case. He regularly uses the word "design" when referring to humans and the human mind. But a design must have a designer — a figure Wright tries to exclude from the equation.

— "Some Preposterous Claims That Infidelity Is Genetic,"
Cal Thomas

THIRTY YEARS AND COUNTING

The forces that were unleashed by, roughly speaking, Woodstock — a lamentable anniversary — have been corroding the foundations of our civilization for 30 years. These years have witnessed a thoroughgoing attack on the American character. Instead of inculcating notions of honor, self-reliance, duty and responsibility, we have become a nation of self-pitying whiners, fast with a lawsuit and slow with child-support checks. We wallow in excuses for poor

products and lousy test scores.

But the most worrisome aspect of the decline of character is reflected in families. To an unprecedented degree, American men are not performing their jobs as fathers.

— "We are developing a culture at war with fatherhood,"
By Mona Charen.

A Study of Luke 23:43

JESUS ANSWERED him, 'I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise' (NIV).

This text is often quoted in support of the popular teaching that the dead are conscious and that the righteous go to paradise or to heaven as soon as they die. Jesus and the repentant thief to whom He made the promise of paradise were crucified together and died the same day. So it is assumed that this promise involved their survival as conscious "souls" or "spirits" that could travel to a place of bliss immediately after death. If this is assumed, it is natural to see in this text a strong support for what is called "the immortality of the soul."

Several problems arise, however, when this text is so used. First of all, the Bible nowhere says that man is now immortal or that his "soul" or "spirit" continues to live on when his body dies. In fact, the Bible states that God "alone is immortal" (1 Tim. 6:16) and that human immortality can come only through resurrection at the return of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:23, 50-54).

Secondly, the Bible teaches that the dead are "asleep" and that they "know



By William Wachtel,
Wenatchee, WA

not anything" (Eccl. 9:5). The Apostle Paul's discussion of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4 mentions over and over again that the dead in Christ are sleeping. Jesus promised that He would "wake" Lazarus up when He raised him from the dead (John 11:11-14).

Thirdly, "paradise" is never described in the Bible as a place that is in heaven or that is now in existence somewhere. (We will consider below Paul's use of the word in 2 Corinthians 12.) The word is of Persian origin, meaning "park" or "garden," and is used in the Septuagint — the Greek translation of the Old Testament — to refer to the Garden of Eden, in Genesis 2 and 3. The Book of Revelation uses the word to describe the restored paradise that will be on the New Earth after Jesus

comes back to this planet to carry out the promised "restoration of all things" (Acts 3:19-21; Rev. 2:7; 21:5; 22:2, 14, 19).

Why, then, does the text seem to say that Jesus and the thief would somehow be in paradise the same day they died? We believe that the Bible does not contradict itself and that there must be a Scriptural solution to the apparent problem.

When we look at the early Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, we discover that there was no punctuation in them. Punctuation was later added by the editors to make for easier reading. Punctuation, then, is a matter of editorial interpretation and, while convenient, is not necessarily correct in every case.

An example of incorrect punctuation in our English Bibles — later corrected — is found in Hebrews 10:12. The early editions of the King James Version read: "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God." Placing the comma *before* the word "forever" means that Jesus will remain in heaven always and never return to earth. This is an obvious contradiction to the oft-repeated promise that He will come again some day! When the editors realized their error, they moved the comma to *follow* the word "forever." Present editions show this change, which places stress on the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus.

The original Greek text of Hebrews 10:12 (and the rest of the New Testament) has no commas, so translators supply them according to what seems to them to be the correct sense. Probably in most cases they have done a good job in the way they have inserted punctuation into their translation. We believe, however, that there is evidence available to show that the comma in Luke 23:43 has been wrongly placed in most of our English versions of the

Bible! If one already believes that the dead are conscious and that people can go to paradise as soon as they die, one can easily place the comma before "today." If one believes that the Bible teaches that the dead are asleep and that paradise will be restored only at some future time, then one will place the comma after "today." *The Greek text will permit either of these placements of the comma!*

It should be noted that scholars have recognized that "today" is often used as a Hebrew way of stressing a command or promise. We see this over and over in the Book of Deuteronomy, where Moses warns the people of Israel "today" that they must obey their God. It is not that they must obey Him today only, but the warning is given "today" (Deut. 4:40; 5:1; 6:6; 7:11; 8:1, 11 etc.). We use a similar emphasis in English when we say, "I'm telling you this right now!" Such a statement implies more than is expressed by the present tense of the verb: it means that we want the hearer to take heed to our words!

Let's experiment with placing the comma after "today" in Luke 23:43: "Truly I tell you today, You will be with me in paradise." (A word-for-word translation of the Greek text is: "Truly to you I say today with me you will be in the paradise"). With such a rendering, the emphasis is on the promise itself — that of being with Jesus in paradise. The word "today" is there to give solemn assurance that the promise will be fulfilled.

The fact that the Greek text reads "the" paradise suggests that Jesus has in mind the definite and well-known paradise described in Scripture — the Garden of Eden restored. "Paradise" is not simply a vague concept, denoting a condition of bliss, as it has come to be used. It is a specific place that will be restored at a specific time!

The Apostle Paul's use of the term "paradise" in 2 Corinthians 12:3 needs discussion at this point. He is talking about "visions and revelations from the

Lord" (verse 1). Among these he describes one in which a person was "caught up" or "caught away" into the "third heaven" (verse 2), or "the paradise" (verse 3). He does not know whether this vision was "in the body" or "out of the body" — whether the person so transported perceived it as one of being moved bodily or in another way. (Compare Ezekiel's visions, in which he seemed transported bodily from Babylon to Jerusalem.) The term "third heaven" may be understood as third in *place* or in *time*. Some think Paul means "third" in a geographical or locational sense. But the Apostle Peter tells us that the New Heavens and Earth will be third as a matter of *time-sequence* (2 Peter 3:3-13). We propose that what Paul is saying is that in a vision this person was taken into the future and saw things as they will be on the New Earth, the *time* of the, "third heaven," when "the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7) will be restored! **HH**

NEW YORK CITY: 1944-1994

by Gary Bauer

The Family Research Council recently conducted a study about what New York City was like fifty years ago. In 1944, New York City had 150,000 more inhabitants than it does in 1994. Yet 97 percent of all children born in 1944 were members of two-parent families. In 1994, only 50 percent go home to households headed by a mother and a father. In 1944, a total of forty people died of gunshot wounds. In 1994, forty people are shot and killed every ten days. In 1944, one hundred babies were sent to orphanages. In 1994, thousands of babies are abandoned, some merely deposited in trash cans and restrooms. What happened to New York between 1944 and 1994?

FROM NEWPORT TO WEST MEMPHIS

by Gary Bauer

I grew up in a blue collar town called Newport, Kentucky, where every neighborhood was, it seemed, on the wrong side of the tracks. People generally worked hard, drank hard, and lived hard. When I was nine years old, I was lucky to get an occasional quarter to spend out of my father's weekly overtime pay, which was about fifty cents. With nothing but a peanut butter sandwich in my pocket, I would usually leave the house on a summer morning and stay out until dark. My friends and I roamed everywhere and never once did we have anything to fear in that rough-and-tumble town.

Contrast that experience to the tragedy earlier this year in West Memphis, Arkansas (which has been repeated in countless other communities): Three nine-year-olds went out to play and never came home. The next morning, their bodies were found. They had been beaten to death and left in a drainage ditch. A few days later several teenagers, allegedly involved in the occult, were arrested for the crime.

What happened in America between my youth and those boys' youth? Is there a parent today who does not fear for his or her children's safety even in supposedly "safe" communities?

Good Reasons for Sunday Schools

Issue Two: The Purposes of Sunday School

Many of our churches have vision statements, which usually have three components: 1) to glorify and worship God, 2) to nurture and educate the people of God, and 3) to evangelize lost people. They may be stated differently and prioritized differently, but generally they contain those three parts.

Our church services are the primary avenue in which the worship is expected to happen. It is the service in which voices can be raised in song, presentations made, prayers offered up, or collected and offered up, and messages proclaimed to which individuals can say an "Amen" in agreement.

Certainly nurturing and evangelism can and do also happen in our worship services, but the Sunday School may also be a place where these can effectively be done. In fact there may be times and situations in which they can *more* effectively be done in Sunday School.

Different emphases for . . . different age groups

In my experience with Sunday Schools it has become apparent that



By Kent Ross,
Rex, GA

there are at least three different emphases that need to be considered for *three different age groups*.

Children, up to about the fifth or sixth grade, need to be given basic knowledge of the Bible stories that are the foundations for faith. Too often students come to the Bible college not knowing the stories of the Old or New Testament. It seems the Bible is a mysterious book. Many are unaware of people like Joshua, Abram, Isaac "and is it Rebekah or Rachel," or what about Philemon, or John Mark?

Those early grades are when children are open to and enthusiastic about these great stories of faithful men and women. They need to be given the basic information upon which to build their own walk of faith.

Not surprisingly the Bible even speaks to that purpose when Paul wrote that

"These things happened to them as examples, and were written down as warnings for us on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come," (I Cor. 10:11).

So in the grade school classes Sunday Schools need to *emphasize an education in the basic stories of the Bible*.

Teens, perhaps grades seven through twelve, have different needs. There is presently a great deal of emphasis on relating to parents and peers, on self-actualization, and those themes certainly have their place.

However it is also in those teen years that there needs to be a strong evangelistic emphasis in Sunday School classes. In these years there is a unique openness to God's call that needs to be addressed. When the fundamental knowledge of the Bible has already been taught, teens are then moving in the direction of acting on those stories of faith and making their own commitment to the Lord.

If decisions are not made for Christ in the teen years, it becomes increasingly less likely to happen as the years pass. So it is imperative that there be a *strong emphasis on evangelism* in the teen classes.

The **Adult** Sunday School classes seem to be where we are having the most difficulty in addressing people's perceived needs. Of course we always need to continue to communicate Bible knowledge and Bible truth, and we continue to need an emphasis on evangelism, but in the adult years the emphasis should be on fellowship.

Establishing close relational bonds in Sunday School classes connects individuals tightly to the church, and ultimately to the Lord. These come about in part because of shared truths of the Bible, but usually not at first.

People need to feel loved and accepted by those already within the organization. Coffee times, sharing times and prayers, even parties are what build

close relationships that draw new people closely together with the long-time members.

Too often our Adult Sunday School classes spend most of their time going over the lesson material. This is fine material, but it is not what is most important to new people. They cannot grasp much of the material. Their hearts yearn for closeness with loving people. That does not come by adult lesson material as often as it comes by people spending time with them and learning about them.

Adult Sunday School classes need to emphasize nurturing for new people especially, but also for people growing up in the church. Some of those grow up and then out of the church and don't return, and neither do their children.

Looking Ahead:

In the next four issues I will be spending further time developing

themes that I have previously mentioned. The changes advocated are not new. In fact they are old. They have already been tried, and tested and found to be successful.

Issue # 3 — The Leaders of the Sunday School

Most Sunday Schools have traditionally been directed by a Sunday School Superintendent . . . maybe a mom with several kids of that "Sunday School age," or by an older person in the church who "has always been the Superintendent" They may have achieved a measure of success, but there may be a better way.

Issue # 4 — Adult Classes

Too often these have failed to arouse interest and commitment on the part of our younger adults. Our older adults have valued them. Unfortunately, the very things they valued were not valued by the young adults, but rather than

fight about it the younger ones just stopped coming

Issue # 5 — Promotions

Yes, they seem "hokey" to some, but they also work with many. But what kind of promotions work? What are they for? Are they legitimate?

Issue # 6 — Vital Sunday Schools: A Key for Churches That Want to Grow!

The day of the Sunday School is not over. Its death has been proclaimed at other times, but it survives. For those churches that catch the vision, their Sunday School can be a "key element" in seeing their churches revive and resurge both in attendance and, more importantly, in conversions of people to Christ.

Starting with the winter quarter the Church of God will publish a series of new Truth Seekers' Quarterly lessons. We begin with "Letters to Timothy," in December. Below are listed the lessons and their authors. The quarterly's new editor is Kent Ross.

1. Paul's Charge to Timothy—Jason Turner; Acts 16:1, I Timothy 1:1-17, II Timothy 1:3-7
2. One God, One Mediator—Anthony Buzzard; I Timothy 2
3. Bishops and Deacons—Stephen Bolhaus I Timothy 3
4. The Birth of Jesus—Seth Ross; Luke 1:26-55
5. Take Heed—Tom Schmitt; I Timothy 4
6. Church Relationships: Part 1—Alan Cain; I Timothy 5:1-16
7. Church Relationships: Part 2—Jon Lippert; I Timothy 5: 17-25 and 6:1, 2
8. Dangers of Materialism—Joe Martin; I Timothy 6:3-20
9. Called According to God's Grace—Jeff Fletcher; II Timothy 1:8-18
10. Passing on the Faith—Mark Mattison; II Timothy 2:1-13
11. Gently and Patiently Teaching—Don Nunemaker; II Timothy 2:14-26
12. Perilous Times—Hollis Partlowe; II Timothy 3
13. Preach the Word—Scott Ross; II Timothy 4



This spring, in the Truth Seeker's Quarterly: "Our Prophetic Faith"

1. Why the Abrahamic Faith? — Joe James; Gen. 12:1-3, 15:1-6, 17:3-8, Gal. 3:6-9, 26-29
2. Overturned, Overturned, Overturned! — Wally Winner; I Chron. 17:3, 7-14, Ezek. 21: 24-27, Luke 1:30-33
3. Four World Empires — Dennis Baldwin; Daniel 2:26-28, 31-45
4. Restoration of Israel — Russell Magaw; Ezekiel 36:17-38
5. Arab Alliance — Francis Burnett; Psalm 83
6. The Return of Jesus — Scott Deane; Matthew 24:15-31
7. The Resurrection of the Dead — Keith Williams; I Corinthians 15:19-23, 51-58; Rev. 20:6
8. Gog and Magog — Arlen Rankin; Ezekiel 38:1-23
9. Man of Sin — Jeff Fletcher; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17
10. Signs of the Times — William Wachtel; Luke 21:25-36
11. Coming Judgment — Gary Smith; John 5:19-24, Acts 17:30,31; Rev. 20:11-15
12. The Thousand Years — Gordon Landry; Revelation 20:1-6, Psalm 72:1-11, 17-19
13. New Heavens and New Earth — Bob Huddleston; Rev. 21:1-7, 22:1-5; 1 Cor. 15:24-28

THANK YOU, LORD

I thank my Lord, for all He's done
For pleasures and for pains
My home, my family, my life
For sunshine and the rains.

For the smells of flowers
in summer
For winter white, cold snow
For the clean fresh air I breathe
For all of nature that I know.

I thank Him for all good things
All the richness of my days
For every smile of every child
And all their charming ways.

And yet in life there have been times
When I've wondered, why, Lord me?
When health has failed my body
When I questioned, what will be?

I've asked His blessing to restore
Me to my former self

And in time He blessed me
And gave back my former health.

Perhaps I should have realized
That without a little pain
I could not truly appreciate
Good health when it came again.

I lost a special loved one
Whom I'd had for many years
And from my eyes and heart
Issued ten thousand salty tears.

I could not bear to think of life
Without her special smile
My heart and life seemed empty
And so sad, for quite awhile.

But now I smile with sweet recall
The days we spent together
For laughter shared
and sometimes tears
For joy in any weather.

Although I miss her still sometimes
I thank the Lord for years I had
To share her loving and her care
And so I learned,
death is not all bad.

So today I thank my Lord indeed
For all of life I'll see
The good, the bad, the sorrow, yes
Everything He's sent to me. *RH*



By
Joyce Housman

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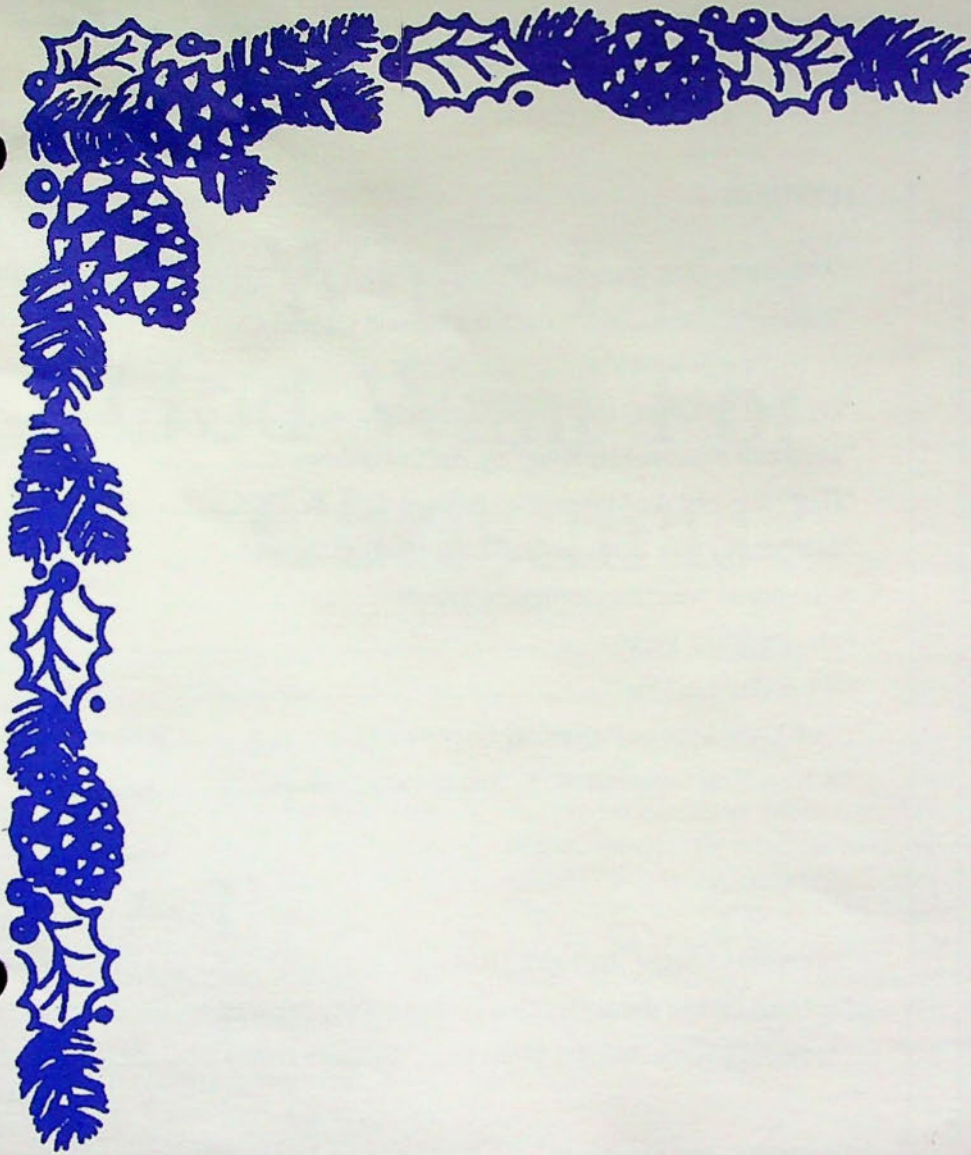
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THE RESTITUTION HERALD advocates:

- the oneness of God (1 Cor. 8:6);
 - the Holy Spirit is God's power (Acts 1:8);
 - Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son (Matt. 16:16), and is our Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5);
 - the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16);
 - the mortality of man (Job 4:17; Psa. 146:4);
 - the near return of Christ (Acts 1:11), and life only through Him (Col. 3:3);
 - the literal resurrection of the dead (John 5:28);
 - the immortalization of those in Christ (1 Cor. 15:53, 54);
 - the destruction of the wicked (Rev. 21:8);
 - the final restoration of Israel as the Kingdom of God under the kingship of Christ (Luke 1:32);
 - the church to be joint heirs with Him (Rom. 8:17), and Israel to be made head over Gentile nations (Isa. 60:1-3);
 - the "restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21).
- It also firmly advocates repentance and immersion in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), and a consecrated life as essential to salvation.

*Please use the form on page 24
when corresponding concerning your subscription.*

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What Does God Want For Christmas?

By Vickie Schlegel

EVERY YEAR AT Christmas time my children approach me with the question: "Mom, what do you want for Christmas?"

I used to tell them, "Oh, nothing, really," not wanting them to deplete their meager cash reserves.

With the passing years, however, I saw that my response distressed them. Their long faces showed how much they wanted to be able to give me *something*. So I made a point of suggesting some affordable items that they could purchase, wrap and present to me at Christmas.

How could I make them understand what I wanted was for them to love God, to be happy and to grow strong? They would have looked at me with an expression that declares, "Boy, she has really gone around the bend this time!"

On a few occasions I actually told them that what I wanted most was for them to be nice to me, to be kind to each other, and to do as they were asked. But

they still went out to buy some kind of a present for me.

I am better able to understand their desire, though, when I consider my relationship with my heavenly Father. The things that I give to him — my service on church committees, my tithes, my attendance at Bible studies and church services, and my community service—are suitable. But I need

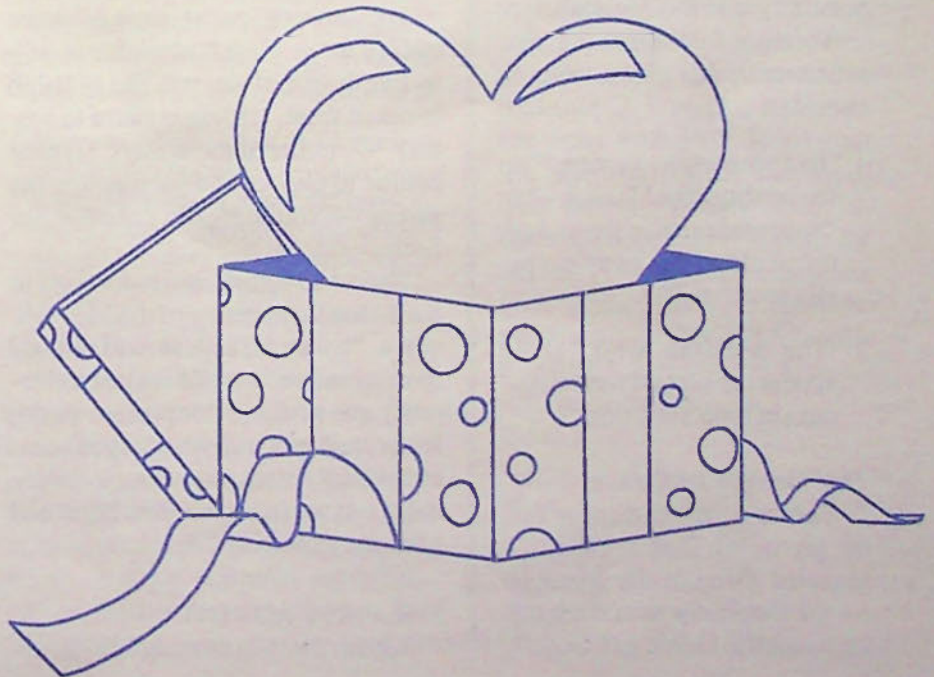
to ask, "What do You really want from me, Father?"

His requests may seem simple, but they are actually quite difficult for me: relinquishing my worries and fears, setting aside my own goals and desires, dying to self and living in Christ. To these requests I reply, "These are tough requests, Lord!"

Like my children, I would rather give God something pretty that I can wrap in shiny paper and colorful ribbons. But in reality I know that what He wants from me is my heart—broken and contrite, for His Spirit to live in.

This Christmas, and every day, I will give my heavenly Father the gift that He really wants. No pretty paper, no fancy ribbons. Just my heart for His home. ❧

—Reprinted from *Decision*, Dec. 1993





The Promises First and Second

By Dennis Baldwin —

THE APPEARANCE OF GRACE

God's amazing grace can be seen in the person of the Messiah, by whom "grace and truth came."¹ While truly "the Law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good,"² grace and truth surpassed the law. This combination was so prominent in God's plan that He elected to personify it in the Messiah.

To more fully view the significance of that grace, we will consider:

1. "Its appearing to all men,"³ in the person of the Messiah who "appeared once in the end of the world to put away sin by His sacrifice."⁴
2. The Messiah who "shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation."⁵

The Design of Grace

Before suitable respect can be given for God's grace — revealed through the Messiah — we should try to understand its structure. Grace and truth:

teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (Tit. 2:12).

The Messiah, who was full of grace and truth, appeared to put away sin by His sacrifice. This could mean more than past sins. It could also include the strength and maturity to say no to "the sin which so easily besets us"⁷ in the present.

The significance of this can also be seen in the Messiah who "entered into heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us."⁸ He is available to help us live the life of victory. The Messiah is out in front, leading onward to victory — rather than always lagging behind to pick up and put together the pieces — could greatly enhance our faith.

Such a structure carries forward to the Second Appearing of the Messiah, when "he shall appear without sin unto salvation."⁹ While we live righteously and godly in this present world, structured grace denies ungodliness and worldly lusts, extending a continual focus on "that blessed hope and glorious appearing."¹⁰

THE FIRST ADVENT

An advent is "a coming" or "an ap-

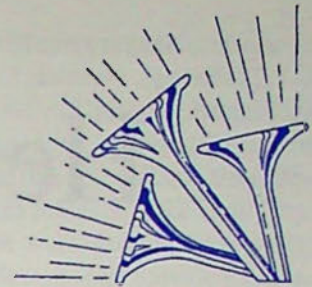
pearing." "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee" (Zech. 9:9). All too often our Messiah's First Advent is limited to the manger. He must also be seen as a "King riding on a colt, just, lowly and having salvation" — salvation brought by the grace of God.¹¹ This offers ample grounds for Zion's rejoicing and shouting as well as our own manifestations of emotions regarding the First Advent.

Malachi envisioned the Advent of the Messenger of the Covenant with "delight" (Mal. 3:1-3). His coming would mean purification, cleansing even the priests who offered "the blood of bulls and of goats . . . sanctifying to the purifying of the flesh."¹² The purifiers needed cleansing for themselves, illustrated by the high priest who offered blood "for himself, and for the errors of the people."¹³

The First Advent of the Messiah can be seen as an epiphany of grace, reaching from the manger to the cross. The panorama includes the manger and the empty tomb, with the cross in full view. Jesus:

gave Himself for the church, so that He might sanctify and cleanse it . . . , and might present it to Himself a glorious church . . . , holy and without blemish.¹⁴

ed Messiah's ond Comings



Front Royal, VA

THE SECOND ADVENT

How could the disciples have known that many prophecies they thought were applicable to Messiah's life in their day awaited a Second Advent? "But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel"¹⁵ are words which speak of disappointment. Jesus' assurances of a Second Advent in later days gave renewed hope, even as it does for us.

As the last measures of the First Advent played, the disciples wondered aloud if the Messiah "would at that time restore again the Kingdom to Israel."¹⁶ Two in white apparel later focused the disciples' attentions on the Second Advent. "This same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). This then became their and our "Blessed Hope."

THE PROPHET'S VIEW

Isaiah's Messiah would reign upon the throne of David and over his kingdom. "Of the increase of His government and peace there would be no end" (Is. 9:7). During his "righteous reign"¹⁷

the desert will blossom and rejoice with joy and singing, . . . the eyes of the blind will then be opened, the

ears of the deaf will be unstopped, and the lame will leap as a deer. . . . In his reign sorrow and sighing will flee away (Is. 35).

SEASONAL RETROSPECTION AND INTROSPECTION

No greater gift is available during this season of giving than a renewal of our faith in the First Advent and our hope in the Second Advent. It is easy to misplace the faithful saying "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" during this season of Advent.

If in fact the epistle of II Timothy is the last of Paul's writings, he could have offered no more fitting epitaph:

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing (II Tim. 4:8).

MORE THAN AN EVENT

The Second Advent must be looked upon as more than a future event. The message from the two standing by in white apparel referred to "this same Jesus."¹⁸ The Second Advent points us to a person, loved and awaited. Peter's words to those scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia were to people who "had not

seen but loved Jesus the Messiah." Even though they could not see Him they believed "with an inexpressible joy."¹⁹ Somewhere along the way they had ceased looking forward to the *event* and had developed an expectation for the *person* of the Second Advent. Their lives became entwined with His, as should ours.

"When Christ [the Messiah], who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4). He (the Messiah) is my life. I have become so entwined in Him that I have no life apart from Him. Is He your life are your private and social lives separate from your Christian experience? Our hope in the Second Advent is built upon our faith in His First Advent our expectation in the Second Advent is fortified by letting the Messiah deliver us from sin. ²⁰

¹ Jn. 1:17 ⁸ Heb. 9:24 ¹⁵ Lk. 24:21
² Rom. 7:12 ⁹ Heb. 9:28 ¹⁶ Acts 1:6
³ Tit. 2:11 ¹⁰ Tit. 2:13 ¹⁷ Isa. 32:1
⁴ Heb. 9:26 ¹¹ Tit. 2:11 ¹⁸ Acts 1:11
⁵ Heb. 9:28 ¹² Heb. 9:13 ¹⁹ I Pet. 1:8
⁶ Tit. 2:12 ¹³ Heb. 9:7
⁷ Heb. 12:1 ¹⁴ Eph. 5:25-27

He Shall Be Great

*By Russell Dickerson,
Litchfield, Minnesota*

IN THE FIRST CHAPTER of Luke, verse 32 begins, "He shall be great." This is one of the most beautiful, one of the most dynamic, yet one of the most neglected descriptions of Jesus in the Bible — "He shall be great." However, when you really think about it, the word "great" does not mean much in our language today. Hardly a day goes by that we do not hear this word used over and over again.

One of the reasons that many of our good English words have no meaning is modern advertising. Every product sold has to be better than the other, so many of our English words have lost their identity. Everything is "great" today: this car is great, that soap is great, this toothpaste is great, that brand is great; in fact, "great" is out-dated. Such words as fantastic, fabulous and tremendous are now being ruined by our advertisers.

Nonetheless, when the Bible was translated some four hundred years ago, great meant *great*. Jesus was not described as fantastic, fabulous, or stupendous. He was simply described as great. But then, great had not lost its meaning. They had no high-pressure sales talk about such and such a product in the days of King James. Unlike

this product or that product, Jesus was truly great.

To say that Jesus was truly the greatest man that ever lived, would not be an exaggeration. We realize that greatness is hard to define; but one of the tests of greatness is the mark one leaves upon history. At the time, Jesus was probably so insignificant to the history of the world that He is mentioned only a few times by secular historians. Even though overlooked by secular historians, Jesus has done more to change history than any other man. The name of Jesus has caused wars to be fought, crusades to be waged, and nations to rise and fall. Surely no one or no ten men have changed the course of history like Jesus. Today there are nearly one billion confessing Christians in the world, and it would be hard to estimate the millions that have professed Christ in the past two thousand years. However, these are facts that are of interest only to the secular historians. Why is Jesus great to those who confess Him as Saviour?

Probably the most important reason is that He is the Son of God. No other person can make this claim. Jesus was begotten of God. That in itself is enough reason to call a man great. Another reason that we Christians call Christ great is that He was fully man,

yet lived a life free from sin. We realize that to many psychologists sin is a man-made theory which has no scientific basis. To one who feels the presence and power of sin, anyone who can live a life free from sin deserves to be called great.

Because we Christians do believe in the power and presence of sin, is another reason we call Christ great. The God we worship is morally perfect and pure. Yet we humans seem to thrive on immorality and sin, so there is a great gulf between God and men. Jesus fills that gap for us. We are now children of God, thanks to Jesus Christ. Anyone who gives us freedom from our feelings of sin and guilt is worthy to be called great.

The thought of death has always been dreaded by men. Immortality has been sought in some form or other by nearly every tribe and people since the beginning of recorded history. Naturally then, anyone who would guarantee eternal life would be great in the eyes of men. Jesus has done this. Not only has He guaranteed the believer eternal life, He has overcome the power of the grave to prove to the world that He has the right to guarantee eternal life.

There will always be those who say that Jesus was the greatest deceiver that ever lived. There will always be those who claim that Christianity is simply borrowed and glorified mythology. Nevertheless, these same people cannot deny that Jesus was great. These same people cannot ever say that anyone who can do the things that Jesus claimed to do is not worthy to be called great. We Christians know that Jesus can do these things. That is why we call Him great. ❧

— Reprinted from
THE RESTITUTION HERALD,
August 31, 1964.

Let Earth Receive Her King

I SAAC WATTS IS considered the father of English hymnology (the study of hymns). He provided the church with almost 600 hymns. His classics include: "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," "O God, Our Help in Ages Past," "We're Marching to Zion," "I Sing the Mighty Power of God," and "Jesus Shall Reign."

Perhaps the most noteworthy contribution from Watts is the Christmas time favorite, "Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come." Notice some of the terminology of this great hymn: "Joy to the world, the Lord is come; Let earth receive her King . . . Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns . . . No more let sins and sorrow grow; Nor thorns infest the ground; He comes to make His blessings flow, Far as the curse is found . . . He'll rule the world with truth and grace,



By Hollis Partlowe,
Oregon, Illinois

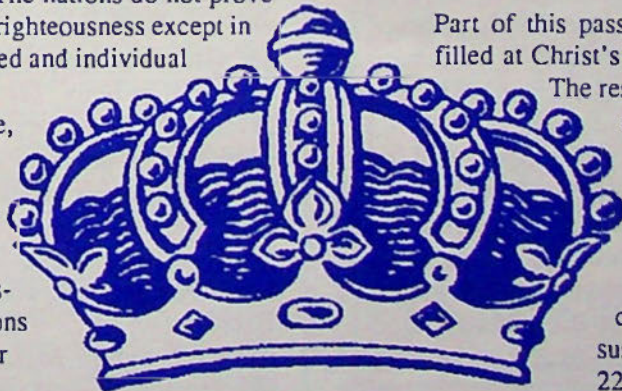
And make the nations prove, The glories of His righteousness . . ."

The Advent message embraces both comings of Christ. We see the shepherds and wisemen finding their way to the manger to worship earth's rightful King. Angelic hosts swarmed down the skyways from heaven. A new star appeared in the sky.

But when we look closer at the words of the hymn we realize that perhaps it is more of a second coming song than a Christmas Carol. Isaac Watts was probably writing in the prophetic present as though the future were already here.

Obviously, the Lord doesn't reign over the earth in righteousness today and nature doesn't bend beneath His sway. Men worldwide are not employing their songs in anthems offering worship to Him. The nations do not prove the glories of righteousness except in the most limited and individual sense.

In the future, when Jesus reigns over the whole earth in truth and righteousness, the nations will "learn war no more."



They will come to Jerusalem to worship the Lord in droves. See Isaiah 2:1-4 and Micah 4:1-4. These prophecies focus on the future age when Jesus Christ is reigning over this entire planet from David's throne in Jerusalem, the Holy City.

With wars and famines, graft and greed, lusts and hate, evidence demands that in a literal and nationalistic sense, the Son of God is not reigning over earth today. It is self-evident that this is not His purpose in the church age. Today Christ continues to build His church (*ekklesia*), the body of believers called out of all nations (Rev. 5:9, 10). In the future age, believers of all ages will inherit God's eternal kingdom when the earth is filled with the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:9; Numbers 14:21).

Perhaps we can see more clearly now that Isaac Watts' great hymn is much more suited to the millennium than the manger. With that in mind consider the angel's striking announcement to the peasant girl chosen of God to be the virgin mother of our Lord.

Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end (Luke 1:31-33).

Part of this passage was fulfilled at Christ's first coming.

The rest will be carried forth to fulfillment when Jesus comes the second time. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20). R41

Grace Beyond the Manger

CHRISTMAS IS A story of birth and giving, but much more. A young couple, proud to bring their firstborn child home from the hospital, placed their precious baby in a beautiful wooden cradle. Over the next few months he grew and the cradle that once swallowed the child could no longer contain him. The boy did not stay in the cradle forever. He outgrew it.

We cannot have Christmas without the manger—but Jesus did not stay in the manger long. We, too, must outgrow the cradle. Most of our lives are lived outside the cradle. Jesus' growth was natural and normal. He grew in wisdom and stature as He developed through childhood. Luke 2:20 NASB* declares, "And the Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him."

Only Luke reports Jesus' childhood and His account is brief. Luke 2:40-52 condenses Jesus' first twelve years of life and forecasts His future. It introduces the silent years of growth which consummate in His ministry.

The "baby Jesus" is sweet and should be remembered, but the reality of the Christmas story is that when the



*By Edward Goit, Sr.,
N. Tonawanda, NY*

"baby Jesus" grew up He was the Son of Man. Like Jesus, we must grow and allow the Church to nurture us and direct us into a closer relationship with our Savior and Lord.

Bethlehem's Declaration

God's grace is Bethlehem's declaration. Isaiah's prophecy, "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given us" (Isa. 9:6a) was two-fold: (1) "a child will be born," (2) "a son will be given." Bible students universally apply this prophecy to Jesus Christ.

There is a story about the day Abraham Lincoln was born in Kentucky. A neighbor hailed a man from town and said, "Any news down at the village, Ezra?"

"Well, Squire McLean's gone to Washington to see Madison sworn in, and old Spellman tells me that this

Bonaparte fellow has captured most of Spain. What's new out here, neighbor?"

"Nothing at all, except a new baby down at Tom Lincoln's house. Nothing ever happens out here."¹

The birth of Abraham Lincoln, but it was considered not important! The birth of Jesus Christ was not important to many people. To many millions, the true meaning of Christmas is still unimportant.

Jesus' lowly birth in Bethlehem of Judea and the shelter of a manger brought the GRACE of GOD nearly two thousand years ago as shepherds hurriedly made their way to "see this thing that had happened which the Lord has made know..." (Luke 2:15b). Since then, mankind has commemorated this gift each Christmas season. Christmas has come and gone once more and now it behooves us to reach beyond the grace of the manger and accept the "son" given.

Luke declared God's role in grace when he wrote, "The grace of God was upon him" (Luke 2:40). God's grace speaks of man's alienation from his Creator to reconciliation with his heavenly Father. It is written, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Man's separation from God is the direct result of sin, for God abhors sin.

People cannot sin and get away with it. God has established definite limits for His creation. He has said, "Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine. The soul who sins will die" (Ezek. 18:4).

God's Delivering Love

God delivers mankind from situations from which it could never deliver itself. He has made provision for man's restoration to fellowship and the gift of eternal life in the blessed gift of His only begotten Son. Our God has stayed the execution of sin's pen-

ality to give a sinful creation opportunity to accept redemption, repent of its sins and receive the gift of eternal life. (See Rom. 6:23.)

God gives salvation freely because He loves us. God shows His love in the gift of His only begotten Son, so that sinful mankind might live through Him. God is still in the business of forgiveness for "whosoever" repents of his or her sins. He delights in mercy! (See Micah 7:18, 19.)

Extended Grace

Isaiah's two-fold prophecy extends beyond Bethlehem's manger. His declaration, "a son will be given" (Isa. 9:6) speaks of the CROSS. Discussion of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, and His coming kingdom, are musts in the Christmas Season. "Jesus is the reason for the season!" The message of the angel of the Lord to the shepherds was, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10, 11). The good news for all people is that there is a Savior. The manger of Bethlehem and the cross of Calvary are intertwined. God's grace extends beyond Bethlehem's manger.

Forgiveness of sins was God's divine purpose "before the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). Forgiveness is not a change in our minds toward God but a change in God's mind toward us. Even when we were dead in our transgressions God, rich in mercy because of His great love, reached out and made us alive together with Christ. It is written, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).

The Apostle Peter, with a healed lame beggar clinging to him at the temple, said, "Men of Israel . . . Repent

therefore and return that your sins may be wiped away, . . . and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time" (Acts 3:12-21).

The Apostle Paul and Barnabas were commissioned by the Antioch church to go forth on missionary journeys preaching the Word of God. In declaring the resurrected Jesus, Paul said, "Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses" (Acts 13:38, 39). This great truth is confirmed by the Apostle John. "For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).

Grace is offered to whosoever will accept Jesus as Savior. It is written, "But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift" (Eph. 4:7). God has provided adoption into His family for the redeemed to be His sons and daughters. According to His Word, this is "through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Gal. 3:26, 27).

God's grace reaches beyond the manger of Bethlehem. Have you outgrown the cradle? As you move beyond the ABC's of Christianity, let the grace of the manger be a springboard for the new year upon which you go forth. Filled with wisdom, build your Christian character as you continue in God's grace.

There is a better day coming! Christmas is an invitation to a celebration yet to come. Angels heralded Jesus' birth in the Bethlehem night, and one

day they will herald the dawning of that better day. Everyone yearns for that better day of celebration when "the government will rest on His shoulders . . . the zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this" (Isa. 9:6b-7).

*NASB referenced throughout article. ²⁴¹

¹From a cartoon, (C) 1918 H.T. Webster, New York World Publishing Company, courtesy Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois.



Microchip Implant Can Help Locate Your Lost Pets

Q: Recently our local Humane Society has offered, for \$25, a lifetime computer chip to be injected with a needle between the shoulder blades of a cat or dog.

Apparently, all new animals being adopted get a chip. Now when stray animals are picked up, they're scanned when brought to the shelter.

Please, offer your thoughts on these implanted chips. Are there known medical side effects? If you had an indoor/outdoor cat, would you have it "chipped"?

A: I'm generally against new and unnecessary technologies, as most readers of my column know, but the microchip identification system you describe is an excellent advance in helping with pet loss, owner identification and pet theft. Once the systems are standard-

ized state by state, microchip pet ID will be a blessing, indeed.

Microchip ID technology is safe for pets, and adverse reactions following subcutaneous implantation are extremely rare, so I see no reason why you shouldn't have your cat "chipped." Other readers might ask for chips at their local shelters, thus encouraging their use.

Incidentally, microchip ID's are also being used on horses and expensive breeding stock and may soon be used on cattle and other farm animals to help trace disease problems—and of course, as a humane alternative to the barbaric practice of hot-iron branding.

—by Michael Fox
Atlanta Journal-Constitution

SAFE, LEGAL, AND CANCEROUS

"The silence you hear," said attorney Scott Somerville in *World* two weeks ago, "is the only argument they have." Mr. Somerville was referring to the abortion industry silence concerning studies linking abortion with increased risk of breast cancer; he could just as easily have been referring to the reaction in some journalistic quarters to the bombshell November issue of the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*. The two notable exceptions: *Time* and NBC's *Dateline*. *Time* summed up "[I]t would be unfortunate if the fallout from the abortion wars stops some scientists from following up on important clues." Attention media watchdogs: It's up to you not to let that happen.

— *World*, Nov. 12, 1994, p. 8.

BIBLES PENETRATE THE WORLD

While the US is virtually overflowing with new versions and editions of the Bible, people around the world continue to wait to read the Word of God in their own language. In Africa, said Vetta Mengistu, international executive director of the International Bible Society in Africa, over 1,800 major languages exist. Of those, only 250 have Bibles. Currently in process are 40 translation projects of languages commonly spoken or understood.

— *ACTS*, November 1994, p. 13.

BRITISH BELIEFS

One in four British churchgoers doesn't believe in the Virgin Birth, according to a survey published in the *Sunday Express*. The nationwide poll, conducted by the MORI Institute, also found that one in 10 don't believe in the resurrection of Christ, while a third of those polled don't believe in Satan or hell.

— *ACTS*, November 1994, p. 13.

HOMOSEXUAL COUNT

A study of British sexual behavior has found the number of homosexuals to be far lower than previously thought. According to *Sexual Behavior in Britain*, only 1.1% of British men reported having a homosexual partner during the previous year, and only 1.4% said they had a male partner at some point in their life, while 6.1% reported some sort of "homosexual experience," a broadly defined term that includes touching. Among women, 3.4% reported a "homosexual experience," and 1.7% had had a lesbian sexual partner. The numbers are significantly lower than the much-publicized one-in-ten figure put forth in the 1948 Kinsey Report, but are in line with other more recent studies. The survey, the most exhaustive ever of British sexual behavior, was conducted in 1990-91, and involved interviews with 18,876 people.

— *ACTS*, November 1994, p. 13

“Who Would Miss Us?”

Let us suppose that last Sunday's service was the last that this congregation would ever be permitted to hold. Who in this community would miss us the most? Would the poor? The orphans? The widows? Or the sinners? Or would it perhaps be the utility companies, the contractors, and the building supply people? Comfortable buildings are important and necessary. But should they be our major impact on the community?

Are we wielding the proper forces for good in our community? Are we loved and appreciated by the people for the good things we are doing? In what ways do we touch the lives of those people outside our circle of fellowship? Are we doing as much as we are capable of doing and should be doing?

In many ways we have become a society for mutual edification. Our worship services should be times of mutual edification and upbuilding. But we should depart from them to serve humanity. Our Lord was described as a person “who went about doing good.” (Acts 10:38.) He will not be satisfied with us if we do any less than follow in his footsteps (1 Peter 2:21).

A confused, chaotic, convulsing world, gasping for life and breath, will not be touched by a tame church, mouthing time-worn cliches and pious platitudes.

To affect a dirty world, it will take a pure church; to infect a sad world, it will take a joyous church; to rapture

an apathetic world, it will take a convicted church; to challenge a dying world, it will take a live church; to heal a sick world, it will take a well church.

It will take a church unafraid of cancer, unaffected by roadblocks, unflinching in the face of criticism, and unmoved by persecution. It will take a church that dares to dream big, to work long, to pray desperately, to plan carefully, to fight bravely, to storm the gates of evil and lethargy. It will take a church that is unwilling to compromise, more than willing to sacrifice, more than ready to be inconvenienced, and more than anxious to risk.

It will take a church whose strength is equal to her task.

It will take a church with Godly gusto, prevailing prayer, demonstrative determination, and victorious venture to win the battle.

It will take a church divinely sent, moving, planning, conquering with supernatural power!

—Guthrie Grove Church of God bulletin.



Love

“Agape” (pronounced “agapay”) is the Greek term chosen for GODLY love. It appears in the New Testament about 220 times in its varied noun, verb and modifying forms. This love from God can only be experienced or expressed if we are related to Him.

“Philadelphia” and similar Greek terms speak of BROTHERLY love. These concepts are essential to the Christian life and appear almost ninety times in the New Testament. This term of love must be guided by the higher form, “agape,” to avoid a misguided brotherly affection.

For instance, the intimacy of marriage is to practice “agape” to insure a successful and lasting relationship.

Paul used “agape” six times in Ephesians 5:22-33. “Philadelphos” appears in verse eight of 1 Peter 3:1-12 and “philadelphia” in verse one of Hebrews 13:1-4. The depths of these kinds of love are to filter throughout every aspect of Christian life. The New Testament never uses the term “eros” to describe Christian relationships. Most often “eros” indicated the romance of unrestrained desire, typical of pagan fertility rites, tending to erode rather than to edify godly relationships.

—Editor, Iowa State Newsletter

Selections from

When Jesus sent two disciples to fetch a donkey's colt on Palm Sunday, they had no other task in the whole world more important than fetching it. If someone had said to them, "You are called to greater things; anyone can fetch a donkey," and they had not done it, they would have been disobedient. But there was nothing greater for them at that moment than to fetch the donkey for Christ. For myself and for each individual I wish that we might do every task, great or small, in this obedience. There is nothing greater than obedience to Christ.

I want to encourage anyone who feels discouraged because of having made unsuccessful attempts to follow Christ. In and of ourselves we cannot follow Christ; we are all equally unable. But that is because our dedication to Christ is not complete. Only when we empty ourselves completely, when we give everything over to Him, can He work. As long as we work in our own vanity, we will fail. Christ shows us again and again how terribly we fail and stand in His way, as a church and as individuals. Discipleship is not a question of our own doing; it is a matter of making room for the Lord so that He can live in us.

How important it is that our life is genuine and remains genuine, and that we do no more—but also not the least bit less—than God requires of us at any moment! There is a danger of coming to an intellectual recognition of the truth and then living a life that conforms to it, when the truth is not yet actually given by God into our hearts and souls.

Things go wrong in churches and Christian communities because Jesus' words about making peace with one another before bringing a gift to the altar (Mt. 5:23-24) are not taken seriously anymore. Jesus Himself said this, and as His followers we are entrusted with witnessing to His words. To us this means we should not come to prayer or partake of the Lord's Supper unless there is complete peace among us. Too often it happens that things are left unresolved when people pray together. We must clear things up and forgive one another again and again.

n Discipleship

It is better to remain unbaptized than to take the step half-heartedly for the sake of parents or someone you love, or in order to find security in church membership. Baptism must be a personal decision. No one can make it for you.

Millions of people are baptized, but for many of them baptism is a completely dead form with no meaning whatsoever. I would advise anyone who wants to be baptized to ask himself, "Am I willing, for the sake of Jesus, to love nothing more than Him — neither wife, parents, nor children — so that he can live in me? Am I willing to give everything to Jesus and my brothers?" If you are not, don't be baptized! You must be willing to die for Him so that He Himself may live in your heart. Jesus must be your only treasure.

The Holy Spirit is like water, which seeks the lowest place. It comes only to the broken and humble heart.

It is important for us to decide whether we want only a nice church or the way of the cross. This must be very clear to us: Jesus' way is the way of the cross, of complete personal change, of a society on a completely different basis than work and bread and privileges. We must be willing to be surrounded by enemies, and to be despised for going His way.

— *Discipleship*, by J. Heinrich Arnold

The Fields

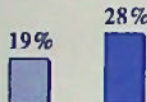
In the U. S.

East Remains Liberal

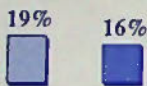
Residents of the East tend to hold more liberal religious beliefs than the rest of the United States and higher proportions of Catholics and Jews live in the East.

■ East
■ U.S. Average

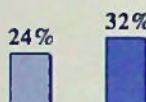
Belong to a Bible study group



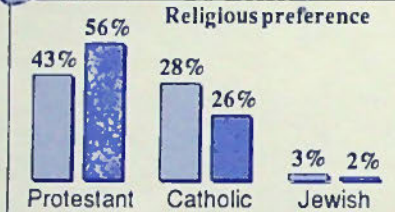
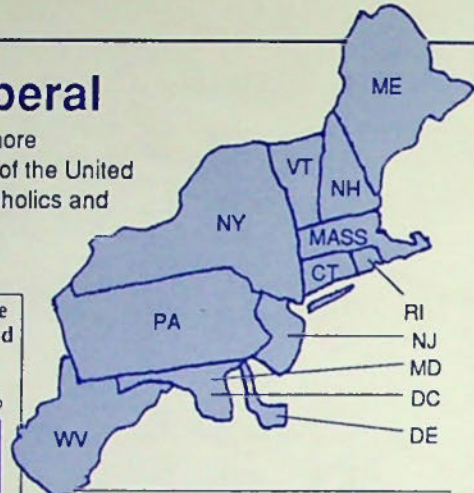
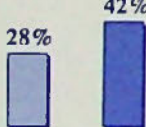
Believe Bible is a collection of fables and legends



Believe the Bible is the literal word of God



Consider self "born again" or evangelical



None: East 9%, National 9%; Other: East 7%, National 6%; Orthodox: East 2%, National 1%

Compared to other regions of the nation which so often are dominated by Protestant and Fundamentalist beliefs, the East claims many adherents of the Catholic, Orthodox, and Jewish faiths. Its Protestants are more likely to prefer mainstream and liberal denominations than the Fundamentalist persuasions that are so prevalent elsewhere.

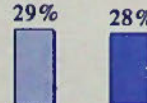
The Midwest often is described as the "heartland" of America, and from our perspective of conducting many surveys on the religious attitudes and behavior of the people of the region, the description fits well.

'Heartland' Religion

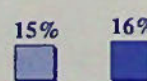
Midwesterners closely reflect the national average in religious beliefs and their level of participation is generally higher than the East or West but slightly lower than in the South.

■ Midwest
■ U.S. Average

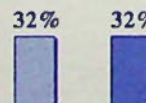
Belong to a Bible study group



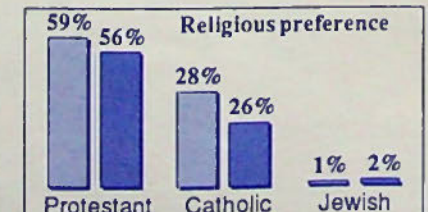
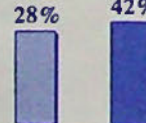
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Consider self "born again" or evangelical



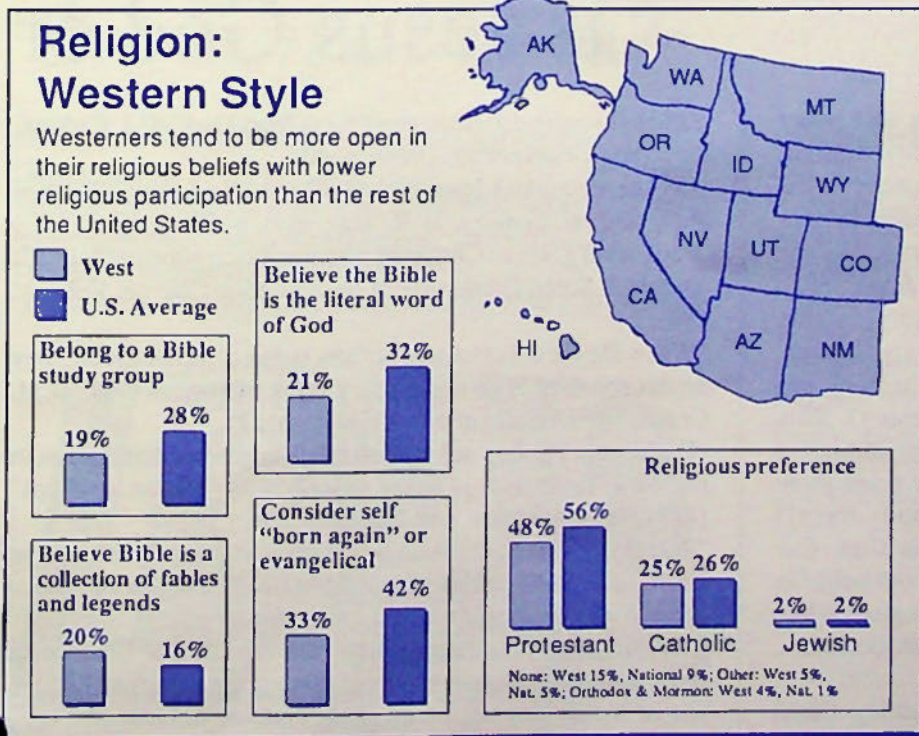
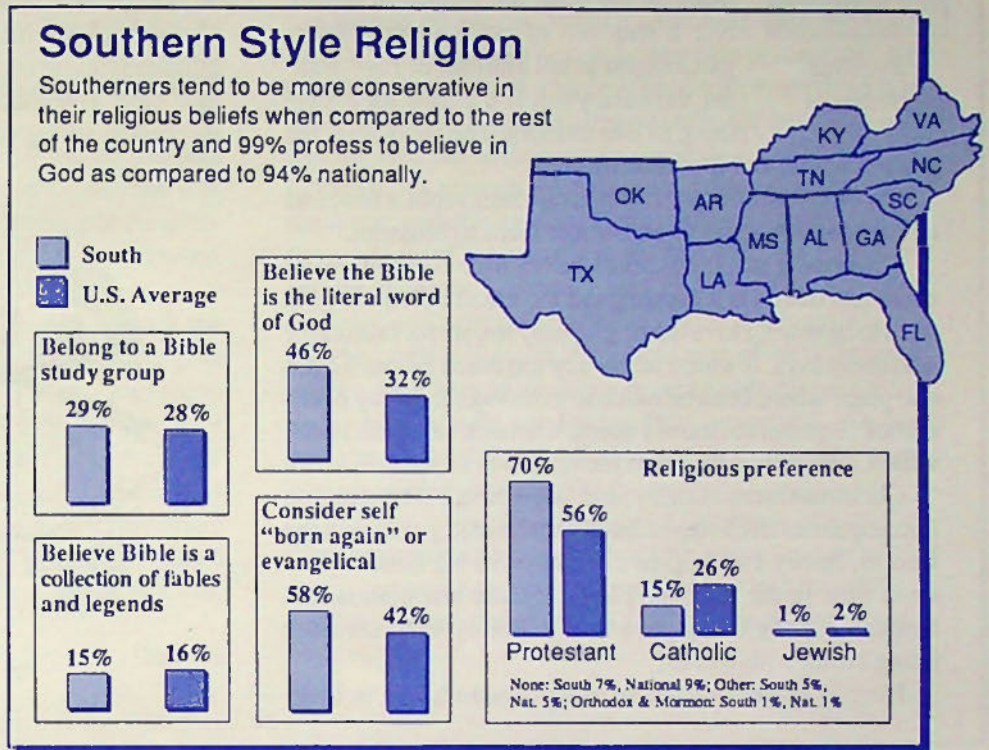
None: Midwest 8%, National 9%; Other: Midwest 3%, National 6%; Orthodox: Midwest 1%, National 1%

It is unfortunate that we have no similar information on Canada. Such would be helpful in planning for expansion of the Church of God in Canada.

— From *PRRC Emerging Trends*, Vol. 16, No. 7, Sept. 1994

Ours to Harvest

The **Southern** states undoubtedly contain the greatest concentration and highest levels of religious fervor in America. Consistently over the years the people of the South have ranked at the top — often by wide margins — in regional comparisons of religious attitudes, beliefs, and behavior, as measured by Gallup surveys.



There is no question that religious belief and practice in the **West** frequently differs from that found in the rest of the country. Participation levels usually are the lowest of any region. Still, they are high compared to those of the inhabitants of many other parts of the world. The headlines and stories about the bizarre practices of religious cults and fringe groups on the West coast can obscure the fact that the majority of residents of the area still hold religious beliefs that usually are similar to what is practiced elsewhere in the United States, if not always with the same intensity.

CHRISTMAS IMAGES



By Joyce
Housman

The winter winds howl 'round the corner of my house making promises. It bears the light flakes of early snowfalls to cover the ravages of the hard freeze which made all the plant life a uniform brown. Not a smidgen of color in my flower gardens, no small animals or fowl wander the barn yard. It's a time for everything to live indoors. The air is cold, the ground white, and it's beautiful.

It's time to fertilize those houseplants, repot a few, and talk tenderly to them to encourage them to blossom.

The sewing machine should be my lone companion because Christmas is a'coming and the grandchildren's gifts need to be sewn. I love the bright, easy to care for fabrics for sale these days. It's hard not to buy too much fabric. That's one place where I can be much to extravagant for my pocketbook. Besides the money spent, where on earth can I store what I buy until inspiration moves me to sew it?

Christmas means family, and that means I'll be cleaning house quite often. I like to have some baked goodies in the freezer, handy for drop-in company. So I'd better spend extra time in the kitchen. The confusion and commotion that accompany this joyous time certainly keep me from being bored with winter!

Here in Minnesota we've already been living in long-

johns, boots, wool mittens, heavy jackets, and scarves for a month or so. However, carrying ten pounds of winter clothing doesn't keep us from taking care of our hungry animals or from enjoying hymn sings, Christmas programs at church and school, sleigh rides and the usual pre-Christmas festivities. We may have red noses (a northern climate syndrome) and cold fingers but we have this season that God gives us. With His protection we'll make it through to spring once more. ^{R.H.}



Is Jesus God or

Opinions are divided. What is astonishing is that many carelessly assume that the popular, majority opinion is the right one. Instead of carrying out a thorough investigation of the question they simply side with the view which seems to have the right authorities backing it. This procedure is irrational. The intelligent approach to the question, "Who is Jesus" is to examine all the evidence thoroughly and prayerfully.

On what basis do so many seem to think that Billy Graham, for example, rather than university professors of theology, has the right answer to the question of Jesus' identity? Billy Graham has admitted that he does not consider himself a theologian and that he wished that he could have given more time to study. Yet when Graham's article, "Who is Jesus?" (*Decision*, April 1994) concludes that "Jesus is God. Our earthly lives and our eternal destinies depend on our belief in that fact," many appear to consider the question closed. What, however, if they had consulted a wider range of authorities:

"Apparently Paul did not call Jesus God" (Sydney Cave, *Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, p. 48).

"Paul habitually differentiates Christ from God" (C.J. Cadoux, *A Pilgrim's Further Progress*, p. 40).

"Paul never equates Jesus with God" (*The Problem of Christ in the Twentieth Century*, W.R. Matthews, p. 22).

"Paul never gives to Christ the name or description of God" (C. Anderson Scott, *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, Vol. I, p. 194).

"When the New Testament writers speak of Jesus Christ, they do not speak of Him nor do they think of Him as God" (J.M. Creed, *The Divinity of Jesus Christ*, p. 22).

"Karl Rahner points out with so much emphasis that the Son in the New Testament is never described as 'ho theos' (God)" (A.T. Hanson, *Grace and Truth*).

"The clear evidence of John is that Jesus vigorously refuses the claim to be God or His substitute" (J.A.T. Robinson, *Twelve More New Testament Studies*, pp. 175-6).

"The writer of Revelation carries the equating of Christ with God to the furthest point short of making them eternally equal. Christ is still 'the beginning of the creation of God' (7:14) by which is probably to be understood that He Himself was part of

SPREADING SOME WARMTH IN THE COLD

By Gaye Dilley

When I think of the Christmas Season, I get a very warm feeling inside. I suppose that is because when I grew up, no matter what, our family was together on Christmas Eve. We would have a large wonderful supper and then after everyone helped to clean up, we would all sit around the tree and open gifts. I always had a secure feeling that we would always be together at Christmas.

We kept that tradition even after we grew up and had families of our own. On rare occasions not everyone was able to be there for Christmas because of being in the army or in the hospital. But I can only think of a few times when this occurred.

As I've grown older, I have always wanted to reach out to people who are less fortunate than myself and try to give them some of the warm feelings that I was so fortunate to have as a child. I have never had an overabundance of money, so I wasn't sure how to do something like that — or even where to start — until last year around September. I was talking to a lady in our church and expressed my desire to reach out. She said that she and her family had talked about doing the same thing. Ha, ha! Where there is a will, God will find a way.

We put our heads together, and last Christmas Day we

put on a big dinner for anyone who was alone or lonely. We had no idea how many people would come or even if anyone would come. We put an ad in the local paper and we had around 60 people. What a wonderful day. We decorated a Christmas tree (made homemade ornaments), had hors d'oeuvre, served a large dinner with everything possible, and then sang Christmas carols. Of course dessert was the last, but definitely not the least.

One of my reasons for doing this, aside from wanting to reach out, was somewhat selfish. I wanted to teach my son (now 12) that Christmas was much more than eating and getting presents. I wanted him to know that giving of yourself, as Christ did, could bring you much more pleasure than any gift could. We took part of our Christmas money, which we would have spent on gifts for each other, and used it to help pay for the food we served. We both came away from that day feeling so filled with God's love that we started planning for the next year.

We still have our traditional Christmas, at home on Christmas Eve, but hopefully on Christmas Day we will be able to continue to give to those who are less fortunate — not by giving all that much, just a little of ourselves.

REI

the *Son* of God?

the creation" (C. Anderson Scott, *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, Vol. I, p. 185).

"In Acts 2:34, 35 it is the attribute of lordship which is given to Jesus; He is not equated with Yahweh" (Howard Marshall, the Tyndale Commentary on Acts, p. 80).

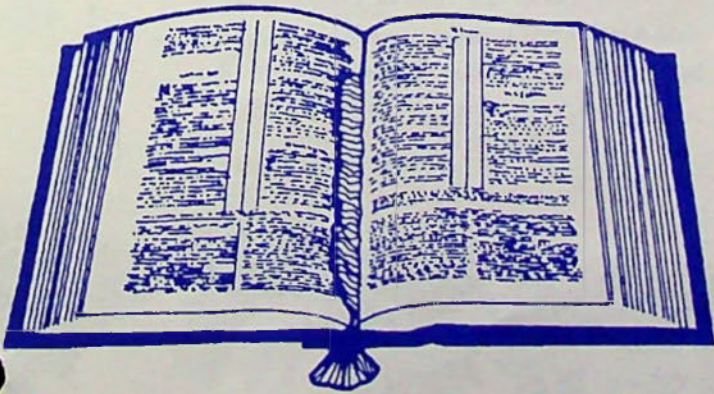
"Jesus is not God but God's representative, and as such, so

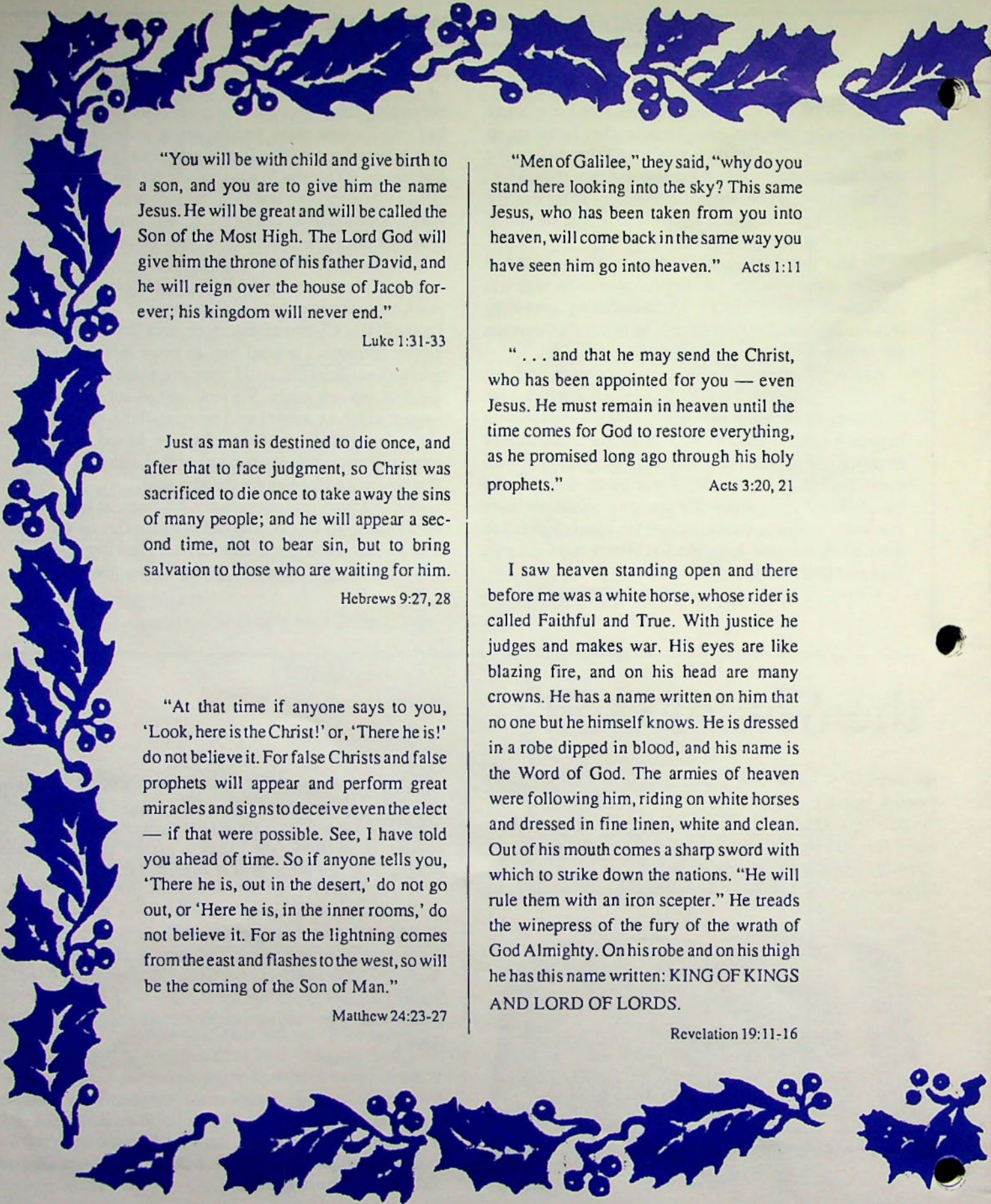
completely and totally acts on God's behalf that he stands in God's stead before the world. . . . The Gospel of John clearly states that God and Jesus are not to be understood as identical persons, as in 14:38, 'the Father is greater than I.'" (Jacob Jervell, *Jesus and the Gospel of John*, p. 21).

The trained professional Bible scholar is not necessarily wrong. Above are examples of the findings of some of the brightest students of Scripture. All have their doctorate in the field of the Bible and its interpretation. Shouldn't their voice be heard? Popular religion has for too long blinded the minds of sincere church-goers to alternative views on major theological issues. REI

—By Anthony Buzzard

For a complete investigation of the most important question about who God is, write for *THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY* (1994, 172 pages), by Anthony Buzzard and Charles Hunting, available from Atlanta Bible College, P.O. Box 100,000, Morrow, GA 30260.





“You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.”

Luke 1:31-33

Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed to die once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Hebrews 9:27, 28

“At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great miracles and signs to deceive even the elect — if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time. So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out, or ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.”

Matthew 24:23-27

“Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.” Acts 1:11

“ . . . and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you — even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.” Acts 3:20, 21

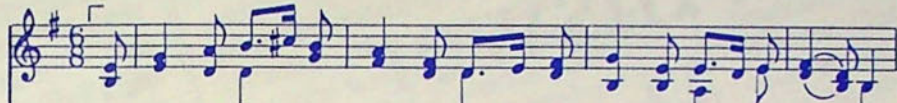
I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one but he himself knows. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron scepter.” He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Revelation 19:11-16

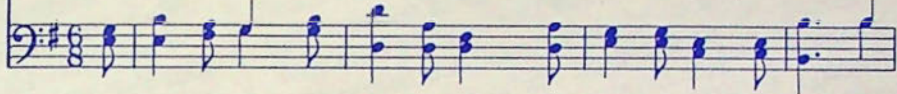


What Child Is This?

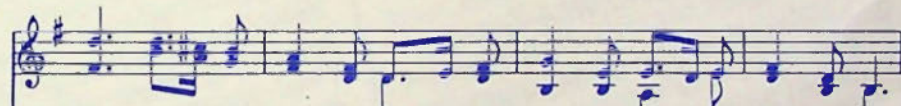
So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. Lk. 2:16



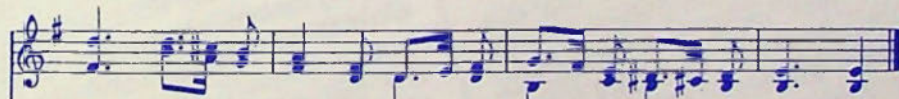
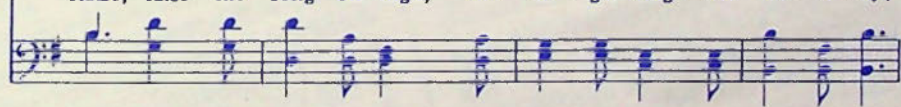
1. What Child is this, who, laid to rest, on Ma-ry's lap is sleep-ing,
2. Why lies he in such mean es-tate where ox and ass are feed-ing?
3. So bring him in-cense, gold, and myrrh, come, peas-ant, king, to own him.



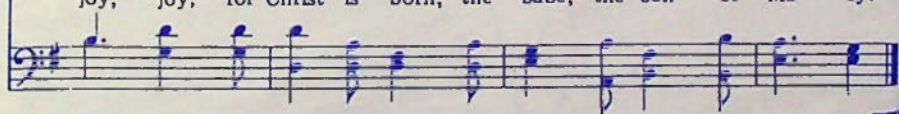
whom an-gels greet with an-thems sweet, while shep-herds watch are keep-ing?
Good Chris-tians, fear; for sin-ners here the si-lent Word is plead-ing.
The King of kings sal-va-tion brings; let lov-ing hearts en-throne him.



This, this is Christ the King, whom shep-herds guard and an-gels sing;
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir-gin sings her lul-la-by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Ma-ry.
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Ma-ry.
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Ma-ry.



God Does Answer Prayer

THE TELEPHONE RANG and a voice on the other end said, "Mrs. Turner, this is DCFS (Department of Children and Family Services). We have a two year old. Will you take him?" Glenda and I had been foster parents for four years. We both worked outside the home and had said we would only take school aged children. We firmly restated our policy, but by the end of the conversation had agreed to take a look at this little guy. We went over together and, in an instant, we agreed. Our lives were about to change forever.

"Little John"¹ came to our home and was immediately the little brother to our four children. He was a terror! He couldn't talk. He was extremely active and into everything. He bit anyone who picked him up, and he single-handedly destroyed all the drawers in two antique dressers. He hated his car seat, so everywhere we drove he screamed at the top of his lungs. We enrolled him in a day care that worked with disabled children. Soon he was expelled; we were asked never to bring him back. When he went to bed at night we were exhausted, but stayed up to enjoy the peace and quiet. Then,



*By Gary Turner,
Rockford, Illinois*

as unexpectedly as the first call came the second — he was going home. We packed his bags and his toys, and we were heart broken.

I couldn't understand. We should have been glad that he was gone; for the first time in a year we lived normal lives again. However, we had met John's parents during the year. We didn't think much of what he was returning home to. I hurt badly for him but there was nothing I could do. I came to the point that I turned it over to the Lord. I began to feel some peace, but I feared we would never see him again or even know what happened to him.

Months passed, I was working in the yard one afternoon when the phone rang inside. Again it was DCFS. "Little John is back in the system. Will you

take him?" My heart jumped, and this time I agreed in a flash. Little John was coming home. The second year he lived with us was much different. Although he still couldn't talk, he settled into our routine and became a joy to have around. A friend was opening a day care, and she worked well with John. She was patient and understanding, and he loved it there. He no longer screamed in the car, and he didn't drive us crazy when we went out in public. He was now an active four year old. But it didn't last long. Again, the system sent him home.² Again, we grieved for this little boy. But this time Glenda and I knew we had to take a different approach. We figured that if we were going to see this child again we needed to befriend his parents and get to know them. That was hard!

It was late winter or early spring. Either way it was cold outside. I spotted John's Dad from my car, walking beside the street. I thought about driving on by him; he wouldn't even know I was around. But I didn't. I stopped, rolled down the window and asked him if he would like a ride. He accepted with some hesitancy. He was doing odd jobs in the area and was walking some distance to get a bottle of pop at a grocery store. While I was waiting for him in the parking lot, God spoke to me and said, "Take him out to lunch." I winced and thought, "Not me! Not the way he's dressed and smells." But I did. We went to Wendy's and probably for the first time in his life, someone bought him lunch. He opened up and began to talk and in a half hour I learned more about him and his family than I had found out in the previous two years. I found out that, like anyone else, he hurt, too. I shared my feelings and thoughts, offered him advice and invited him and his family to come to our church. He muttered something about having his

own church "when they could get there." As I dropped him off, God spoke to me again. As Jim³ walked around the back of the car, I quickly rolled down the window and said, "if you would like a ride on Sunday, give me a call and we will pick you up." He nodded and went back to work. Saturday night the phone rang — he and John wanted to go to church. For several weeks, Little John and his family came to church on a regular basis. As a matter of fact, they were often the first to show up and the last to leave. They seemed to like us, and oddly enough, we all seemed to like them.

But once again, we lost Little John. This time it looked like it would be for good. They announced they were moving to Arkansas and would not be back. For the third time in two years, we felt like our hearts were ripped from our chests. For the third time in two years I turned "Little John" over to the Lord. This time I asked Him to make a kingdom difference in John's life and help him and his family. In less than a month, we received a call from the State of Arkansas. They asked if we would take him a third time as a foster child. John was back in the system, but this time he was not coming to our home. The judicial system intervened and would not allow him to cross state lines. Again, our hearts went out for him, and we prayed to God on his behalf.

We were able to keep informed over the years about how John was doing. We never knew where he was. We never saw him from 1990 to 1994. But in September, 1993, we had a ray of hope shine forth. First John's Dad called, and then Arkansas' Department of Human Services. John was up for adoption. We were told if we wanted him to get our name on the list. We called immediately, but we were not greeted with a favorable response. They intended to place him in Arkan-

sas. They took our name, thanked us politely for our interest, and we never heard from them again.

In March, 1994, I called the Adoption Unit and was informed that John had been adopted and was out of the system. They wouldn't give me any information and they wouldn't put him in contact with us. Once again it looked like John was gone. This time it left little doubt that it was for good. But this time I felt peace instead of hurt. Peace that I didn't understand. What had happened to my love for him? Why didn't I hurt like I had before? I still prayed that John would be in a Christian family where he would be raised to know Jesus.⁴ I prayed that one day I would see John in God's kingdom. I prayed that somehow John would be loved and nurtured to the point that he could make a kingdom difference in the lives of people around him. "God," I said, "You know what he needs and he is totally in your hands. Keep him safe." With that, I knew John would be alright.

It was Saturday morning, the day before Mother's Day, and things were as hectic as usual. Our granddaughter, Ashley was home with us from Atlanta. We had a big day planned at the church for Mother's Day and then we were leaving to return Ashley to her parents. In the mail I noticed a letter from the Department of Human Services, Little Rock, Arkansas. It informed us that John had been adopted but had already been returned to the system. If we still wanted him, he would be ours! Little John was coming home! This time for good!

After a long, tedious summer, John is at home with us again. He is a very special little boy. Besides his having all sorts of emotional problems, we have

found that he is pretty sick physically. He has been diagnosed with Marfan Syndrome. The disease causes rapid growth, weakens his heart, causes his joints to not function properly and affects his eyes. Both his eyes' lenses are detached and he has difficulty seeing. He will soon be eight years old. He can't read. He can't write and he is way behind in school. He has been bounced from school to school, home to home. Our prayer now is for patience and understanding as God heals all of the wrongs that have been committed against him in his young life. We have followed the instructions of James 5:13-16 and he has been anointed with oil by the elders of the church. We ask all of you who are reading this to lift "Little John" up before the Lord and pray for healing on his behalf. We trust God to continue to work the miracle He has been working in John's life. ✠✠

¹We call this boy "Little John" because our second son is named John.

²From the information we have been able to get, John has been in at least three hospitals, 12 or 13 foster homes, and nearly a dozen schools. As I write this, he is seven years old.

³Name changed to protect confidentiality.

⁴John's two brothers and one sister have been adopted by a pastor and his wife in Arkansas. John came out of a foster family which had him in church three times a week, he runs around the house singing about Jesus and His love for us.



A New Year Perspective



By Stephen Bolhous
Fonthill, Ontario

OF ALL THE GIFTS you received during this recent holiday season there is one that you probably overlooked. You have been given a new year; we all have! The old year of 1994 has been replaced by the new model known as 1995.

With some of the Christmas gifts we received there was an accompanying booklet of instructions, an owner's manual. If an owner's manual came with the gift of a new year the first page might read something like this: "Entering a new year is much like crossing a busy street; we need to look in both directions and then proceed."

First we must look at the past year. In preparing for a new year we need to reflect on the old year's major events, joys and sorrows, triumphs and tragedies. We hope we grew a little wiser and improved our character and disposition as we added another year to our sum total of life experience. We want the new year to build on the growth gains of the old year.

Second we look in the opposite direction, toward the future. It's difficult to see the future with the same clarity we see the past. There are too many un-

known elements. It's all new. There will be a mix of positive and negative experiences, but exactly what they will be we don't know. When the people of Israel were about to enter the promised land God said to them, "You have not passed this way before." (Joshua 3:4) Their future was all new and unknown to them just as the experiences of 1995 are new and unknown to us.

Proceed Into 1995

Having looked both ways we're now ready to proceed into the new year. How shall we proceed? What should be our outlook? What expectations should we have? What should be our value system for processing, filtering and digesting the information and experiences that we will encounter?

We can proceed through 1995 with either a microscope or a pair of binoculars. Both are instruments of magnification but with different perspectives. A microscope enlarges tiny items, some so small that the naked eye could never see them. With a microscope the littlest things loom large before us. A pair of binoculars brings items from the vanishing point of the horizon into clear visual defini-

tion. The binoculars bring into focus a distant panorama enabling us to see far beyond ourselves all at once.

We can look at life with either microscope vision or binocular vision. We can allow the little insignificant items of life to become far larger than their real importance so that they soon dominate us; or we can see ourselves as part of a large time picture that stretches far beyond the immediate moment.

Focus on Eternal Values

We need to use binocular vision and see our lives in terms of God's eternal tapestry. Long ago someone wrote, "Only one life, 'Twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last." Though not a Bible verse it certainly represents a Bible teaching. Much of life is obviously temporary and transitory. Almost all of the things we sweat and labor to acquire are not going to last. The only things that will survive into eternity are intangible: the Word of God (I Peter 1:25); faith, hope and charity (love) (I Corinthians 13:8-13); and deeds of ministry (Matthew 10:41, 43; I Corinthians 3:12-15).

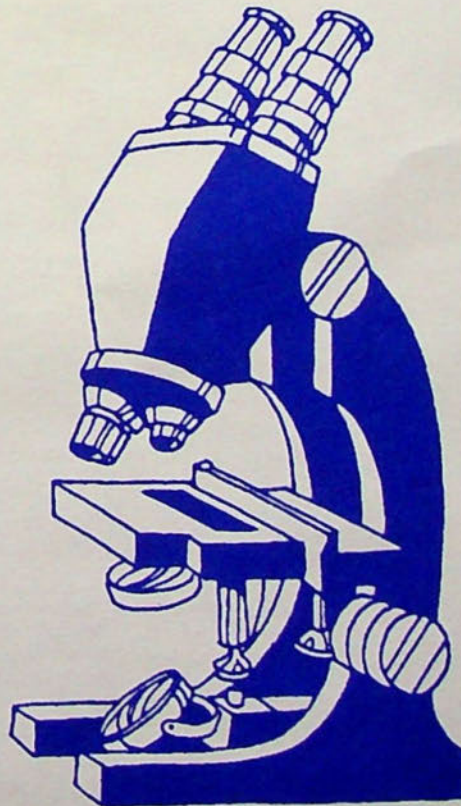
As we live and the new year of 1995 we need to maintain a proper perspective. We need to pay attention to the things that count for eternity and not be so consumed with the things that will not last.

Follow The Lord

When the people of Israel were about to enter the promised land God told them that since they had "not passed this way before" they were to follow the ark of the covenant carried by the priests. The ark was one of the

visible symbols of God's presence with them. In other words, God was telling them that since they didn't know where they were going they were to follow Him.

As we proceed through 1995 we must make sure that our relationship with God is one of being sensitive to His direction for our lives. We need to be close followers of the one who sees tomorrow more clearly than we see yesterday. The lyrics of a popular Christian campfire chorus state, "My Lord knows the way through the wilderness, All I have to do is follow." That's a great way for the last page of an owner's manual for a new year to read—"keep following the Lord." PH



I Like the Church of God

Early in December I met with the Ministerial Recognition Board at the Timberland Bible Church in South Bend. We had a good meeting and part of it was an enjoyable interview with Steve and Pat Zimbelman. Saturday morning I spoke to a group of Indiana's youth and youth leaders. Sunday I was privileged to preach to the Timberland congregation. The auditorium was beautiful, the people were excited about their church and encouraging of me. Pastor John and Alice Railton welcomed me into their home and I enjoyed their warm hospitality and fellowship.

All of this is to say that I like the Church of God. It's a special opportunity I enjoy as an employee of our College and Conference to be able to travel among our churches. I really enjoy doing that for I see so many good things happening.

Too often our attention is drawn to troubled situations, and yes, we have those. But we also have congregations

from small on down to tiny that are joyful little beams of light. It seems that those troubled situations loom so large that we forget the good sermons that are being preached, the spiritual growth that is happening and the people that are coming to faith.

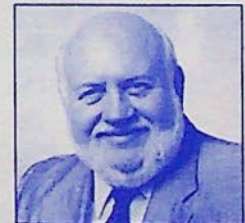
I wish there were more. I know there is not enough. I know that we could dismiss all of this as "rose-colored serendipity," but I don't think that would be correct. The Church of God is called to be part of God's Plan, of Christ's Church, and we need to live like it! There are six things to do:

- 1) We need to preach the Gospel in a spirit of anticipation and expectation over what Christ will do in and through us.
- 2) We need to put away the anger and the bitterness which all too easily slips in among even loving congregations, and devote ourselves to getting along . . . "a unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" kind of thing.
- 3) We need to believe in the Bible's message so strongly and that it is so important that we do more in the way of teaching it to

our neighbors, and most importantly to our families.

- 4) We need to fill our churches with songs of praise and hymns of adoration . . . not just by a few leaders, but by all of Christ's people.
- 5) We need to lovingly lead our young people to avoid the enticing temptations of life and be devoted to the things of God (quaint and naive, isn't it).
- 6) We need to recover the spirit of joy we found among one another, by meeting with one another and loving and encouraging one another . . . "and so much more as you see the day approaching."

Thanks Timberland, but also thanks to all the churches I've visited . . . such as Holbrook, Harlingen, Litchfield, Omaha, Waterloo, Hector, Pomona, Simi Valley, Wenatchee, Beloit, St. Charles, Happy Woods . . . I hope I can visit all of the others in the future. God's people are largely good people, who love His Christ, and look for His Return. In the New Year, let's devote ourselves to being more perfectly the Body of Christ.



Kent Pass

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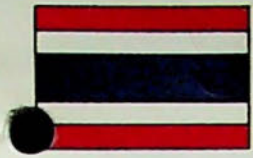
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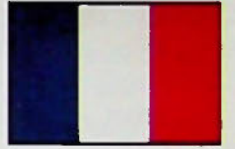
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ARE WE MAKING A DIFFERENCE?



THE RESTITUTION HERALD • Volume 84, Number 3 • February, March 1995



The Glory of the Kingdom

We need to remind ourselves and be reminded of it periodically. The coming Kingdom of God will be rich beyond our ability to comprehend because we are finite and mortal. We gain glimpses of it on occasion . . . in those moments at baptism, when a person completes their step into God's family . . . or that transcendent moment when, as a new parent, we hold our child for the first time . . . or that moment of quiet joy when, as part of the body of Christ, we partake of the emblems representing Christ's body and blood.

Those moments are a spur to encourage a recommitment of our lives to the Lord. But it seems sometimes that those moments are too few and too infrequent. The author of Hebrews writes that it is extremely important that we remember to gather with the family of God, and that *more* frequently as we near the end of the age.

But the fact is that it is getting easier to not come together. Too many say they haven't time for getting together in state and regional conferences. They don't mean that, not really. What they mean is that they're not interested in it, or that their schedules have become so busy with other activities that they have decided not to make the time for these church activities, which frankly don't interest them much.

What a mistake that has been and continues to be. It's a lonely and unpopular position to argue for more involvement in these activities, but the small, incremental steps we take away from the closeness of fellowship lessen even more the unity we ought to be experiencing, and we lose those momentary glimpses of the Kingdom. Not entirely, but over a period of years it is a large loss.

Our children don't develop relationships with others of "like precious faith," and that leads to marriages outside of the

faith. That in itself is not bad or wrong, except that too often that has led those same young people to abandon the precious truths of the Bible to go into popular and orthodox religion. Step by step, family by family, we lose touch with one another and with the faith "once committed to the saints."

Maybe we can't change what seems an inevitable course, but we need to try. You who read this need to remember those glimpses of the Kingdom that can happen in times of sweet fellowship at a state conference. No, not state conferences as they too often are, but state and regional conferences that draw us close and inflame and impassion us anew with our hope of the return of Jesus Christ to this earth.

We need to encourage and aid our pastors to participate in the ministerial conferences and retreats. They need to be encouraged to be an encouragement. Often they themselves are frustrated over the lackadaisical attendance and participation at state and regional events. Internally they ask why they and their families should attend and participate when so many in their own churches aren't participating.

That's why you readers, the committed ones, need to be spearheading a return to the fellowship and transcendent moments when we glimpse, albeit only momentarily, that coming Kingdom.

I'd like to see you at General Conference this summer. I'd like to see you at Christian Worker's Seminar next month. I need, through you, to catch a glimpse of Christ's Kingdom . . . yes, through you!

Kent Ross

THE Restitution HERALD

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THE RESTITUTION HERALD advocates:

- the oneness of God (1 Cor. 8:6);
- the Holy Spirit is God's power (Acts 1:8);
- Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son (Matt. 16:16), and is our Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5);
- the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16);
- the mortality of man (Job 4:17; Psa. 146:4);
- the near return of Christ (Acts 1:11), and life only through Him (Col. 3:3);
- the literal resurrection of the dead (John 5:28);
- the immortalization of those in Christ (1 Cor. 15:53, 54);
- the destruction of the wicked (Rev. 21:8);
- the final restoration of Israel as the Kingdom of God under the kingship of Christ (Luke 1:32);
- the church to be joint heirs with Him (Rom. 8:17), and Israel to be made head over Gentile nations (Isa. 60:1-3);
- the "restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21).
- It also firmly advocates repentance and immersion in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), and a consecrated life as essential to salvation.

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THIS MONTH'S THEME

MISSIONS, MISSIONS, MISSIONS. This issue is filled with seven articles focused on this theme of missions!

The Lord calls us, His disciples, to witness about Him and the coming Kingdom everywhere, to our near neighbors and those who are far away. For years those associated with the General Conference have been enthused for missions. Wonderful efforts were made to reach out to the world, but often those programs didn't achieve all that we dreamed they would.

Within the hearts of many people through our churches there is a longing to see the day when a clear presentation of the gospel is being made in country after country.

Minnesota, whose conference has always been vitally interested in missions, spearheaded a movement to establish a "missions sending agency." The General Conference adopted it, and now we are again moving ahead with Christ's command.

Pastor Vivian Kirkpatrick starts off with a history of our involvement in missions. Donna Kennedy writes of the love of God for the lost which evidences itself through Scripture. Tracy Savage, back briefly from Russia, writes concerning the calling to missions. The financial underwriting of mission efforts is addressed by Judy Myers, our Staff Coordinator. Joe Martin, instructor at Atlanta Bible College, writes of the education needed in preparation. Finally, Mardy Lawrence writes of the trip she recently took with her husband Bill to India, and then of the importance of understanding cultures to be effective in missions work.

We hope that each article encourages your heart to beat faster as you consider your place in this effort. For some it may be to undergird this effort with prayer, for others to financially support it, and for others to prepare to go. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness . . . and then shall the end come." R44

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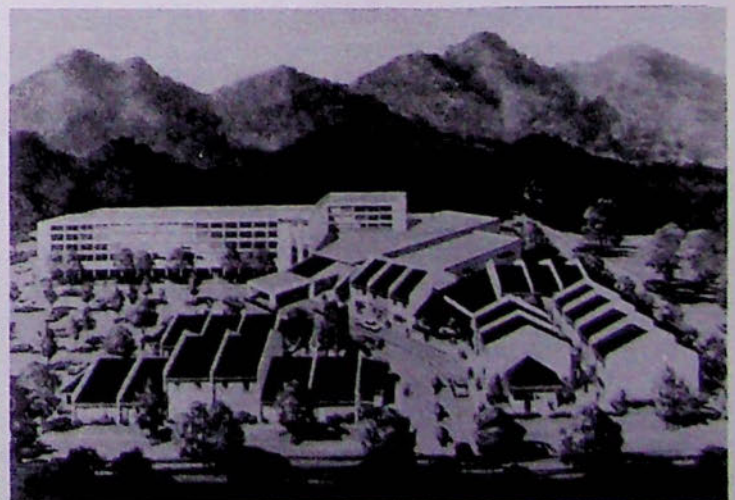
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Christian Worker's Seminar '95

April 2-7, 1995

Holiday Inn Pigeon Forge, Tennessee

For information, please contact Kent Ross, P.O. Box 100,000, Morrow, GA 30260. 1-800-347-4261.



The History of the Lord's Harvest International

By V.E. Kirkpatrick II

I FIRST BECAME acquainted with missions as a boy of nine or ten when our little church in Holbrook, Nebraska collected clothing to send to the poor, needy people of Digby, Nova Scotia. That work became a full-time effort of the Church of God in about 1957. The image I had of Nova Scotia was that of a poor, destitute, downtrodden area, where all the people would, with joy, gladly accept all the cast-offs we could send them.

Why do I tell you this? Because the Digby I would later visit was quite different from the image I had conjured up as a child. It was a beautiful, thriving area, rich with scenery, a proud history and fishing industry, and abundant with tourists. My misconception about Nova Scotia is illustrative of the images that we have too often had and continue to hold about missions. It is those misshapen images that necessitated and led to the creation of the Lord's Harvest International — an agency that would develop proper images of the mission field, and from those understandings develop a vision and make wise decisions about the proclamation of the gospel on the mission field.

Missions and the Church of God

To understand the Lord's Harvest International, let me first take you back and review what has been a rich, although limited involvement of the Church of God in missions. The first mission effort of the Church of God was with an organization called Bible Faith Mission. This was a joint effort of the Advent Christians and the Church of God. It was based on what Bro. Clyde Randall, in his book *Historical Waymarks of the Church of God*, called a "novel idea" — that of basing a mission on work being conducted by nationals. This early work was centered on an effort already being done in India. Mrs. Sarah K. Taylor, originally an Advent Christian, was the founder of this work which predated the organization of the General Conference. Mrs. Taylor was ordained into the Church of God at the 1914 fall conference of the Minnesota State Conference. As you can see, the Minnesota Conference, the group which proposed the foundation of the Lord's Harvest International, was early involved in missions and has continued this interest to the present day. At one point, the work in India even owned its own printing press. When Sr. Taylor and the main national worker died, the work deteriorated and fell into other hands. John

Manoah and S. S. Manoah would carry on over the years in a limited way.

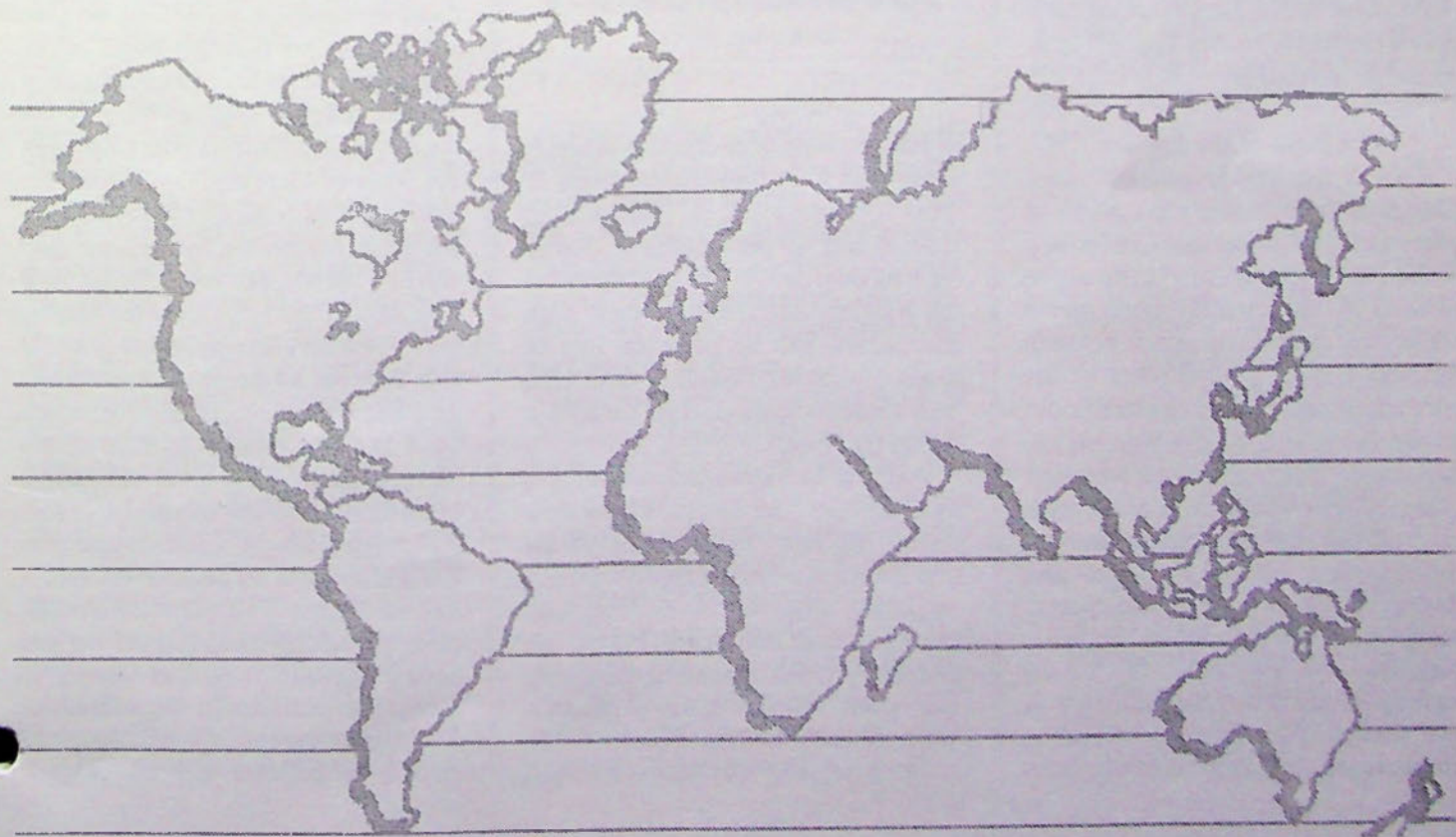
The next main push into missions by the Church of God began in the late 50s and early 60s. The Digby, Nova Scotia work began in 1957. In 1961 Bro. Harold Doan traveled to the Philippines to follow up on contacts there. Bro. and Sr. Lawrence traveled to India in 1963 and helped to influence us to support that work. Over the years the Minnesota Conference had maintained contacts with the Manoahs. It was about that same time that the Blanchard, Michigan church's work with migrant workers from Mexico led to a work in the village of Labor Vieja, and Bro. Dean Moore was sent to Mexico as a missionary in 1963. Later we would have work in Africa, Lebanon, etc., and we thought we were well on the way to being extremely successful in missions.

So the logical question is, "What happened to all these efforts?" I would like to answer this from the words of Paul in I Corinthians 13:11. Paul says, "When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things." As we began to grow spiritually in missions, we began to realize that many of the things we were doing were, in essence, childlike, born

out of innocence. Saying this is not to diminish the past or its importance in establishing our basis in missions. Everyone begins as a child (physically and spiritually). As we began to grow, mature, and gain experience, our attitudes and understanding began to change. Being true to our heritage, almost all of our efforts, our actions, our fields, were based on the same erroneous assumption of the original Bible Faith Mission — that we could succeed with indigenous workers by financially supporting them. Almost all other mission agencies have had to work through the same growing pains. Our efforts stumbled over that basic, innocent assumption. The problem with supporting indigenous workers (when I say this, I do not seek to diminish the fact that many of those workers were spiritual, dedicated, and well-intentioned) is that it is hard for us

to monitor expenditures — to know how the money is being used. Financial support, although given from the bottom of our hearts, is a constant temptation for indigenous workers. It has been proven through studies that it raises missionaries above those they are ministering to, it is a constant temptation for workers, it causes jealousies, and it reduces the importance of nationals supporting their own workers. In the long run it can retard the growth of a mission field. Ultimately, the result of our well-intentioned, childlike efforts was limited effectiveness and success. In some cases the money even helped to destroy the field because of the above stated reasons. It is difficult for us, in our western culture, to understand how giving something that should logically be an asset (to transportation, music, or ministry, etc.) can become a stumbling block.

But, as we began to understand what was happening (I would call it spiritually maturing in missions), the decision was made that we would no longer send support to indigenous workers. I would like to make several comments about this. Today, many well-intentioned people (and I don't exclude myself from this group) have looked back and complained that this decision ruined Church of God missions. After education and allowing my own ideas to mature, I have come to understand that perhaps the opposite is true — perhaps it will be the very salvation of Church of God missions. It is this history that has led to where we are today — attempting to develop a mature, effective training and sending agency. The decision that was made several years ago was brought about by the mature understanding of individuals who had been deeply in-



volved in Church of God missions from the late 1950s. Some have made them the villains of Church of God missions — this is a terrible injustice. Those who have been criticized are the same ones who had the most involvement and experience in missions. They had learned some valuable lessons as part of the maturing process. I have heard it asked, "If you had a business that was failing, would you continue to do as you had in the past, or would you try to learn and make changes that would cause it to succeed?" I doubt the recommendation was ever an effort to pull back from missions; instead it was an effort to quit wasting money and ruining godly indigenous workers. It is easy for those without personal involvement, without the background, without the understanding, to sit back and to criticize, but the wise man bases his decision on proper understanding and current information. I have come to understand that the decision was right — and it has led us to where we are today.

The Birth of the Agency

This is the background of where Church of God missions was a couple of years ago. The Minnesota Conference of the Church of God still has an active Missionary Society and serving on the society caused a discussion to begin to develop among the ministers of the conference. We were concerned about where we presently were in missions. Acts 1:8 states, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." We understood this as a mandate — as the Church of God we have no choice! The Lord didn't tell us that when we had completed the job at home we should then go to other places

in the world. The threefold areas of service were to be accomplished simultaneously. At the time that discussion began, all we had was an Advisory Committee. If you have ever served on an advisory committee, you will find that at times it is a frustrating job. Your hands are tied when it comes to action! No matter how much study goes into your recommendations, you can only advise. Our work



It is difficult for us . . . to understand how giving something that should logically be an asset can become a stumbling block.

in missions consisted of trying to correspond with and respond to the needs of those who contacted us. There was no internal way for the Church of God to train its own people who felt called to the mission field. And if they were trained, we had no place or way of sending them to a Church of God field. This caused a great deal of frustration within our group.

As an ad hoc committee, we began to look at what were several of our concerns. We were all dedicated to the importance of the truth of the Scriptures, including what we sometimes call Church of God distinctives. For us, this created a problem in sending our people with other mission sending agencies where very often a Trinitarian statement had to be signed. We contacted several

agencies to check on this requirement. We were told they would not accept us unless we would sign the statement and teach the material they sent us. We would not be allowed to share our important truths. We also noted the dynamic Church of God young people who have served and are presently serving with other agencies, oftentimes simply frustrated with the lack of any Church of God agency. Our observation seemed to be that every time we trained someone at other religious training schools, we ended up losing them. Two things then motivated our desire to step beyond where we presently were: the mandate for missions and the importance of God's truths.

Next we addressed how we could get from where we were to where we wanted to be. We decided that we needed a way of training Church of God missionaries and a professional agency for sending those missionaries. We saw the need for some autonomy from the Board of Directors as this would be a *trained* agency — with a better understanding of the needs and requirements of missions than the Board of Directors. Our first discussion turned to starting our own training school in Minnesota, starting our own sending agency, and soliciting our own funds under the auspices of the Minnesota Missionary Society. Not only would this have been a tremendous undertaking, but we also recognized it would have been potentially harmful to the General Conference if we had started competing for funds. It is probably easier to raise funds for missions than anything else. Thus we decided to encourage the Church of God General Conference to establish a mission training and sending agency. With this thought in mind, the ministers of the Minnesota Conference contacted President David Krogh, got together with Judy Myers,

our national missionary coordinator, and wrote the motion to establish the training agency. This proposal was first taken to the Minnesota Missionary Society, then the Minnesota State Board, and finally sent to the Board of Directors for inclusion in the *Progress Journal*, so it could be voted on at the 1993 General Conference. At that conference, the motion to create a training and sending agency was passed.

The Agency's Purpose

With that background, I would like to share what I see as the purpose of the Lord's Harvest International based on how it came into existence. I don't see our primary purpose as dealing with money requests from fields or serving as a maintenance organization for our present works. First of all, the Lord's Harvest International has the responsibility of becoming a professional sending agency. This was included as part of the motion that was made. An untrained sending agency could easily repeat the childlike mistakes of the past. At this point training our agency is just as important as training the missionaries themselves. It was experience and training that enabled informed people to realize what was happening on our fields. Just as a beginning, this training must include such areas as mission science itself, understanding various cultures, and an understanding of world politics. Your present agency is already involved in this long-range, continuing effort. We have already studied a book called *A People for His Name* by former missionary Paul A. Beals. At the present time several of us are taking a correspondence course called "Perspectives on the World Christian Movement."

I tell you these things for a specific purpose. We would all like to rush out and become involved in missions and

send our money to help those poor people in other countries. This would be a colossal mistake. As this agency becomes trained, we need your help. We need you to learn to trust the wisdom of this agency in knowing how to deal with situations that may arise. Sometimes you may have to accept decisions without knowing the specifics because of the confidences involved. Please do not try to circum-



Sometimes more harm than good comes out of the most well-intentioned actions.

vent its decisions or send money to fields without going through the agency. Sometimes more harm than good comes out of the most well-intentioned actions. This board is your professional board, striving from their training to accomplish what is best, that the gospel might be shared in all countries.

As I see it, the other key purposes of the Lord's Harvest International are to establish a training program for missionaries, and then to send missionaries to develop and establish mission fields where the message of the Kingdom of God might be shared.

Allow me to share a couple of other thoughts. Please be patient! A good mission program will not happen overnight. In our haste, we could repeat mistakes of our innocent youth. It will

take four to six years after the first volunteers respond to the call of God before we have them trained and ready for the field. Then it will take time to establish new fields before results are seen. When you send your children, your young people, your friends, they will need your financial support, your prayer support, your constant encouragement, but you will also need to let them go! That lesson will not come easily. It is simply this: once you have sent them to the Lord's Harvest International, they come under the jurisdiction of that sending agency. On the field their problems, finances, vacations, furloughs, etc. are to be handled by the sending agency. We must learn to support without interference.

This may be only a personal goal, but I look forward to the day when every mission field is supervised by trained missionaries whom we send — working with indigenous workers who are supported by their own people. It is only then that we will have been successful in the efforts we began with the recommendation of the Mission Sending Agency. **RH**



Vivian Kirkpatrick is pastor of the Hector Church located in Hector, Minnesota. He currently serves on the Mission Sending Agency for the Church of God (Abrahamic Faith).

Common Thread of Scripture

By Donna Kennedy

IS THERE A COMMON thread or a common theme that runs through Scripture? If there is, what is it? What binds the whole of Scripture together?

The whole of Scripture speaks of a relationship between mankind and his Creator. In the first chapter of the Bible, God makes it very clear which part of His creation He took special interest in.

In Genesis chapter one, verses 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, and 31 tell us what God saw when He viewed each stage of His creation. Each segment leads to the statement "it was good" until we get to the final stage, the creation of man. Here God exclaimed that it was "very good."

Going back through the creation account, we see how God created the world. Verses 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20 and 24 tell us that God spoke the words and light, waters, vegetation, celestial lights, water creatures and land animals appeared. However, in Genesis 1:26 we are told that God made man in His image. Man is special not only in the fact that he was made in God's image, but in that God got personally involved in His creation. God could have said, "Let there be man" and man would have appeared; but He did not.

Then the Lord God formed man of the dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being (Gen. 2:7).

God bent down to the earth He had created and formed man with His own hands. Then He bent down further and breathed His own breath into this form. God, indeed, considered His relationship with man in a different light than the rest of creation.

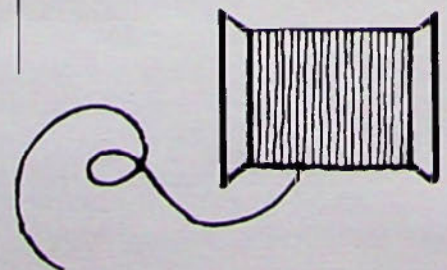
Everything was great for a while and then man failed God. From that point until the present, God's work, God's desire, has been to reconcile man to Himself, to bring man back into that special relationship.

This is the common thread throughout Scripture, starting in the Old Testament and moving through the New Testament: God working to restore His people to Himself.

We sometimes see the God of the Old Testament as unloving and judgmental, yet in reality it was not God who brought judgment on His people. The people knew what God expected; they also knew the consequences of disobedience. Man brought judgment upon himself. God was simply faithful to His word.

And just as God's word of judgment is sure, so is His word of deliverance or reconciliation. In 2 Chronicles 7:12-16 we find God's response to Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple. Solomon's prayer is recorded in chapter 6. Here he brings before the Lord some of the consequences that could fall on the people because of their sin. He presents each example and then petitions God on behalf of his people. Solomon asks God: If they will return to You, confess Your name, turn from their sin and pray, then will You hear from heaven, forgive their sin and restore their land?

God knew Israel would rebel, yet in 2 Chronicles 7:12-16 He makes this promise to Solomon: He would make Himself available for His people to return to Him. His ears would always be attentive to their prayers and His eyes and heart would continually be available to them. This promise was kept again and again



in the history of Israel. The people sinned. They were punished by being sent into captivity. They cried out to God for forgiveness and deliverance. God heard and answered their prayers.

This is a different view of the harsh God of the Old Testament. It shows a compassionate God desiring and working toward the restoration of His people. This compassionate God of the Old Testament is the same God we find in the New Testament.

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but all to come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9).

(Regarding prayer on behalf of men):

This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth (1 Tim. 2:3, 4).

And what is truth? John 3:16 and Romans 5:8 tell us that God loved us so much He sent His own Son to die so we may have a relationship with Him. This is truth. Jesus is the only way for man to reconcile himself to God. But how will mankind know this? Whose responsibility is it to proclaim this truth of reconciliation?

Second Corinthians 5:18-20 tells us. It is mine! It is yours! It is the responsibility of every child of God; God has given us the ministry of reconciliation. He has committed to us the word of

reconciliation. We are ambassadors for Christ. When the world looks at us, they see Jesus. What we do with our hands, what we say with our mouths, where we allow our feet to take us, will either reconcile our neighbor to God or lead him away. The choice is ours. RH



Donna Kennedy is a missionary-in-training who has previously participated in mission outreaches to Russia.

C O L U M N

Am I Ever Glad to Live in the Snow Belt!

TODAY WAS ONE OF THOSE "AM I ever glad to live in the snow belt" days. The sun shone brightly, the temperature was moderate, there were even a few drips coming off the eaves. How glorious winter can be! The geese and turkeys, all mature now, sit in sunny spots or walk around looking for spilled grain and small stones on the roadway. After a few weeks of snow, winds, and low temperatures, they welcome this lovely day. The birds, mostly sparrows, hop about enjoying a leisurely meal instead of a hasty fast food menu. They seem to be conversing in their chirpy voices — no doubt remarking on the splendid day.

Sunset this evening is spectacular. I paused on my way

from the hen house with my dozen eggs to admire it. The wispy clouds which had been hanging around all day were suffused with a peachy apricot color. The sky behind them was so blue that it would be hard to imagine a more pure color. Close to the horizon the clouds were edged with molten gold. The silhouettes of trees against this splendor completed a painting that only God could make. I stood and soaked in this masterpiece till my feet began to feel numb. What a wonderful finish to a perfect winter day!

Tomorrow could be cold, blustery and miserable as some Minnesota winter days can be.

But, God willing, there will be a few of these precious jewel-like days thrown in to lift our spirits and make the winter a magical time. RH



By
Joyce Housman

The Profession of Missionary

I WOULD LIKE TO TALK about the profession of missionary. Being a missionary is a career option whether you are a student deciding what to study and what to do with your life or if you are an older adult who may be considering a career change.

I realize that many of you may be satisfied and comfortable with where you currently are. However, maybe another day God will inspire you in another direction. I believe it is good to talk to young people about this career option, even when they are young. It is never too early to plant a seed.

People are always asking kids, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" What pride a parent must feel when their child says they want to be a doctor. For many years this has been a position of prestige and honor. Truly, what a great profession — what satisfaction one must have after saving a life, to see that individual walk out the door. Please don't take this wrong — for if being a doctor is your calling in life and the Lord's using you there, that's great. Today, though, I'm not advocating that profession; enough people already do that.

As I said earlier, what a great feeling it must be to be able to help save a life.



*By Tracy Savage
Morrow, Georgia*

Jesus Christ offers a much greater salvation than that performed at a hospital. He not only offers complete, total, and eternal healing from cancer, AIDS, depression, etc., but He offers healing of our dead, rotted bodies, putting them back together never to fail again. It may feel good to see a patient walk out the hospital door, but it's an incredible feeling knowing you'll see a new brother or sister in Christ out walking on streets of gold when God's kingdom is established upon the earth!

Being a missionary is not at all like what people think. Rarely do they wear loin-cloths and eat grub worms as a staple part of the diet. Although some led to the bush of Africa may live like this, the stereotype of a missionary is usually wrong. One could be a missionary not only to the uttermost parts of the

earth but also to the innermost parts. The Lord allows us to follow our passions and desires when they are in His will. He builds on what we have and what we offer Him. With me, it was a soccer trip to Russia that sparked the interest and now I'm serving there as a missionary.

People need to realize that being a missionary isn't just for others or other people's kids. It is not a profession for the weak, stupid or unsuccessful but for those whom God has chosen. God has been very gracious to me. With all the strength and talent God has given to me, I have chosen to follow where my path would lead in Russia. I could have been anything I wanted to be in life, I could have gone anywhere, but I chose to be employed by the King in His personal service. Praise the Lord He found me worthy of this honored position. Being on the King's payroll goes far beyond finances. He does provide needs and more but it is far more rewarding and exciting not only to see the Lord pour out His spirit in the lives of people today, but also to be a part of their transformation and future salvation.

Being a missionary is an honored and privileged position. I encourage you to invest your lives in this honor and I challenge you to encourage others to do the same. If your calling isn't to become a missionary, your support and encouragement of one is just as important. We are a team. May we prepare the way for our Lord to come quickly. ^{R42}

Tracy Savage participates in a missionary outreach to St. Petersburg, Russia. She is currently continuing her education at Atlanta Bible College in Morrow, Georgia.

Giving to Missions

PAUL'S WORDS TO THE church in Corinth provide some food for thought as we consider how to give for missions. In 2 Corinthians 8:3-5, he tells them about the giving of the Macedonian churches:

For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.

I believe there are several important giving principles in these verses that we need to consider:

1. *"they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability"* — The Macedonian churches gave sacrificially. The verses just prior to these mention severe trials and extreme poverty, yet they gave in *"rich generosity."* Our giving needs to be done in the same manner.

2. *"entirely on their own"* — Paul had not pled with them for their support; they had made that choice freely. Each of us needs to consider what we can do, and then do it of our own free will.



By Judy Myers
Oregon, IL

3. *"privilege of sharing in this service to the saints"* — They considered their giving a privilege and they considered it to be a way that they could be partners in the ministry. We too need to adopt this way of thinking.

4. *"gave of themselves first to the Lord"* — Before doing anything, they sought God and His leading. He provided the direction in their lives. He needs to also provide the direction in our lives. Before we do anything, we need first to seek God's leading.

5. *"and then to us in keeping with God's will"* — They understood God's desire for all to come to a saving knowledge and acceptance of His Son. Thus they aligned themselves with those going out to teach the world. Our giving needs to be an outgrowth of our understanding of the will of God.

In Romans 10:13-15a we read:

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?

Two groups of people are involved in this passage — those who go and those who send. I believe all of us fall into one of these two groups. We are either called to go or called to send. God has a plan for each of us. If you don't know what His plan is for you, spend time seeking to learn it, and when you have, be true to that calling with all of your being.

If you are called to be the "sender," you are just as important to the task as if you were the "message bearer"!

A "sender" is one who provides the necessary support for the missionary. There are two vitally important roles we need to consider as "senders." First, the role of intercessor. The single greatest gift that can be given to a person on the field is the knowledge that back at home, someone is pleading for them and their ministry. They need the assurance that their ministry and the people they are serving really matter. Second, the role of financial supporter. No mission can function without financial giving. From a broken, burdened heart for a lost and dying world can come sacrificial giving for the privilege of being a part of a ministry. This financial giving can come in many forms: one-time gift, monthly contribution, faith promise offering, personal tithe, or trust. However it comes, it should be done because of a desire to see God's purpose fulfilled. That is what

(Continued on Page 15)

How to Become a Missionary: An Educational Process?

By Joe Martin

HOW DOES ONE become a missionary? The source of Christian mission is clear: Jesus said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15). Keith Green has an excellent line in one of his songs that says, "Jesus commands us to go, it should be the exception if we stay." Each Christian knows that he or she may not be able to go thousands of miles away but they are to be missionaries to their community and neighbors. If one is staying inside one's home not communicating the good news, one is not obeying Jesus' primary command. Though there is no question as to whether a Christian is to be in missions, there are different callings and desires regarding the type of missions one will do — community, state, national or foreign. For those interested in the latter type of missions, this article will provide current thinking from the "Lord's Harvest International" sending agency as to the education process to become a missionary.

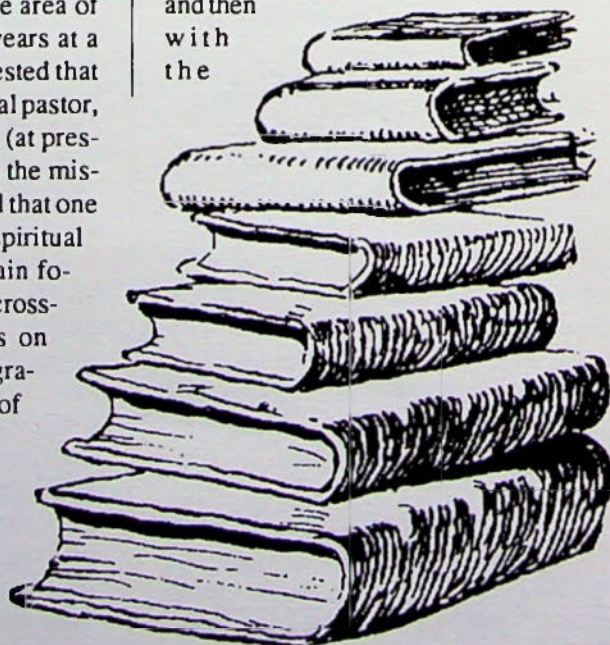
At present, there are three levels of possible commitment and consequently three levels of education suggested by the sending agency. Level one is for someone interested in a six months or less cross-cultural experience. This could

even involve an inner city effort. We are recommending an interview and evaluation with the local pastor and the individual coordinating the trip. We are also recommending some type of cross-cultural training relative to the length of the experience desired. This should include a review of cultural taboos and different cultural manners. For the longer experiences, some language helps with possibly a first aid and hygiene course.

Level two is for the supporter or helper for the long-term missionary. We are envisioning this to be in the area of six months up to a couple of years at a time. With this level, it is suggested that there be interviews with the local pastor, with the Missions Coordinator (at present Judy Myers) and also with the mission agency. It is recommended that one take testing in the areas of spiritual giftedness, aptitude, etc. A main focus of the education will be cross-cultural training with a focus on language, cultural taboos, geography, and with the possibility of the agency recommending that the person take the "Perspectives" course. This is a course on the current status of missionary work and training offered for both credit and non-credit. This may be taken

by mail. A further aspect of education for this level may be a biblical review of some fundamentals and how to present Christ and God's truth to others. Also, there will be a medical education assessment with a possible review of first aid and hygiene.

Level three and subsequent education is focused on someone interested in a major commitment. Again, there should be interviews to determine interest with the local pastor, the Missions Coordinator, and then with the



Lord's Harvest International Agency. In this area there will be extensive testing for giftedness, personality, aptitude, etc. both within the Conference and Agency and also with an external testing group. There are several professional testing agencies specifically used by mission organizations to assess one's personality and matching to a long-term mission effort. At this point, there is to be a formal application and evaluation by the Agency. If accepted one enters into formal training.

The formal training is an educational process that will cover four-plus years. For this education, we are at present offering two options.

Option one will involve four years at Atlanta Bible College plus an internship/missionary experience during or after the formal education. With advisement from Kent Ross, the academic dean, it is suggested that this entails two hundred and eleven quarter hours from Atlanta Bible College leading to a bachelor's degree. It is to include a wide range of Bible, ministry, and general education courses with some specifics such as the aforementioned "Perspectives" course, a medical intensive, cross-cultural communications, cultural anthropology, etc. Atlanta Bible College at present requires an associate's degree

from Clayton State College if all work for the bachelor's is done at ABC. That associate's degree involves some ninety-one quarter hours and is included as part of the two hundred and eleven.

Option two is an educational process that will cover basically the same amount of time but will allow the candidate to do two years in the local community setting in coordination with the local pastor and church, and also two years at Atlanta Bible College. This was encouraged since there may be cases where a candidate's missionary interest may be better served by a local college and the local church — for instance, if one were interested in serving in Poland, and a local church was near a large Polish community where the candidate could begin to learn the rudiments of the Polish language and interact with the people while attending the area college or university. The additional two years would be covering Bible and ministry courses, along with any additional recommendations, at Atlanta Bible College.

It looks like a lot, doesn't it? I remember Buckminster Fuller, the intellectual inventor of the geodesic dome, discussing the environment with a group of college students. He said, "What we have to do is so important and urgent that we must be careful to take our time and

prepare well, for the challenge is great." In James Rutz's book, *The Open Church*, there is a chapter entitled, "The Secret of True Greatness: Taking the Hard Road." There Rutz wrote of Arnold Schwarzenegger's training — the hard, arduous exercise he went through to get where he did. What we are doing is so important and urgent that the Agency urges you to consider interviewing and applying if God may be calling you to missions service. It will not be easy. You will become frustrated with the systems involved and the hoops that we and others are expecting you to jump through, but remember the urgency and importance of "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation." R+H



Joe Martin is an instructor at Atlanta Bible College in Morrow, Georgia. He has served on the Mission Sending Agency for the Church of God (Abrahamic Faith).

For curriculum information, registration details and consultation, please contact:

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GENERIC CAPTION (Choose One):

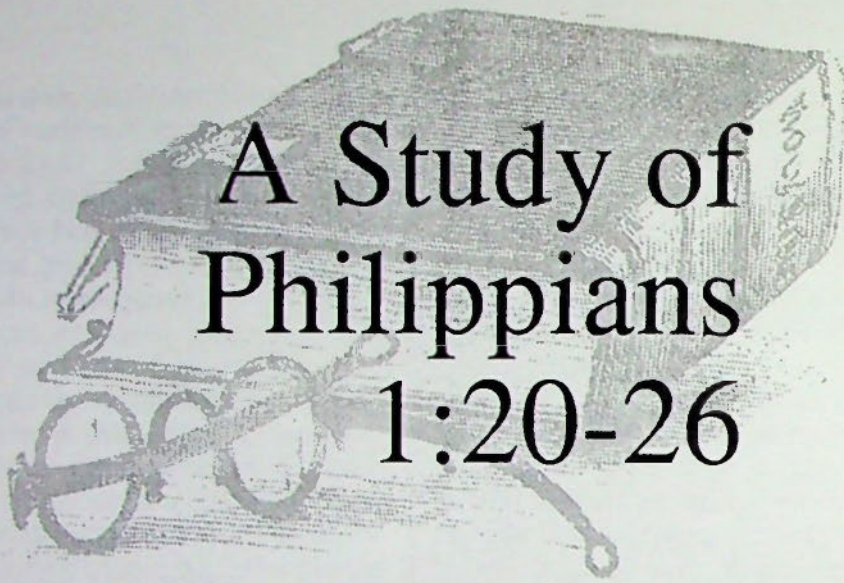
- a. "Come under God's Word."
- b. "Delve into God's Promises."
- c. "Bogged down in Leviticus? Let us help."
- d. _____ (submissions accepted)

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A Study of Philippians 1:20-26



THIS TEXT IS OFTEN used to support the idea that the Apostle Paul wished to die so that he could go immediately to heaven and be with Christ. It is thought to be a "difficult text" for those who believe the Bible teaches that the dead are asleep and do not get to be with Christ until the time of the resurrection at His coming.

The claim of some that Paul wished to go to heaven at death represents him as faced with one of two choices: life or death. The latter event, as they see it, would enable him "to depart and be with Christ" (v. 23). Yet, when all of Paul's teachings about the future life are studied and compared, a serious question arises as to this popular interpretation of what Paul says here.

Why, for instance, did he teach in 1 Thessalonians 4 that the way Christians get to "be with with Lord" (v. 17) is by being resurrected at His "coming" (v. 15) and by being caught up to meet Him *after* He descends from heaven (vv. 16, 17)? There is nothing here about going to be with the Lord when one dies, or about individuals passing *one by one* into the heavens whenever they die. No, Paul describes the gathering of an entire



By William M. Wachtel
Wenatchee, WA

group *at one time* into the presence of the Savior, and *that* to take place at His return! It will be a grand and glorious reunion for *all* the faithful from both the Old and New Testament ages — this is the "better thing" to which the author of Hebrews also looked forward (11:39, 40).

The same scenario is depicted in 1 Corinthians 15, where Paul declares that the resurrection of the dead in Christ occurs "at his coming" (v. 23). It is stated that meanwhile the dead have "fallen asleep" (vv. 18, 20, 51). Christ Himself is said to have slept in death, being the "firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (v. 20). The passage in 1 Thessalonians 4 also describes the dead in Christ as "those who have fallen asleep" (vv. 13, 14, 15). Nothing in either passage implies that the dead are

conscious or that they are alive "with Christ" during a supposed "intermediate state" between death and resurrection.

Are we to believe, then, that Paul contradicts himself in Philippians 1:20-26, or that he had received "further light" on the state of the dead by the time he wrote this letter? Some writers have so stated or suggested. It seems strange, however, to seek to harmonize Paul's writings by such interpretations. Rather, it would seem wiser to ask whether the apparently conflicting ideas can in fact be found to fit together in a consistent and harmonious manner!

When we examine the text in Philippians we discover, for example, that Paul really is not saying that he does not "know" whether he would choose life or death. Most of our English versions render the Greek word used here (*gnorizo*) as "know" or some synonym meaning the same. But if *gnorizo* means "know" here, *it is the only instance in the entire New Testament where it is so translated!* This verb occurs 25 times in the New Testament, and in every other text it is translated "to make known" or "to declare." Moulton and Milligan's standard work, *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*, assesses the meaning and usage of this word in the Koine Greek papyri and states that "it has definitely the meaning 'make known' as in all its NT occurrences (even Phil. 1:22)" (p. 129).

This ought to alert us to the fact that something questionable may be going on in the minds of translators who render *gnorizo* as "know" instead of "make known" or "declare." Is it because this verb cannot bear its regular meaning here, or because those translators are imposing a view of their own on what Paul is saying? Are we to assume that Paul does not know which of the two choices he would make, or rather that he does not tell his readers which choice he would prefer?

As a matter of fact, he does tell them quite clearly what he *wants*: "to depart and be with Christ." But he has already stated that he does not declare which of *two* specific alternatives he would choose — whether to keep on living or to die. Either of these two would involve certain advantages and disadvantages for him and for his readers.

If he were to keep on living, this would mean "fruitful labor" (v. 22, NIV) for him and would result in "progress and joy in the faith" (v. 25) for his readers. It would also allow Paul to exalt Christ in whatever circumstances his life would bring (v. 20). If, on the other hand, he were to die, his martyrdom would exalt Christ. His faithfulness unto death would gain him a martyr's crown (Rev. 2:10) in the day when crowns are awarded (2 Tim. 4:8). His example as a martyr would strengthen other Christians to be faithful despite persecution and martyrdom. For Paul's readers, the disadvantage of his death would be their losing him and his continued ministry.

This brings us to the fact that Paul does describe what is his *real* desire,

which we find to be a *third* alternative: "to depart and be with Christ." Paul says that this "is better by far" (v. 23, NIV). At this point he piles on superlatives to express how much more he desires this third alternative. It is better than any two other choices because it is the best of all! He has already told us that he will not declare whether he would choose death or mortal life. If "to die" means that he then, by means of death, gets to depart and be with Christ, he has obviously told us what he said he would not tell us! Can we believe that Paul has contradicted himself within two adjoining verses (22 and 23)?

In verse 23 Paul says he is "pressed out" by the two things he has already mentioned — to live or to die. Arndt and Gingrich translate: "I am hard pressed (to choose) between the two" (p. 797). It is in the sentence just preceding this statement that he says, "And what I shall choose I do not make known." We must conclude, therefore, that when he says he wants to depart and be with Christ he is *not* saying that he wants to die in order that he may so depart!

What, then, is he really saying? Paul had already written that at Christ's coming, when He descends from heaven, the resurrected and glorified saints will, in fact, *depart* (from the surface of the earth) to "meet the Lord *in the air*" (1 Thess. 4:17). They will be "caught up" or "snatched away" (Greek, *harpazo*) in the clouds for the grand and glorious reunion with their Lord — and "so" (Greek, *houtos*, "by such means") be forever "with the Lord." (When the Spirit of the Lord "suddenly took Philip away" (Acts 8:39 — Greek, *harpazo*), Philip *departed* from the presence of the Ethiopian eunuch and was taken to another location!)

Paul consistently magnifies the resurrection of believers at the return of Christ as the "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13) to be held before our eyes. He never exalts *death* (it is an *enemy*! — 1 Cor. 15:26) nor does he imply that it is a means by which to enter into Christ's presence! Philippians 1:20-26 is wrongly so interpreted — yielding a contradiction within the text itself and a clash with Paul's own teachings elsewhere! ❧

Giving to Missions (Continued from Page 11)

we are seeking for in the missions program of the Church of God. We desire individuals and churches who will be partners in the missions ministries we are in the process of developing. During the next few years we need willing "senders" to help train individuals for missions service. We need partners to pray regularly and fervently for current ministries both at home and abroad. We need the "message bearers" to step forward and declare their call.

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also

reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion,

and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! (2 Cor. 9:6-15). ❧



Making His Imprint

By Ruth Gartner

WHILE I WAS growing up, I was a quiet, shy girl who never talked much. Since being injured in an accident in 1967, my life has been committed one hundred percent to serving my Creator and God. But I never dreamed of having the strength and courage to wage a strong battle for the Lord in which I felt I was standing alone, surrounded by wolves.

It started four years ago. My son, Brian, then in the seventh grade, was put in Accelerated Language Arts, an advanced English class that dealt with critical thinking. I felt proud.

Several days after school started, I happened to skim through the book my son had been assigned to read. It was entitled *Ten Little Indians*, by Agatha Christie. Just skimming, I found thirty-eight swear words, a poem that mentioned three methods of suicide, two references to religion as a mania, the murderer's writing of his lustful desire to give his murders artistic, brilliant planning, and a concluding detailed description of the nine murders he had committed and his suicide designed to look like a tenth murder. I was shocked.

When I filled my husband in on the contents of the book, he asked, "What is

the purpose of our twelve-year-old reading this book? Is it to teach him ten ways of murder or four ways of suicide?"

I complained about the book to Brian's teacher and to the Roswell Independent School District director of education. I was told the book had been approved by the Reading Curriculum Adoption Committee, and that it is practically impossible to find a currently published book that does not have one or more swear words in it. I was also told that, with one exception, the other books to be assigned in the Accelerated Language Arts class were as bad or worse.

I immediately pulled our son out of the accelerated class and put him in regular English. Although the purpose of the Accelerated Language Arts class was to give the brighter child more of a challenge, I figured my son did not need that kind of challenge — one of murder, suicide, bad language, and religion bashing.

I expressed my concerns in a letter to the editor of the *Roswell Daily Record*. I ended with a plea to parents to be aware of what their children are reading in school and a suggestion that if they didn't like the material, they should do something about it.

I certainly felt that the books on the Reading Curriculum List should be

reviewed and improved. But it didn't appear that the school system was going to do anything about it. I felt the job of reviewing the books on the list was too big a job for me. There were over two hundred books to review.

So I decided to arouse all the Christian help in Roswell I could. There are over one hundred churches in Roswell. I started calling each pastor to explain the help I needed and to ask for names and phone numbers of people who might be interested in helping review the school books. I got together forty-two Christians to help. I divided the books into groups of three to five per person and sent the names of the books and an evaluation sheet for each volunteer to fill out.

When the evaluation sheets were turned in, I categorized them under one of three headings: "Good," "Fair," and "Unacceptable." I made copies of the report sheet to hand out and presented them, along with a speech, at a meeting with the Reading Curriculum Adoption Committee I had been invited to. A TV station had a reporter there with a camera because this was a hot piece of news. I'm sure the committee felt the heat of pressure from both sides: the liberal media and parents who didn't like what we were doing, and conservative Chris-

tian parents who thought the Reading Curriculum List needed scrutiny and improvement.

Because of the work Christian parents did together, several objectionable books were taken off the Reading Curriculum List. There was victory in the end, but it hadn't been an easy job. I had suffered for it.

It took courage for me to talk to Brian's English teacher and to the educational director. After my letter to the editor was published, there were several other letters published regarding what I was doing — some in favor and some very much against.

There was much talk in the schools and in all Roswell. Everywhere I went, I could feel people's eyes on me. My ears strained to hear my name and criticism of what I was doing. I'm sure a lot of what I felt was my imagination. But the tension and stress were still real and took their toll on me. I sometimes lacked any appetite and many a night had trouble sleeping.

One of the weeks that Christian parents were reviewing books happened to be National Book Week. The media, who love to holler "Censor!" and "No censor!" decided to make me their scapegoat. I was interviewed on camera by two of Roswell's three TV stations. I was willing to answer their questions. But the reports on the TV came across negatively against me, distorting the facts and accusing me of things that weren't true.

But I do have one positive comment on the media. The Roswell paper called me in for an interview during which I told my story and answered questions. The report they wrote and published was accurate about what I was doing.

At the beginning of the parental book review, there was stress between myself and the director of education because I

was working outside the system. But by the end of that school year, she decided what we parents had done had proved to be for the betterment of part of the system. We weren't out just to make trouble. Since then, she has gone out of her way to be friendly to me. This was my first part in being involved with or in the school system.

Shortly after this, a friend of mine suggested I apply for a substitute teaching job since I had enough college credits. I've been substitute teaching in the public school for two and a half years now. Twice when the evolution theory came up, I taught it just as it is — a theory. I loved shooting it full of holes with reasons why it isn't true and taking the opportunity to present the Creation side of the story as well. I haven't been fired yet.

Two years ago, Pam, the new director of secondary education, asked me to serve on a committee of teachers to select the best science books for Roswell schools for the next six years.

I wasn't super happy about any of the science books on the State Approved List. All of them state the evolution theory as fact, not as theory. Some books referred to evolution throughout. Other books only mentioned it in one chapter toward the end. All I could do was pick the least offensive book and work toward its acceptance.

The committee members chose the book series I felt was the best of those offered. If I'm on the committee again in another five years, I hope I'll be able to help select an even better book series.

Pam saw I had been a trustworthy committee member, so she sent me an application for a job on the State Instructional Materials Commission. I applied to the State Department of Education and was appointed as one of twenty commissioners. It is our job to select a

subcommittee of teachers and parents to review representative samples of bidding publishing companies. The different subjects of school material are divided into six groups. Each year one of the groups of material is reviewed. This year we are reviewing math, music, and art.

My main concern is to keep New Age ideas, humanistic teachings, homosexual rights, and disrespect to any person off the New Mexico acceptable materials list. This doesn't mean that any school in New Mexico can't buy with their own money a book series that is not on the state acceptable materials list. But at least we will be doing what we can to help protect the children in New Mexico's schools.

When I was forming my subcommittee, I tried to acquire as many Christian parents as I could. However, I'm disappointed I wasn't able to interest as many Christian parents as teachers. I sent out information to over 80 churches in Roswell, but I've learned that isn't as effective as calling by phone and then following up with information by mail.

Although I haven't been paid one cent for the committee and commissioner work I've done, I consider this work crucial. As a daughter of God, I'm busy making His imprint on my community wherever I can. I'm trying to help direct my community in the way that would be pleasing to God. I don't expect to win every battle, but I do expect to always fight for the Lord. I know I will be a winner in the end when Jesus returns, so I don't worry about whether I win or lose any skirmishes. I just keep fighting.

How about you? Are you informed? Are you active? Are you helping to improve your community?

(Continued on Page 22)



India: Ten Years Later

By Mardy Lawrence

WE, MARDY, BILL, and Pat Lawrence, went to India to evaluate the physical, spiritual and managerial conditions of our two mission churches in Bangalore, south India: the Thomas Town Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith and the Christ Union Church in Lalji Nagar. As a member of the board of the Lord's Harvest International, Inc. (L.H.I.), it was my (Mardy's) responsibility to report to the board and to our constituency.

India appears to have a larger middle class than when we were last there 10 years ago. Population control is talked about but predictions are that by the year 2010 India's population will exceed China's which is now over one billion. Ninety percent of the population still live at the poverty level.

Salaries for a six days per week factory worker are \$50 per month; a registered nurse, \$70 per month; a doctor fresh out of training, \$110 per month; and the head doctor at a 150-bed hospital, after 15 years employment, \$270 per month. No one owns a car except a few people in the wealthy and upper middle classes. S.S. Manoah, a Church of God pastor, once bought a car but within a few weeks, because of jealousy, someone put sugar in his gas tank and ruined

the motor. Graft is rampant; almost no one obtains a job, gets much of anything accomplished through the government, or wins a lawsuit without paying bribes.

Litter is everywhere. There are apparently no laws or education discouraging it. Dr. Naylor at Bangalore Baptist Hospital, whom Bill worked with, said it is probably because they are so busy wondering where their next meal is coming from that they haven't time or energy to consider those things.

Bangalore, a city of approximately four million people, is said to be the fastest growing city in the world. It is called the Garden City and is indeed beautiful, six feet above the ground, with many flowering trees and shrubs. There are also two large city parks, well landscaped, with lots of artistically shaped flower beds. We are glad the people have these to enjoy. Below six feet the litter, graffiti, bullocks, cows and calves, dogs, human and animal droppings, cardboard lean-to shacks, open sewers, unbelievable traffic congestion, and tremendous air pollution and odor detract from the beauty.

Extensive street work, which is very badly needed, and construction of office and apartment buildings are in progress. We don't remember seeing any apartment buildings before. They are still all for the well-to-do. Emily Roberts (sis-

ter-in-law of S.S. Manoah) applied for telephone service five years ago and she just received the service while we were there. The traffic maze is unbelievable; pedestrians, cattle, dogs, bullock-pulled carts, auto-rickshaws, motorcycles, motorscooters, bicycles, cars, trucks, and buses were all honking and weaving about like marbles, golf balls and tennis balls carried on a tray by a drunken man. Some of the animals simply lay about in the road. We were surprised that we only saw six accidents!

We all took a one-day trip to Vellore Hospital. It was six hours round trip and the rail fare was ten dollars each. It is a non-denominational Christian hospital, the largest hospital in southeast Asia, with 1,500 beds. The staff of 500 doctors also see 2,000 outpatients per day. I asked one of the doctors how they are able to get so many doctors to work there even though their pay is less than any other hospital in India. He said, "Because we like the Christian atmosphere." Only 70% of the doctors are Christians themselves. I was impressed by their large chapel that dominated the center of the buildings and the fact that they have five services per day — in five languages — with sound piped to the wards so the inpatients can hear.

Later we became acquainted with two of four doctors and their wives who,

at great sacrifice of money, material possessions, living comforts, proximity to family, and the education of their children, plan to provide medical care to one of the most backward, underprivileged, remote areas of India where no medical care is available. These four men were classmates in medical school and each felt God's call at that time. They agreed that they would each become a specialist in a different field before going to this area. Subsequently three of them married doctors, who have also specialized in different fields, and the other married a teacher. In May of 1995 the last of the specialty educations will be finished and they will all be settled there. How we admire them! This is evidence of the wonderful product of Vellore Medical College and Hospital.

Several years ago, in order to comply with Indian government regulations, we established a charitable society with a constitution and bylaws and a governing body (hereafter referred to as G.B.) to conduct the society business. They are responsible for the church properties (movable and immovable), a piece of land, the appointment of pastors, and presenting yearly financial reports to the Indian government for audit. Faithful members of the original G.B. had difficulty finding seven members capable and willing to serve. Many have wanted to serve who were either incapable or had wrong motives. This year we got to really know each of these seven G.B. members and are very pleased with their abilities and commitment to the Lord and to our churches. They have spent many, many hours in G.B. meetings, appearing in court, meeting with the congregations to try to clear up misunderstandings, and hearing the complaints of dissidents.

We met collectively and individually many times with the G.B. and many of

our people there, and read the minutes of their meetings (which Emily Roberts has meticulously kept). I listened carefully and prayerfully to everyone who spoke and asked many questions, both of those associated with us and those associated with other Christian churches or organizations or Christian human service organizations. I especially tried to know the heart of the people and their personal relationship and commitment to the Lord. I also taught evening Bible studies at the Thomas Town and Lalji Nagar churches.

Bill worked as a doctor in Bangalore Baptist Hospital, a Christian hospital whose chief of staff is a doctor from the U.S. The Lord has worked mightily through Rebekah Naylor as a surgeon, hospital administrator, and missionary. She is the only Southern Baptist missionary still allowed in all of India. Every year the government threatens to disallow her visa. Bill also preached a sermon at each of our churches and led a Bible study one evening for the hospital men's group. Pat used her business and accounting skills to help in the business office at the hospital, and she and Bill carefully checked the financial records of our churches and of the G.B. She also helped me by doing some excellent teaching in the evening Bible studies. She related well with the people of all ages, but the youth especially enjoyed her. The hospital provided Bill with a car of sorts and a driver as needed. When we weren't with him, Pat and I moved about by auto-rickshaw for 25 to 60 cents per ride (2 or 3 persons included).

The Thomas Town Church was built in 1966. It was the largest church built in Bangalore in 25 years and is a beautiful building that seats about two hundred people. The attendance is about 70 persons including children. Single-family homes occupied by Hindu families now fully surround it.

Pat and I were impressed with a monthly Saturday women's meeting. Most of the ladies were older women I had seen in this group in previous visits. Sumathi Manoah, wife of Pastor S.S. Manoah, led them in a discussion regarding the gifts of the Spirit. Everyone knew what their gifts were and told how they were using them.

Funds were recently collected through the Church Builders League for badly needed repair of the roof and walls, to cover the open sewers, and to provide flush toilets with city sewer connections. The money is in the bank, waiting first for the monsoons to pass, and now for spring. People seem to be colder there. Many were bundled in coats and scarfs in November when we thought it was ideal shirt-sleeve weather.

Pastor S.S. Manoah is a 65-year-old man of the middle-middle economic class. He preaches at Thomas Town Church at 9:00 a.m. twice per month and laymen preach alternate Sundays. He officiates at weddings, baptisms, and funerals. He is important as a front man although he is not a leader. His services are rigid and ritualistic, but the people seem to like that as most of the congregation comes from Catholic backgrounds and it gives continuity. He relates best with children and the uneducated. He's looking toward retirement and in the meantime he'd like to pastor just the Lalji Nagar Church.

From all appearances the Lalji Nagar Church is running smoothly. Pastor S.S. Manoah also preaches there two Sundays per month and laymen preach the other Sundays. We were pleased with the spiritual growth of one of these lay preachers, who has been in the church many years.

We certainly covet your prayers for God's guidance and intervention as the work in India is continued. ❧

The Development of Biblical Unitarianism

Part Two: Modern Development — The Roots

By Allon Maxwell

MODERN Unitarianism has its roots among some of the early Anabaptists in Holland, Poland and Transylvania in the 16th century.

Michael Servetus (1511?-1553)

The Spaniard, Michael Servetus, though not an Anabaptist, appears to have been the first well-documented Unitarian of the 16th century. After attending the coronation of Emperor Charles V at Bologna in 1530, he became distressed by papal ostentation and the emperor's deference to the worldly pope. Contact with reformation leaders in France and Switzerland led him further away from Catholicism. Following personal study of the Scriptures he rejected the doctrine of the Trinity and published his book, *Errors of the Trinity*, in 1531, which attracted the condemnation of Catholics and Protestants alike.

After about 1546 he fell out with Calvin, incurring the latter's determined and open animosity.

In 1553, in Lyon, he published another major work against the Trinity. He was taken by the Inquisition, but escaped to Geneva, where he was arrested by the Reformers. At Calvin's instiga-

tion he was burned, a martyred victim of the darkness of spirit in which Calvin and his followers walked (1 John 4:20).

Adam Pastor (born c. 1511)

Rudolph Martens was a former Flemish Catholic priest who changed his name to Adam Pastor when he became an Anabaptist in 1533. A contemporary of Menno Simons, he was ordained by Simons and Dirk Phillips as an evangelist in 1542.

He worked closely with Simons until 1547, when they fell out over Pastor's teaching that Jesus did not exist in any personal form before His conception, and was to be considered divine only in the sense that God dwelt in Him. In 1548, after a couple of unsuccessful attempts at reconciliation, he was finally excommunicated by Simons for his Unitarian belief.

Pastor is thought by some reputable historians to be the Flemish Anabaptist visitor to Poland who went by the name Spiritus. Whether or not this identification is accurate, Spiritus is credited with the introduction of Unitarian theology to Poland in 1546.

Lalios Socinus (1525-1562)

Socinus was an Italian. He was studying Greek and Hebrew in Zurich

when Servetus was burnt. The circumstances attracted his attention to the doctrine of the Trinity, which, after study, he came to reject.

He was disinherited by his father for his views, and following his father's death, his share of his father's estate was seized by the Inquisition. He spent the rest of his life in exile in Zurich.

His theological views survived his death, and his papers were inherited by his nephew, Faustus Socinus, who became perhaps the most famous of the Unitarian pioneers.

Faustus Socinus (1539-1604)

Faustus Socinus was the nephew of Lalios Socinus. By 1559 he had been denounced by the Inquisition and forced to flee into exile. In Zurich, in 1562, he acquired his uncle's papers. Shortly afterwards, in Lyon, he wrote his first work, in which Christ is described as "divine by office rather than by nature."

In 1563, by giving outward submission to the Catholic Church, he managed to return to Italy where he remained for 12 years.

Forced to leave Italy again, he eventually settled in Cracow, Poland, in 1579, where he became a leading figure amongst the already established Polish Brethren. There he commenced the work

of revising the Racovian Catechism, but died before it was completed.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, Unitarian theology flourished in Poland where for a time it gained some degree of political ascendancy. A university was established, from which graduates carried the Unitarian teaching throughout Europe (though not with highly visible success).

However, in a resurgence of Catholicism, fierce persecution resulted in the virtual extinction of the Polish Unitarian movement. Somewhere around 1638 the university was destroyed. By 1660 a decree was passed by which Unitarians were required to dispose of all property and leave the kingdom within three years. Many capitulated to the Roman Church. However many thousands left their homes and sought asylum in exile. They were scattered throughout Europe, taking their radical theology with them.

Many travelled to Hungary, Transylvania, Prussia, Silesia and Moravia. In Prussia especially, they were received and permitted to establish churches for Unitarian worship.

Others found refuge in Holland where, prevented by the authorities from obtaining separate places of worship, they were eventually absorbed amongst the officially tolerated Trinitarian Anabaptist groups.

Others fled to England, where the seeds of Unitarianism had been growing, at times quietly, and at other times under fierce persecution, for a century or more. Here they found a haven, though less than secure. They were helped by the congregations formed through the influence of John Biddle (see below).

The Transylvanian Church

The parallel development of Unitarianism in Poland's close neighbor,

Transylvania, did not involve anything like the same persecutions. It was protected by the state by legislation enacted in 1571. In Romania and Hungary this Church has survived to the present time, without succumbing to the rationalist influences experienced in other lands.

The Influence of the Racovian Catechism

The Racovian Catechism is the confession of faith of the Polish Brethren. It was first published in Poland around 1575, and is one of their best-known writings.

A revision was published in the Polish language in 1605. This enlarged and annotated edition was begun by Faustus Socinus and Peter Statorius Jr., who both died before finishing the work. It was completed by others after their deaths.

During the following couple of centuries, the 1609 Latin version and other subsequent Latin editions were widely circulated and read by scholars in other countries. It was also translated into many other languages, including Dutch, German and English, making it available to the common people of those countries.

Without doubt, this document has been, directly or indirectly, one of the major influences in the re-emergence of Unitarian theology as a significant movement.

DEVELOPMENT IN ENGLAND

The 16th Century

In England there are vague, less than certain references to denial of the Trinity as far back as 1327 and 1401, when two were burned under that accusation. There are other pointers in the 15th century, which are also less than certain.

In 16th-century England anti-Trinitarian teaching definitely was making an appearance, paralleling developments on the continent. Many of the Dutch Anabaptists who fled to England in 1535 came under suspicion. Some were found who denied the Trinity, and were forced to recant.

An English priest, John Assheton, was tried before the king in 1548, and admitted denying the Trinity. However he also recanted, for fear of the stake. Around that time a number of others were also tried and forced to recant under threat of death. Other anti-Trinitarians who refused to renounce their faith were burnt or imprisoned.

It is not easy to be certain how much of this anti-Trinitarian sentiment was Arian, and how much was Unitarian. The authorities who persecuted them were not always aware of the differences, and tended to be indiscriminate in grouping all "heretics" who denied the Trinity as either Arian or Anabaptist.

The 17th Century

It was in the 17th century that Unitarianism made a clearly identifiable appearance in England. The Racovian Catechism and the writings of Faustus Socinus penetrated the religious world of England to such an extent that "Socinianism" began to be used as an epithet to label those "heretics" who agreed with them.

Socinianism came to a painful birth in England in the face of determined animosity.

In 1648, official opposition reached its worst expression when the Presbyterian majority in Parliament passed the notorious "Ordinance for Punishing Heresies and Blasphemies." This evil law was directed principally against anti-Trinitarians, practitioners of believer's baptism (and rejectors of

infant baptism), pacifists, and Arminians. Seven specific "heresies" were punishable by death, "without benefit of Clergy." Sixteen less serious "errors" were to be punished by imprisonment.

The law was not popular with the Parliamentary minority. It caused much controversy, and in the midst of other political unrest of the Cromwellian era it became dormant. In 1651-2 Cromwell, who favored religious tolerance, secured the passage of his "Act of Oblivion," which set free many accused of various crimes, including heresy. In 1653, when Cromwell became Protector, he pledged himself to guarantee religious freedom to all. However, Cromwell was not really

either diligent or successful in fulfilling this pledge, and the "defenders of the Faith" still managed to prosecute "heretics" for some time afterwards

In 1662, the bigoted anti-Puritan Parliament passed the "Act of Uniformity," which was aimed against non-conformists of all kinds. However public opinion gradually forced change. Eventually, in 1689, the "Religious Toleration Act" gave relief to dissenters of all kinds, and the worst religious persecutions began to abate.

(It should be noted here, in fairness, that religious persecution in England was not directed solely against anti-Trinitarians. Other non-conformists of

all kinds suffered as well. It was this same 17th-century religious intolerance which drove the Pilgrim fathers to seek freedom from persecution in a new land. In the 25 years before the Religious Toleration Act, some 8,000 non-conformists are said to have died in prison and 60,000 suffered in other ways, through fines and loss of property. Such was the "love" inspired by the "Christ" of the established Church!)

The Unitarians quickly took advantage of any increasing freedom. By 1672 a member of Parliament was complaining that Socinian books were selling as openly as the Bible. **RH**

Making His Imprint (Continued from Page 17)

I don't recommend that anyone start work outside a system or an organization. It is a lot easier and a lot less stressful to work on the inside of what you want to improve. Be aware of everything in your child's school that is part of his or her education. Be an active PTA member. Assist your child's teacher. Run for the school board. Volunteer to be on textbook committees. Anytime you need some extra help, don't hesitate to call other churches and give other Christians the chance to help you work toward what is right and good. Don't expect to see eye to eye with

anyone else — even other Christians. Try to concentrate on a common cause. If you keep your eyes on that goal, you can find much help from other Christians. You don't need to stand alone.

Start out every day with Scripture and prayer. You always want God to be with you in everything you say, do, and even think. Ask Him to guide and direct you in what He wants you to do each day, and to give you the strength and courage to do it.

Yes, the world is getting worse and worse. But does that give us the excuse to quit trying to work for the Lord?

Absolutely not! Yes, the world is sick with sin; God says it's going to get even worse. But He doesn't tell us, "If things get bad, you can give up." He expects us to fight in His righteous army, to preach the gospel, and to lift high His standards and values as long as we have breath. We don't have time to evaluate ourselves whether we think we qualify to be a soldier for the Lord. Every Christian is a soldier for the Lord.

Make a mark for the Lord. And never, never, never give up! **RH**

—Reprinted from *Bible Advocate*, Dec. 1993, pp. 6, 7, 16.

Cultural Context of Missions (Continued from Page 23)

know what to say and do to please us. At least three Indians from other Christian organizations told us, "Everyone wants to be a pastor because it can be easy work and a good way to make a living."

I've touched on just a few of the cross-cultural differences, experienced in overseas work. My ambition for our organization is that we learn from our

experiences and from those of the many seasoned mission organizations that have one to two hundred years of experience. Sometimes in reinventing the wheel it turns out square instead of round. I believe pastoral training plus specific missions training and experience under seasoned missionaries is essential in order to prevent problems in the future.

Now that we are providing educational opportunities and guidelines, I believe that we will soon be ready to move out into the world.

We must remember our mission of spreading the gospel of salvation and of making disciples who make disciples (Matt. 28:19, 20). **RH**

Cultural Context of Missions (Continued from Back Cover)

better. This excuses them from any responsibility to help the needy.

- Most people remove their shoes upon entering the church even though shoes are allowed. *Everyone* removes their shoes when entering the pulpit area. How could they trust our spirituality when we didn't know this!
- Men and women sit on opposite sides of the church, with the women trying to keep their heads covered with the loose end of their saris; this demands constant attention because they are slippery. Pat and I were obviously "disrespectful" but I had never thought of that before and they were too polite to tell us.
- Communion is administered by the pastor from a common chalice with the people kneeling at the altar. The men all go first. All I knew to do was pray. God is merciful — none of us got sick from sharing in that.
- The dead are placed outside their homes for viewing, with ice kept under their bed and perfume periodically sprayed over them. They must be buried within 24 hours. We would have missed some funerals if they had not sent runners to tell us to come quickly.
- It is unacceptable to touch food or people with the left hand. In many countries where there is no toilet paper they use their left hand. We only discovered that on this last trip. How we must have repulsed and offended them!
- There is a definite protocol as to how and who presents garlands (leis), done routinely at welcomes and farewells. If they hadn't been understanding, Bill would have been engaged to

several women before we understood that one.

- In some countries the people believe that since they are born less privileged than we, it is their right to take from us in any way they can. They don't consider it stealing.

These are just a few cultural differences that we have learned about and there must be many more that we still don't understand, even after many relatively long visits.

The work in India is directed by the Governing Body (hereafter referred to as G.B.). It is a government-required entity whose purpose is to oversee the property and to submit yearly financial reports for audit. They also have the responsibility of selecting pastors. They are required to meet once a year, but this group meets at least monthly due to the lack of other adequate leadership in the churches. They have tried in many ways to encourage and help raise up leadership. We are very pleased with the dedication of these seven G.B. members to God and to our churches.

While in Bangalore, in an interview with Harry Bush, Southern Baptist missionary supervisor of southeast Asia, he said, "Most people who come here, the first thing they want to do is reach into their pockets. This is the worst thing they can do. It has done much more harm than good. They want to build shiny new buildings and stand back and say 'Isn't it wonderful what God has done?' Not so. The people haven't been properly disciplined and trained and haven't the experience to take on that kind of responsibility. It creates envy, jealousy, strife, and confusion, and takes the focus off God and His love and His plans for now and eternity."

He said that when they send out a short term ministry team they explain

these things to them at orientation *before* they go, *during* their stay, and *after* they leave and still often some slip money to someone, thinking the person or group *they* are helping is an exception to the rule.

"In dealing cross-culturally," he said, "I explain, 'Let's have a clear understanding. I bring no money, no supplies — only the Word of God to help you grow to become children of God.' The goal is to know their hearts. It is a terrible insult to God to think that the goal is just to get people baptized and into the pew."

He also said, "I have people knocking on my door all hours of the day and night; all their stories seem so true and desperate. I have occasionally given ten dollars to the area or district overseer and when the people come to me I direct them to him. He knows the people and their real needs; I don't."

He explained how carefully they supervise and disciple a new work until a solid core has jelled. They must be spiritually mature and have functioning deacons and elders before they provide a national pastor. Even then they give them very little financial help. He said, "If you want to share your wealth give it to any organization that has qualified and trustworthy nationals to oversee that it is spent wisely."

While in India we also met with Mr. Von Worten, chairman of all the Baptist work in India. He told me, "Churches tend to be pastor controlled and great care is needed as to who is appointed. Once appointed it is very difficult to get rid of them. You will probably need very good legal advice in order to know how to proceed with that difficult task."

Missionary-ism *can* be a racket. We have received many letters from people who barely met us — or even took our name and address from our luggage tags — pretending to have met us. Once we send them our printed materials, they

(Continued on Page 22)

Cultural Context of Missions

By Mardy Lawrence

Understanding missions in the context of individual cultures is crucial to the success of any endeavor to build up people in the Lord. Our recent trip to India, along with numerous trips all over the world in the past 31 years and our interaction with missionary organizations and their leaders, has prompted us to address some issues we believe need serious contemplation and prayer by the Church of God General Conference. Our desire is to increase our effectiveness as bearers of the gospel to all the world.

We have been to Bangalore, India ten times now and I would say we're only just beginning to know and understand the culture. I will try to relate some of the things we have and are learning. I believe they have direct bearing on our attitudes and actions in the area of future missions, both in India and other parts of the world where the Church of God General Conference is involved.

- Communication for understanding is truly a difficult art in the best of

situations. Even when natives speak English, their accents and different ways of phrasing make it difficult to catch the meaning of what they are saying. People all over the world tend to say or nod "yes" when they don't understand. In our city churches of India, four languages are spoken which even makes their communication with each other difficult. (In the villages they speak the dialect of the locality.)

- Ninety percent of the people live at the poverty level and are mentally preoccupied with where to get their next meal, so it is difficult for them to concentrate on our short-term teachings. It is also difficult for them to imagine that we, the wealthy Americans, would have anything to offer them but money. It takes time to build relationships and confidence in people and in God.
- Most of their marriages are still arranged by the parents, and there is

continuing female oppression by the dowry system. The caste system is still very much alive although denied. All this dramatically effects the way the natives look at each other and creates confusion when Christians expect them to believe all are created equal.

- In the U.S., in the marketplace, there is no discrimination for religious conviction, while in India, Christians are discriminated against. This makes becoming a Christian very difficult there. In some parts of the world it is advantageous to become at least a nominal Christian. In America, identifying oneself as a Christian can be used to establish business and political credibility. In Africa, we found that most just go along with their tribal leader.
- In Hinduism the belief is that people suffer in this life because they were bad in their past life; therefore suffering now will make their next life

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The Restitution Herald

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HOPE AND

Glory, Hallelujah!

We just celebrated the Easter season. That always brings joy to a Christian's heart as he considers the crucifixion and more importantly the Resurrection. As a person grows older that issue, the Resurrection, takes on more and more importance.

One by one pastors bury faithful members of their congregations, families separate from loved family members, good friends come to the ends of their lives. That could bring on depression, and for some it does, but it does not need to, for there is something beyond death.

Something happened there at the tomb sometime during the night! The stone was rolled away . . . the "body" was not there . . . something had happened! That something, the Resurrection of Jesus, showed the Father's power and authority as He put new life into the body of His Son. That new breath of life was one of immortality and incorruptibility — the first one with this new life of God!

That is our hope and anticipation. It will happen for those faithful members who have been buried, for those loved ones from whom we've been separated, and for those good friends we miss so dearly. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump . . ."

Ominous Signs

The horrifying poison gas attack on Tokyo's subway system reminded us how vulnerable we are

in a free society. While members of the "mystery cult" were being arrested, editorials in Japan and elsewhere asked the question, "Why didn't you investigate this cult earlier and have them under surveillance?" My first response is to agree with this question, but there is an ominous spirit in wanting to investigate strange "religious cults."

On Sunday afternoon, March 26, a panel of experts was discussing this incident in Japan, and speaking of how vulnerable U.S. society is to just such an occurrence. Their conclusion was that it will only take some incident like Japan's happening here in the U.S. and we will "see how much of our freedom will be curtailed."

The threat is there . . . for the freedom that we have so much come to take for granted . . . and for all "cults" that don't fit in with the norm. The threat of tribulation and persecution looms on the horizon.

Next Issue

With these things in mind and because we are the "Restitution Herald," our next issue will be devoted to the matters concerning the "end times" and the coming Kingdom! You'll want to have this issue in your home. Extra copies may be pre-ordered. The cost will be \$3.00 for extra copies. RH

Kent Lass

REALITY.

The Restitution Herald

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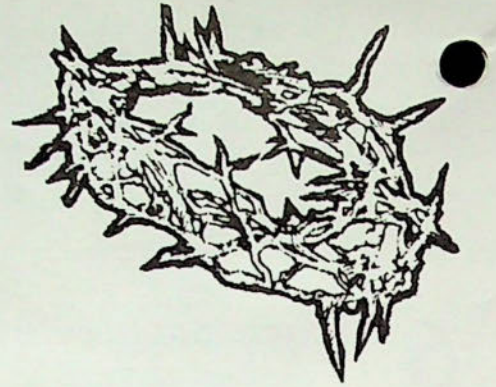
THE RESTITUTION HERALD ADVOCATES:

- THE ONENESS OF GOD (1 COR. 8:6);
- THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD'S POWER (ACTS 1:8);
- JESUS CHRIST IS GOD'S ONLY BEGOTTEN SON (MATT. 16:16), AND IS OUR MEDIATOR (1 TIM. 2:5);
- THE BIBLE IS THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD (2 TIM. 3:16);
- THE MORTALITY OF MAN (JOB 4:17; PSA. 146:4);
- THE NEAR RETURN OF CHRIST (ACTS 1:11), AND LIFE ONLY THROUGH HIM (COL. 3:3);
- THE LITERAL RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD (JOHN 5:28);
- THE IMMORTALIZATION OF THOSE IN CHRIST (1 COR. 15:53, 54);
- THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED (REV. 21:8);
- THE FINAL RESTORATION OF ISRAEL AS THE KINGDOM OF GOD UNDER THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST (LUKE 1:32);
- THE CHURCH TO BE JOINT HEIRS WITH HIM (ROM. 8:17), AND ISRAEL TO BE MADE HEAD OVER GENTILE NATIONS (ISA. 60:1-3);
- THE "RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS WHICH GOD HATH SPOKEN BY THE MOUTH OF ALL HIS HOLY PROPHETS SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN" (ACTS 3:21).
- IT ALSO FIRMLY ADVOCATES REPENTANCE AND IMMERSION IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS (ACTS 2:38), AND A CONSECRATED LIFE AS ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION.

PLEASE USE THE FORM ON PAGE 24 WHEN CORRESPONDING CONCERNING YOUR SUBSCRIPTION.

THE RESTITUTION HERALD

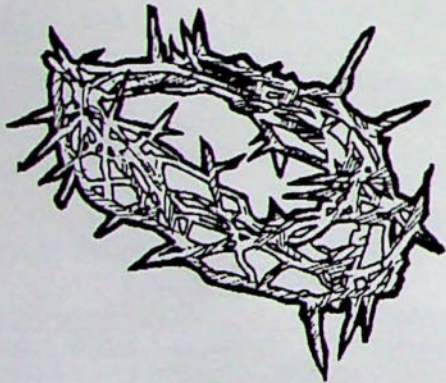
Easter



Angels, roll the rock away;
Death, yield up thy mighty prey:
See, He rises from the tomb,
Glowing with immortal bloom.

Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia!
Christ the Lord is risen today!

— Thomas Scott, *Easter Angels*



Easter must be relived.
Where is the zeal that followed Easter's birth?
The faith that doomed the soulless gods of earth?
No shadow, lifeless spirit of repose
Prevailed that cloudless morn when Christ arose.
The Easter atmosphere cannot revive
A torpid faith that thinks itself alive.

— George W. Wiseman, *Expositor*



The Easter message tells us that our enemies, sin, the curse and death, are beaten. Ultimately they can no longer start mischief. They still behave as though the game were not decided, the battle not fought; we must still reckon with them, but fundamentally we must cease to fear them any more.

— Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*

Tomb, thou shalt not hold Him longer;
Death is strong, but Life is stronger;
Stronger than the dark, the light;
Stronger than the wrong, the right;
Faith and Hope triumphant say
Christ will rise on Easter Day.

— Phillips Brooks, *An Easter Carol*



May Easter Day
To thy heart say,
"Christ died and rose for thee."
May Easter night
On thy heart write,
"O Christ, I live to Thee."

— Anonymous



Spring bursts today,
For Christ is risen and all the earth's at play.

— Christina Georgina Rossetti, *Easter Carol*

Come, ye saints, look here and wonder,
See the place where Jesus lay;
He has burst His bands asunder;
He has borne our sins away;
Joyful tidings,
Yes, the Lord has risen today.

— Thomas Kelly, *Come, Ye Saints*



Jesus wore the thorns away.

In the bonds of Death He lay
Who for our offence was slain;
But the Lord is risen to-day,
Christ hath brought us life again,
Wherefore let us all rejoice,
Singing loud, with cheerful voice,
Hallelujah!

— Martin Luther: *In the Bonds of Death*



Retrospective

Resurrection Hope



to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).

Do I hear someone say, again, "Why does God allow such things?" The answer is, God is allowing man to go his own way. God tried man on the individual plan, but man rebelled and rebelled and rebelled, till finally God chose the one righteous man in the world, Abraham, and dealt with his seed until the kingdom of Israel was formed. God then tried to deal with the Israelites in a theocratic way, but they rebelled and rebelled and rebelled until He gave them up to their own way. Do not blame God for what is being done; blame man.

What is the way out? After the first World War, thousands and thousands of people turned to spiritualism, theosophy, and so forth, trying to find some information as to the whereabouts and conditions of their loved dead ones. The stampede toward these false doctrines was worse in England than in America. The ministry of England made a feeble protest, but what could the ministers do?

HOW MUCH HOPE have we Christians in these last days? Is it wavering? Or, is it "sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus" (Hebrews 6:19, 20)?

Do I hear someone say, "What evidence have you that the hope you believe and teach is true? If God is a God of love and is all-powerful, why does He not stop the terrible slaughter, starvation, misery, and woe?" These very conditions mentioned are strong evidences that God *is* and is the kind of God the Bible says He is, because the Bible teaches that just such things will happen in the last days. None except a divine mind could so accurately point out thou-

sands of years in advance the things we see happening before our eyes. "In the last days perilous times shall come" (2 Tim. 3:1). The word "perilous" is taken from the same Greek word as the words "exceeding fierce" in Matthew 8:28. The two men possessed with devils were said to be "exceeding fierce." So, the times in which we live are "exceeding fierce" — and I believe no one will try to say otherwise. Luke 21:26 reads: "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Look over the world to see if you can find anything anywhere that would have a tendency to quiet a man's fears. This sign, with some others that will probably happen in the near future, portends that the end is near, for the Master said, "When these things begin

BY JAMES A. PATRICK

Their plight can best be illustrated by the plight of an evangelist who held some meetings in Buffalo, Minnesota (the county seat of Wright County, in which I was born). There were a number of spiritualists living in and around the town. The evangelist took occasion to berate the spiritualists, until one evening he preached a sermon on the immortality of the soul. At the close of the sermon, a man in the audience stood up and said, "I don't see why you berate us spiritualists so severely, when you lay down the track we run our train on." This statement is absolutely true. The doctrine of immortality of the soul is the foundation of all false religions. Spiritualism, theosophy, supposed immortality of the soul — none can be the way out. What, then, is the way out?

Let us get back to the thought with which we started — hope. What is our hope? Is it the same as Paul's hope? What was Paul's hope? "When Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees, and the other part Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question" (Acts 23:6). Again Paul said: "This I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24:14, 15).

Once more I quote from Paul: "Now

I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" (Acts 26:6-8).

Why did Paul stress resurrection so strongly as his hope? "If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain: ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished" (1 Cor. 15:16-18). Resurrection hope is the only biblical hope, and especially in these last days of slaughter and woe. ❧

Winter Waning, Spring Coming

By Joyce Housman

Winter is on the wane — how can I tell? When those blustery winds aren't blowing, there's a mellowness in the air. The trees are miles away from being green, but there's an expectancy about them — a swelling of the buds, a sappy smell which is only half imaginary. Some of this may be wishful thinking but the calendar can't be all wrong! We are closer to spring.

I am surrounded by seed catalogs, another sure sign. My gardening ambition knows no bounds at this season. I'd like a different fruit tree (maybe apricot), more perennial flowers, some new varieties of vegetables, and definitely more energy to handle it all.

The advertisements for baby chicks have arrived. Should we order a few green egg layers or stick to either brown or white egg layers? Maybe we should buy another exotic assortment and enjoy seeing the jokes nature plays on chickens. We'll need a few meat chickens or broilers too. Then of course we need to check out nursery quarters for the chicks and sanitize it and the feeders and waterers.

The wild birds are more active now. The warmth of the sun spurs them on. They make longer expeditions to uncover tasty morsels hidden by the snow during the winter. In a few weeks they'll be joined by the real springtime heralds: the robins, meadowlarks, mourning doves, geese and dozens of varieties of ducks. I'm looking forward to the choir song of spring birds.

Of course we still have some possible snow days left here in Minnesota. We probably will have more snow, even a snowstorm or two before spring officially proclaims itself, but winter's back is broken and God promises spring will come. ❧



“Lovest Thou Me?”

By F. L. Austin

IN SYMPATHY DOES THE Christian heart reach out unto the conscience-stricken Peter as three times the Saviour's tender though searching question is placed, "Lovest thou me?" It was not the voice of one carrying a crown of thorns; it was the voice and eye of Him who had passed through death, who had slept the chill sleep to a finish and who had been triumphantly raised; it was He who was speaking with a voice echoing forth from glad immortality.

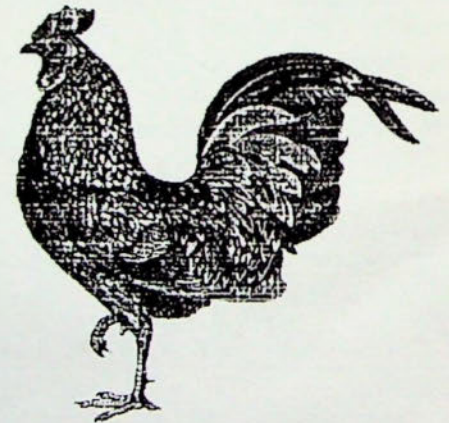
"Lovest thou me?" could but have had a far deeper and more searching meaning to Peter than was possible in

the hours of that bitter agony of the Saviour's passion and trial. There was no excuse for Peter's denial, but there was great reason why Peter could now thrice answer the Saviour in unmistakable words.

"Lovest thou me?" are words still vibrant in the heart of every true follower of our Lord. It is just as necessary for you and for me to confirm Peter's reply and to assure to Him our love as it was for Peter. We, too, have all too often denied our Lord.

Upon this anniversary memorial of His resurrection, what better could each true Christian do than to assure with word, with heart, with action true, with

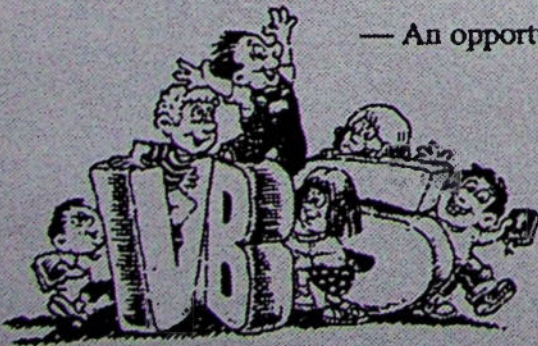
life's devotion, that we, too, love Him who died for us. ^{RH}



What Are You Doing This Summer?

ABC's Summer Ministries Program '95

— An opportunity to use your gifts and talents to serve God and others! —



We are looking for people of all ages to devote a portion of their summer — even as little as one week — to assist our churches with calling, Vacation Bible School, or VBS promotion and follow-up. For more information please write to Amy Berry or Sarah Buzzard at Atlanta Bible College, P.O. Box 100,000, Morrow, GA 30260, or call 1-800-347-4261.

Easter Reflections

By Harry Goekler

EASTER IS A TIME OF hope and joy for Christians. Easter makes a difference, the difference between life and death, light and darkness, hope and despair. Through the message of Easter, we have an endless hope instead of a hopeless end. Easter joins with springtime in proclaiming life abundant and everlasting life.

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead demonstrated supernatural power over geology — the stone was rolled away; over human government — the Roman seal was broken; over the military — the soldiers were as dead men; over death itself in that Jesus conquered death and rose to life.

The women had come to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus. They found the stone rolled away. Luke 24 tells us they entered the tomb and did not find the body of Jesus. As they were much perplexed, suddenly two men stood by them in shining garments and they were afraid. The men said to them, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen." What glori-

ous words! "He is not here, but is risen."

After His resurrection Jesus appeared only to those who had known and served Him. Likewise, when Jesus returns, it will be to those who have loved and served Him.

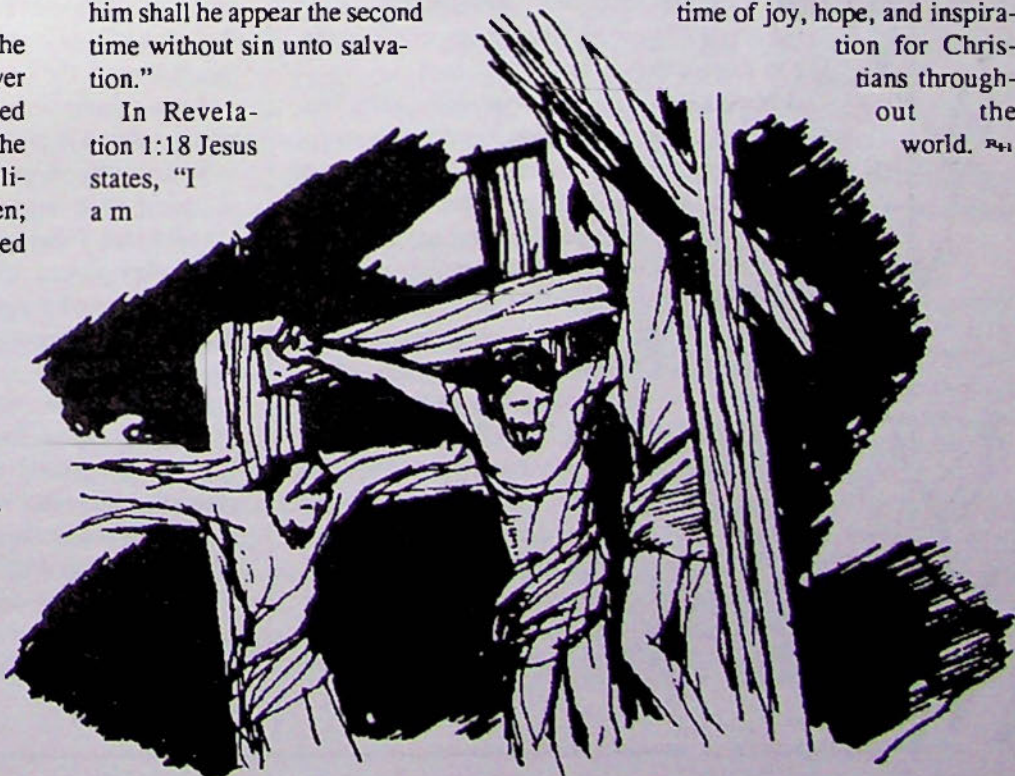
Hebrews 9:28 declares, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

In Revelation 1:18 Jesus states, "I am

he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

The hope of Christ hinges on the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, becoming the firstfruits of all who sleep in death. Jesus told His disciples, "Because I live, ye shall live also." So then Easter becomes a time of joy, hope, and inspira-

tion for Christians throughout the world. *R+1*



The Epitaph of Unbelievers

By Hollis Partlowe

WHAT WOULD YOU like written on your tombstone? That's not the most joyful thought, but it's a sobering one. Let's talk about it.

Somewhere in New England a tombstone reads: "Here lies the body of Helen Trent; she kicked up her heels and away she went." Dr. James Dobson's mother suggested for her epitaph: "I told you I was sick." Another tombstone says simply: "I goofed." To sum up one's whole life in these words is not very funny.

I hope I don't come across weird, but I've developed an interest in what people put on their tombstones. Another epitaph in New England says: "Here lies the body of Helen Young. On May 22, 1926 I learned to control my tongue." Another tombstone reads: "You can't win." That tells you something about the person sleeping at the base of it. It suggests a hopeless, negative attitude. The Christian says: "I shall win." "Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57). The Christian race is a victory race. "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37). A faith that doesn't take us beyond the grave leaves a great deal to be desired.

Scripture teaches us that when believers die we are not to sorrow for them as others who have "no hope" (1 Thess. 4:13). Apparently some

have no hope beyond the grave. On their tombstone could be written "NO HOPE."

In contrast, Paul the apostle gives believers a bright and glorious future. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (vv. 16-17). Both dead Christians and the ones still living at that moment meet the Lord at the same time.

In an old cemetery in England, there appears an epitaph which is remarkable for the inspiring history it relates in such a brief manner: "I have sinned, I have repented, I have trusted, I have loved, I rest, I shall rise, I shall reign." This is an expression of deep faith based on God's Word. All who believe and trust in God have assurance of life beyond the grave, even eternal life in the coming kingdom.

A little boy stood with his father looking at a group of puppies in the window of a pet shop. "Which one would you like?" the father asked. Pointing to one that was wagging its tail, the boy replied: "I'd like the one with the happy ending." Christianity has a happy ending.

Life is precious. Jesus Christ is the only hope of life beyond the grave. Friend, don't look into the sunset without the Saviour. *R+1*

The Moral Foundations of Society

By Margaret Thatcher

GREAT BRITAIN, which shares much of her history in common with America, has also derived strength from her moral foundations, especially since the 18th century, when freedom gradually began to spread throughout her society. Many people were greatly influenced by the sermons of John Wesley (1703-1791), who took the biblical ethic to the people in a way which the institutional Church itself had not done previously.

But we in the West must also recognize our debt to other cultures. In the pre-Christian era, for example, the ancient philosophers like Plato and Aristotle had much to contribute to our understanding of such concepts as truth, goodness, and virtue. They knew full well that responsibility was the price of freedom. Yet it is doubtful whether truth, goodness, and virtue founded on reason alone would have endured in the same way as they did in the West, where they were based upon a biblical ethic.

Sir Edward Gibbon (1737-1794), author of *The Decline and Fall of the*

Roman Empire, wrote tellingly of the collapse of Athens, which was the birthplace of democracy. He judged that, in the end, more than they wanted freedom, the Athenians wanted security. Yet they lost everything — security, comfort, and freedom. This was because they wanted not to give to society but for society to give to them. The freedom they were seeking was freedom from responsibility. It is no wonder, then, that they ceased to be free. In the modern world, we should recall the Athenians' dire fate whenever we confront demands for increased state paternalism.

To cite a more recent lesson in the importance of moral foundations, we should listen to Czech President Vaclav Havel, who suffered grievously for speaking up for freedom when his nation was still under the thumb of communism. He has observed, "In everyone there is some longing for humanity's rightful dignity, for moral integrity, and for a sense that transcends the world of existence." His words suggest that in spite of all the dread terrors of communism, it could not crush the

religious fervor of the peoples of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

So long as freedom, that is, freedom *with* responsibility, is grounded in morality and religion, it will last far longer than the kind that is grounded only in abstract, philosophical notions. Of course, many foes of morality and religion have attempted to argue that new scientific discoveries make belief in God obsolete, but what they actually demonstrate is the remarkable and unique nature of man and the universe. It is hard not to believe that these gifts were given by a divine Creator, who alone can unlock the secrets of existence. ^{PH}



Margaret Thatcher is a former Prime Minister of Great Britain. She is currently serving in the House of Lords.

GEORGE Washington warned in his Farewell Address, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports . . . And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion." Our other Founders agreed. John Adams, a Massachusetts Unitarian, agreed in no uncertain terms: "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." James Madison, an Episcopalian, insisted that "before any man can be considered as a member of Civil Society, he must be considered as a subject of the Governor of the Universe." And even Thomas Jefferson, the great deist who was deeply skeptical of sectarianism in any form, agreed. He asked, "Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God?" Religion, he concluded, should

be regarded as "a supplement to law in the government of men," and as "the alpha and omega of the moral law."

From Sam Adams to Patrick Henry to Benjamin Franklin to Alexander Hamilton, all of the Founders intended religion to provide a moral anchor for our liberty in democracy. And all would be puzzled were they to return to modern-day America. For they would find, among certain elite circles in the academy and in the media a scorn for the public expression of religious values that clashes directly with the Founders' vision of religion as a friend of civic life. But it is not enough merely to identify the intent of the Founders. It is also necessary to defend it.

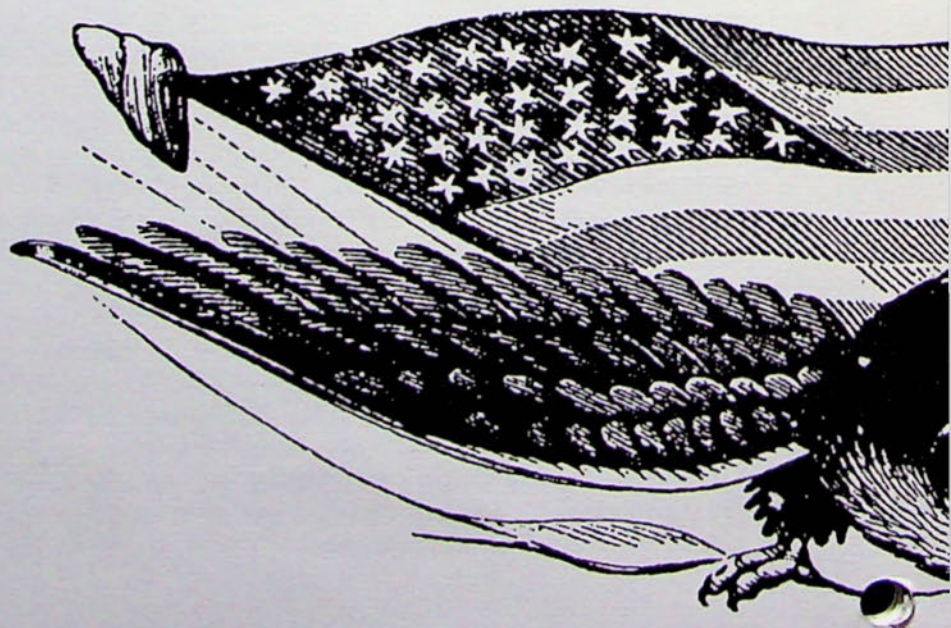
The first question we should ask ourselves is: Why did the Founders see a connection between religious values and political liberty? Alexis de Tocqueville, the French statesman, historian, and author of the classic *Democracy in America*, points to an

answer. "Liberty regards religion . . . as the safeguard of morality, and morality as the best security of law and the surest pledge of the duration of freedom." In short, Tocqueville concluded, religion "is more needed in

TI De-Val Ame

By William

democratic republics than in any others." Americans today agree with Tocqueville. We are among the most religious people in the world (a City



ne wing of erica

University of New York study done in 1991 revealed that nearly 90 percent of the American people identify themselves religiously as Christians or Jews, while only 7.5 percent claim no religion).

Our very

n J. Bennett

commitment to liberty of conscience — including the freedom to believe or not to believe and many other liberties — follows, in good part, from

the respect for religion still felt by the majority of Americans. It is ironic that anyone who appeals to religious values today runs the risk of being called “divisive” or attacked as an enemy of pluralism. For the readiness of most Americans to defend tolerance and equality does not derive only from an abstract allegiance to Enlightenment ideals. It also comes from a concrete allegiance to the Judeo-Christian ethic. That faith is deep, alive and important in and to America.

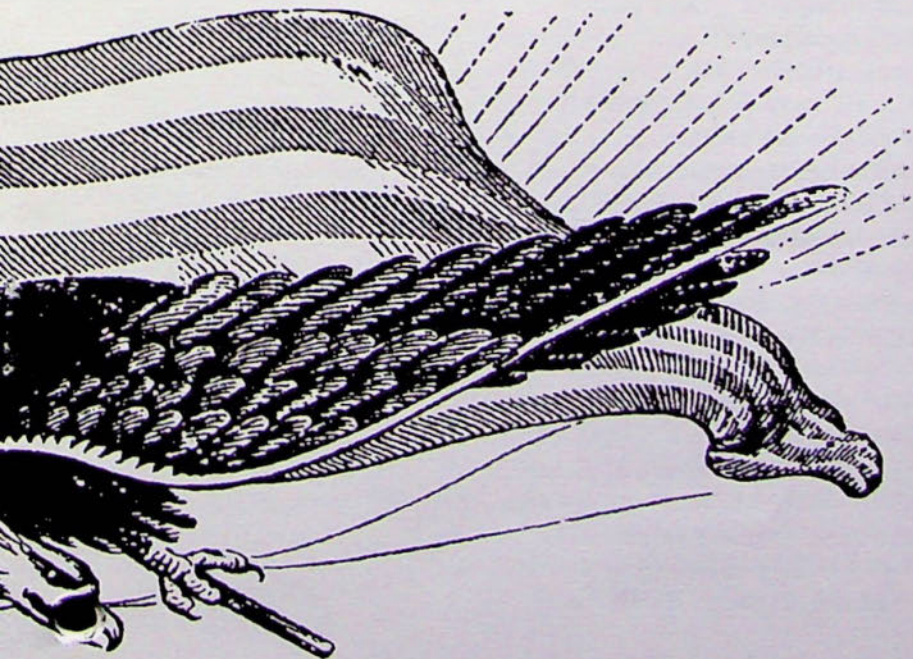
THE FATE OF our democracy is intimately intertwined —

“entangled,” if you will — with the vitality of the

Judeo-Christian tradition... The attitude that regards “entanglement” with religion as something akin to entanglement with an infectious disease must be confronted broadly and directly

... It would be — it is — tragic indeed to find that the passing of old-fashioned suspicion of particular religions has been followed, with barely an interruption, by a new suspicion of our broad religious tradition on the part of secularized elites, far more sophisticated, a bit better disguised, but no less divisive, no less reprehensible, no less damaging [than the old divisions between Protestant and Catholic, Gentile and Jew] . . . The Judeo-Christian tradition is not a source of fear in the world; it is a ground of hope . . . No one demands doctrinal adherence to any religious beliefs as a condition of citizenship, or as proof of good citizenship, here. But at the same time we should not deny what is true: that from the Judeo-Christian tradition come our values, our principles, the animating spirit of our institutions. That tradition and our tradition are entangled. They are wed together. When we have disdain for our religious tradition, we have disdain for ourselves.

(continued on p. 14)





(Continued from Page 13)

IN THE SPRING OF 1986, a small but very vocal group of students called on Stanford University to abolish a freshman course called Western Culture, by all accounts one of the most popular courses offered on the campus. In its place, they proposed a course that would emphasize the "contributions of cultures disregarded and/or distorted by the present program." This marked the beginning of a steady stream of charges against the Western Culture program, its supporters, and the Western tradition that sustained the program — charges of racism, sexism, imperialism, elitism, and ethno-centrism.

Two years later the Stanford faculty senate met to discuss replacing the Western Culture program with a new course called "Cultures, Ideas, and Values" (CIV). The familiar core reading list of fifteen significant works in Western philosophy and literature was to be thrown out. Instead, CIV instructors would decide year by year what the content of the course would be. And the instructors would have to include works by "women, minorities, and persons of color," and at least one work per quarter that explicitly addresses issues of race, gender, or class.

Throughout the two-year debate, tactics of intimidation were employed by CIV supporters. Free and open discussion was discouraged; opponents were publicly taken to task by the Stanford administration while a pro-CIV student group that occupied President Donald Kennedy's office for five hours and released a set of ten demands was not disciplined or even censured for the occupation. In the end, the adoption of CIV was a political, not an educational, decision.

After Stanford decided to alter its Western Culture program in 1985, a group of student organizations invited me to deliver an address and, they hoped, engage in a debate with President Kennedy. I was anxious to make a strong case as I had done as chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities for the study of Western culture. I accepted the invitation, knowing full well that the central question underlying the Stanford debate was under debate on other campuses across the country. Stanford, sometimes referred to as the "Harvard of the West," is a flagship university. What it does matters.

My office offered a handful of debate dates to President Kennedy, but we were told that he was not going to be on

campus for any of them. Finally, suspecting that I might never find a date when the president of the university would be on campus and ready to publicly discuss the issue, I accepted the invitation to speak and left ample time for discussion with faculty and students afterward. On April 18, I traveled to Palo Alto to offer my judgment on what had taken place at Stanford:

Stanford's decision . . . to alter its Western Culture program was not a product of enlightened debate, but rather an unfortunate capitulation of pressure politics and intimidation. Does anyone doubt that selecting works based on the ethnicity or gender of their authors trivializes the academic enterprise? Does anyone really doubt the political agenda underlying these provisions? The events . . . at Stanford serve as a striking example of what Allan Bloom has called "The Closing of the American Mind." In the name of "opening minds" and "promoting diversity," we have seen in this instance the closing of the Stanford mind. **RET**

Breaking the Bonds of Slavery

Passover can mean both physical and spiritual freedom.

When God was giving the Ten Commandments to Moses and the Hebrews, He could have described Himself in many ways. Creator of the universe. Alpha and Omega. King of kings. Light of the world. Lord God Almighty.

But instead, in Exodus 20, God describes Himself to Moses by saying, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."

From the very beginning, God defined Himself to His people through personal involvement in their lives. He met their deepest needs . . . rescued them when all human means had failed . . . and performed the impossible as a witness both to the persecuted and those who were persecuting.

Spiritual bondage is also broken through the Passover Lamb.

Throughout history, God has stepped in to rescue His people and fulfill His promises to the faithful. Many years after the first Passover, as the Jewish people celebrated their freedom from Egyptian slavery, God acted again. This time, He moved in a miraculous way to provide spiritual freedom to His people and all who believe in His name. His only begotten Son, Jesus, became our Redeemer. His birth, life, death and resurrection free us eternally from the slavery of sin and death.

Jewish people focus on God's Involvement in their lives during Passover.

The traditional Passover service is called a "Seder" and is conducted in the home. When having a Seder, the family uses a book known as the Haggadah which means "to tell." It tells the story of Passover and of God's redemptive grace. The Haggadah was originally brief. But succeeding generations

have added their interpretations, legends and traditions. Today, there are over 1,200 different versions of the Haggadah.

In keeping with Jewish tradition, our Messiah, the Lord Jesus, made preparations to keep the Passover when He sent Peter and John into Jerusalem to prepare for what we now call the "Last Supper."

Passover points people to the Lamb.

It is impossible to consider Passover and overlook the Lamb. During the first Passover in Egypt, the blood of the Lamb caused the Lord's judgment to "pass over" the homes that were covered in the blood — a type of redemption which is fulfilled, of course, in our Messiah, Yeshua, the Lamb of God.

Not only is the Lamb key to our understanding of Passover. The Lamb is also key to our understanding God's provision of salvation.

Passover is our path to Resurrection!

While Passover demonstrates our God's commitment to breaking physical and spiritual bonds that lead to death, our Messiah's resurrection adds a whole new dimension to our salvation. No longer are we escaped slaves looking over our shoulders for the pursuing Egyptian army. We've gained eternal freedom. Even death has no more dominion.

"The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:56, 57). Because Yeshua our Lord has risen and overcome death, we can take part in His victory that has already been won. We can boast of the fact that our Lord has risen — and we will also rise with Him.

— *The Chosen People*, spring 1995.

Christians Make the Best Missionaries

By Bob See

AS MEMBERS OF THE body of Christ, we were never trained to be missionaries. Yet, more and more, the survival of the Christian walk and the future of new converts to Christianity depends on our ability to fight the influence of the evil that surrounds us.

We must remember why we entered the arena of Christianity. We wanted to be inspired, to be informed, to broaden and deepen our own knowledge of Christ and the kingdom He proclaimed. Those same goals can be brought to the process of reaching our friends and neighbors. When we write a letter, make a call, or, best yet, visit a person in need, we need to remember our vision of a Christ-filled life. We need to inspire, inform, broaden and deepen the knowledge of people who may have very little idea of what or who we are.

We need to show them the fruits of our labor: a kind word of comfort, a visit to a sick person at home or in the hospital, a bag of groceries to a less fortunate family, an invitation to church, a friendly welcome to a new face at your church

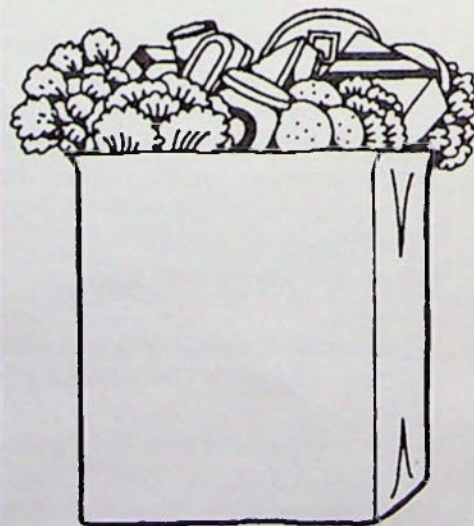
service, a card remembering a birthday, a get well card in the mail, etc. These are but a part of your ammunition showing that you care as Christ showed His love for you.

We must view ourselves as peaceful combatants — using our communication skills to reach our target audience and overcome their ignorance. We need to collect concrete examples that prove that serving our Lord and Savior is effective and worthwhile. This is not egotism or self-aggrandizement! This is survival. We must reach the people around us not just once but many times over many years because the iniquity of the world will continue to undo whatever good we attempt to do. It may feel uncomfortable, yet we must become the ongoing representatives (missionaries) for Christ. We need to know those around us, their backgrounds their personal interests, even their “pet peeves.” Finding common ground with people is a good first step to talking about the hard issues of a changed life.

We can use the everyday skills that we naturally possess and the Lord will add to these as needed. We mustn't be

advocating for ourselves; that is the worst case we can present to non-Christians. We must be advocates for our Savior and for the future state of the person to whom we are talking.

We must keep reminding the people of the world that Christ has presented the Kingdom of God to them as a free gift and to reject it is the most costly expenditure that they will ever make. Share your rebuilt life with another. ^{PH}



Still You Walked

By John Nordberg

You knew that I didn't believe in you,
but still you walked.
You knew that I would disappoint and hurt you,
but still you walked.
You knew that I wouldn't love you the way that I should,
but still you walked.
You knew that I wouldn't put you first in my life,
but still you walked.
You knew me better than I knew myself,
but still you walked.
You knew all of my shortcomings,
but still you walked.

You said that you would never leave me,
but still you walked.
You said that you loved me more than I'd ever know,
but still you walked.
You said that you would sacrifice everything for me,
but still you walked.
You said that you wanted to be an example for me,
but still you walked.
You said that most people will never understand,
but still you walked.
You knew what awaited you at the top of Calvary,
but still you walked.

Values

"The Declaration of Independence states that the Creator gave man the right to liberty. It seems man can realize that liberty only if he does not forget the One who endowed him with it." —*Czechoslovakia's President VACLAV HAVEL, in an acceptance address on winning the Philadelphia Liberty Medal.*

"As a writer and thinker, Mr. Havel has had certain advantages not given to American intellectuals. That is, he has lived under a genuinely oppressive system, been imprisoned and actually endured state punishment for the expression of his art and views. Our own artists and intellectuals must content themselves with manufac-

tured fantasies of state oppression and assaults on freedom... It must therefore seem peculiar to Mr. Havel to witness what is going on in America where—if liberal establishment opinion is to be believed—the greatest threats to freedom and democracy today are school prayers, radio and TV ministries, evangelical Christians seeking public office, and any and all use of a public accommodation for religious activity." —*Editorial in The Wall Street Journal.*

"We are closer than ever to seeing abortion disappear from large segments of the country simply because the fruit of the last 10 years of exposure is beginning to ripen. This is because abortion is a unique evil in that it can only be legally

done by the most thoroughly trained and specialized profession in America—doctors. Regardless of the rhetoric of the AMA and the laws protecting child killing, if the doctors refuse to do it, it won't get done." —*Pro-life activist JOSEPH FOREMAN, announcing plans to set up a new organization to discourage young doctors from joining the abortion industry.*

"When the 'state' decides that it won't 'prohibit' killing babies, it isn't 'staying out' of abortion any more than a 'state' which decides it won't 'prohibit' killing blacks is staying out of civil rights." —*GREGG CUNNINGHAM in In-Perspective.*

Perhaps it was the day 10-year-olds could name more brands of beer than U.S. presidents. But somewhere along the recent way, our culture has become so thoroughly manufactured by marketers that it is no longer able to give real sustenance to thousands of Americans. Instead of growing up on homemade stories in which we learn about ourselves, we are fed mass-produced images that fit only a few, stigmatizing and marginalizing the rest. As if this weren't bad enough, we are subsidizing our own dehumanization because we are forced to pay the hidden promotional cost at the checkout counter.

—*Psychology Today, January/February 1994*

Editor's Scrapbook

From the Bottom Upwards

The true Christian religion . . . does not begin at the top, as all other religions do; it begins at the bottom. You must run directly to the manger and the mother's womb, embrace this Infant and Virgin's Child in your arms, and look at Him — born, being nursed, growing up, going about in human society, teaching, dying, rising again, ascending above all the heavens, and having authority over all things.

—Martin Luther in *Lectures on Galatians*

Something happened on Easter Day which made Christ more alive on the streets of Jerusalem forty days after His crucifixion than on the day of His Triumphal Entry. A false report might last forty days but the Church which was founded on a Risen Christ has lasted for nineteen centuries, producing generations of the race's finest characters and now including some six hundred million members.

— Ralph W. Sockman, *Pulpit Preaching*

Medical Council Requires Abortion Training

The group that governs training of physicians decided that obstetrical residents must be taught how to perform abortions. The accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education said residents must take training unless they have a moral or religious objection. The council can withhold accreditation from hospitals, which would then lose federal funds.

—*National and International Religion Report*

Romeward Bound

Episcopal Bishop Joins Protestant Converts to Catholicism

A leading conservative bishop in the Episcopal Church is leaving the denomination to become a Roman Catholic.

Clarence C. Pope, Jr., bishop of Fort Worth, announced in late October that he will leave the Episcopal Church. He and his wife, Martha, will become Roman Catholics, following a handful of other Protestant leaders who have converted in recent years.

Pope, 65, will retire at the end of 1994. On sabbatical this fall, Pope waited until his successor, Jack Iker, had been consecrated before making his own announcement.

Pope said he had been thrilled at the possibilities of an "organic reunion between Rome and Canterbury" in recent years. But it has become apparent to Pope since the Church of England voted two years ago to ordain women priests that "the pilgrimage" he longed to take "corporately would now have to be taken alone." Pope has called the ordination of women "a tragedy."

Pornography, Yes; McDonald's, No

Bexley, Ohio (EP) — Residents of Bexley, a well-to-do community in Columbus, Ohio, are waging a battle over a sex-oriented business in their town. They want to keep it.

Neighbors are fighting a proposal to tear down the porn shop and replace it with a McDonald's. Steve Elbert, who lives just behind Bexley Video with his wife Anita Dawson and their two children, said, "We think fast food is equivalent to pornography, nutritionally speaking."

Neighbors say the video store doesn't create much traffic, and they fear the litter, traffic and odors they believe would accompany a McDonald's.

—*Southern California Christian Times*

Lost Blessing

"Assemble yourselves together" (Heb. 10:34, 35).

What is the blessing that people lose by not attending church services? The greatest blessing lost is the **hearing of the Word of God**. Too many times we forget that what the preacher is preaching is **not his word**, but the Word of the Lord.

In the Word of the Lord there is salvation, blessing, promise. When we do not attend services where the Word of the Lord is preached, we do not hear that Word, and thus we have little defense against Satan, and we perish. It is good to come into the house of the Lord. David's attitude should be ours: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD."

Are you eating weekly (or weakly) of that bread of life? Is hearing the Word of God a blessing you lose?

Help Me Today

This day, I think will be a common day,
Devoid of venture, risk or thrill or show;
Eight working hours, plodding in a row
Like lagging sheep, whose herder I must be— And You,
who made me, know I hate such days.
I can face danger or the press of haste,
Cruel shock or sudden uproar and alarm,
Or I can laugh and play the merry clown,
Or act a part to mask some desperate need— But something
limps in me when days are dull.
And so I ask Your help this common day.
Help me to keep sweet when there is none to see;
Help me to be patient though there be no praise,
And brave without the spotlight or applause,
And honest in the secret, unseen acts.
Dear Friend, whom I feel but cannot see, Help me today.

— from *Poems That Touch the Heart* by Elsie Robinson

Low Qualifications for Religion Editor

In search of a new religion reporter, *The Washington Post* placed a notice on its company bulletin board asking those interested to notify the editors. The notice read: "The ideal candidate is not necessarily religious nor an expert in religion."

— *National and International Religious Report*, 1/23/95

High Marks for Home Schoolers

Home school children scored in the 77th percentile in reading, math, and language arts in standardized achievement tests. Scores were for K-12 children. Statistics were compiled from the 1994 Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. More than 700,000 children are schooled at home in the United States today.

— *National and International Religion Report*,
12/26/94, reprinted in
American Family Association Journal, March 1995, p. 4.

Unclear On The Concept

An August Associated Press report on the Pitkin County jail in Aspen, Colo., contained only praise from former inmates. The jail, which has a library, gym, videocassettes for rent and luxurious views of Red Mountain, was applauded by Dewi Sukarno, widow of the former Indonesian dictator, who once did 24 days for assault: "I will treasure memories of the jail the rest of my life."

Just after a Church of England diocese fired Rev. Anthony Freeman of West Sussex in July because he had admitted in a recent book that he does not believe in God, 65 of Freeman's colleagues signed a letter protesting their superiors' "intolerance." And then in October, Oakland, Calif., Catholic Bishop John Cummins, facing a shortage of clergy, reappointed the Rev. John Gilmore as a parish priest despite knowing that Gilmore secretly fathered two children in the 1980s. (Gilmore has since taken a vow of celibacy.)

— From the column "News of the Weird," printed in
The Atlanta Journal/
The Atlanta Constitution,
January 22, 1995

No Peace Without the Babe

Our trouble is we want the peace without the Prince.

— Addison Leitch
(*Christianity Today*, Dec. 22, 1972)

The Lost Sex and Culture Study

By Philip Yancey



WHILE MUCH OF the media is buzzing about a new

survey on sex in America, I'm still thinking about a book, *Sex and Culture*, published in 1934. I discovered it in the windowless warrens of a large university library, and I felt like an archaeologist must feel unearthing an artifact from the catacombs.

Seeking to test the Freudian notion that civilization is a byproduct of repressed sexuality, the scholar J. D. Unwin studied 86 different societies. His findings startled many scholars — above all, Unwin himself — because all 86 demonstrated a direct tie between monogamy and the “expansive energy” of civilization.

Unwin had no Christian convictions and applied no moral judgment: “I offer no opinion about rightness or wrongness.” Nevertheless, he had to conclude, “In human records there is no instance of

a society retaining its energy after a complete new generation has inherited a tradition which does not insist on pre-nuptial and post-nuptial continence.”

For Roman, Greek, Sumerian, Moorish, Babylonian, and Anglo-Saxon civilizations, Unwin had several hundred years of history to draw on. He found with no exceptions that these societies flourished during eras that valued sexual fidelity. Inevitably, sexual mores would loosen and societies would subsequently decline, only to rise again when they returned to more rigid sexual standards.

Unwin seemed at a loss to explain the pattern yet it so impressed him that he proposed a special class of “Alpha” citizens in Great Britain. These individuals of unusual promise would take vows of chastity before marriage and observe strict monogamy after marriage — all for the sake of the Empire, which needed their talents. ²⁴¹

The Aging of a

WHILE NOT AT all liking the term "cult" to describe us — it is inappropriate to use of a congregational group — nevertheless there are five observations about the aging of a movement that bear consideration.

They need to be considered and then addressed. As a movement ages:

1. *The movement loses its identity and focus.* The first generation, or two, is enthused and filled with vibrancy for its message. Its clear purpose and focus is to take its unique message to the rest of mankind.
2. *The movement loses its antagonism against the rest of society and the other churches.* Because it is so convinced of the "rightness" of its own message and understanding of the Bible, it feels that society in general, and

other churches in particular are wrong . . . and the enemy.

3. *The movement loses its evangelistic fervor.* No longer are those outside the movement viewed as dangerous enemies. Over time they are seen less as antagonists, and more as misguided brothers. As later generations rise they ask themselves what their grandparents were thinking when they denounced other movements. They see people in other movements as such good people that it would be wrong to consider them wrong. The result is that if those other people are not "wrong," then there is less evangelistic fervor — because the movement's message is no more "right" than the other group's message. New generations view as arrogant the previous generation's insistence on its understanding of the Bible as being "right."

4. *The movement's struggles become internal, within the movement itself.* There is often a generational struggle over the movement's direction — on what it will place its emphasis. Churches refocus from evangelism and teaching the movement's message to other expressions.

5. *The movement proposes frenetic renewal efforts.* The previous steps result in a decline of membership and financial support.

Unfortunately, there is no nice, easy sixth step whereby everything works itself out and all is well with a movement again. Unless there is a recovery of the movement's original focus, it is unlikely that it can reverse itself and be renewed. That requires careful study of the Bible, devotion to prayer and fasting for God's leadership, and a humble willingness to let the Lord of the Church lead His Church! ²⁴¹

CULT

By Kent Ross

As a Thief in the Night

By Norman J. McLeod

THE LAST WORDS Jesus spoke before He ascended to heaven told that Jesus' followers are not to know the exact time Jesus shall return. He spoke particularly about the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, but that event is most decidedly pointed out as coinciding with Jesus' second coming. Again and again since the time Jesus departed, religious leaders have been setting dates for His return. During the Middle Ages, Eusebius and Julius Africanus said He would return at 1000 A.D. Archbishop Ussher set the date at 2000 A.D. We are more familiar with the legion of more recent church leaders who have set all manner of dates for the greatest event of all time.

Scripture definitely records that the time is not known. Jesus said twice in the same discourse, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only . . . Watch, therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Matt. 24:36, 42). More recently, it has been argued that followers of Jesus who were looking for His coming would know the time because of statements made by the Apostle Paul in the letter to the Thessalonians. The Apostle said, "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief" (1 Thess. 5:4). People argue that it is only to the unbeliever that the coming of the Lord will be as a thief. The sense of the whole passage is to the

effect that we do not know the exact time He will come, and so we should be watching all the time. "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (v. 6). If we knew when Jesus was coming, we could set our alarm clocks and proceed to go soundly to sleep. We would not need to watch. That is the value of uncertainty. It keeps us ever alert and ready to do the right thing to our neighbor, to act in a truly Christian manner with all associates. We are not tempted to think that because Jesus is not coming for some time we can go out and gather in some ill-gotten gain.

Those who have set dates for the Lord's return, and have found themselves to be wrong, have invented all manner of doctrines to cover the chagrin they have endured. The most common subterfuge of this class of people is that Jesus is already here. He has come to His own, but the rest of the world does not realize that He has come. These people hunt abstruse prophetic utterances that seem to bolster their teachings, but never once have they produced any plain statement that says so. Types and apocalyptic statements from Daniel or the book of Revelation are testimony that Jesus is coming to His Church first and then to the world. Those who hold to such teachings will let you know they are of the true Church, but you are not because you do not know of Jesus' coming. Then at frequent intervals, there will come those

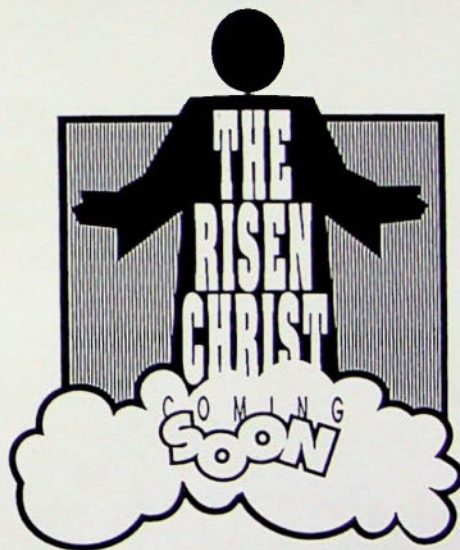
who tell you some have been taken, and you are left. Such a one will say they have noticed recently that so many righteous people have died, and undoubtedly they have been taken, and we are left in this vale of woe! When that doctrine was first taught in my presence, I did become somewhat disturbed. No more! In no place does the Scripture make any such statement. We have several plain statements to the contrary.

Then if any man say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not . . . If they shall say unto you Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chamber, believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be (Matt. 24:23, 26, 27).

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him" (Rev. 1:7). The angels who spoke to the Apostles at the time of Jesus' ascension said He would come the same way He went (Acts 1:11). Until such time as I can be shown plainer statements than these, I believe that when Jesus comes, it will be with one great flash and all the world shall know it simultaneously. Doctrines based upon obscure texts, abstruse reasoning, or on individual interpretations of apocalyptic utterance will not alter my opinion.

Someday, when God's own good time has been reached, Jesus will come through the cloven skies to take over the kingdoms of this world, to raise the dead, to change the living, to put down all authority and power, in other words to perform the most radical revolution the world has ever seen. Words fail to express the grandeur of that glorious revolution, because it is beyond our

wildest dreams. We have not the slightest idea of when it shall be, but if we are looking for it, we can have some idea of the time of His coming. God has given signs, but we cannot always be sure that we have interpreted His signs correctly. The fault is not in the signs but in their understanding. Let us watch, therefore, for we know not what hour our Lord doth come. ^{R+1}



Revamping of Worldwide Church of God Causing Decline?

The Worldwide Church of God is experiencing a loss of membership and a cut-back of programs in the process of moving from beliefs once called quasi-Christian and cultic to a more orthodox Christian identity. The church is known for its television ministry and magazine, *The Plain Truth*, and once taught the doctrine of British Israelism, which holds that Anglo-Saxons are the lost tribe[s] of Israel.

Today the 95,000-member church is coping with a one-third loss in revenue and a ten percent loss of membership, according to the *National & International Religion Report* (March 20). The 56-acre denominational headquarters site is for sale, although officials say the church is not headed for bankruptcy.

A leader says that the losses stem from a wholesale revision of doctrine in the last five years. While the denomination once rejected the doctrine of the Trinity, it is now accepted, as well as adopting the teaching that salvation is through grace rather than following biblical laws.

— *Religion Watch*, April 1995

Five Fearful Facts

1. Not everyone is going to be saved.
2. More people will be lost than will be saved.
3. Many expecting to be saved will be lost.
4. No one will be saved after death.
5. This could be your last opportunity to be saved.

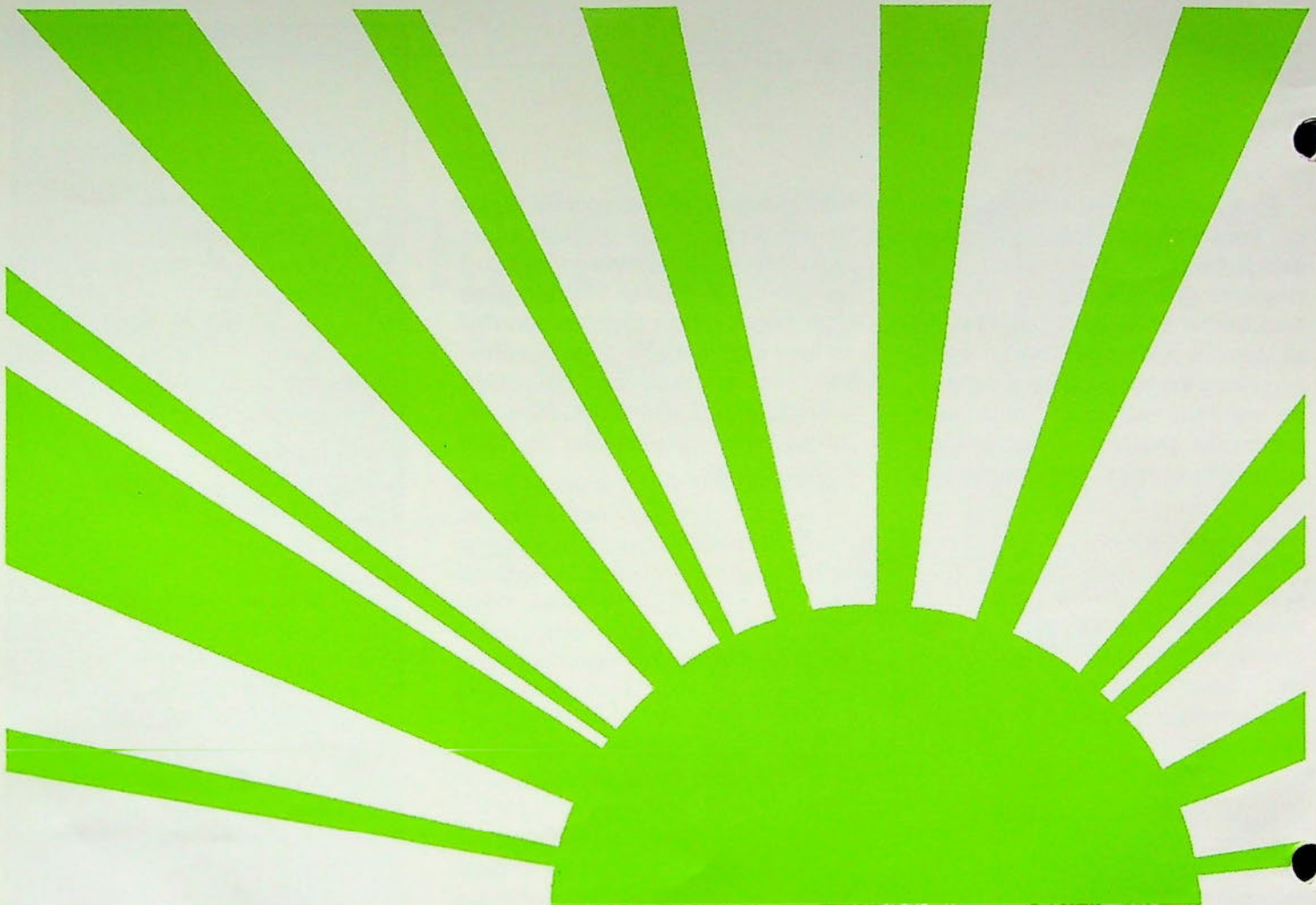
Twelve Guidelines for Living

- I will do more than belong
I will participate.
- I will do more than believe
I will practice.
- I will do more than care
I will help.
- I will do more than be fair
I will be kind.
- I will do more than forgive
I will forget.
- I will do more than dream
I will work.
- I will do more than teach
I will inspire.
- I will do more than earn
I will enrich.
- I will do more than give
I will serve.
- I will do more than live
I will grow.
- I will do more than be friendly
I will be a friend.
- I will do more than be a citizen
I will be a patriot.

— Wm. Arthur Ward

“There is one single fact which we may oppose to all the wit and argument of infidelity, namely, that no man ever repented of being a Christian on his deathbed.”

— Hannah Moore



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The Restitution Herald



A HERALD OF THE COMING KINGDOM OF GOD

VOL. 84, NO. 5

JUNE, JULY, 1995

**The Future:
What Does
the Bible
Say About It?**

Mixed Feelings . . .

by Kent Ross
Editor

ASI WRITE THIS, I'M feeling torn by two emotions. It's graduation time at Atlanta Bible College, and we have students finishing their studies and with a sense of anticipation entering into their ministries. Some are heading into their internships. Others, having completed their Foundation year or their Church Leadership courses, now head to their homes to continue secular education and to function in their churches with enhanced ministry skills. There is an outlook of hope and expectation.

But today a tape arrived in my office that tells of the development of technology, funded in part by our government, that allows for an identification chip to be implanted by regular hypodermic needle that allows absolute identification of each individual. Whereas people would be leery of some surgical procedure, having a "shot" doesn't seem threatening. What will be injected is just the size of a human hair, but is a transmitter that will allow complete identification of every individual everywhere. That information brings my other emotion . . . one of disquietude. Those who hold to the truth of Revelation — and to the literalness of most of it — will recall the 13th

chapter and shudder over what is to come. The scientist who developed this chip reported further that their testing revealed that the device needed to be implanted where the skin makes the most rapid temperature changes in response to the air. The two places they discovered were (you've already suspected the answer) on the forehead and the back of the hand.

The blessing we celebrate in this issue is the hope of the return of Jesus to this earth — but that also means that the time of intense persecution or tribulation is nearing. Three articles in this issue address the place of the Great Tribulation. You'll want to read and carefully consider what each writer says. Pray for understanding.

There is so much to say on these end times that the next issue will also have more end times articles to give a fuller picture of what shall come to pass. We know that ultimately the Kingdom of God will appear. May that come quickly enough, for those who look for Him to appear the second time. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! ^{Rev}

Kent Ross



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- THE ONENESS OF GOD (1 COR. 8:6);
- THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD'S POWER (ACTS 1:8);
- JESUS CHRIST IS GOD'S ONLY BEGOTTEN SON (MATT. 16:16), AND IS OUR MEDIATOR (1 TIM. 2:5);
- THE BIBLE IS THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD (2 TIM. 3:16);
- THE MORTALITY OF MAN (JOB 4:17; PSA. 146:4);
- THE NEAR RETURN OF CHRIST (ACTS 1:11), AND LIFE ONLY THROUGH HIM (COL. 3:3);
- THE LITERAL RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD (JOHN 5:28);
- THE IMMORTALIZATION OF THOSE IN CHRIST (1 COR. 15:53, 54);
- THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED (REV. 21:8);
- THE FINAL RESTORATION OF ISRAEL AS THE KINGDOM OF GOD UNDER THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST (LUKE 1:32);
- THE CHURCH TO BE JOINT HEIRS WITH HIM (ROM. 8:17), AND ISRAEL TO BE MADE HEAD OVER GENTILE NATIONS (ISA. 60:1-3);
- THE "RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS WHICH GOD HATH SPOKEN BY THE MOUTH OF ALL HIS HOLY PROPHETS SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN" (ACTS 3:21).
- IT ALSO FIRMLY ADVOCATES REPENTANCE AND IMMERSION IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS (ACTS 2:38), AND A CONSECRATED LIFE AS ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION.

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The Decline of Faith in the Last Times

by Rex Cain
Bedford, OH

“WHEN THE SON OF man comes, will he find faith on earth?” (Luke 18:8, RSV).

I saw it happen with my own eyes. No doubt about it. I slipped right into the “old school” and didn’t even feel the pain. Where did the years go that placed me here?

I guess it happens in every generation — the oldest one laments the “progressiveness” of the newest one. Surely we can see with clearer eyes than those Baby Boomers or the X Generation!

Well, it matters not what I of the “old school” think or what modern politically correct mainstream orthodoxy teaches; let’s just return to The Rock that has withstood the pounding of millenniums. It remains unaltered, uncompromised.

In my own time I’ve seen a “watering down” of even our own denomination’s fundamental tenets. The fire for standing for our distinctive faith has waned. I can recall some real sparks flying over doctrine at our Ministers’ Conferences back in the 50s and 60s. Some with great valor were determined to keep it pure. But that passion has been compromised since then and we’re most likely to “wanna get along” and not confront a misstatement of teaching here, or a blatant mistake there.

We don’t like being different. Neither do we like being pointed out as odd or maybe even a cult. But, when we stand firm for the Word of God as we understand it, all pretenses are stripped from us and we are either applauded or persecuted. It’s a very tenuous place to be. In our society, everyone avoids this position like a pestilence; but genuine Christians can’t afford such luxury. Jesus never said the world would love us; rather they would hate us (Matt. 10:22; 24:9). Our waffling on Truth is very worrisome to me and our historic understanding of the Bible must, at all costs, be pressed at every opportunity. Many serious thinkers in religious circles are today reevaluating, very seriously, the immortality of the soul, the place of the dead and some of our other teachings that have made us unique . . .

and biblical. We must not give up now just when the corner could be turned. It takes time for changes in theological concepts to reach the pulpits. But a movement in the right direction, I think, is under way. Remember when the literal return of Christ to earth was pooh-poohed by orthodoxy? Or the literal return of Israel to their land brought ridicule — or worse? Not any more; you hear both preached all the time. Some marvelous books (authored not only by our own people) have been written on the sleep of the dead and the mortality of man.

As more Truth wants to burst out, the resistance will mount, so we must stand firm and be counted. Don’t give up on your (our) fundamental faith and belief in our distinctive teachings. Truth will prevail but it can be costly at times.

There will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And *many will follow* their licentiousness, and because of them the way of truth will be reviled (2 Pet. 2:1, 2, RSV).

False teachers. We have many! Truth will be reviled. From the beginning! Many will follow the lies. How well we know! We can only influence in our own circle, but let us be about doing it with all our power “as [we] see the Day drawing near” (Heb. 10:25). Personally, I don’t think there’s much time left to stand for right when wrong is so strong. It’s true that we live in the times of which Paul wrote, “There are those . . . who will listen to anybody [but] can never arrive at a knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim. 3:6, 7, RSV).

As we approach the end of this century and this millennium, let us be cognizant that the end of this age, as we know it, is rapidly approaching and that we must be loyal to God in holding up — at all costs — the Truth.

“Guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us” (2 Tim. 1:14, RSV).

R11

JESUS IS COMING

Of That There Can Be No Doubt!

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:7, 8).

"Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you — even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets" (Acts 3:19-21).

"For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first" (1 Thess. 4:16).

"And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming" (2 Thess. 2:8).

"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

"So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him" (Heb. 9:28).

"For in just a very little while, 'He who is coming will come and will not delay'" (Heb. 10:37).

"Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

"He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

"Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen" (Rev. 1:7).

"The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life" (Rev. 22:17).

by Jon Lippert

The
Here
Ever
right,
whatever
whatever is
— if anything is
lent or praiseworthy
think about such
things. Whatever you
have learned or received or
heard from me, or seen in me —
put it into practice. And the God of
peace will be with you” (Phil. 4:8, 9,
NIV).

Immorality as defined in Scripture by the
Apostle Paul: “But mark this: There will be ter-
rible times in the last days. People will be lovers
of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abu-
sive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy,
without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control,
brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited,
lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God — having a form
of godliness but denying its power” (2 Tim. 3:1-5).

I recently heard the story told about a man who had started
a business from nothing and had built it into a thriving con-
cern. The building and grounds were beautiful, situated in the
best of locations. People would drive by just to see its beauty.
All who entered were genuinely welcomed, and desired to be a
part of this business. Needless to say, business thrived.

One day the owner, in search of a new challenge, decided to
go to South America to start a similar enterprise. He spent much
time with his supervisor and employees discussing how the
business should be run in his absence. He promised to also
send monthly letters with further instructions, and to answer
any questions that they might send to him.

The owner worked hard establishing the new business, and
true to his word he sent monthly letters back to the supervisor
with added instructions.

After a period of three years, with things going well in South
America, the owner returned home to check on his original
interest. On his first pass he drove right past the property be-
cause he did not even recognize it. The lawn had been taken

Morality as defined in
Scripture by the Apostle
Paul: “Finally, brothers,
whatever is true, what-
is noble, whatever is
whatever is pure,
is lovely,
admirable
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over by weeds which stood two feet tall. Some of the trees had
been uprooted by a storm, and had been left as they had fallen.
Windows had been broken out in various parts of the building
and not replaced. As he entered the reception area there was no
greeting, only trash here and there, dying plants, and dirty car-
pet. Workers milled around aimlessly as machinery was bro-
ken down and no one seemed to know what to do.

The owner eventually found the supervisor and cleared a
place where they both could sit. “What has happened here to
cause this mess and ruin my business?” the owner asked.
“Things haven’t gone well since you left,” was the supervisor’s
reply. “Didn’t you receive my letters?” the owner asked. “Sure
we did,” came the quick reply. “Every month when your let-
ters came we all got together to read them aloud. Each depart-
ment then reread the letters and studied them. Some groups
even meet once a week after work to talk about their favorite

letters. We have many people who can quote large portions
of several of your letters.” The owner sat in silence for a
time. Then he turned to his supervisor and said, “How
is it that you say I am your boss, yet you have not
done what I asked you to do?” Shame covered
the reddened face of the supervisor as he sat
in silence.

What an embarrassing moment! To
be called on the carpet before the
boss knowing what you have
failed to do, and having been
well instructed in how to
do it. There is no es-
cape, no possible ex-
tion for your ac-
how much
rassing
tion be
ing

plana-
tions. Yet,
more embar-
would the situa-
if it were Jesus ask-
you the same question?

But Jesus has asked the
question, “Why do you call
me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do
what I say?” (Luke 6:46). “Ah, but
I have done what you asked,” you
might say in reply. “I was baptized and I
attend church quite regularly.” “But there is
more,” comes Jesus’ reply. “I am more than a
little concerned about your lifestyle, about your
recreational activities, the things you watch, the
things you say. I wonder exactly where your treasure

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pears to
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of what I said.
this be? Have you
had enough teachers
preachers? Do you not
understand my words?
Please explain to me how I
could have made it more clear."

You see, there is no excuse for
disobedience. We cannot selectively
obey. Partial obedience is disobedience.
Why am I coming on so strong? The Bible
has given us some definite warnings about the
end times that we need to be aware of.

Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 4:3, 4, "The time will
come when men will not put up with sound doctrine.
Instead, *to suit their own desires*, they will gather around
them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears
want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and
turn aside to myths." Look at the proliferation of talk shows
with expert after expert announcing his or her solutions to the
problems of today. Many sound very "spiritual," yet promote
ideas contrary to what the Lord has laid out in Scripture. I heard
one so-called authority say, "Don't you think we are all going
to somehow make it?" It was less a question than a statement
that it did not matter what we do, God will accept us into His
presence regardless of our behavior.

As I write this I have been rocked in recent months at the
news of various Christians falling into immoral activities. Chris-
tians of all ages have traded in their relationship with the Lord
for fleeting moments of personal gratification. Some of these
people have continued on as if they had done nothing wrong.
Others have totally left the fellowship. Grace is their cry. It's
cheap grace, not amazing grace. It is obvious that they desire
Christ as Savior, but will have nothing to do with Him as Lord.
This decline in morality should not shock us, yet it does. In
Matthew chapter 24, Jesus answers the disciples' questions
regarding the signs of the end of the age. Many of these signs
our youngest people could list. In verses 10-12 are some signs

is and blush at where your thoughts
are. It gives me concern the way
you sometimes treat other
people; what you say and
think about them. I am a
little confused about
lack of fruit. It ap-
me that you
nored much

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not mentioned as often. "At that time many will turn away
from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many
false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because
of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold."

Many will turn away from the faith. They will hate and be-
tray each other. Many will be deceived. The love of most will
grow cold. I heard the results of a survey recently that said
among people who considered themselves to be committed
Christians, only 8% relied on God's Word for direction in their
lives. Isn't that astounding? It is easy to see why Jesus uses the
words "many" and "most." It is also easy to see how Jesus can
ask another embarrassing question of us in Luke 18:8: "When
the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

Who are the "many"? Who are the "most"? Do you worship
with someone on Sunday who will be deceived? Will the per-
son behind you one day hate and betray you? How will the
increase of wickedness affect your love? Just to make sure
you understand, let me emphasize three words Jesus
uses: Many. Most. Will. Jesus isn't talking about just
a few. He is describing great numbers. "Most"
implies to me more than half. He also doesn't
say that they might, or that it is possible;
Jesus says that they will.

Yet there is still hope. The end has
not yet come. If we have sinned
He will forgive us, but we must
put away all immorality
from our lives. We must
be on guard to not let
gain a hold in our
we begin our
time with the
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lives. As
daily quiet
Lord we
say, "What will
have me do today,
Lord?" and end our
quiet time with "yes,
Lord." Spend time in the
Word and in prayer daily. Find
someone whom you can trust to
hold you accountable for your behav-
ior in Christ. Be ready for the days ahead;
hold fast to Christ! ✠

The United Nations and the New World Order

*by Tom New
Greenbrier, AR*

*I believe many
Christians
have their
"heads in the
sand" in
regard to the
times in which
we are living.*

WE LIVE IN A TIME WHEN much of Bible prophecy is coming to pass. Signs all around us tell us that Jesus is coming soon. These signs are like spiritual road signs of caution, warning and information. God has seemingly pressed the "fast forward" button that will lead us to the end of the age and His ultimate will, resulting in the Kingdom of God on this earth. I believe that we are not walking or jogging, but *racing* towards:

1. The New World Order
2. The mark of the beast
3. The second coming of Christ
4. The establishment of God's Kingdom

Yet I believe many Christians have their "heads in the sand" in regard to the times in which we are living. Cares of this world are choking these biblical prophetic truths from their hearts. Many are being deceived and are blinded to the real issues of spiritual preparedness. Sadly, that day may "come upon them like a trap" as prophesied in God's word. Jesus said, concerning the Church, that many will be as unprepared as the foolish virgins, and will run out of spiritual oil at the "midnight cry." The call to the Christian today is, "Awake! Arise! Get

on your spiritual armor and report for duty, as we head into these last days."

A few years ago during the Persian Gulf War, the then president George Bush began speaking about a "New World Order." That phrase troubled me, although I had supported George Bush in the last election. It was as if an alarm went off in the back of my brain. But first I had to overcome a political bias in order to see things in the right perspective, a prophetic perspective. I think that often Christians let such political biases overshadow the prophetic truths that should enlighten us to events that will ultimately bring about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

When George Bush called a cease-fire in the Iraqi-United Nations conflict, it was the United



Nations that set the requirements of the peace agreement for Iraq. President Bush emphasized the fact that the United States was fighting under the auspices and direction of the United Nations. He also stated that no nation would again rise against the "Family of Nations," because as a direct result of the Iraqi and United Nations war, the world was united. Powerful words!

President Bush called for a New World Order under the authority of the United Nations. He gave a speech on January 17, 1992, which was quoted in the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*. He said:

This is a historic moment. We have in this past year made great progress in ending the long era of conflict and Cold War (that is with the Soviet Union). We have before us the opportunity to forge for ourselves and for future generations a New World Order. A world where the rule of law, not of the jungle, governs the conduct of nations. When we are successful, and we will be! We have a real chance at this New World Order, an order in which a credible United Nations can use its peace keeping role to fulfill the promise and vision of the United Nations founders.

Notice how emphatic President Bush was, as he said, "When we are successful, and we will be!"

We question why the President of the United States wanted to strengthen the United Nations. President Bush said that the United Nations now has a chance to become what its founders envisioned. What did they envision? Is the United States to lose its sovereignty to the power and authority of this New World Order?

Since then, we have seen a re-emergence of an almost dead and ineffective United Nations. It has come to life again in places such as Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, and other parts of the world. Our own troops under President Clinton have begun taking their orders from the United

Nations in Bosnia. Why is this President trying to give the United Nations more power than ever before? Could this be the "beast coming out of the sea" of nations, as the Apostle John describes in Revelation 13:1?

And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast



We are headed for a cashless world society designed by the world banking community.

his power and his throne and great authority (Rev. 13:1, 2, NIV).

Many believe that it is the devil who has given power to this end-time system. Also this system has many of the same characteristics as beast world powers before it, such as Babylon, the Medo-Persian Empire, ancient Greece, and Rome. This new system will have all of their powers combined. How is this possible? Because not only has knowledge increased, but we have had an information explosion! We live in the age of the "information super-highway" with modern computers and fax machines. We are headed for a cashless

world society designed by the world banking community. All of this modern technology is already in place to fulfill the role of those beasts. In fact, the technology is already there to fulfill the text in Revelation 13:16:

He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.

Some believe this could be a very small computer chip inserted under the skin. Already they are experimenting with placing a small information chip and tracking device under the skin of dogs and cats so that they can never be lost or stolen. Can the mark of the beast for mankind be far behind?

One of the heads of the beast had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. Could this be speaking about a system of government, rather than a person? It certainly is an interesting concept.

The idea of a world government has been around since the beginning of mankind. The world has seen many of these dominating world powers throughout its history. We mentioned before the empires of Assyria, Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. But not since Rome has there been such world domination. Not that man has not tried, he has just been unsuccessful. Following "the war to end all wars," as World War I was called, the League of Nations was formed, under the leadership of President Woodrow Wilson. This attempt at a world governing body died, mainly due to lack of support from the President's own country, the United States. Part of the reason for this lack was due to the planning of its headquarters to be on foreign soil, in Europe. Even though the League of Nations eventually died, the concept never did.

After Hitler's Third Reich's failure at world domination, another attempt was made. In fact, even before the end of World War II, the designs for the forming of the United Nations were on the drawing board of the "allied Big Three," Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin. Following World War II, the successful establishment of this ruling body was a reality, this time in the United States, with headquarters in New York City. How could the American people reject it now? Of course much of the financing for it came from the pockets of the American people.

Since its establishment, the United Nations has had small success in solving world problems, and very little power. But recently a rebirth of the United Nations has taken place. Not since the days of the Roman Empire has there been a real world government. But as we draw close to the end of the age, there is a great push to move toward a *New World Order*. What better way to solve global problems than through a global government?

The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. Men worshipped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshipped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?" (Rev. 13:3b, 4).

When this system takes over, the whole world will be amazed at its power, and the people of the world will welcome it. Just think of the benefits of a world government! We would have no more wars; we would have economic stability, more control of famine and crime, population control, and better assistance in times of natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes and floods. Think of the benefits in the medical field in dealing with pestilence, disease, and plagues! A world govern-

ment might "save the environment" by restricting and punishing countries who violate environmental laws. People will initially welcome such a government to solve all these problems! Think about it: no more fear of sending your sons and daughters halfway around the world to fight a war! Isn't that what President Bush said in his speech? That no nation will be able to rise again like Iraq and take over another nation like Kuwait?

"Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?" The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exer-



When is the last time anyone saw either a Christian or a minister portrayed in a positive light?

cise his authority for forty-two months. He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them (Rev. 13:4b-7).

So there is a government that is coming that will eventually make war against all Christians on the face of the earth. I believe that this persecution of the Church has already begun. Notice how Christians are being treated by the news media, and made fun of in sitcoms and movies. When is the last time any-

one saw either a Christian or a minister portrayed in a positive light? Today, Christians are portrayed as right-wing fanatics who blow up abortion clinics, and "homophobes" who have an intolerance of alternative lifestyles like homosexuality and lesbianism. Christians are portrayed as charlatans like Brother Ike, Jimmy Bakker, and Jimmy Swaggart. Christians need to "wake up and smell the coffee" concerning the times in which we are living.

Since the Persian Gulf War, our Congress and President Clinton have carried this push to a world government by signing two world trade agreements, commonly known as NAFTA and GATT. I was amazed to hear that many congressmen never read the bill, or knew what it contained before they voted on it. Most Americans, when asked, did not know what it was all about, and could not explain it. Yet, when they learned more about these two bills, many thousands of Americans called their senators and congressmen to vote against it. In an article in the *Conservative Chronicle* entitled "Persistent Efforts Toward World Government," Phyllis Schlafly writes:

Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kan., stated during the Senate debate that his office was receiving 2,000 phone calls per day against GATT/WTO and only two or three calls for it. Yet, he still voted for it.

Other senators also received phone calls at the rate of 1,000 to 1 against GATT, but still voted for it. Congress voted to make the United States a World Trade Organization member despite the fact that the only public opinion survey taken on the subject (Yankevovich) showed the American people overwhelmingly opposed to it.

Is that democracy in action? Is that the change the American people voted for on November 8? Or is it big government business as usual?

It isn't any coincidence that 80 percent of the the lame ducks in Congress voted pro-GATT.

The day after the GATT/WTO vote, the Europeans started ganging up in a bloc and rounding up Third World Allies to vote for their candidate for World Trade Organization secretary general and against the U.S. candidate.

Walter Cronkite has long since identified himself as a liberal, but I didn't know until [receiving a fund-raising] letter that this longtime father figure of nightly TV news was so committed to plunging America into world government.

Cronkite urges a "global call" for "dramatic changes" in the U.N. Charter to set up "permanent U.N. peacekeeping forces," "a permanent International Criminal Court" (you can bet it won't have any Bill of Rights guarantees), "a strong and well-funded Commission for Sustainable Development to protect the earth's atmosphere and oceans," and "a strong and well-funded High Commissioner of Human Rights" (that surely isn't constitutional terminology).

All of these changes are designed to be part of a "reinvigorated" United Nations that will be able "to forge genuine, enforceable international solutions." The U.N.'s 50th anniversary this spring is the date when all this is supposed to happen.

These changes in our constitutional form of government might sound too "way out" for many Americans to respond positively. But don't be too sure.

BUT THAT'S NOT ALL. Cronkite holds out the expectation that a reinvigorated United Nations will even solve our U.S. domestic drug problem. That's a tall order! It's hard to see how the United Nations could possibly solve our domestic drug problem.

Or that we would want it to! The American people are unlikely to accept a foreign "peacekeeping

force" invading our cities, even if it is for such a noble purpose and directed by a U.N. high commissioner.

Under the Clinton administration U.S. troops take their orders from the U.N. generals. In Clinton's one hour and twenty minute State of the Union address in January, he used the word "global" again and again in mentioning the need for us to compete in a "global economy." It seems not to matter whether we vote Democrat or Republican, we are still headed toward this New World Order. All of our living past Presidents supported these world trade agreements,



*[The Church] has a spirit of slumber
in regard to its
spiritual preparation*

in spite of the lack of support of the American people. One of the first steps en route to this global occupation has to be monetary and economic concerns.

As you can see, the spiritual forces of wickedness are already at work as we race toward the fulfillment of Revelation 13:16, 17:

He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.

We know these things must come to pass, and then the end will come. We are told to then look up and lift our heads for our redemption is near. But my big concern is for the sleeping Church in these last days. If it is not totally asleep, it has a spirit of slumber in regard to its spiritual preparation. Where will you be at Midnight? (Matt. 25:1-13).

We are told that in the last days God will send a strong, powerful delusion, so that people would believe the lie (2 Thess. 2:11). We are also told that there will be a great falling away, and that many will be deceived (Matt. 24:10, 11). We see the fulfillment of this in many of our churches.

We, as Christians, should not put our faith in men or the political parties they represent. We should trust in the Lord, and look to His Word for guidance, information and warning as we see things come to pass. Jesus said, "Behold! I come quickly and my reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done" (Rev. 22:12). We know that part of that reward will be God's New World under the leadership of Christ. It will be a kingdom, and Christians will be priests, to serve our God and to reign on the earth (Rev. 5:10).

**AWAKE! ARISE! O CHURCH OF
GOD, THE CROWNING DAY IS
NEAR!**

In conclusion, I want to quote the words an angel spoke to John in Revelation 1:3: "Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near."

Yes, the time is very near! ^{RH}

The Sign

The people of Israel were chosen by God to be the objects of His love, the primary recipients of the Word of God (Rom. 3:2), the race and nation from which the Messiah would be born, and the national representatives of the Almighty to humanity. When they came out of Egypt God said to the people of Israel:

You are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the Lord brought you out . . . (Deut. 7:6-8).

God selected them for His purposes. Due to that divine selection the people of Israel have always been a sign to the world of the design and faithfulness of God. As we catalog various texts concerning Israel we can see the signature of God on Israel in three ways that make them a sign to the world.

ISRAEL SHALL ENDURE

God promised that He would never allow Israel to be destroyed:

Thus says the Lord, Who gives the sun for light by day, and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; The Lord of hosts is His name: If this fixed order departs from before me, declares the Lord, then the offspring of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever. Thus says the Lord, If the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out below, then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done, declares the Lord (Jer. 31:35-37).

Through numerous persecutions in history many have attempted to destroy Israel — always failing. Only if the established patterns of nature were to be removed could Israel ever be eradicated. That's a pretty good guarantee of continuity.

A second reason to know that Israel will endure is because God is preserving them out of faithfulness to the patriarchs. "From the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers" (Rom. 11:28).

Third, Israel will endure because God still has a work for them to do. In allegory form Paul compares Israel to the branches of an olive tree that were cut off but will be grafted back into the tree again:

They also if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree (Rom. 11:23, 24).

At the coming of Christ the natural branches (Israel) will be restored. Israel is being preserved for a future ministry which Isaiah, Zechariah and several other prophets described for us. God's preservation of Israel is a sign to the world of His sovereignty and faithfulness to His promises.

ISRAEL'S MODERN HISTORY

Though the people of Israel have been scattered throughout the world, God has been moving in the past century. He is preparing the stage for Israel's divine future through the evolution of a political state. Consider these milestones:

- 1897 **Theodor Herzl convenes the First Zionist Congress** in Switzerland to work toward the establishment of a nation.
- 1917 **Balfour Declaration** in which Britain, exercising jurisdiction over Palestine as a result of World War I, favors the establishment of a national home for the Jews in Palestine.
- 1948 **As a result of United Nations' action** following World War II, Palestine is divided into two parts: one for the Arabs, one for the Jews. The Jewish state of Israel is born! Isaiah foretold the suddenness of the nation's birth:

Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she gave birth to a boy. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen

By Stephen

of Israel

such things? Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be brought forth all at once? As soon as Zion travailed, she also brought forth her sons (66:7, 8).

- 1967 **In the June Six Day War, Israel gains the old city of Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza strip, Sinai peninsula and Golan heights.**
- 1973 **In the October Yom Kippur War Egypt and Syria attack Israel. Israel counterattacks and defeats her enemies.**
- 1979 **Camp David Accord — peace treaty between Israel and Egypt.**
- 1980 **Jerusalem declared the capital of Israel. Several nations of the world denounce the action.**
- 1991 **Madrid Peace Conference; superpowers compel the Middle Eastern parties to negotiate a peaceful settlement to their differences.**
- 1993 **Agreement between Israel and the PLO granting self-government for Palestinians in Jericho and Gaza regions.**
- 1994 **Declaration between Israel and Jordan renouncing the historic belligerency of a 46-year state of war, and pledging to work for a formal peace treaty.**

All of this modern history shows us that God is getting ready to work with Israel. They are His sign to the world that He is still in control. As you see the hand of Providence in Israel's contemporary history — see God!

ISRAEL'S FUTURE

The people of Israel will continue to be a sign to the world into the millennial age. The greatest regathering of Israel as a people will occur under the reign of Christ:

It will come about in that day that the nation will resort to the root of Jesse, who will stand as a signal for the peoples; and His resting place will be glorious. Then it will happen on that day that the Lord will again recover the second time with His hand the remnant of His people, who will remain, from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He will lift up a standard for the nations, and will assemble the banished ones of Israel, and will

gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth (Isa. 11:10-12).

Note that the "root of Jesse" — Jesus Christ — is the one who is the signal and cause for this ultimate regathering of Israel to her homeland.

One purpose of the regathering of Israel by Jesus is their national conversion. Israel will finally recognize and accept Jesus as their Messiah. Zechariah says:

I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born. In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem . . . In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity (12:10, 11; 13:1).

The Apostle Paul tells us, "thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, the Deliverer will come from Zion. He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. And this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins" (Rom. 11:26, 27). There will be a great repentance by the race of Israel and the salvation of Jesus will at last be accepted by those for whom it was originally intended.

Israel will be a sign by fulfilling her original mission — to be a light of God's salvation to the nations (Isa. 49:6; Acts 13:47). The nation and the kingdom which will not serve Israel will perish (Isa. 60:12). The people of Israel will have a mighty teaching ministry to the world to declare the Almighty: "In those days ten men from the nations of every language will grasp the garment of a Jew saying, Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech. 8:23).

CONCLUSION

Israel has always been and will always be a sign that points men and women to God. The sign of Israel began when God first called the people out of Egypt; it is a sign which will continue into the reign of Christ. It is a sign which we must not ignore, for Israel is God's sign to us of His faithfulness to His redemptive plans. ❧

Bolhous

The Great Tribulation

A Historical Perspective

by Edward Bender
Pelzer, SC

When the word "tribulation" is discussed it brings to mind several major prophetic texts of the Bible. Some are: 1 Jn. 2:18-22; 4:1-3; 2 Jn. 7; 2 Thess. 2; and Matt. 24.

The word "anti-christ" is one of the first terms that comes to mind when discussing prophecy. Most will be shocked to know that this word only appears five times in the Scriptures — all in 1 and 2 John. Today, we often think of "anti" as describing someone who is against a certain principle, such as "anti-American." However, the word is used differently in the Scriptures. "Anti," according to *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* by Arndt/Gingrich, is used "in order to indicate that one person or thing is, or is to be, replaced by another, *instead of, in place of* . . ." (p. 73). The following Scriptures serve as good examples of the meaning of "anti": "But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room [*in the place*] of his father Herod, he was afraid to go hither" (Matt. 2:22). "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish [*instead of a fish*] give him a serpent?" (Lk. 11:11). Once we understand the biblical meaning of "anti" as substitution, it is easy to see that "anti-christ" means "substitute Christ." The "anti-christ[s]" are people who pass themselves off as representatives of Christ (see 2 Cor. 11:13-15). The Roman Church's representatives have done this for centuries.

Another aspect of the Great Tribulation is the fact that, prior to it, there will be "a falling away" (2 Thess. 2:3). *Strong's Concordance* defines the Greek

word for "falling away" (apostasy) as "defection from the truth . . . forsake." Literally, there must be a departure from the teachings of God and His Son, Jesus Christ. One of the most serious of these errors came, according to the Apostle John, when deceivers taught "not [that] Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an anti-christ" (2 Jn. 7). The teaching that Jesus is *not* the only begotten Son of God but the immortal God of Creation is the spirit of anti-christ. This teaching originated from persons who were once the saints of the Church. Again, the Roman Church promoted the teaching of the Trinity. According to John's letters this teaching was even around while John was alive. He calls its proponents deceivers.

The "anti-christ" or "man of sin" "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God . . . so that he as God *sitteth* in the temple of God" (2 Thess. 2:4). The word "sitteth" is the word "cathedral" (*kath-id'zo*), implying to set, appoint, settle, or dwell. "Ex cathedra" is the expression used to describe the Pope's words as he speaks from the seat officially; such official communications are considered infallible. There have been times when he has proclaimed himself the Vicar of Christ, and God on the earth. Compare that thought with the rest of 2 Thess. 2.

When the Great Tribulation is mentioned most of us turn our thoughts to Matthew 24. Jesus was on the Mount of Olives teaching the disciples when they asked him three questions: 1. "When shall these things be?" ("There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.") 2. "What shall be the sign of your coming?" 3. "[What

shall be the sign] of the end of the world?"

A simple outline of Matthew 24 is provided below.

I. "Tell us, when shall these things be?"

A. Matt. 24:4-12 — General signs to precede each of the three periods.

1. Matt. 24:6 — "the *end* is not yet," i.e. destruction of Jerusalem, 70 AD.

a. This word "end" is the Greek word *tel'-os*, meaning "a point aimed at as a limit." This is *not* the same word used in Matt. 24:3 to describe the end of the age.

B. Matt. 24:13-20 — A description of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

1. Matt. 24:13, 14 — "end," same as 24:6. It is important that we clearly understand that the "end" spoken of in verses 13 and 14 is *not* referring to the consummation of the age, but rather the end of Jerusalem. Compare the two different Greek words.

2. Matt. 24:14 — Gospel of kingdom preached in all the world.

a. This was accomplished in Paul's day: See Col. 1:5, 6, 23; especially *Rom. 1:8*; 16:19.

b. "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find [the] faith on the earth?" (Lk. 18:8).

c. "Sabbath" (v. 20) — during Jewish era, not Christian.

II. "... and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the *end* of the world?" "End" in this text is "*consummation of the age*."

A. "Great tribulation" (Matt. 24:21, 22) — from 536 AD - 1796 AD. A period when somewhere between 50 and 70 million people were killed.

B. Matt. 24:23-28 — The time be-

tween the end of the Great Tribulation and the Second Coming of Jesus, early 1800s through mid-1900s.

C. Matt. 24:29 — Transition period between the early signs and the physical signs of His coming, late 1700s through the present time.

III. Matt. 24:30-31 — Signs of the literal end of the age. This is a description of the events that will close out this age and usher in the one-thousand year reign of Christ spoken of in Rev. 20:1-6.

I will summarize some of the above outline. The papal Roman Empire lasted twelve hundred and sixty years, from 536 to 1796. During that time some 50 to 70 million people were put to death, most of them Jews and Christians who believed in the ONE TRUE GOD. There never will be a persecution like this again because there are not 50 million true Christian believers who teach the ONE TRUE GOD. If this time had not been shortened by the suppression of the army of papal Rome in 1773 God's Church would have been totally destroyed (Matt. 24:21, 22).

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened" (v. 29). It should be pointed out that after the suppression of the army and before the actual end of the 1260 years, there was darkness over all of North America on May 18, 1780. Concerning this event, the Adler Planetarium and Astronomical Museum stated: "The question of a prevailing darkness over North America is still unresolved, and we are not able to offer an explanation. It is certain that no solar eclipse occurred on that date."

Many believe that those who hold the historical interpretation of prophecy teach that all tribulation and persecution for the Church is over. THIS IS NOT ACCURATE! It is important that we

clarify the difference between "tribulation" and "The Great Tribulation." The Great Tribulation is past as we have shown above. However, the Church, as long as it is in existence, will have tribulation. "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12; cf. Jn. 16:33). However, the Bible is just as clear that *no* practicing believer will ever endure the *wrath* of the Almighty God, "the *wrath* of God upon the children of disobedience" (Eph. 5:6). "For God hath *not* appointed us to *wrath*, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:9). The true saints will be protected from the wrath and indignation of the Almighty God just as Israel was protected from the last plagues. Wrath comes from the hand of God but persecution or tribulation is placed on man by man.

Just because the Great Tribulation is past is no sign that we can take it easy. We should be praying and fasting while the bridegroom is away (see Matt. 9:14, 15). Genuine followers of the One True God and His Son Jesus Christ will be persecuted because of their faith and conviction. We need today to be hiding God's Word in our hearts (minds and beings) so when that hour comes we will be able to stand.

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent (Rev. 3:18, 19).

Author's note: I have written a 20-page paper that does this subject much more justice than does this short article. If requested I will send a copy to you. ²⁴¹

Christ's Coming Is in Two Phases

A Pre-Tribulation Perspective

by Hollis Partlowe
Oregon, IL

OUR SAVIOUR'S RETURN WILL include two major aspects. One aspect refers to Christ's coming into the air for the church. The other aspect refers to Christ's coming to the earth with the church. The first aspect concerns Christians; the second aspect concerns Israel and the nations. In the first aspect, Christ is revealed as Lord and Bridegroom; in the second, He is revealed as Messiah and King. The first aspect is the blessed hope of Christians; the second aspect will result in the cleansing and exaltation of Israel. Some Bible students describe the first aspect of Christ's coming as the "rapture," and the second aspect as the "revelation." Christ's coming for the church will precede His coming with the church (Dr. Alva G. Huffer, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 491).

Daniel's 70 Weeks of Prophecy for Israel

Daniel 9:24-27 contain a comprehensive program for Israel from the prophet's day until the kingdom of God is set up. Most students see the total time period as 490 years. It seems clear that the entire period ($7 \times 70 = 490$ years) was decreed upon "thy people," Daniel's people, Israel, and "thy holy city," Jerusalem. To read the Church into this time frame is contrary to the whole tenor of Daniel. If we get off on the wrong foot here, with this basic prophecy, we will be off track farther down the road.



Students who hold the futuristic interpretation of prophecy see the first 69 weeks (483 years) as history, and the last week (7 years) as future. Perhaps no one would put the Church in the first 69 weeks. Why put the Church in the 70th, since all 70 weeks were decreed upon Israel? It is called "the time of Jacob's [Israel's] trouble." It's never called "the time of the Church's trouble."

Jesus called it "great tribulation" and added that unless that time period is shortened no flesh would be saved, "but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matt. 24:21, 22). It seems pretty clear that the elect in this context is Israel. In this Olivet discourse, Jesus speaks of the Sabbath day, the Temple, sacrifices, "great distress in the land and wrath upon this people," Jerusalem, and "this people" being "led away captive into all nations," etc. (Luke 21:23, 24). It would seem strange to apply that terminology to the Church. It doesn't seem to fit. Besides, Daniel was told twice in one verse that this unprecedented "time of distress" was to be upon "your people" — Israel (Dan. 12:1). The Church is hardly, if at all, in view in the Old Testament.

Three Groups of Mankind (1 Cor. 10:32)

All of mankind is divided into three groups — the Jews, the Gentiles and the Church of God. Perhaps ignoring this key verse is the cause of much of the confusion as to which groups are in or out of the tribulation period. To read the Church

into Israel's program leads to unsound interpretation. When the Bible writers use the term "Israel" they are referring to the physical descendants of Abraham through his grandson Jacob whose name was changed to Israel.

As we approach any passage we must determine which group is in view. Who is speaking, to whom, what is the time frame, etc.? To ignore this basic rule of hermeneutics is not wise and will lead to nothing but confusion. This approach certainly commends the two-phase coming of Christ. Other views usually transfer the prophecies of Israel to the Church in a spiritual method of hermeneutics. This concept is usually identified with amillennialism. Premillennialists reject it with very few exceptions.

The Church Not in View in Revelation 4-18

This lengthy passage focuses on the great tribulation. In the introduction to this great prophetic book (ch. 1), and in the seven letters to the seven historical churches (chs. 2, 3), the Church (*ekklesia*, "a people called out") is mentioned at least 16 times, but it is not mentioned again until chapter 19, at the marriage supper. Why?

This passage is usually equated with the seventieth week of Daniel, "Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:3-8), the "great tribulation" (Matt. 24:21, 22), and the "times of trouble such as never was since there was a nation" (Dan. 12:1). This again is Jewish time (Dan. 9:24). The purpose of this period is not to purify the Church. It has already been purified by the blood of Christ. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" the Church will be made immortal and glorified with Christ (1 Cor. 15:52). The main purpose of the tribulation is to purify Israel in preparation for her exaltation in the kingdom of God.

However, tribulation saints are clearly seen in this period. The 144,000 of Israel

are to be converted and sealed (Rev. 7; 14:1-5). In addition to them, there is a whole multitude converted "of all nations and kindreds, and people and tongues" (Rev. 7:9).

The New Testament Church does not include saints of all ages. It did not exist until Jesus came and built it (Matt. 16:18). In fact the revelation of the Church was a "mystery" (secret) until the time of the Apostles (Eph. 3:2-8; Col. 1:24-26; Rom. 16:25). The Church was not formed until the Jews rejected their Messiah and the kingdom He came to establish. The four Gospels make that clear.

Real evidence that the Church must endure the tribulation period is lacking. The Church is an organism quite distinct from believers in the Old Testament period and believers in the tribulation period as well. That period is Jewish time, the seventieth week decreed upon Israel. Never are tribulation saints referred to as the Church (*ekklesia*), the body of Christ, the indwelt by Christ, the bride of Christ, the subject of translation (rapture), or as having been baptized by the Spirit. The Church is unique in her calling, nature and time.

The tribulation period concerns three classes: (1) the nation of Israel; (2) the pagan Gentile world; (3) the saints, or elect, who will live in that great time of trouble. The word *ekklesia* (church) is never used in a tribulation passage, to the best of my knowledge. If the Church is seen in the tribulation, the burden of proof to locate it is on those who so teach.

The Last Trumpet (1 Cor. 15:51, 52)

Much of the discussion about the tribulation is focused on the "last trump" which is sometimes confused with the seven trumpets of Revelation 8-11. I see no relation between the two. The last trumpet is a command for the dead in Christ to awake, to arise, to put on

immortality and be glorified with Christ. The trumpets of Revelation announce God's wrath on sin and rebellion. The "last trump" has no relation to Israel, the nations or the unsaved dead. It concerns the Church only. The "last trump" must be understood then to relate to the time order indicated by the context. The purpose of this trumpet is to assemble the Church. The reason that it is called the last trumpet is that it is the final signal of this age. It terminates the Church's activities in this life and heralds the glad day of meeting her Lord. It is not sound theology to carry the thought beyond this and locate it in another area of unrelated Scripture.

The use of trumpets was very common in the Greek and Roman world of New Testament times. Paul did not give the Corinthians any indication of what he meant by "the last trump." This implies that they already knew what he meant by the term. One has to assume that.

In the ancient world, trumpets were sounded to assemble for battle, to attack, to retreat, to reassemble after battle. Then the last trumpet was sounded to head for home. This is probably the terminology Paul was using. In Jewish wars the last trumpet sounded was the trumpet of reassembly or return from battle. Examples are found in 2 Samuel 18:16 and 20:22. This was also familiar to the people of Paul's day. It was in common use in connection with the Roman army. Only those living in submission to the trumpet would respond to its signal. The trump of God associated with the rapture of the Church will have the same kind of function or purpose as the last trumpet of battle in the ancient world. Perhaps for this reason, Paul called it "the last trump."

It must also be pointed out that the book of Revelation, with its revelation concerning all seven trumpets, was not

(Continued on Back Cover)

Rapture of the Faithful: When?

A Post-Tribulation View

by Gordon Landry
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THIS WRITER HAS HELD ALL views of the coming rapture. At one time, the pre-tribulation rapture held a fascination for me, probably because it released me from the fear of impending horrible torture. But as time passed it seemed more reasonable to believe that the Church had to recognize the antichrist before he attempted the insidious crime of complete genocide upon the faithful. One had to know him to oppose him. Bro. James Mattison brought to my attention a combination of verses which convinced me that the saints would go through the tribulation. That combination of verses is Revelation 11:15; 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52; and 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.

The text in Revelation 11 describes the ushering in of the Kingdom of God by the sounding of the seventh (last) trumpet by the seventh angel. The twenty-four elders (v. 16) said:

We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy [corrupt] the earth (vv. 17, 18).

The Corinthians Scripture portrays the resurrection taking place at the sounding of the last

trump. If this last trump is not the last trumpet of Revelation 11, which last trump is it?

The Thessalonian text depicts what has come to be called "the rapture," i.e., the catching away of the saints to meet the Lord in the air as He descends with the power and authority to establish His Father's Kingdom here upon the earth. You will note that here, too, the trumpet sounds. Is there any reason to believe that the three texts do not herald the same event?

"But," someone will argue, "Paul continued in 1 Thessalonians 5 with this statement, 'God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ'" (v. 9). Indeed this is true. But notice that in the Revelation Scripture God's wrath is not poured out until the giving of rewards to the saints. With the sounding of the other six trumpets, punishments have been meted out in cataclysmic events, but God's wrath has been withheld. It is finally unleashed with the seventh trumpet. What the saints will endure in the closing days of man's rule is the tribulation. The tribulation is not God's wrath; it is man's wrath poured out upon God's people. That many of God's saints will be slain during the tribulation is quite evident from Revelation 20:4:

I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his



image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Second Thessalonians 2:7 is sometimes used to try and prove that the phrase, "he who now letteth [hinders] will let, until he be taken out of the way," refers to a pre-tribulation rapture. This cannot be. Paul earlier besought the brethren "by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him" (v. 1), that they be not shaken or troubled that the day of the coming of Christ was imminent. A falling away has to come first, said Paul, and the man of sin has to be revealed. He will sit "in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (v. 4). Whoever or whatever "he who now letteth" may be, it does not refer to the saints — unless it be in a "falling away" mode (v. 3).

Matthew 24 contains a very precious key to understanding the order of events relative to the coming of Christ. It should not be dispensationalized away. Jesus warned of deception early and often in this discourse (vv. 4, 5, 11, 23-26). The

greatest of all tribulations is graphically outlined in verses 21 and 22. It will surpass the horrors of the Assyrians, who relied on tales of their viciousness to strike fear into the hearts of their enemies. It will outdo the atrocities of the Babylonians, who relentlessly subdued the civilizations of their day. It will go beyond the terrors generated by ruthless Roman armies, which ground their enemies to dust and crucified hundreds if not thousands. It will supersede Hitler's depravity and heinousness. It will even surpass Stalin's hideousness, to whom the destruction of human life was only a stepping stone to amassing power. That great tribulation will see the destruction of untold numbers of Christians. But it will also see the defining of true Christians when they are tried in the fire. If we are among that number, let us pray to be strong to the death.

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in

heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (vv. 29, 30).

There is no indication on Jesus' part that He will come partway, receive His saints, wait with them for seven years (or even three and a half years) up in the sky somewhere, and then come on to the earth. He will return from heaven as He went to heaven (Acts 1:9-11). Nothing is said in Acts 1 or anywhere else about Him hesitating for three and a half or seven years on His way to the Father's throne. He will return in the clouds of heaven as He ascended to meet His Father. The difference is that His friends will meet Him on His way down and will escort Him back to earth. If those friends have died or been killed beforehand, they will be resurrected before making this journey. If there are friends still alive when the time comes, they will be changed to be like Him before they make the journey.

The time draws nigh. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). ^{PH}

C O L U M N

Summer's here, I'm fairly positive about it. Everyone is getting that brown as a berry complexion because, thank God, the sun has warmed up our world. The farm is looking alive with crops popping out of the soil and green beginning to take over the dark fields.

My garden is yielding its early summer delights. Asparagus (I dreamed of the taste for the last three months), rhubarb, crisp radishes, and tender green onions. The lettuce is nearly big enough and how wonderful the first garden salad will taste!

The baby chicks are all feathered out and the beef calves have nearly all arrived. Mamas and babies are anxious to go out to pasture and eat grass. Taking the cows to pasture is an event

of importance, especially to the grandchildren. We cross the neighbor's farm and so need a few people to escort the cows. A couple of horses, four-wheelers and two pickups filled or ridden by adults and children follow the parade of cows. Quite often a newborn calf has to be carried by horse because he can't keep up. Once there the kids will have to walk down to the stock pond and toss a few stones. By the time we get home everyone is ready for popcorn and cookies. Another family Sunday afternoon has sped by. Yes, it's really summer now.

I think one of the turkey hens has begun to set. The nests have been hidden well and I see her only briefly toward evening when she leaves her nest to eat. Soon the other hens will assume their maternal duties too. Poor old tom turkey will have to strut and

show off to the chickens for a while.

There will be no geese this year — the coyotes took all but two ganders this winter. I'll miss seeing the goslings around. I suppose even coyotes have to eat.

Lovely cheerful flowers nod their heads in my flower gardens. It's not hard to find enough to make colorful bouquets for church. I just need to find more hours to chase those crazy weeds and grub out the quack grass. If quack grass were on the endangered species list I'd be eternally grateful!

I do love early summer and all the gifts of nature God has given us. Even quack grass can be endured because the rewards of the season are so great!

— by Joyce Housman

Change of Address

by Ed Goit
North Tonawanda, NY

TODAY GOD'S AND HIS SON Jesus' address is heaven, tomorrow the earth. Jesus our High Priest, presently "at the right hand of God" (Rom. 8:34), soon will return to earth as He and others have promised. Zechariah declared:

Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both (Zech. 6:12b-13).

When Messiah builds this millennial Temple, it will be just as literal as the Tabernacle and the temples of Solomon (962 BC), Zerubbabel (516 BC) and Herod (20-66 AD).

God's Word prophesies that Jesus shall soon return to earth to reestablish God's kingdom with the construction of the millennial Temple as one of His God-given assignments. This restoration will occur in the "times of restitution" (Acts 3:21; 15:13-16). This will bring to pass in due time the prophecy, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their GOD" (Rev. 21:3). A classic Jewish response to catastrophe has been to renew life. The state of Israel is a modern miracle manifested through its proclamation of independence, May 14, 1948. Israel's rattling skeleton (Ezek. 37:1-14), shaken by the Zionists, foretells a God-di-

rected exodus when He will send many fishers and hunters to return His people to their land from all the lands where He has driven them (Jer. 16:14-16; Isa. 11:12).

Yesterday, childless Abram and Sarai acted foolishly by attempting to speed up God's plan of promised seed (Gen. 16:2-4, 11-12). Today, some of Israel feverishly rush the preparations to speed up God's plan for the restoration of the Temple and the Messianic age. In process is the gathering and assembling in Israel of Temple building supplies, solicitation of monies, university studies to restore the ancient precepts and statutes of the Mosaic law and considerations of the priesthood and prescribed Temple worship.

The Six-Day War of 1967 resulted in Israel's securing the old city of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount area for the first time in nearly two thousand years. Jerusalem's acquisition has made possible the Temple's restoration, re-implementing Temple worship and its daily sacrifices and offerings.

I believe God's Word indicates that there will be two more temples built in the Jerusalem area. The *first* is to be built by some of Israel immediately before Daniel's prophesied "seventieth week" or during the first half of that time period (Dan. 9:24-27). The *second* is to be built by the Messiah after His second coming and the reestablishment of God's kingdom (Zech. 6:12b-13).

Apparently the first Temple's existence is realized in that time period when "the prince that shall come" confirms a covenant of peace with Israel for one week and it ruptures in the midst of the week (Dan. 9). In Israel preparations for this



tribution Temple are sensitive, religious and political. The Moslem Dome of the Rock is located on the Temple Mount and its removal could precipitate a holy war between the Arab and Jew. This problem is not insurmountable and the Temple will be built. Its precise location is subject to dialogue.

Jewish Talmudic writings dating prior to the burning of the Temple in AD 70 are quoted in the Mishneh Torah by Rambam. They declare that the Temple was not built dead center on the Temple Mount, the location now occupied by the Dome of the Rock. "Rambam states that the Temple Courtyard was . . . set off farther from the southern (wall) of the Temple Mount than from (the wall of) any other direction."¹ Rambam quoted sources that declare that the Temple itself was situated directly opposite the Easter Gate on the northern part of the Temple Mount.

Recent archaeological discoveries by Dr. Asher Kaufman and the aforementioned Talmudic documentary sources have convinced many Jewish and evangelical scholars that King Solomon's Temple was built in the area north of the Dome of the Rock.

In recent years there has been a comparatively secret archaeological dig known as the Western Wall Excavation. Since the Six-Day War, Israeli archaeologists have been digging a tunnel north from Wilson's Arch along the sacred Western Wall. There the enormous Herodian foundation stones, each of which measures over 46 x 10 x 10 feet, have been photographed. Hundreds of feet below the accumulated rubble of the ruins of the Temple, the archaeologists have uncovered a link with that tragic day when the Roman army burned the Temple. It has been documented that some of the actual ashes from the burning of the Temple on the night of Av in AD 70 have been located there in a large crack in the foundations of the Temple.

Renowned lecturer and author Grant R. Jeffrey states:

The importance of this archaeological research cannot be overestimated. If Israel can prove conclusively that the original Temple stood in this open area north of the Dome of the Rock, then it is conceivable that they could rebuild the Temple here without disturbing the Muslim Dome.²

John seems to confirm this:

The angels stood saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city under foot for forty-two months" (Rev. 11:1-2, NKJV).

The Ark of the Covenant remained in the Temple until the end of King Solomon's reign when it was removed to Ethiopia. It is known that it was not present in the second Temple after Israel returned from the Babylonian captivity in 536 BC. Jeremiah speaks of its importance in the future (Jer. 3:15-17). This prophecy implies a crucial role for the Ark in the events leading up to the rebuilding of the Temple and its demise. Much research has been conducted in Asksum, Ethiopia, the ancient capital of the Queen of Sheba, concerning the Ark of the Covenant.

In addition to the lost Ark, the ashes of the red heifer are also vital to Israel's plans for rebuilding the Temple. The sacrifice of the red heifer was vital in ancient Israel. According to the Talmud and rabbis, it is essential that Israel resume the sacrifice of the ashes of the red heifer in order to cleanse the Temple Mount and priesthood (Num. 19:2-10). According to the Mishneh Torah by Rambam, the ceremonial burning of the red heifer happened only seven times in Jewish history: once by Moses, once by Ezra and five other times until the destruction of the second Temple. The ashes which remained from each previ-

ous sacrifice were added to the new ashes to provide continuity, a perpetual sacrifice.

A pure red heifer is very rare. *Time* magazine reported on October 16, 1989 that the Chief Rabbi of Israel sent a team of scientists to Europe in August to obtain frozen embryos of a breed of red heifers which will be used to raise a pure red heifer on an Israeli cattle ranch. This report confirms that Jewish authorities have decided to conduct animal sacrifices once more. It is obvious that preparations for another Temple in Jerusalem proceed.

Twenty-six hundred years ago, Ezekiel foresaw the rebirth of Israel and described the millennial Temple in much detail (Ezek. 40:1-46:24). Israel and the nations will see the manifested glory of Jesus Christ when He returns from heaven. His varied roles as Judge, King, Teacher, Shepherd and Redeemer will be seen by all. He will receive men's worship as a perfect and just peace comes forth from Jerusalem.

Just as God gave Moses the pattern for the Tabernacle (Ex. 25:8-9) and David the plan for Solomon's Temple (1 Chron. 28:10-13), He gave Ezekiel the master plan for a literal future Temple in the land of Israel (Ezek. 41; 43:10-11). The millennial Temple's structure, priesthood, ritual ministry, and stream of healing waters are described in this prophecy in great detail. The area, courtyard, gates, chambers and walls are vividly outlined. Its purpose will be to demonstrate GOD'S HOLINESS to the nations in a changed Israel.

Ezekiel's God-given vision reveals the impossibility of its fulfillment in any past temple. Its realization awaits fulfillment in the second advent of Jesus Christ and the establishment of the millennial kingdom. ²⁴¹

Endnotes

¹ Grant R. Jeffrey, *Heaven the Last Frontier*, Toronto, Ontario: Frontier Research Publications, 1990, p. 63.

² *Ibid.*, p. 66.

The Millennium

*by Jim Mattison
Pelzer, SC*

THE COMING THOUSAND-YEAR rule of Christ on earth is known as the millennium. Jesus will come from the right hand of God in heaven to the earth and rule a thousand years until all enemies of God are put down (1 Cor. 15:24-26). It will be the time when this earth, groaning under the weight of sin, will be restored to its Edenic condition (Acts 3:19-21).

The Golden Age will begin with Christ descending and resurrecting the dead righteous people to eternal life. They shall reign with Him during this restoration time (Rev. 20:6). The rest of the dead must wait until the end of the thousand years for their resurrection, and it will be for judgment.

Then, Christ will turn over the cleansed and restored earth to His Father so that God may be "all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).

During this period of Christ's rulership over earth, a number of changes will take place. Perhaps the best way to describe the millennium is to see the changes that will take place in each area.

Saints Immortal

"We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed . . . the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed . . . this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Cor. 15:51-53).

We look for Jesus to come from heaven to transform our lowly bodies so they will be like His (Phil. 3:21).

We who are still alive at Jesus' coming will certainly not precede those saints



who have died. The Lord Himself will come in great glory and with the trumpet of God. The dead Christians will rise first. After that, the living Christians will be caught up with them to meet Christ in the air (1 Thess. 4:16-17). Then, Christ and His bride will descend together to earth where He will begin the thousand-year rule.

World Peace. No More War

When Jesus reigns in Jerusalem, the nations of earth will travel to Jerusalem to learn of God's ways. Jesus will settle disputes for many people. Swords will be hammered into plows, and spears into pruning hooks. The nations will not go to war against other nations. Men will not train for war anymore (Isa. 2:1-4).

Psalm 72 is a Messianic Psalm. It tells many things about Christ's reign. One is that peace will abound. Every living thing on earth will be at peace.

No one will harm another. The earth will be full of peace and God's righteousness.

Peace among Animals and Men

The lamb and wolf will live together. So will the little goat and the leopard. Cows will feed with bears. Lions will eat hay. The infant will play with the cobra. The young child will put his hand into the viper's nest. They won't harm or kill, then (Isa. 11:6-9).

No ravenous animal will walk the face of the earth. The old covenant of Genesis 9:2, of animals dreading men, will be changed to a new covenant (Hos. 2:18). Animals, birds, and reptiles will enjoy peace with men.

Health. No Sickness

No one living in Jerusalem will say, "I am ill" (Isa. 33:24) and the same evidently will be true for all people. As Jesus destroys the enemies of God and

men one by one, the last enemy destroyed being death, we will see pains, aches, illnesses, and suffering going out of existence.

"Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb shout for joy" (Isa. 35:5-6). Probably this means that first of all the changed Christians will be made whole. But remember Jesus' compassion on the



God has not promised to restore any of man's doings, only the good conditions God put here in the beginning.

multitudes, how He healed the sick and restored blind eyes and deaf ears. Why wouldn't He do the same when He has all power on earth?

A Time of Great Plenty

The man reaping will be overtaken by the man plowing. The planter will be overtaken by the grape treader. "New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills" (Amos 9:13, 14). This happens now in southern states. I harvested three crops off one row in one year in Louisiana years ago.

One of my favorite verses about Kingdom plenty is Psalm 72:16. A handful of corn seed on the top of the mountain will produce a crop looking

like the mighty cedar trees of Lebanon. Now, mountaintops are rocky and infertile. What a change!

The whole earth will be like the Garden of Eden (Ezek. 36:35). Deserts will blossom with beauty. Springs will break out in the desert (Isa. 35:6-7). This will happen in Palestine, and also all over the earth, for the earth is to be restored (Acts 3:21). Today, men have made the earth desolate (Isa. 24:5).

Everyone who now overcomes by Christ's spirit in them will eat from the Tree of Life (Rev. 2:7). Jesus will again eat with His Apostles, and very possibly, we will eat sometimes at Jesus' table!

Earth Restored

The millennium will bring about the restoring of all that God has promised to restore (Acts 3:21). God has not promised to restore any of man's doings, only the good conditions God put here in the beginning.

The cause of this restoration will be that *the glory of the Lord will fill the earth* (Num. 14:21; Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14).

The heavens and the earth will actually be made new after the terrible upheaval in them just before Christ returns. That is what we are looking for: the new heavens and the new earth, *wherein dwelleth righteousness* (2 Pet. 3:10-13). We live on the same earth on which Noah lived. The things of men were destroyed then, and they will be again. Only right things will remain.

Now the earth is groaning and crying under the weight of the sins of men. It is waiting for the redemption of the sons of God, for then earth too will be restored (Rom. 8:21-22).

This, then, is our hope: Life in the wonderful Kingdom of God after Jesus returns. Could any other hope be greater?

Words of Anticipation...

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these

words are trustworthy and true... The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place."

"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."

He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Rev. 21:1-5, 22:6b, 12, 20

Christ's Coming Is in Two Phases

(Continued from Page 17)

written until several decades after Paul wrote 1 Corinthians with his statement about "the last trump." Therefore, the Corinthians could not have identified "the last trump" with any or all of the seven trumpets of Revelation. It would seem strange indeed for Paul to refer in a letter to the Corinthians to prophecies not yet uttered, and to a book not yet written.

The Day of the Lord (2 Thess. 2:1-8)

Regardless of which view one has of the tribulation, he will most likely turn to the Thessalonian epistles for support. Two keys are essential to correctly interpret this somewhat difficult passage.

First, the day of the Lord (v. 2) must be viewed in light of its Old Testament back-

ground. It's not a twenty-four hour day, but an extended period of time when God's wrath is poured out on the ungodly. The prophets predicted it in such passages as: Isa. 2:12-22; Joel 2:1, 27-32; 3:1-17; Dan. 12:1.

The rapture event (v. 1), which closes the dispensation of the Church, will open the period known as the day of the Lord. It includes all the end-time events as well as the thousand-year reign of Christ. The day of the Lord is in contrast to the day of man.

The second key we should keep in mind as we approach the above passage is that the Thessalonians had received some misinformation. They had been told that they were in the day of the Lord predicted by the prophets. Perhaps this is reasonable when we realize that the infant Church

was undergoing severe affliction. At any rate, Paul assures them that they were not in that time period. He tells them not to become unsettled or alarmed by these false reports that they were already in the day of the Lord (v. 2). Whether these false reports had come by letter or word of mouth, Paul says they are not true. Some had even accused Paul of teaching that the day of the Lord had already come. The Apostle responds: NO WAY. Because the rapture will occur first, they will be kept from the day of the Lord.

In this article, I have just scratched the surface of this huge subject. When all the evidence is in, it seems clear that Christ's coming is in two phases, neither of which is secret. ^{RH}

The Restitution Herald

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Maranatha '95



Atlanta Bible College

Welcome to Atlanta Bible College!

We, the students of Atlanta Bible College, would like to present to you this year's issue of the *Maranatha*. The *Maranatha* presents the events of everyday life at the Bible College as well as paint a picture for those who are unable to visit our campus.

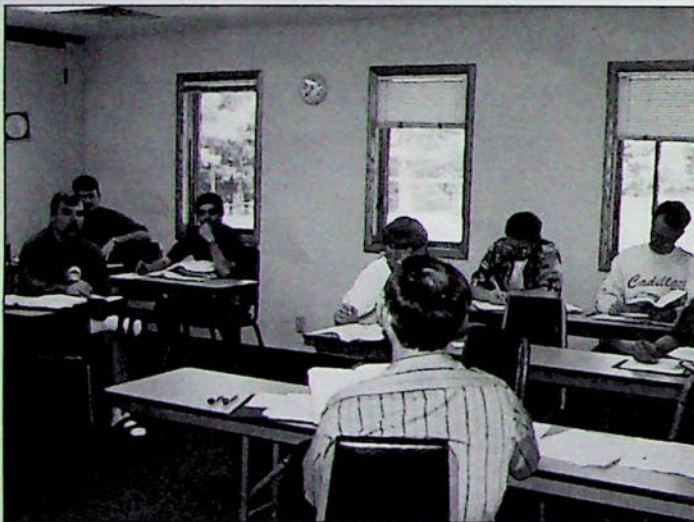
This year the Bible College is sending out three graduates into the pastoral ministry. They will receive special attention in this issue for their achievements during their tenure at the Bible College.

In addition to the seniors, we also had a large number of underclassmen roaming the halls of the Bible College. The incoming freshmen always bring excitement and joy into the previously existing body. The blending of these

classes is what creates the atmosphere for growth at the Bible College. People from the entire country form a body which thrives on the parts that make it up.

So sit back and relax, as we tell the story of the 1994-95 school year at Atlanta Bible College. And perhaps when you are finished, you will know each of us a little better.

There are several things that constitute a normal life at the college. The first of these is class. The college offers a variety of classes at various times to work with the schedules of the students. Another thing that fills the time of the students is a healthy intake of sporting events. The last occupier of time is goofing off and acting like the college students that we are.



Above: Joe Martin instructs one of his many classes during the year. From the looks on the students' faces, I would venture to say that it is Greek II. I would also say that because I couldn't understand a word that they were saying.

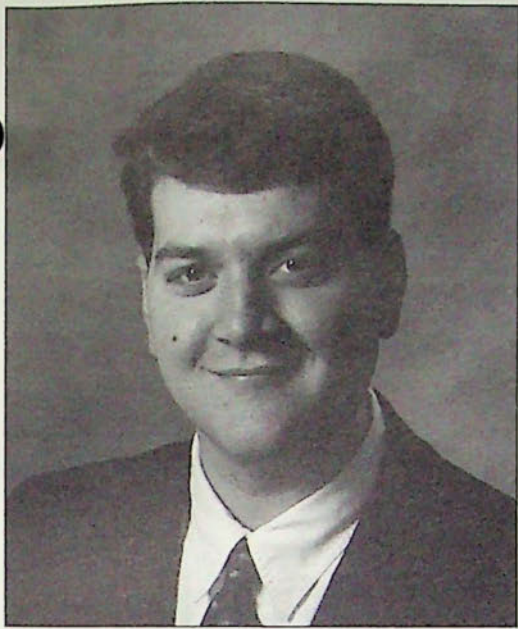
Right: In between classes students have the opportunity to rest and unwind before their next grueling ordeal. Here we see Clayton Isham and Tim Spickler cooling off and preparing for the next class.



What a dig! Andy Cisneros dives for a long ball as teammate Greg Landry approaches the net to play the second hit. The two were defeated in their match but they fought tooth and nail to the end. The college has a sand volleyball court and basketball court for the use of the students.



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MICHAEL CISLER

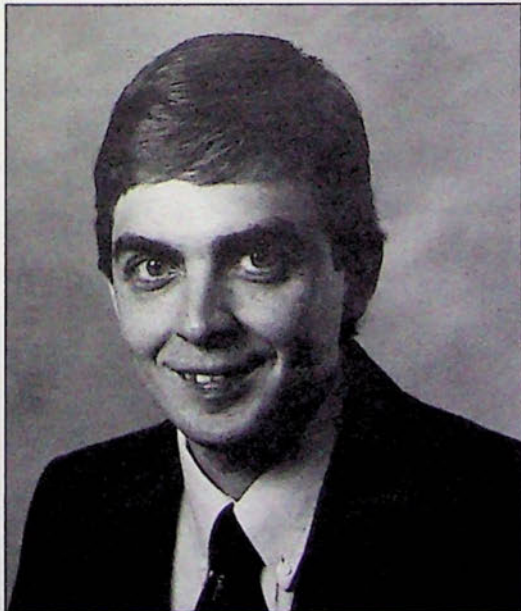
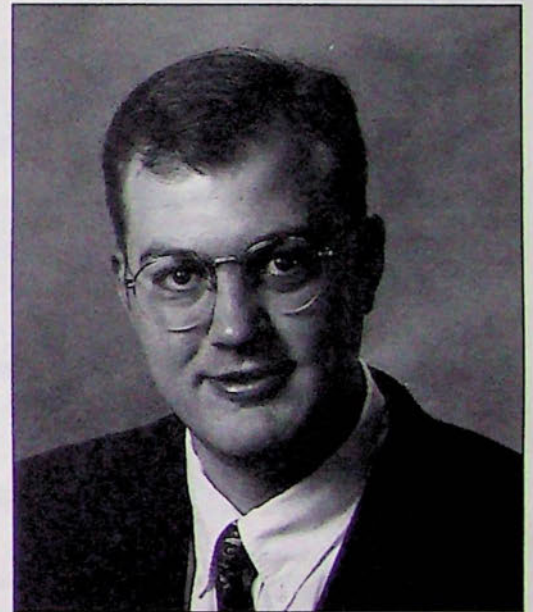
I grew up in the Grand Rapids, Michigan area and have attended the Southlawn Church my entire life. After graduating from high school, I attended Grand Valley State University for two years. Once I took most of my general education classes there, God sent me to ABC. I began my studies at ABC in the fall of 1993 and after two years of intense studies, I am graduating.

The day after graduation I married Melinda Nelson of the Eden Valley Church who received her two-year certificate from ABC on graduation night. In September we will be going to Fonthill, Canada to do our internship under Stephen Bolhous. We do not know where God will lead us after that but we are staying open to His leading.

In Canada we hope to improve our ministry skills and are both excited for the continued growth in our lives. I, personally, hope that I can continue to grow in the skill of building relationships with people. I feel people are the most important part of ministry and plan to always focus on relationships in my ministry.

JEREMY SMITH

Jeremy is originally from South Bend, Indiana. His youth group at Timberland Bible Church was led by Dale Bliss — who he now is interning under. His Bible College education began in Oregon, Illinois. You might say Jeremy is of the old school. While attending Atlanta Bible College Jeremy met and married Cheryl (Cupp) Smith. They now are living in Michigan.



MARK TSCHAENN

I grew up in Lafayette, Indiana and attended what was then the Faith Chapel Church of God. After graduating from high school, I spent twelve years in the Air Force. The first year I was in the service I was stationed at Incirlick Air Base, Turkey. After that I was stationed at Grissom AFB in Indiana. While living there, I attended the Jay Street Church Of God. It was while I was attending this church that I felt God calling me to His service in the ministry. I felt that He wanted me to start spreading His message and reach out to His lost people. I decided to attend Atlanta Bible College and enter into the pastoral program. I have enjoyed my time here at the Bible College and I am thankful for all that I have been taught as well as the many friends I have made. Terri, our children (Jennifer and Nathan), and I are looking forward to our move back to Lafayette where I'll be doing my internship with Steve Taylor at the New Hope Community Church. My future goals are to continue serving people and to try to draw them closer to Christ. We thank everyone for their prayers and support these last three years.

We Present to You the Class of 1995

1995 College Invitational

Although attendance at the annual College Invitational was lower than it was last year, a lot of things were an encouragement to all of those who attended the event. Students from churches throughout the United States invaded the campus of Atlanta Bible College for the first weekend in the month of March.

Friday night there was a special program that was produced by the students of the college. Special thanks should be given to Erin Riley for coordinating this event. It was a BIG success.



Students Erin Riley and Jeff Osborn present a sketch in the Friday night program. The program was based on the popular show "Saturday Night Live."



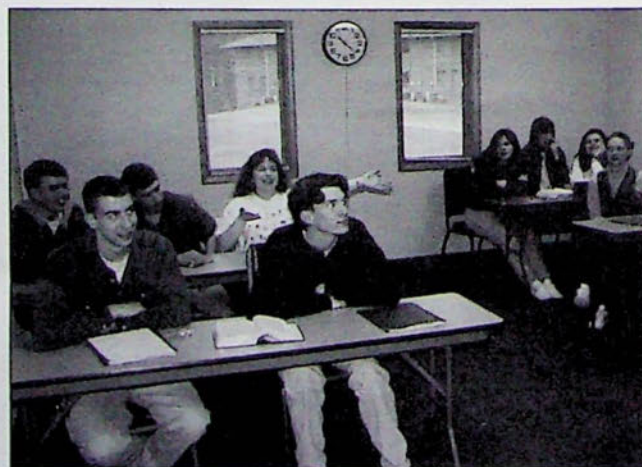
Visitors from Michigan, Leslie Doane and Sara Knapp, relax from the hustle and bustle of the hectic weekend. Although it is an enjoyable time, the invitational is tiring for everyone involved.

Those who attended the invitational received a special treat on Saturday night. A local Christian alternative musical group called "The Waiting" presented a show for this year's event. It seemed as though everyone really enjoyed the concert. A special word of thanks to Dale Harshman for helping to arrange this event.

The event culminated on Sunday with guests visiting one of the two churches in the area followed by a potluck sponsored by the members of New Friends Bible Church.



One of the most important things about the College Invitational weekend is the food. Here we see a buffet that was set up for the students to enjoy.



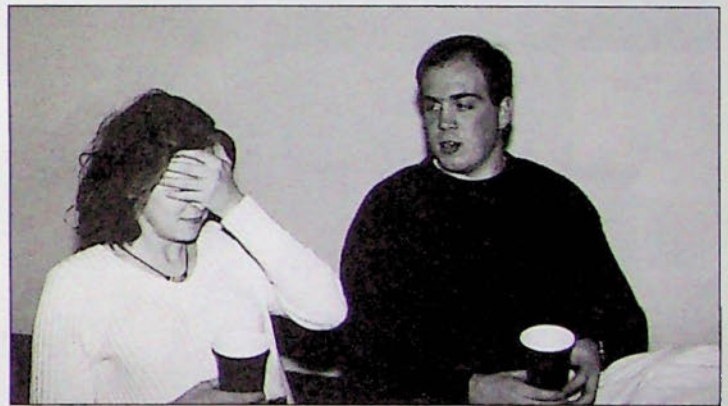
One of the many classes offered during the weekend. Everyone seems to be enjoying themselves as well as participating.



Little princesses.



Strike a pose.



Erin is camera shy,
but Kirk doesn't flinch.



John Nelson instructs a children's class for
Friday Afternoon Special.



Daniel!
Where are
you?



The recruiting committee tries to look happy.



Dale and Jeremy jam during a chorale concert.

Tell me honestly now,
are they me?

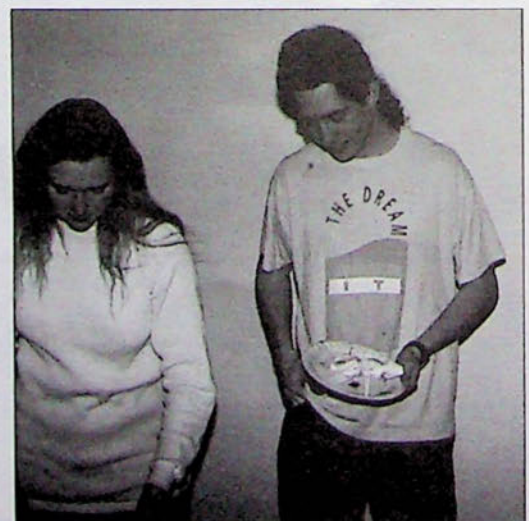


Varooooom!
Nice car, you guys!

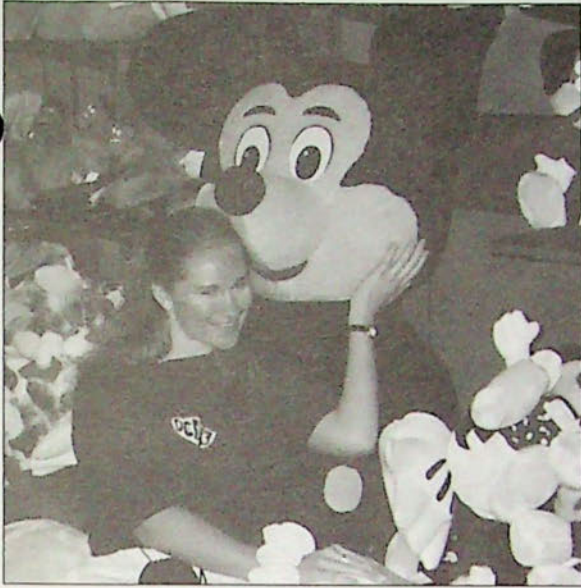
Less
filling.
Tastes
great.



Don't mind me Dale - I just needed to wipe my nose. Thanks.



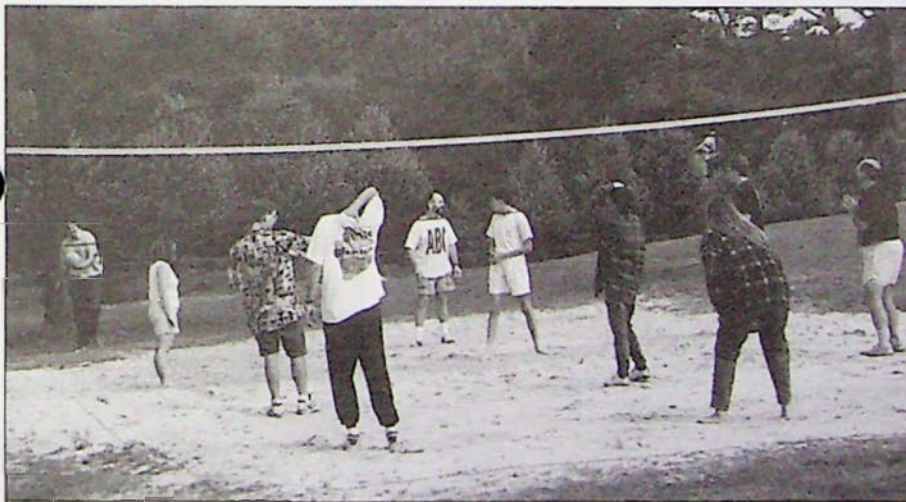
Good food, huh, Rebekah?



That's too much Mickey for me,
Minnie will be jealous!



But I only
dozed off
for a
minute?!



Volleyball is second nature at ABC.



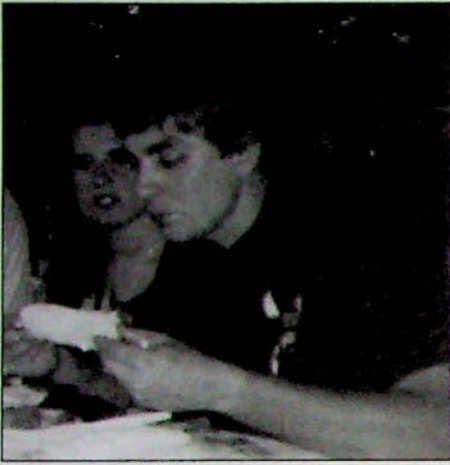
But eating always comes first.



Lisa and Merry
at dinner.

Dan,
the preacher man,
tears into his steak.





Um, um, good.



Forget the salad, I'm a carnivore.
Where're the hamburgers?



Don't go away mad, together we can beat him!



No pets allowed, Rebecca.



Gee, I don't recognize anybody.



O.k. Dale, we blitz!

ABC Staff, 1994-95



David Krogh

PRESIDENT
INSTRUCTOR



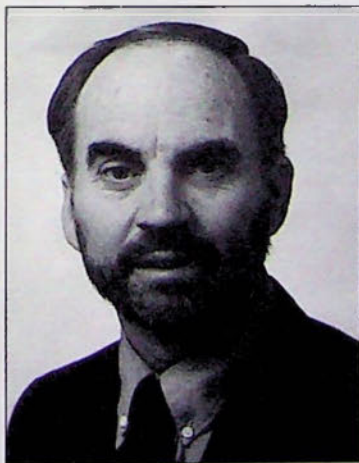
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1995 College Chorale

The 1995 Chorale visited 13 different churches on their annual spring tour. This year members were introduced to the wonders of the northwest part of the United States. Students visited such sights as the Badlands and Mount Rushmore. In addition to their tour, the group spent time in the Carolinas as well as performing at the Northeast Conference in Ohio.

Special thanks to Dale Ramsey for his direction and guidance during the trip. Here are a few scenes from along the way.



The Chorale in performance at New Friends Bible Church, Morrow, Georgia.



The German village of Leavenworth in Washington was the first site "for fun" for the Chorale.



Then on to Mount Rushmore, Black Hills, South Dakota.



Fortunately we didn't lose anyone in the Badlands in South Dakota.



Nature presented us with another piece of peace and quiet on our trip.

The Student Government Association

The Student Government Association is responsible for the social activities at Atlanta Bible College. The association provides certain committees on which students can participate and develop skills of leadership for future times. These committees include the social committee, sports committee, *Maranatha* committee, chapel committee, and the missions committee. The social committee was the highlight of all of the groups, hosting such events as barbeques, pizza parties and bowling nights.



An evening of social committee fun at the bowling alley.



Chris Seiders, SGA President, tries to grill the steak at the annual steak fry.

The sports committee held a large ski trip for the student body. No limbs were broken on the trip and everyone seemed to have a good time.

The missions group had a large boost when Tracy Savage was here to share her expertise from the Russian experience.

The chapel committee planned chapels and roundtables for the year.

This edition of the *Maranatha* is the product of the *Maranatha* committee.



Amy Railton, perhaps a bit worn down after the quarter, prepares herself for a rejuvenating, thick, juicy steak.



The class of 1995 at Atlanta Bible College,
and the future of the Church of God.



A group of prospective students at the ABC Invitational discuss events.

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Au Revoir!

It has been an enjoyable two years. It's always a pleasure to work with material and shape it into a magazine that you hope will build, inspire and inform God's people. You've been very kind in your response and comments on these past issues.

But now it's time to change. Jeff Fletcher, pastor of the Happy Woods Church of God in Louisiana, has been selected to be the next editor. Pastor Fletcher's past gives every indication and promise of excellent things to come. We extend to him our best wishes.

As in the past, THE RESTITUTION HERALD in the future will call the Church of God to the hope of the soon return of Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on this earth. That is the central message of every issue.

But it is also apparent that too often that hope is merely intellectual. The Church of God needs to concern itself with the lives of its members. When marriages fall apart, when there are extramarital affairs, when there are

vicious fights within churches and between churches and pastors, when the children of the church drift away to other churches that hold significantly different views of the Scripture's teachings . . . and we could go on and on . . . then it is imperative that pastors, churches and individual members spend significant time and effort on discipling believers, be they new to the faith or longstanding members.

Renewal of a church, and of our entire organization, depends first on prayer to the Lord and, secondly, on a determined effort of discipling for spiritual and moral growth. That can only be accomplished through the power of God's Spirit at work within us. Paul wrote, "To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me" (Col. 1:29, NIV).

May God bless us in our walk in Christ. Good-bye.

— Kent Ross



A Saturation of September Splendor

By Joyce Housman

September has arrived. The children are happily back in school after declaring their horror at having to be there. Summer is definitely closing and new routines will replace our more leisurely, warm-weather lives.

The cornfields are drying up slowly with the golden ears beginning to peek through the husks. The soybean plants are changing color from a dark green to a tinge of yellow-rust. The ripening process is beginning. We'll soon find out how full the storage bins will be.

The fall flowers are gorgeous. The dahlias will bloom their hearts out till Jack Frost kills the plants. The mums, asters, zinnias and a host of wild flowers still flaunt their vibrant colors, thrilling my eyes.

God's own flower garden is blooming splendidly. The maple trees are slowly turning color. Against a hillside of green a flaming branch or two of orange-red stands out.

The poplar trees are bleaching out and will turn a neon yellow. In another week or two the trees will be a riot of color. When those leaves fall, the red oaks will have their turn at delighting the viewer.

It will soon be time to bring the beef cows home from pasture with their sassy, glossy calves. It would be nice if the weather holds and they can graze the cornfields after they are combined. They pick up missed ears and a lot of foliage that is always hard to plow under. Of course that all depends on how long snow holds off. How can I write that word? Snow, at this point, seems to be a very nasty concept. I want to glory in this fantastic season of autumn. I need to soak in the sunshine and impress on my memory the sights, the smells and the sounds of this beautiful season. I want to saturate my mind with the essence so that, God willing, it will last till spring.

A Contemporary Affirmation of Faith

We believe in Jesus Christ the Lord,
Who was promised to the people of Israel,
Who came in the flesh to dwell among us,
Who announced the coming of the rule of God,
Who gathered disciples and taught them,
Who died on the cross to free us from sin,
Who rose from the dead to give us life and hope,
Who reigns in heaven at the right hand of God,
Who comes to judge and bring justice to victory.

We believe in God His Father,
Who raised Him from the dead,
Who created and sustains the universe,
Who acts to deliver His people in times of need,
Who desires all men everywhere to be saved,
Who rules over the destinies of men and nations,
Who continues to love men even when they reject Him.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
Which is the form of God present in the church,
Which moves men to faith and obedience,
Which is the guarantee of our deliverance,
Which leads us to find God's will in the Word,
Which assists those whom God renews in prayer,
Which guides us in discernment,
Which impels us to act together.

We believe God has made us His people,
To invite others to follow Christ,
To encourage one another to deeper commitment,
To proclaim forgiveness of sins and hope,
To reconcile men to God through word and deed,
To bear witness to the power of love over hate,
To proclaim Jesus the Lord over all,
To meet the daily tasks of life with purpose,
To suffer joyfully for the cause of right,
To the ends of the earth,
To the end of the age,
To the praise of His glory. Amen.

— adapted from *The Hymnal for Worship & Celebration* by Word Music

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THE RESTITUTION HERALD ADVOCATES:

- THE ONENESS OF GOD (1 COR. 8:6);
- THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD'S POWER (ACTS 1:8);
- JESUS CHRIST IS GOD'S ONLY BEGOTTEN SON (MATT. 16:16), AND IS OUR MEDIATOR (1 TIM. 2:5);
- THE BIBLE IS THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD (2 TIM. 3:16);
- THE MORTALITY OF MAN (JOB 4:17; PSA. 146:4);
- THE NEAR RETURN OF CHRIST (ACTS 1:11), AND LIFE ONLY THROUGH HIM (COL. 3:3);
- THE LITERAL RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD (JOHN 5:28);
- THE IMMORTALIZATION OF THOSE IN CHRIST (1 COR. 15:53, 54);
- THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED (REV. 21:8);
- THE FINAL RESTORATION OF ISRAEL AS THE KINGDOM OF GOD UNDER THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST (LUKE 1:32);
- THE CHURCH TO BE JOINT HEIRS WITH HIM (ROM. 8:17), AND ISRAEL TO BE MADE HEAD OVER GENTILE NATIONS (ISA. 60:1-3);
- THE "RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS WHICH GOD HATH SPOKEN BY THE MOUTH OF ALL HIS HOLY PROPHETS SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN" (ACTS 3:21).
- IT ALSO FIRMLY ADVOCATES REPENTANCE AND IMMERSION IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS (ACTS 2:38), AND A CONSECRATED LIFE AS ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION.

"Dad, I'm

OVER THE LAST 20 years the percentage of illegitimate births to girls 19 and under has increased from 15% to 51%. In 1987, more than 1,100,000 teenage girls became pregnant, and 60% of these girls became pregnant again in the next two years. Do these statistics alarm you? No wonder the problem of teen pregnancy is considered epidemic and has been called by some "the most important issue of the remaining years of the 20th century."

It seemed only yesterday that I was holding little Amy on my lap reading her bedtime stories. Now, with college classes and extracurricular activities, she had little time for Dad. But this morning was different. She wanted to talk and I figured it must be about school, her job or needing a loan.

She toyed with her food as my wife and I gave her time to gather her thoughts. Finally, she took a deep breath and said two words that I thought I would never hear my unmarried teenage daughter say: "I'm pregnant."

It was as though an instant in time stood still. I was numb. Kay, my wife, picked up the conversation. "Are you sure?" Other

questions were asked, but I couldn't get my thoughts together to discuss it further. I've always had a subconscious fear that my children might engage in premarital sex. My fear had become a reality. What was I to say? How should I respond and counsel my daughter?

Perhaps every parent struggles with that fear. Oh, there are those who court the idea, "My kids are above average. I've taught them better and they're not really involved." They resist the thought that it may happen to them. But, down deep, most parents are concerned that their children may become sexually active. It's tragic, but the fact is that your own son or daughter, your grandchild, your friend's child, or some of the kids at your church *are* sexually active. If one of them becomes pregnant, what will be your attitude?

What will you say? What action will you take?

I would like to share here the help I received — from books, friends, and God's word — which guided my wife and me through this difficult period of our lives. My hope is that it can help youth directors, pastors, anyone with a friend in this situ-

ation, and especially you parents who find yourselves struggling through the ordeal of an unmarried child's pregnancy.

A Sense of Loss

Becoming pregnant is perhaps the most traumatic experience an unmarried girl will ever endure. If she is a Christian, she will probably feel she has lost everything she holds dear. She will be tempted to give in to such feelings as:

I've lost my past. I've lost my morals and I am strapped with the social stigma of being an unmarried teenager. I'll be looked upon as loose, immoral, and impure.

I've lost my future. If I decide to keep the baby, the next 18 to 20 years of my life are planned. I will be making a commitment to my child, and my future will feel out of hand or pushed aside. As I feel less in control, I may feel pressured to marry.

I've lost my self-image. As my body changes physically, it will be a constant reminder of what I've sacrificed. I'll have a tendency to blame myself, think degrading things about myself, to punish myself emotionally for it.

How Does a Fa

Pregnant"

I've lost my relationships. How will my family and friends feel about me? Boys may shy away from going out with me when they know I have a child. Family members and other adults who respected me before may not respect me now.

The Emotional Response

Such thoughts and emotions pouring down on her could cause some of these responses:

Grief. When a girl contemplates these losses, she will undoubtedly experience pain and suffering. She may grieve over losing control of the life she had planned out.

Depression. If she doesn't obtain relief from her grief and suffering, she will go into depression and if depression is allowed to take over, she'll face despair and feel there is no hope — no light at the end of the tunnel.

Shame. Except for the grace of God, feelings of shame will affect her attitude toward herself, her friends, her closest loved ones, and even the baby. Accepting feelings of shame is a devastating blow to self-image and outlook on life. Shame can cloud every aspect of her life: work,

school, caring for her child, working in the church, counseling and helping others, etc.

Two Important Principles

If there is any time a girl needs the love of, support, and wise counsel of her parents, it is during an unplanned pregnancy. But because parents also are experiencing tremendous emotional turmoil, they run the danger of reacting negatively rather than responding positively.

The next few days after learning of my daughter's pregnancy were some of the most emotional and confusing of my life. Rarely do I shed tears, but that week I wept bitterly every day. I found myself reacting negatively to the entire situation. If it hadn't been for dedicated counselors at a Crisis Pregnancy Center urging me to follow two very crucial principles, I would have probably driven my daughter to despair. Those principles are what I'd like to share with you. Simply stated they are:

- The power of forgiveness can untangle the emotions and clarify the thinking.
- Committing the future to God can provide a sense of direction.

My Need to Forgive

I sat in the counselor's office pouring out the hurt raging inside me. The counselor asked, "Why do you think you are hurting so?" "Well," I responded, "this whole ordeal is so painful. My little girl is hurting so much now and it's going to get a lot worse before it gets better. She'll suffer shame; may have to drop out of school; will bear a child she can't provide for; and may face other consequences I haven't even thought of."

The counselor nodded slowly. I went on, "Amy has all these tough decisions to make. She'll have to decide whether to marry the father of the child. Should she keep the baby or should the child be put up for adoption? Then there's the schooling. Should she go away to live with another family until the baby is born? There are so many variables within those questions that it boggles the mind, let alone the emotions. No matter what is done, everyone involved will feel the pain."

The wise counselor allowed me to wind down. After I finished, she leaned forward and said softly, "You say you have accepted Amy and aren't angry

ther Respond?

with her, but is the pain you feel all for your daughter?"

I wasn't sure what she was driving at. "What do you mean?" I questioned.

She continued, "I really encourage you to examine the reason for your personal hurt. Do you feel you have lost some of the things you wanted to share with your daughter?"

Yes, I had. Deep down I, too, suffered a loss. I wanted to give my daughter as a virgin to a Christian young man. But now I had lost that possibility. I wanted to experience the joy of my daughter's first child, but I couldn't have that either. I wanted to be a part of my first grandchild's life, but it appeared I had lost that opportunity too. My tears weren't just for Amy — they were for me as well. I would also feel the shame and pain of her mistake.

Love Can Cover

I prayed for a spirit of forgiveness. Now more than ever, Amy needed my support, love, and acceptance. As I confessed my resentment and selfishness to God, He filled me with a supportive love for my daughter that I never thought possible. God's power of forgiveness took away the resentment. But there was more. My emotional confusion began to fade. The act of forgiving put the choices that would have to be made into perspective.

You see, the consequences of a few fleeting moments of uncontrolled passion seem endless. No matter which alternatives are considered — premature marriage, single parenting, or adoption — they are all painful and appear unacceptable. Confusion becomes the order of the day. Yet when I found the power to forgive, I gained not only a supernatural supportive love for Amy, but a clarity of heart and mind to understand the alternatives. As my emotions untangled, I sat down and wrote her a long letter. Here are some excerpts from that letter:

Dear Amy,

I know that during this past week you have suffered pain as never before; the burden that you bear is perhaps the heaviest you've ever carried. Yet through it all God assures us: "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:19).

And one thing I've come to realize is that God has not declared that life is over because of an unplanned pregnancy. God has great plans for your future. You have not been disqualified from the race. In fact, He plans to draw you closer to Him and teach you to know Him better than you have ever known Him before. Once we



realize that our main purpose in life is to know God and glorify Him, life comes into proper perspective. And I believe, Amy, the more you and I know Him and see life from His perspective, the more life and all its struggles and problems begin to be solved.

God has an answer for this situation. He has a solution. One without pain and suffering? Probably not. Yet, He has plenty of grace, that when appropriated to our lives, will be for our good and His glory. But, I've learned that I can't appropriate His grace while responding to life in an un-Christlike manner. So, I strive to "stay always within the boundaries where God's love can reach and bless (me) you" (Jude 1:21 LB). Once we begin to respond according to God's Word, we are then able to move on and clearly understand the choices we have to make.

I know you are struggling, even more than Mom and I are, with a flood of emo-

tions; it's difficult to think straight. I sense that this pregnancy represents the loss of everything you were holding dear. And while it may appear to be that way on the surface, you have not lost everything when you have God as your Savior and Friend. In fact, by properly responding to God and His Word, you will gain far more than you ever imagined.

Remember, Amy, you have sought God's forgiveness and this means your slate is clean — as far as God is concerned, you have committed no sin, ever! Mom and I, too, have forgiven you. We can walk down the street with our daughter as proud as we've ever been. What makes us proud, and God, too, is the fact that you've acknowledged your error, sought God's forgiveness, and committed your life to Him.

But what about the rest of your life? You have many difficult decisions to make. You have your life and the life of your baby to consider. There are no "perfect" answers. One of the things that makes this so difficult is that there are so many alternatives, and none of them is pleasant. But as you align your responses to the instructions of God's Word, the clouds will clear and He will make His will known.

I can't tell you what to do. You have engaged in an adult act and you have an adult decision to make. However, I want to point out to you the context in which to make your decision. When you consider your options, do so with one central purpose in mind: What will bring the most honor to God? Right choices become clear as you:

1. Maintain right attitudes (align yourself with God's Word during trying times, love those who mistreat you, and accept your humbling position with grace).

2. Continue to consider only those options that would bring honor to God.

3. Obtain wise counsel from mature Christians to confirm the leading you have.

If you decide to keep the baby, you can rest assured we will do all in our power to be the best grandparents possible. We will fulfill our responsibility in being a godly

influence as best we can under God.

If you decide to make a placement plan for your baby, you can rest assured we will be there to support you, love you, weep with you and heal together with you.

I love you dearly, Amy, more than you can know. You will always be my little girl. There are brighter and more beautiful days ahead for all of us. God will use this as a stepping stone in all our lives. We will learn much together. We can more effectively minister to others because of how we allow God to use this in our lives.

Through this we can all become even closer as a family than before. Mom and I feel honored and want to thank you for sharing this with us on the very day you found out. We thank you for the opportunity to be a part of the decisions that affect the life of our first grandchild. No matter what, this will always be a special child to both of us; we have lots of love to share with you and your first child — in whatever way God chooses to let us be a part.

The road may seem dark and lonely at times, but remember we're always here and want to help. And, more importantly, Christ is with you always, your dearest friend, your closest companion, the One who knows you most and loves you best. Mom and I pray for you daily. I love you, I love you, I love you.

Your dad

Commit the future to God

Amy had more than seven months to make the biggest decision of her life. She was confident that marrying Mark would further complicate matters. We agreed. But was she to raise her child as a single parent? Or were we to assume the responsibility of raising our first grandchild? Or did God have a Christian couple prepared to raise our daughter's baby? Weeks turned into months and still no clear direction. We prayed daily that God would provide clear direction to Amy.

One afternoon while discussing the options with her, she became frustrated.

"Dad," she said in tears, "I've got to know what's right to do. Why won't you tell me what I should do?"

My eyes blurred as I tried to explain, "Amy, you know that I love you. And I want what is best for you and the baby." My voice choked with emotion. "I could tell you what was right if I could only see some 20 years into the future, but I can't. Honey, I don't know exactly what to do either, but I do know how you can find out."

She sobbed quietly as I went on. "Commit your future into God's hands; He does know the future. Give Him your baby; relinquish that life within



you into His care. Once you're so committed, ask Him what He wants to do with His little unborn child. Tell God you are gladly willing to raise your baby if He so desires, and you are equally willing for Him to hand your child to some other family to raise."

As weeks went by, God gave Amy the ability to relinquish her child and her own future into God's hands. Slowly pieces of the puzzle came together. One confirmation after another made it clear to her, and eventually to all of us, what she was to do. I hesitate to share her decision simply because I would not want it to be considered a determining factor for anyone else. Each family situation is unique and must be considered separately before God. However, I believe the principle is applicable to all: Commit your future and the life of the baby to God and He will direct you.

Seek God's Grace

As I look back over the year, I see that actually I offered very little advice to my daughter, but did give lots of love and support. And it was that love and support from both Kay and me that allowed what little counsel we did offer to be of help.

If you find yourself in a similar situation, I urge you to seek God's grace early along with the support of wise biblical counselors. Transparently confess the pain and hurt you feel. Allow God to fill you with the power of His forgiveness and then commit the future of your daughter and her baby into His hands. I'm confident that God makes His will known to those who honestly and unselfishly seek His leadership.

The bitter consequences of an unplanned pregnancy in the life of an unmarried girl and her family are beyond my ability to describe here. God certainly knew what was best when He commanded against premarital sex. Our entire ordeal causes us to praise God for His specific moral commands of love. They are commands designed for the protection and provision of young people.

But, perhaps even more than that, we praise God for being the gracious forgiver and loving friend who lifts the fallen and restores a broken life. He was there through every moment of every day, drawing my daughter to His soothing breast. In the lonely night hours of pain and regret, He was there; during the time of indecision and confusion, He was there; and He'll be there for you, too, if you find yourself in a similar situation. His "*grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness*" (2 Cor. 12:9, NASB).

— Author anonymous, an excerpt from *Why Wait?* by Josh McDowell and Dick Day, ACTS, July/August 1995

Ten barriers stand between churches and dynamic growth. What are they?

The reality of church growth in America is that 95% of all the churches stop growing before they reach an attendance of 300. What does it take to lead a church to growth? What does it take to get a church going? Well, the first thing you have to do is you have to remove the barriers to growth. It is natural for churches to grow — they are living organisms. It is unnatural for them not to grow.

*Adapted
from
Rick Warren*

Therefore the task of leadership is to discover and remove the barriers so that growth can be automatic. We need to ask ourselves, "What are the barriers to growth in my church?" Once the barriers are removed, then the growth will begin to happen.

Listed below are ten key barriers that prohibit church growth. Our focus and vision must address these barriers and not only remove them but replace them with correct biblical principles and practices which will lead to growth.

1. Members won't bring friends to church.

The fact is you have to have visitors before you can have members. A lot of people say, "I love my church but I wouldn't be caught dead bringing a non-Christian friend because the service wouldn't make sense to them." So, the antidote is seeker-sensitive services. Services must be designed, at least in part, to attract and keep the unsaved. Classes and programs which cater only to current members exclude new people from joining the "Christian cliques." Our focus not only needs to be on worshipping God and discipling believers, but also on joyfully bringing in the lost.

2. People fear growth will ruin the fellowship.

Do we experience this attitude among our churches? Really, everybody wants the church to

grow to a point as long as it doesn't make them uncomfortable. But, when the balance starts tipping and there are more newcomers than there are old-timers, problems arise. People begin to say, "It's not my church anymore" or "I don't know everybody anymore" or "I'm afraid I'll become just a number and get lost in the crowd" or "I just like the way it is." The antidote to this problem is affinity or cell groups. Churches must grow larger and smaller at the same time — larger in the corporate, celebration services but smaller using cell groups which care for the individual needs of people.

3. The church is driven by tradition.

Churches must be driven by purpose. We must not become anti-tradition because there is nothing wrong with tradition in and of itself. Certain things usually become traditions because they work. But, we cannot automatically accept or reject a tradition just because it has been used in the past. Our responsibility is to evaluate it and reaffirm it, redefine it, replace it, or remove it. The wrong motivation in a church is that we've always done it that way. Tradition may not be practical, let alone biblical.

Two dangers exist in tradition. The first danger is that we make the methods of something sacred. Never confuse the method with the message. It is unacceptable to change the "faith once delivered unto the saints." But the methods have to change. What worked in the 18th century will not work in the 19th, and what worked in the 19th won't work in the 20th, and what works now will not work in the future.

The second problem with tradition is we often forget why we do what we do — we lose our sense of purpose. A principle of vital importance related to church growth and programs is "When the horse is dead, dismount." In our churches, we have great

That Stand

programs that were great in the past but are dead now. What we need to do is give them a decent burial. Peter Drucker said, "The most expensive and most difficult thing to do in life is to keep a corpse from stinking." The problem is that the things that are hardest to let go of are the things that worked in the past. But, just because they worked in the past doesn't mean they still work. So, you have to let go of some traditions.

A case in point is Moses. He lost his right to leadership because he wouldn't let go of tradition. Remember the first time Moses went up to the rock and God told him to strike the rock? He obeyed, but what happened next time? God told Moses to speak to the rock and Moses' response was, "Oh, no Lord, we've never done it that way before. We've always struck the rock." But God responded, "I know that but I want you to do it in a new and different way." Again Moses said, "No sir, we've always done it the traditional way. So I'm going to strike the rock." As a result, Moses lost his right to leadership and didn't enter into the promised land.

Jesus said the same thing when He told us we cannot put new wine in old wineskins. Note the exchange of Jesus and the Pharisees in Matthew 15:1-3. The Pharisees asked, "Why do your

disciples break the traditions of the elders?" And Jesus replied, "Why do you break the commands of God for the sake of tradition?"

We cannot have any sacred cows, any programs or methods which cannot be changed. Nothing cannot be changed except the truth, the testimony of Jesus Christ. But how we deliver truth is always up for grabs. Yesterday's tools cannot be used in today's ministry and meet the needs of tomorrow. An example of this commitment to change is Homer Lindsay, pastor of First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Florida, attendance of 9,000. He killed bus ministry when they were still bringing in 800 people on the buses. He knew the ministry was going the wrong way and he axed it. What an accomplishment to have 800 people attending due to a bus ministry, but what a great step of faith in doing away with something that's dying. We've got to catch a wave and get off before it crests.

4. Trying to appeal to everybody.

We are not the same. All around us are people of different tastes, different ideas, different convictions, and even different cultures. But there is an antidote to this problem in the church — defined target. Churches must define a target geographically,

culturally, etc. so effective ministry can take place to those it is called to minister to (see Paul's example of this in I Corinthians 9:19-27). The more clearly we define our target, the easier it is to reach people.

5. Being program-oriented rather than process-oriented.

The antidote to this problem is the life-development process. People must be moved from membership to maturity to ministry and then to missions. We've got to bring them in, build them up, train them, and send them out. Is it too lofty to believe we can be one of the most spiritual churches in the world by the year 2,003? Is it too lofty to believe we can become one of the fastest growing churches in the world? Some might think these goals to be ridiculous, unrealistic, or unachievable. Not so. These should be the goals of each and every church on the face of the earth. Through process and purpose, this can happen. Through programs, it won't. Once the year 2,003 arrives, could we even know if we met the lofty goals mentioned above? By implementing purpose and processes, as opposed to programs, a specific measure can be made to determine if the goal was achieved.

(Continued on Page 21)

in the Way

The Art of

SUBMISSION SEEMS to be a word that conjures up negative feelings in today's society. However, we would be less than wise if we did not go directly to God's Word and agree with His divine wisdom regarding the subject. Although it is true that you will not find the word submission in the Bible, you will find the words submit, submitted and submitting. In fact, God deemed it important enough to address it in various situations. Submission is no less and no more than the act of submitting to someone else in the spirit of humility and meekness.

by
Paul Woods

From the Beginning

We find in the very beginning of the Bible that the angel of the Lord spoke to Hagar and told her to return to her mistress and submit herself unto her. We are all familiar with this story so we will spare details for the sake of time and space. Suffice it to say that God was dealing with a hard situation in this instance, humanly speaking, and we might tend to think that Hagar was justified in not submitting to Sarah. Although Hagar was fleeing from Sarah, God asked her to submit in humble obedience to Sarah's will.

We might also note that at this point in history, God required

the strangers in the land to submit themselves to the same commandments that He gave to the children of Israel. This was especially true regarding the Sabbath. This in itself gives us a glimpse of how important it is for our will to be submitted to another's.

First to God

Understandably, the very first requirement on our part is submitting ourselves to God's will. James 4:7 draws a parallel for us by simply stating in the first part, "Submit yourselves therefore to God." James makes it plain in the second half of the verse that we are to resist the devil and he will flee from us. When we, as Christians, are one hundred percent submitted to doing God's will, it gives us all the freedom we need to resist the enemy of our souls.

When we submit ourselves first to God, we will automatically apply the rest of God's principles concerning submission. The Apostle Paul probably speaks of submission as much as any other writer. He exhorted the Corinthians to quit being like men and to be strong and to submit themselves unto everyone that helped and labored with them (I Cor. 16:16). Paul was well qualified to give this advice as he was willing to practice it in his own life.

Peter also speaks plainly concerning submission — so much so that he deems it a necessary part of our Christian witness to unbelievers. In fact, he makes a strong statement that it is the will of God for us to be submitted to those in authority over us, acting as servants of God. You might ask, "What's the whole purpose of submission, especially to ungodly men?" Peter assures this will bring glory to God and that we are to do it for the Lord's sake.

Subject to One Another

Next Peter addresses the issue of submission within the body of Christ: "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility" (1 Pet. 5:5). In this particular passage, Peter first exhorts the elders to rule well, then exhorts the younger ones to submit to the elders.

Can you imagine how different our world would be today if submission were practiced at every level of life? It seems, at times, that our world is void of a submissive spirit, especially when we read and hear of the atrocities humans do to each other. This would not be happening if we would humble ourselves to each others' will. We cannot pass over the admonition given in Hebrews 13:17:

What Is Submission and How

Submission

Obeys them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

Here we find a heavy responsibility laid upon Christian leaders. When open, flagrant rebellion is found among God's people concerning submission, I think they simply must not comprehend the awesome authority that God has placed on church leadership. The men in these positions, if honest before God, realize that they will stand and give account for the souls they have watched over. It is not something to be taken lightly.

Subjection in The Home

When our spirits are submissive to God, it brings lasting results not only within the body of Christ, but also within our homes. The home is the best place to begin practicing submission. The Apostle Paul said it best: "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God" (Eph. 5:21). He is speaking here about the way of a believer.

He goes ahead in the very next verse and speaks to the wife about submission, and then to the husband's specific role. There

is not much unity in a home if God's order of authority is overlooked.

We must realize that in any given situation — husband-wife, parent-child, employer-employee and God-man — no submission is required as long as both wills are the same. *Submission is only required when there are two different viewpoints.* One viewpoint must submit to the other in order for harmony and unity to prevail in the relationship!

Subjection in Society

Submission is a badly needed and neglected principle in our society today. I believe the Apostle Paul understood this when he wrote these prophetic words to Timothy: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be . . ." (II Tim. 3:2-4). I think if we examine the type of men Paul is talking about here, we would find that not one of them is showing a spirit of submission.

In fact, quite the contrary, we find arrogance and pride in each one of these situations. Paul is very specific when he tells what kind of men they will be: lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural af-

fection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

This passage of Scripture should put the fear of God in us and make us realize how serious our walk with God is. It seems that we see relatively few who consistently walk with God. If we really realize this, it should give the people of God greater intensity and determination to do His will.

May I humbly suggest to you that there should not be a negative response to submission. As the depravity of the world increases, so must our walk with God intensify in every aspect. There must be a real willingness on our part to truly submit to one another in the fear of the Lord.

God's word is sure. If He cared enough to teach us the way of submission, how much more should we be careful to live it?

May you enjoy God's blessings upon your life as you continue to learn the art of submission.

— Reprinted from ACTS,
January 1995.

Does It Apply to Christians Today?

Contemporary Reflections on Psalms

Bless the Lord, O my soul;
And all that is within me,
bless His holy name.

Bless the Lord for safety in the
face of imminent danger.
Bless the Lord for my spouse
coming into my life.
Bless His holy name

Bless the Lord for helping us
find the things we lose,
and getting us out of
difficult situations.

Bless the Lord for the chance
to get away from the
hustle and bustle of work.

Bless the Lord for the chance to
make new friends.
Bless the Lord, O my soul

Bless the Lord for giving us
victories and sticking with
us through the tough time.

You are a Super Glue God and
we praise you.

Bless the Lord for the special
moments with my family and
their uniqueness to me.

Bless the Lord, O my soul; And
all that is within me; bless
His holy name

O Lord, the God of my salva-
tion,
I have cried out by day and
in the night before Thee.
Let my prayer come before Thee
Incline Thine ear to my cry.

Help us, Lord, with our work
with young people, so that
it might go forward. Provide
the financial support that is
needed.

Send your Spirit to strengthen
us, and keep us growing in
you.

Deliver us from times of
discouragement, and encourage
and bolster the faithfulness
of new members.

O Lord, incline Thine ear to
our cry.

Strengthen and uplift
our own shortsighted
faith. Send us a
lightening bolt of
adrenalin.

O God of might
and power, where are
you in the midst of my
troubles, as I struggle
to fulfill two jobs,
and be a good father
and husband?

How long, O Lord, must I
struggle with fear and
pain?

Let our prayer come before
Thee. Incline Thine ear
to our cries.

Sing for joy to God our
strength; shout joyfully
to the God of Jacob.

We can be victorious,
Lord, knowing that *your*
perfect love
casteth out all our
worries, fears and cares.

Our earthly problems are
simply heavenly challenges
to you, mighty God.

You have truly inclined
your ear to our cries.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.
And all that is within us;
Bless His Holy Name!

Jeff Bull, Paula Kirkpatrick,
Dan McGowan, Linford Moore,
Shelly Mummert
and Delbert Rankin

In the beginning
God called
Out of the soft darkness
God called
the sun rose, glorious
God called
I didn't always want to
hear him
But God called

He sent me far from home
to comfort strangers.
He brought me back
to care for loved ones
become strange
with age
with illness
with doubt
And the darkness
was not so soft.

But God called others
with hands for me to hold
Partners and children
and friends
and in the end
I'm glad
God called.

Gloria Currier, Evelyn
Hamlin, Kelly Kirchoff,
Melanie Kolczyk, Cathy
Osdoba, Kent Ross, Mar
Radermacher, and Dorothy
Webster

Lord, we realize that there
are many things that
take place in our lives
and that we forget to thank
You for them

For safety in travel both
this weekend and every
day, we thank You.

When money is tight we
thank you for providing
our every need.

For planting ideas and
solutions to problems in
our hearts and minds we
thank You.

For the love and support
of our families and friends
we thank You.

Most of all we thank you for
the gift of Your Son as a
sacrifice for our sins

Some days the stresses of our
jobs, finances, and
relationships weigh
heavily upon us and it's
easy to feel over whelmed
by it all. We can't seem
to find a way out or a
reason for our troubles.

But You, Lord, see the big
picture and how we can
grow through the difficult
experiences. At times we
know You carry us when
we can go no further
and that You supply all
of our needs.

Help us remember to fix our
eyes on You.

Heidi Cooper, Linda McGowan,
Connie Mummert, Tascha Rankin,
Julie Reye, LeAnn Tyler and
Charles Webster

Give thanks unto the
Lord; for he is good: for
his mercy endureth forever.
He kept me safe on the
road: for his mercy endureth
forever.

He gave me strength
when I had many
obstacles to overcome:
His mercy endureth
forever.

To Him who gives me
a new job every year.
His mercy endureth
forever.

To Him who chooses me
with a strong hand and
with a stretched out
hand: His mercy endureth
forever.

To Him who never
changes: His mercy
endureth forever.

To Him who alone
doeth great wonders:
His mercy endureth
forever.

He spoke and we are
and He is! His mercy
endureth forever:
He does miracles in
weird ways:
His mercy endureth for
ever.

Life is as brief as the
summer grass. His mercy
endureth forever.

I have learned to
trust him every day:
His mercy endureth forever.
How low can you go!
His mercy endureth forever.
He leads us through
the wilderness: His
mercy endureth forever.

O give thanks unto
the God of Heaven:
His mercy endureth
forever.

Chuck Currier, Gaye Dilley,
Beebs Downing, Joyce Magaw,
Jeff Radermacher, Karah Rankin
and Cheryl Ross

Temptation

In its relentless dependence on human choice, God's management style may resemble a kind of abdication. Sometimes, I confess, I wish God acted differently. If God had merely reached down and with a flick of the finger knocked Saddam Hussein from the throne, for example, how many lives would have been saved in the Gulf War? Why must God "sit on his hands"? Why does evil go unpunished?

Often, I want God to take a more active role in *my* history, too. I want quick, spectacular answers to prayer, healing for my diseases, protection for my loved ones. I want a God I can point to for the sake of my doubting friends: "See, there he is."

When I think these thoughts, I recognize in myself a thin, haunting echo of the challenge Satan threw in Jesus' face two thousand years ago. In George MacDonald's words,

Instead of crushing the power of evil by divine force; instead of compelling justice and destroying the wicked . . . He let evil work its will while it lived; He contented Himself with the slow unencouraging ways of help essential; making men good; casting out, not merely controlling Satan . . . To love righteousness is to make it grow, not to avenge it.

I remember one afternoon in Chicago sitting in an outdoor restaurant listening to a broken man tell the story of his prodigal son. Jake, the son, could not keep a job. He wasted all his money on drugs and alcohol. He rarely called home, and brought little joy and much grief to both parents. My friend, Jake's father, felt helpless. "If only I could bring him back and shelter him and try to show how much I love him," he said. He paused to gain control of his voice, then added, "The strange thing is, even though he rejects me, Jake's love means more to me than that of my other three, responsible children. Odd, isn't it? That's how love is."

I sense in that final four-word sentence more insight into the mystery of God's restraint than I have found in any book of theodicy. Why does he sit on his hands and wait, and content himself with the slow, unencouraging way of making righteousness grow rather than avenging it?

That's how love is.

— Philip Yancey, *Christianity Today*

Beware the Bible

Warning stickers on hotel-room Bibles? That's one of the projects of the Freedom From Religion Foundation, whose members are affixing the labels to Gideon Bibles. One label warns against taking the Bible literally. Another alleges that Gideon was a mass murderer.

— *National & International Religion Report*, September 19, 1994

Edit

More than Unconditional

[God's grace] is intended to change the people who receive it. There *is* something wrong with you. From God's point of view, you not only need someone else killed in your place in order to be forgiven; you need to be transformed in order to be fit to live with. The word *unconditional* may be an acceptable way to express the welcome of God. But it fails to communicate the point of that welcome: a comprehensive and lifelong rehab, learning "the holiness without which no one will see the Lord."

God does not accept me just as I am; He loves me despite how I am; He loves me just as Jesus is; He loves me enough to devote my life to renewing me in the image of Jesus. This love is much, much, much better than unconditional.

— David Powlison, *Journal of Biblical Counseling*, spring 1994

Before I got married I had six theories about bringing up children; now I have six children and no theories.

— Lord Rochester

Scrap

Married To Your Husband — And His Job

Most two-career couples would say their number-one difficulty is time — time to meet the dual demands of family and jobs. But actual *hours* seem to be less the problem than “negative mood spillover.” Job-related pressures “make workers psychologically unavailable at home,” according to an article in *Psychology Today*. Fatigue, irritability and simple preoccupation can keep employed people from being able to pay attention to their spouses. So in many ways, your husband is married to your work — and you are married to his.

— Quoted from *Marriage Partnership*, Winter 1993.

Touchdown, Staubach!

Steve Farrar

I remember a number of years ago watching Phyllis George interview Dallas Cowboys superstar Roger Staubach. It was a typical, dull sort of interview until Phyllis blindsided the quarterback with this question: “Roger, how do you feel when you compare yourself with Joe Namath, who is so sexually active and has a different woman on his arm every time we see him?”

We’ve all seen Staubach keep his cool in pressure game situations, and the tension in the air this time was just as great. But once again, Staubach kept his cool.

“Phyllis,” he said calmly, “I’m sure I’m just as sexually active as Joe. The difference is that all of mine is with one woman.”

Touchdown! Roger hit the end zone with that comeback. Real men don’t commit adultery. A real man sticks with one woman. Period.

— As quoted in *Christianity Today*, from *Point Man: How a Man Can Lead a Family*, by Steve Farrar. Copyright 1990.

A pat on the back is only a few vertebrae away from a kick in the pants, but it’s miles ahead in terms of results.

(unknown)

The Marriage Bonus

According to the *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, marriage is good for you. Nearly 40 percent of married folks wake up in the morning feeling good about their lives — as compared to fewer than 25 percent of singles. And there’s an added marriage “bonus”: People who are happy in their marriages tend to be happy in work, friendship and parenthood, too.

— Quoted from *Married Woman* by *Marriage Partnership*, Winter 1993.

Fidelity’s Big Payoff

Dr. Paul Brand

God gave us a code of morality — whatever limitations it puts on us — for our benefit. Having celebrated my golden wedding anniversary last year, I can say without hesitation that the basic human virtue of faithfulness to one sexual partner is the most joyful way of life. That has meant foregoing illicit pleasures, to be sure, but I have thereby always lived free from any fear of sexually transmitted diseases. I have always trusted my wife completely, and she me. We have channeled love, commitment and intimacy toward one person in a lifelong investment that is now, in old age, paying rich dividends.

— Quoted by *Marriage Partnership*, Fall 1994, from *Christianity Today* magazine (January 10, 1994).

(Continued on Page 22)

Men

by
Dr. Rod
Cooper

"Cliff was as kind and mild mannered a husband and father as you would ever want or meet. He worked hard, made a decent living, was active in his church, and loved to putter in his garden.

"One summer day Cliff pulled his year-old power lawn mower out of the shed and rolled it onto his beautifully landscaped back lawn. He attached the bagger, set the controls on 'START' and pulled the cord. Nothing. He pulled again. The engine turned over a couple of times, coughed, then died. He pulled again and again and again. With each vigorous pull of the cord the engine belched smoke and gas fumes but would not start.

"Finally, after another hearty pull, the engine roared to life. Cliff straightened up and adjusted the throttle, but before he could take a step the engine sighed deeply. Then he tried to restart it — once, twice, three times — but it would not kick in. After glaring at the mower for several seconds Cliff turned and walked toward the house.

"Janice had noticed through the kitchen window that her husband was having trouble with the mower. 'Is the mower broken?' she asked as Cliff walked in the back door and through the kitchen. He didn't answer her, didn't even ac-

knowledge her presence. He just walked past her down the hall to the den. In a couple of moments he came back through the kitchen carrying his prize deer-hunting rifle and a handful of shells. 'Cliff?' Janice called to him in a tone of mild alarm. 'Cliff, what are you doing?' Again Cliff walked past her and out the back door as if she were invisible. Janice held her breath as she watched him from the window.

"Cliff walked to within ten feet of the lawn mower, then stopped. He methodically slid several shells into the rifle's magazine. Then he bolted a shell into the chamber, lifted the rifle, and took dead aim at the defenseless machine. POW-CLANG! POW-CLANG! POW-CLANG! With each direct hit the lawn mower shuddered, and sparks and tiny shreds of metal exploded from it. It was a wonder that Cliff wasn't struck by the shrapnel.

"After emptying the magazine into the lawn mower, Cliff calmly walked back into the house and retired to the den to clean his gun, closing the door behind him. Janice stood in the kitchen dumbfounded. She had never seen such a change of character in her meek and mild husband. He was never one to display his emotions — until now! And it frightened her to wonder what other startling quirks might be lurking beneath Cliff's

An.

and

quiet, confident exterior."

The true life scenario of Cliff is not that uncommon. A similar incident happened with me, except I threw my lawn mower over the fence and left it there.

I have discovered over the years in my counseling of men that men feel in extremes, with the predominant emotion expressed being anger. Why? Because men are hurting — badly. Robert Louis Stevenson, author of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, once said, "Our civilization is a dingy ungentlemanly business; it drops so much out of a man."

Despite rumors to the contrary, our cultural and socioeconomic system devastates men as a gender physically and psychically. For instance, men, overall, commit suicide at four times the rate of women. Alcohol and drug abuse ravage America's young men. Men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine suffer from alcohol dependency at three times the rate of women of the same age group. Men make up more than two-thirds of all alcoholics, and fifty percent more men than women regularly use illicit drugs. Men account for more than ninety percent of arrests for alcohol and drug abuse violations. Men comprise eighty percent of America's homeless. "... men oftentimes experience the Volcano

Syndrome. They suddenly blow up and spew their rage and anger on everyone."

This stress on men takes its toll. Men's life expectancy is ten percent shorter than women's, and the incidence of stress-related illnesses such as heart disease and certain cancers remains inordinately high among men.

Finally, men are also a large part of the growing crisis in the American family. Studies report that parents today spend forty percent less time with their children than did parents in 1965, and the pressures of work and the circumstances of divorce increasingly isolate men from their families. In a recent poll, seventy-two percent of employed male respondents agreed they are "torn by conflict" between their jobs and the desire to be with their families. Yet, the average divorced American man spends less than two days a month with his children. Well over half of black male children are raised without fathers. While the trauma of separation and divorce affects all members of the family, it is especially poignant for sons; researchers generally agree that boys at all ages are hardest hit by divorce.

— Reprinted by permission of Focal Point,
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ger

Baptism

by
C. H. French

MUCH HAS BEEN said and written on the subject of BAPTISM and many different ideas have emerged. Let us set aside any preconceived conclusion and allow the Bible to show us what it teaches.

We will look at this important subject under four simple headings:

Baptism —

- Its Need
- What It Achieves
- What Form It Should Take
- After Baptism . . . *What Then?*

1. Need: Mankind's downfall in the Garden of Eden caused an alienation from God. From that beginning, God made a series of promises of ultimate reconciliation, through people like Eve, the patriarchs, David, and the prophets of Israel. In keeping with these promises, He sent His Son as the Savior of mankind:

For God sent not His Son into the world, to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:17).

Earlier in the same chapter, Jesus removes all doubt about **baptism being essential for salvation:**

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born

of water and of the spirit, *he cannot enter the Kingdom of God* (John 3:5).

Again Jesus says, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*" (Mark 16:16).

2. Achieves: Let's look at what *baptism achieves* in an individual, expressed in different ways in the Bible.

A. Spiritual washing:
"The answer of a good conscience toward God" (1 Pet. 3:21).

B. Remission of Sins:
"Repent and be baptized, for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

C. Saved by water:
"Eight souls [persons] were saved by water" (1 Pet. 3:20).

D. Identified with Christ's death, burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:1-8, Col. 2:11-13).

E. Taken the name of Christ:
"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27).

3. Form: Because of its importance, the form of baptism must follow that required by God, to satisfy the principles already considered. Let's look at the following Scriptures for guidance:

A. "Because there was much water there" (John 3:23).

B. "And they went down both into the water" (Acts 8:38).

C. "And Jesus went up straightway out of the water" (Matt. 3:16).

Note: The primary meaning of the Greek word *baptizo*, translated "baptized," is "fully wet." The correct *form* being essential, so too is . . . *belief and repentance.*

D. "Repent and be baptized" (Acts 2:38).

E. "When they believed Philip . . . they were baptized" (Acts 8:12).

F. Read in detail of the conversion of the Philippian jailor (Acts 16:30-33).

4. After Baptism: Jesus shows quite clearly that baptism was (and is) the beginning of a life of service, promising spiritual, not material, benefits, to all who faithfully follow Him (Matt. 19:27). Look at the way the Apostle Paul contrasts the works of the flesh with "the fruit of the spirit" (Gal. 5:16).

**Baptism gives us
a second chance
to be reconciled to God.
Let's take it!**

— from a tract printed by the
Gospel Publicity League

What Is So Difficult About Water Baptism?

by
*Anthony
Buzzard*

A SONE WHO HAS learned almost everything by being challenged on various biblical issues over 40 years, I venture to stimulate the thinking of some fellow unitarians on the question of baptism. These are friends, whose zeal for the Bible is undoubted, who have been taught that baptism in water is a pointless ritual not applicable to Christians.

The argument has been put this way: "There are two major baptisms in the New Testament: a) water baptism begun by John the Baptist; b) baptism in the spirit — the baptism which Jesus Christ baptizes with and which makes someone a Christian."

Take a careful look at the above statement. It is really not a fair account of what the Bible teaches. There is a major missing factor. The facts are that Jesus also baptized in water. There are therefore three baptisms, not two: a) the water baptism of John; b) the water baptism authorized by Jesus; c) baptism in the spirit.

Everyone is familiar with the baptism of John. It has clearly been superseded by Christian baptism. Christian baptism is both by water and by spirit. In John 4:1, 2 we learn that "Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples were)." John 3:22 says that "Jesus and his disciples came into the land of Judea, and

there Jesus was spending time with them and baptizing." There is no doubt therefore that Jesus baptized in water (although the actual act of immersion was performed by his agents, the disciples.) This initiation ceremony was baptism performed by Jesus — Christian baptism in water.

The great commission mandates that disciples until the end of the age go into all nations and teach whatever Jesus taught. Part of that commanded discipling process is to "baptize them into the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). That is a clear command from the lips of Jesus, and it features amongst the marching orders of the Church.

The Apostles clearly understood it that way. Peter's appeal to his first-century audience has not become obsolete. "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). The typical initiation into the Church is by repentance, believing the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Name of Jesus Christ and baptism in water. Acts 8:12 provides an early creed: "When they believed Philip as he proclaimed the Gospel about the Kingdom and the Name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, both men and women."

As if to leave no possible loopholes, Luke reports that even af-

ter the reception of Holy Spirit, the Gentiles were to be baptized in water. Peter was only following his Lord's command when he called for water and ordered "them to be baptized who had received the holy spirit" (Acts 10:47, 48). When Paul discovered converts who had received John's water baptism only he immediately administered Christian water baptism into the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19:5). The New Testament Church certainly did not teach that spirit baptism replaced Christian water baptism. The two go together as the standard way in which a person is joined to the body of Christ. Late in his career Peter can still talk of "baptism which saves" us, as "an appeal to God for a good conscience" (1 Pet. 3:21). Of course, no one is suggesting that there is anything "magical" in the water. What counts is the childlike submission to the ordinance prescribed by Jesus. It is a simple matter of obedience.

Baptism without a persistent continuation in the Christian life cannot save a person, any more than a one-time decision which is not followed by commitment. Salvation is by grace and faith, which means also (in Paul's words) "obedience from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed" (Rom. 6:17). That teaching included baptism. This way of inviting converts to become Chris-

tians is a part of what salvation by faith meant to the Apostles. They taught the "obedience of faith" everywhere (Rom. 1:5; 16:26).

God has given us a proper procedure for admission to His church. Baptism in water is a public renouncing of sin and a determination to serve God and the Messiah. Labels like "carnal ordinance" or "legalism" misrepresent the apostolic teaching about Christian water baptism. Jesus Himself was baptized in water (Luke 3:21). He made and baptized converts (John 4:1), and He ordered His followers to make and baptize converts (Matt. 28:19, 20).

There is no need for division or difference over this very simple matter, which has not been a problematic issue for millions of Bible readers over many centuries.

Evangelicals recognize that Peter's appeal for repentance and baptism is strikingly different from modern evangelistic formulae. Writing on "Conversion in the Bible," R.T. France observes that:

Our tendency to see baptism as a symbolic optional extra, or to be embarrassed by the inclusion of a physical act as part of the spiritual process of conversion, contrasts with the strongly "realist" language of the New Testament about the saving significance of baptism (e.g., John 3:5; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12; Tit. 3:5; I Pet. 3:20-21). While there are no New Testament grounds for believing that baptism *by itself* makes a person a Christian, the idea of an unbaptized Christian is equally

foreign to its thought. "Without it [baptism] a believer did not enter the primitive community of faith" (S.S. Smalley) (*Evangelical Quarterly*, 65:4, 1992, p. 306).

We appeal, therefore, to our unitarian friends who have been caught in the falsely spiritual view that the physical act of baptism is not part of Christian discipleship. It was the Gnostics who created a mistaken division between what is physical and what is spiritual. The Apostles, in mandating water baptism, were obedient, as we should be, to the command of Christ. And recognizing the Lordship of Jesus is the heart of what it means to be a believer. There is no genuine confession of Jesus as Lord without obedience (Rom. 10:9).

Our Testimony

by Gene and Amy Dylewski

Baptized at Timberland Bible Church, South Bend, IN, October 24, 1993

Dear Children of God,

You may be wondering why someone would wait so long to be baptized? There may not be a really good answer to that question. However, when we were your age we went to church just like you. Only it was a different church. Then something happened. We found God was calling us away from that church. Our problem was we didn't know where He was calling us to. We looked for a while and visited churches but we were struggling too much with guilt from leaving that church which we grew up in. And because of that guilt, the truth of God's Word was uncertain to us. So we read the Bible, prayed and went with friends who invited us to their churches. We still held in our hearts that the right church would come along and we would know it. And during this time God walked patiently with us and we led a good life. However, we were unhappy. After we moved to Granger we decided to try again. We went to many churches in the community and then we visited here.

No one had invited us. No one had told us what you believed as a church. No one except God walked in those

front doors with us. We were greeted, we were welcomed and we felt accepted into a family that we hadn't even been introduced to. We asked ourselves why? And it was so clear to us that God worked through the people of this church. So that's when we decided to search and study to see if what this church believed is also what God had been patiently leading us to. And with help, we believed.

Wow, we felt great! But there was still something missing. We wanted to have what those people had that we met when we walked in that front door. A commitment! We know that after today our hearts will be gladdened and not saddened. To us baptism was a challenge from God. He drew a line in the sand before us and asked us to courageously step over it and be with Him. So by being baptized we have left the past behind and are publicly stating that we are ready to start a new life with God.

It will become clear to you someday that God is challenging you. And you will find an abundance of support around you to help you step over that line and be baptized.

6. Emphasize meeting rather than ministry.

We often evaluate our spirituality by how many meetings we attend during the week. If you're a good Christian, you go every week; if you're a great Christian, you go twice a week; if you're a spiritual giant, you go twice a week, to potluck, the business meetings, and Wednesday night Bible study. But what would happen if all the meetings were cancelled? Jesus did not say, "I have come that you might have meetings." Yet, Christians have little or no time for meaningful ministry because they're always at meetings.

With so many meetings, we are trying to over-teach our people. I might go to morning class and get an application for my life; then to morning worship and I'm supposed to get another application for life; then maybe a Friday night service for Bible study or discipleship; next maybe Wednesday night for prayer meeting and Thursday morning for men's prayer breakfast. Include this with personal, daily devotions and overload is inevitable. No one can learn that much information, let alone apply it. Christians are often too busy learning and don't have time for application. How well we're doing if we get one truth applied and incorporated in our life on a weekly basis. Just because people are informed, doesn't mean they are transformed! Too much teaching without time and emphasis on application and training results in hearers of the Word and not doers. The antidote to this is that every member must be a minister — focus on ministry rather than meetings.

7. Teaching without application.

So much of our teaching and reaching is without practical application

for the average church-goer. Preaching must emphasize personal transformation, not ethereal theology or inapplicable doctrine. In Matthew 28:18-20, Christ commanded the disciples not only to go, not only to teach, but to make disciples fashioned after the image of Christ, not simply informed of church doctrine.

The result of teaching without application is believing salvation comes by knowledge, instead of grace. Of course, no one would admit this on an intellectual level but Christ is more concerned about our heart conviction and personal discipline than He is about our brains.

8. People don't trust their leaders.

Faith in leadership is at a low ebb today. In fact, the American culture builds people up and, as soon as they're elected, begins criticizing them. For some reason, of which many are justified, there exists a love/hate relationship between the leaders and citizens of America.

In the ministry, we have a tremendous decline in integrity and morality. As a result, people are skeptical. Ministers are guilty until proven innocent. There is an antidote though and it is authentic leadership. God uses men and women of character, those devoted to obedience and sacrifice. While skepticism of the ministry is understood, it is not acceptable to scrutinize for the sake of scrutiny or personal satisfaction.

How many Old Testament prophets were popular for their messages? How often was Jesus criticized by the religious leaders of His day? How often was Paul rejected because of his uncompromising emphasis on discipleship and truth? Leaders must be people of integrity and character, and the flock must be willing to let them lead.

Trust is often a bone of contention between leaders and members of churches. But, we have to ask if we can truly trust ourselves. If we cannot even trust ourselves to do right all the time, why do we expect leaders to do what we admit we can't?

9. Legalism.

Many churches are more interested in maintaining orthodoxy than they are in discipleship and reaching the lost. Division and dissension exist because people fight over minor doctrinal issues — we strain a gnat and swallow a camel. The antidote to legalism is a climate of acceptance. This doesn't mean sin is allowed to continue or doctrines against the teachings of Scripture are promoted. Rather, it means those things which don't matter really don't matter. We need to put Romans 14 into practice rather than becoming Pharisees ourselves.

10. Structured for control rather than growth.

Most churches are structured for control rather than growth. Too often, we are over-programmed, over-organized, and over-structured, and bureaucracy is killing our churches. There are too many committees and not enough committed; there are too many board members who are bored members. The antidote is to keep the structure simple. With simplicity, leaders can lead and the body can minister.

If we are going to have growing churches with members dedicated to evangelism, discipleship, and biblical worship, we must remove the giants that stand in the way.

— ACTS, January 1994, pp. 6-8; 28.

Editor's Scrapbook

(Continued from Page 15)

Learning Experience

There was a young evangelist who as a single college boy preached youth revivals and became famous for his sermon to parents, "Ten Commandments for Rearing Children."

After college he was married; two years later he and his wife were blessed with their first child. He vigorously preached the sermon until the baby was two years old. Then he changed the title to "Ten Rules for Rearing Children."

When the child went to elementary school, he changed the title to "Ten Suggestions for Rearing Children."

When his child got to junior high school, he changed the title to "Ten Helpful Hints for Rearing Children."

When his child entered high school, he stopped preaching this sermon altogether.

— Paul Walker, *Pulpit Helps*

Dads Still Do It Best

You can't make your children great, but you can help them become great.

Research has repeatedly documented that a child who enjoys a positive and continuous relationship with his or her father tends to have a good self-concept, higher self-esteem, higher confidence in personal and social interaction, greater moral maturity, reduced rates of unwed teen pregnancy, greater internal control and higher career aspirations. Phew. Here's to more quality and quantity time with our kids.

— Jerry Johnston, *Inspire Your Kids to Greatness*, Copyright 1993

Men Live Longer, Thanks to Us

You cook with olive oil and use a butter substitute. You try not to serve red meat, and you encourage your husband to get more exercise. But, in this era when everything from hamburgers to Nutra-sweet™ could be hazardous to your health, a husband's best lifesaver may be his wife.

A recent study indicates that married men live longer simply because they live with their wives. And there is no comparable substitute: Living with a person other than a spouse offers no additional advantage. It seems that men simply live longer with their wives by their sides.

— *Marriage Partnership*, winter 1993

The Rooms of My Marriage

Jackina Stark

Our home — the rooms we inhabit — illustrate the companionship my husband and I share. In the living room we meet after work to drink Diet Coke™ and discuss the day. He balances the checkbook, I do my nails. He watches the ballgame and I nap with my head on his stomach. He takes a nap; I read a book. He spreads out newspaper and polishes his shoes while I do 50 sit-ups; he eats potato chips while I vacuum the carpet.

In the kitchen, he makes lasagna and I make the salad. He plops ears of corn into boiling water; I butter and burn the rolls. After we eat and are full, I load the dishwasher and he sweeps the floor.

And companionship in the bedroom. Nights when I pour out mistakes or

triumphs. Nights when I, a grown, responsible woman, can say silly, preposterous things, and only he and I will know. Nights I want to read "just a few more pages" with the warm camaraderie of his sleeping body beside me. Nights when I need to be held, and he puts an arm around me and closely shapes himself into me. Nights when I want to give and to take love, and he's there, knowing my pleasures and needs.

My husband makes me glad I am not alone.

— *Marriage Partnership*, winter 1993

Father and Son

Ray Fuller

Talking to a teenager shouldn't be "tricky" for men. The problem most fathers have is that we all try too hard — everything's got to be "quality time" or "heart-to-heart."

Whenever there's something I want to discuss with my son, I make it a rule to get out of the house with him and just do something monotonous, like hiking, fishing or washing the car. Either way, we eventually get to talking without ever having to go through the stress of starting a "conversation."

— From a letter to the editor published in *Men's Health* magazine



The Only TRUE Scripture?

To tear or reduce, mar or deface, is to diffuse the Word of truth. To remake the Bible into a new image is to create an idol in the face of God. To agree to popular voice is to bow to a familiar [spirit]. The practice of commonizing verse is witchcraft. To change, add to, or delete from the holy Word of God is nothing short of blasphemy. To utter in tongues the verses of other authors in the Tabernacle of the Most High is also blasphemy. To buy translations of barterers and thieves is to put money into their coin purses.

These churches then walk as nations upon the earth. There is no Holy Scripture but the King James Bible; the Lord God prepared it for us.

From the
Bible
Advocate,
June 1995.

T.K.
Springfield, OR

EDITOR'S NOTE: The BA [Bible Advocate] shares your enthusiasm for truth and for preserving inviolate the Word of God. We do not understand what logic leads to some of your convictions, however. Please answer these questions for your own thinking:

If the King James Version is the only Holy Scripture, the only version God recognizes, then must all people of the earth who speak other languages learn to speak English before they can study the Word of God? The King James Version did not exist before the sixteenth century, when King James of England authorized that translation. Did no one have a Holy Bible before then? What did the people of the world do to learn about God for 1,500 years after Christ died on the cross before this translation appeared?

If it was honorable for a king, known for an inability to control his temper, to have a group of scholars formulate a translation for general use, why would it be less honorable for dedicated Christian scholars to attempt to improve on that translation? Most of us brought up on the King James Version recognize that the word "Easter" in Acts 12:4 is a problem in that translation. Do you feel that God inspired that inaccuracy?

We recommend How We Got the Bible, by Jerry Griffin (Bible Advocate Press, 1990, \$4.25), to help you understand these matters. In regard to the immediate question, he says:

The King James Version in use today is not the same as the original 1611 edition. Because of its Elizabethan spelling and lettering, the 1611 edition would be difficult for the modern public to read. Over the years, five major revised editions have been published. The first appeared in 1613 with some 300 changes. Further alterations in printing, spelling, and punctuation followed in 1629, 1638, 1762, and 1769. The 1769 Oxford edition by Oxford University scholar Benjamin Blayney represented the most thorough modernization of spelling and punctuation (some 75,000 changes from the 1611 edition). This is the edition essentially in use today.

To be candid about the matter, if we were to take the stand you recommend, we would have to ask ourselves, "Which of these editions represents what the Lord prepared for us?" Is the current 1769 edition inaccurate on 75,000 counts, or are they improvements that God inspired? If those men of the Church of England were inspired to do their work to bring the public a more readable, understandable translation, might not God just as likely inspire men today to continue those improvements? How would we reason that they are not?



The Only TRUE Scripture?

(Continued from page 23)

Your King James Version probably has a statement in the front similar to the statement from those employed by King James to prepare this translation:

For when Your Highness [England's King James] had once out of deep judgment apprehended how convenient it was, that out of the Original Sacred Tongues, together with comparing of the labours, both in our own, and other foreign Languages, of many worthy men who went before us, there should be one more exact Translation of the holy Scriptures into the English Tongue. And now . . . we have great hopes that the Church of England shall reap good fruit thereby; we hold it our duty to offer it [their translation] to your Majesty [King James], not only as to our King and Sovereign, but as to the principal Mover and Author of the work: humbly craving Your most Sacred Majesty . . .

These words from the group of men who translated the KJV reveal their humanness and the source of their information for translating, and they gave King James the credit for their inspiration rather than God! As members of the Church of England studying the Word of God, they came to several doctrinal conclusions different than those espoused by many of us. People who use the King James Version still arrive at different doctrinal conclusions.

In all of what has been said, there is no intent to discourage use of the King James Version, to belittle the great benefit it has been to English-speaking peoples, or to make light of concerns about the validity of some modern translations. As did the translators of the King James Version, translators of recent versions make mistakes while trying to do a faithful job presenting truth.

Modern Bible Version

As we've discussed on other occasions, perhaps a brief review of the subject of modern Bible translations is helpful.

It is interesting and important to realize that when the Bible was first written in the original Hebrew and Greek, the language was in the style currently being spoken and written by the people. It was not "old-fashioned" in its day and time. This has been shown by discovery of other writings of the same period. Such a fact argues for keeping the Bible always translated in up-to-date versions.

While most of us love the King James Version and are familiar with its majestic language, its archaic English often leaves something to be desired in the matter of clarity and accuracy. This is not meant to be a criticism of our still useful King James, but a plea that we become familiar with, and use extensively, the several good modern versions now easily available!

— Pastor William Wachtel

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