



IN MY OPINION

AS I BEGIN THIS TASK of editing THE RESTITUTION HERALD, I can't help but remember those who sat in this editor's chair before me. Their service over the years is wonderful to remember. They have consistently held up the truths that the Bible teaches, and that the Church of God has espoused. Look back and remember.

Hollis Partlowe (1990-1993)
 Russell Magaw (1979-1990)
 David Krogh (1978-1979)
 J.R. LeCrone (1973-1978)
 C.E. Randall (1971-1973)
 Terry Ferrell (1968-1971)
 Harold Doan (1955-1968)
 James Watkins (1951-1955)
 S.E. Magaw (1938-1950)
 G.E. Marsh (1931-1938)
 F.L. Austin (1922-1931)
 S.J. Lindsay (1911-1922)

But the 82 years do not end the story. As long as Christ has not returned we have a responsibility to keep publishing the hope of the coming Kingdom to our world. Perhaps we have not been able to clearly communicate the gospel as the Bible teaches it to a world that either has heard a perverted gospel, or no gospel at all. We can't allow it to languish just within our own body. It needs broader expression to our world. First in making that happen are our local churches and our pastors. Second, we look at the new works that are being planted. Third, there are new methods of proclaiming the gospel, such as television. And there remains publishing, of which the HERALD is a part. More efforts are being made in recent years than for some time . . . efforts such as *Wisdom and Power*, *A Journal From the Radical Reformation*, *Kingdom Come*, and others.

In his July 16, 1940 RESTITUTION HERALD editorial, S.E. Magaw wrote about our General Conference and stated:

Thus, for the General Conference of the Church of God to be strong and successful in the ever-ripening fields of service, it is divinely imperative that there be no divisions, no quarrels, no spirit of enmity among us. Brethren are *brothers*, not contestants. Every true minister of Jesus Christ *ministers*, and every local church unit labors in the common cause. Strong churches in California inspire our faithful few in Florida, and the winning of converts in Ontario cheers all the congregations in the States. The General Conference is of, by, and for all the Church of God.

That's exactly the spirit we need. We need to be strongly bonded with one another in our call of service. The gospel message is a message of good news about God's coming Kingdom. That really is good news for those who come to appreciate the exciting plan that God has for this planet and for His people.

THE RESTITUTION HERALD was founded with that as the basis of its message . . . to tell about the plan as presented in the Bible, a plan of which much of the world and even of Christendom is ignorant.

We as a conference need to renew our commitment to work together in spreading these truths of the Bible in a spirit of love and graciousness, but also of courage and boldness.

THE RESTITUTION HERALD is but one instrument whereby that can be done, but it is one. For a few years literature was thought to be of little worth in evangelism. But literature floods your mailboxes from merchants and

businesses that know it has a place. Of course the most effective literature is that passed from convinced people to someone else. It is one way you can help make a difference . . . by subscribing for someone else, or with someone else in mind. Twelve dollars for an annual subscription that could bear fruit for eternity.

Joining together . . . rejoicing in one another's successes . . . reaching forth to our relatives and friends . . . step-by-step doing our small part in fulfilling the Great Commission. R-11

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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HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM A SERMON!

1. Get to bed early Saturday night.
2. Get up early Sunday morning so a lost shoe or tie tack doesn't throw you into a panic.
3. Eat a leisurely breakfast together setting the mood for the day by reading a Bible text before giving thanks for your food.
4. Permit no non-religious TV or music Sunday morning to distort your worshipful frame of mind. (I'd be cautious about the above any other day of the week.)
5. Arrive 10 minutes early to enjoy greeting and talking with your friends.
6. Sit towards the front.
7. Take notes. This can't be overemphasized. You'd be surprised how this helps concentration and just brief notes will help you retain the message. Jotting down texts provides good references for later study.
8. See only yourself in God's "mirror" (James 1:23, 24). It helps no one try to "fit" the sermon to someone else. If it fits you, wear it in good spiritual health.
9. Don't arrive with a critical and judgmental attitude, for you will very likely leave with one.
10. If you don't agree with the sermon, make an appointment with the pastor to discuss it. It's impossible for him to concentrate on your views while shaking hands at the door.
11. Pray during the week that the pastor will sense God's leading for his message.
12. Listen with the idea that God is going to speak to a need in your life from His Word. Nothing that the minister says is infallible, but he does draw his conclusions from the Infallible Word. His main objective is to "read from the book . . . clearly . . . and give the sense of the . . . reading" (Nehemiah 8:8). If he does that, the sweet fellowship, communion, singing, and the Spirit of God in a receptive heart should make your day at God's house a radiant experience.
13. Discuss the sermon (not the minister) around the dinner table. Here, your notes could come in handy to "examine the Scriptures . . . to see if these things were so" (Acts 17:11).
14. Reflect occasionally on the general theme of the sermon the rest of the week . . . best done while praying.

There is nothing in all the world quite like a sermon! With the pastor behind the pulpit, and you willingly before the pulpit, it is mutually understood that the pastor may freely speak of "justice, self-control, and future judgment" (Acts 24:25), and you will graciously hear and heed for your own spiritual good understanding the Message comes from God.

A God-fearing pastor will readily admit to being humbled by the responsibility to preach righteousness to those who would willingly come to sit before him. Sometimes, it is awesome. He covets your prayers as he prays also for you!

It is you — my people — who have built for me a "wooden pulpit" (Neh. 8:4). Yes, you have built this place where you may come as "one man" (Neh. 8:1). You rightfully expect your "Ezra" to bring you God's Word in this place you've provided. As we read from the Book, then, may "the ears of all the people be attentive" (Neh. 8:3). —From Pastor Rex Cain, Bedford, OH

CONSIDER THIS!

Our society has stopped saying that God is dead. But He is still considered irrelevant. He's not important enough to go to school. He's laughed at by the entertainment media. His Ten Commandments are treated like the 55-mile per-hour speed limit: only the prudish obey.

A society that thinks God is insignificant can expect to be awash with problems. It shouldn't be surprised by rampant AIDS among homosexuals and drug users—with its accompanying spillover that claims the lives of many innocents. It should realize that it has left itself wide open to pornography-induced child molestation and female exploitation. It will look the other way when millions of unborn are gruesomely slain.

An irrelevant God is one who is brought out only for ritualistic worship. Kind of like appeasing a rain god.

But El-Shaddai is no rain god. And He won't be appeased. He is to be worshipped, adored, praised, obeyed, and consulted. Every day. All day.

As long as people consider God irrelevant—either individually, as a family, or as a nation—they may as well get used to paying the consequences. Ignoring Him won't make Him go away.

—By Dave Branson in *Discovery Digest*, via Pomona CA bulletin

Brief Messages



Why I'm So Thankful to God for His Church of God

by Pastor Stephen Bolhous
Fonthill, Ontario, Canada

GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD, for He is good" (Psalm 118:1). The motivation for thanksgiving to God is strong in Christian people. The need to express thanksgiving has prompted the establishment of national holidays. In Canada, Thanksgiving Day (complete with turkey and pumpkin pie) is observed on the second Monday of October; in the United States, Thanksgiving is the fourth Thursday of November.

In this Thanksgiving season of October/November, with resplendent autumn colors and an abundant harvest, there are numerous items which should receive our Thanksgiving attention. The greatest ones are intangible, non-material treasures. These escape our notice throughout much of the year but must not do so in this Thanksgiving season.

One of the rich treasures that should be central in our thanksgiving focus is our gratitude for the Church. The Church of God is a special group of people who love the Lord; though we are tinged with human flaws we also have honorable traits wor-

thy of our thanksgiving. I'd like to share with you three features of His Church of God for which I am especially thankful.

The Adventist Heritage

The Scriptures vividly present the promise of the second coming (advent) of Jesus: "the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God" (I Thess. 4:16). Paul speaks of this event to Titus as our "blessed hope" (2:13). This Bible promise was not always commonly accepted and taught as it now is. It lay dormant and neglected throughout much of history until its "rediscovery" in the nineteenth century.

One of my family treasures is a letter written by my great-great-great-grandfather, Garrett Robins of Illinois, while he was separated from his wife. The letter is dated May 20, 1855, shortly before the American Civil War (1861-1865).

My dear Elizabeth, I would like to say a great many things to you and especially about the glorious hope of a resurrection from the dead and an admittance into the Kingdom of our Lord. I see in the late papers that all hopes of peace to the nation are at an end and we hear of wars and rumors of wars . . . So my love, cheer up and hope to the end, for He is to appear without



sin to them that look for Him and love His appearing.

Our Church's forebearers were united in this hope and left it as a spiritual heritage to us. Peter wrote "to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours" (II Peter 1:1). We are linked with the believers of a century ago and with the Apostles in a common Adventist hope. With thanksgiving we boldly stand on the spiritual heritage and Bible promise of Jesus' return.

The Search for Truth

I am thankful for being part of a Church that esteems truth. The Scriptures present the value of truth. "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). "Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart" (Proverbs 3:3). Truth enlightens and liberates and therefore is to be held tenaciously.

The official title of the Christian Education Adult Lesson booklets published by our Church is *Truth Seeker's Quarterly*. This name reflects an attitude that is part of our Church's "personality profile." We are truth seekers. We search for God's truth; we prize it, cherish it, and will not forsake it. As truth seekers we are open-minded, not closed-minded. We recognize that no ceiling or quota of truth exists. The truth seeker knows it's always "open season" in the search for truth. Therefore he patiently listens and examines ideas and thinking that are new to him in the light of truth previously apprehended by his mind. If error is revealed it is discarded; if more truth is obtained it increases the treasure.

The failure to fully embrace this aspect sometimes results in problems. When we mistakenly think our cup of truth is full and we've learned all there is to learn and know all there is to know, then we've set ourselves up with a rigidity that makes us inflexible to the receipt of additional truth learning. "If anyone supposes that he know anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know" (I Corinthians 8:2).

M. Scott Peck's book, *The Road Less Traveled*, states that personal discipline requires dedication to the truth. He likens it to maps that need to be revised from time to time. God's truth is unchanging, but my imperfect comprehension of it must continually be updated and some lines on my "truth map" need to be adjusted. If I am

a genuine seeker of truth it will require a willingness to periodically change my understanding. I am thankful to God to be part of a body of truth seekers.

A Strong Sense of Family

I am thankful to God for the family feeling that exists within the Church. Believers in distant locations are brothers and sisters to me because we belong to the same Lord. Conference gatherings are something like the Passover observances in Jesus' day—a joyful celebration of being family with one another and with the Lord. These Christian family ties give me a sense of belonging and identity; I experience a feeling of acceptance which I could never replace.

A good family/church does two things:

- 1) Welcomes new members. A family/church is not a closed clique, it is an open-membership body. Those who wrongly entertain notions of seniority may see these new members as second class in some way, but a wise family/church rejoices when the Lord adds members.
- 2) Shares joys and sorrows. That which affects one member affects the whole body. "If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it" (I Corinthians 12:26). John Fawcett wrote: "We share our mutual woes, our mutual burdens bear . . . our fears, our hopes, our aims are one." A good family/church is genuinely concerned about all the members in it. I am thankful to God for the family concern practiced by our Church.

Conclusion

If you hold a small object close to your eye it dominates your vision field and blocks out all other items. Frequently when we think of our Church we think of its faults and things we dislike, allowing those concerns to dominate and mask the great good that it has. This kind of thinking distorts reality and keeps us from recognizing these positive features which are truly worthy of our thankful praise to God. In this Thanksgiving season take a fresh look at the Church God has given you. As you give attention to its ideals, aren't you glad and thankful, as I am, for His Church of God?

RH

To Commemorate the Closing

by Marsha Behrens
Oregon, IL

AS OF AUGUST 27, 1993, the Church of God General Conference building in Oregon ceased to be the seat of publishing for the General Conference. The Conference's long history at the corner of Third and Franklin Street began in the 1920's with Paul Johnson as associate editor of THE RESTITUTION HERALD. The publishing arm of the General Conference has now moved to Atlanta, Georgia with Kent Ross as interim editor. But before leaving the old place to its new owners, Spectrum Printing, a time of reverence and reflection with some of the current staff members seems fitting.

As the publishing staff prepared to transfer their duties to Atlanta, they took time to look back over the years which have been rich in experience and blessing. They are a dedicated group who have contributed much during their tenure and especially during the closing days at the Oregon site.

Hollis Partlowe stepped in three years ago as interim editor for THE RESTITUTION HERALD. He was retiring from thirty years of pastoring and saw this new position as editor as a challenging ministry and one that would allow him the outlet he felt he needed to express all that was in his heart to say about the Lord's message of hope. Hollis' two favorite activities are preaching and writing, and the editorship position allowed him time and opportunity for both. Even though he had retired from the pastorate, he preached almost every weekend. In addition, he spoke at various prophetic conferences, seminars, and evangelistic meetings.

His work as editor also enabled him to correspond and meet with a wide variety of theologians outside the Church of God faith. As a result, some Christadel-

It is with deep appreciation that we acknowledge the work of Hollis Partlowe, Gordon and Barbara Landry and Becky (Partlowe) Hall. They've concluded their employment with the Conference after many years of dedicated service.

Hollis Partlowe is a man with a heart for God, and a true pastoral concern for people. We wish him the best as he continues his "retirement," and trust that he and Hilda will continue their valuable ministry to our churches.

Gordon and Barbara's ministries go far back in the Church of God and they have served God's people faithfully around the country. While no longer pasting-up other people's work and proofreading it, hopefully Gordon will continue his writing ministry and Barbara will be there at his side as she has been through the years.

Becky has been a particular joy to me as she was to my dad the years she was his secretary. She has been in the front office faithfully fulfilling her duties for many years, though she is only 24 or 25 . . .

We will miss them all. They have been a part of us and they will be sadly missed.

—Editor

phians, Advent Christians, and members of the Seventh Day Church of God came to attend General Conference meetings in order to hear more.

Hollis's interest in the prophetic message and his skill as a direct, insightful author are obvious in his booklet entitled *Daniel's Prophetic Outline of World History*. In this publication, he not only details the Biblical forecast of world history, but he also stresses the basic purpose of prophecy—to edify and comfort us; to encourage, assure, and strengthen our faith.

In addition, he published a work entitled *God's Great Plus Sign to the World*, in which he describes the cross as God's great plus sign, His great sign of "addition" as He calls each one to be added to the Family of Christ, forgiven of sin through the blood on the cross.

He also contributed many articles to THE RESTITUTION HERALD over the years and contributed to the publication of *Christ Speaks to the Church Today*. In it he wrote about John's letter to the church at Philadelphia and the humble and faithful people there who exemplified the life of Christ, kept God's Word, and won converts.

Even though he is now retiring (for the second time!), he plans to continue writing and preaching and, he adds with a smile full of twinkles and enthusiasm, "being busy with my grandchildren . . . they're very important to Hilda and me."

Of course, Hilda and Hollis will remain in Oregon close to their daughters and their families: Rachel and Paul Newell and Becky and Mike Hall and their children Brian (7 1/2) and Kimberly (5).

Hollis first came to Oregon in 1954 to attend Oregon Bible College after two years of service in the U.S. Army in a World War II combat zone overseas. He came from the Cool Springs Church in Virginia. In 1958, he graduated from OBC and began his first pastorate in Macomb, Illinois where he served for seven years. Then it was on to Phoenix, Arizona to plant a new church which grew from 32 members in 1965 to 225 by the time he left in 1976. Next, it was back to Oregon to pastor the Oregon Church of God until 1988. He also taught systematic theology at OBC for two and one half years.

Hollis has served in many ways, and it is gratifying to know that his enthusiasm for continuing the work is strong and focused. May God continue to bless Hollis and his future service.

* * *

Gordon and Barbara Landry are also to be recognized for their dedicated service to the Church of God General Conference. Gordon first came to Oregon to attend the Bible College in 1945. During this time, besides having preaching duties at the East Oregon Chapel, he worked as assistant to the editor under the patient but exacting tutelage of Paul Johnson,



Publishing offices, Oregon, IL (before remodeling)

associate editor of THE RESTITUTION HERALD. At the time, Gordon knew nothing about the printing business. One of his most vivid memories of those early times occurred one day while he was running quarterly covers through a hand-fed press with hand-set type. Unknown to Gordon, a single letter of type had fallen out and the entire run of covers came out with a glaring gap where that letter should have been. Paul looked at the covers and said to Gordon, "Now we'll see what a good pressman you really are. I want you to position the missing letter in the chase and run these covers through again so the letter registers where it belongs." Gordon hoped he had fed through the initial run accurately, positioning the paper just so! If he hadn't, the missing letter might print with a glaring inconsistency. As it turned out, most of the covers looked pretty good, says Gordon. But he remembers the event as one of high anxiety for a young man just starting out and trying to please his new boss. He learned the printing trade well and to this day counts Paul Johnson as one of the most influential and admirable men in his life, along with Sydney Magaw who was also editor during the 1940's and an excellent Bible College teacher and man.

While pastoring East Oregon Chapel, Gordon met Barbara Kump—a "townie" from East Oregon. Barbara had come to

know the Lord at the East Oregon Chapel soon after Mrs. Floyd Nedrow began the work there. Looking back to those days, she remembers very warmly the sweetness of her Sunday school teacher, Beth Marsh. Barbara started taking classes at OBC during her senior year of high school.

Gordon, at the age of twelve, was baptized by

Harry Goekler of the Happy Woods Church in Hammond, Louisiana, after special meetings by Melville Lyon. He came to the Bible College because of his mother's wish that one of her sons become a minister. As a young man, Gordon overheard his mother say that of all her sons she felt that he was the one most likely to become a pastor. At the time, Gordon was surprised by what he heard and certain that it wouldn't happen.

Gordon and Barbara attended classes at the original Bible College site which later came to be known as Maxson Manor. In 1949 they married and filled their life with adventures in serving the Lord and with rearing their seven children. An eighth child died at four months of age from SIDS. For two years they cared for four foster children.

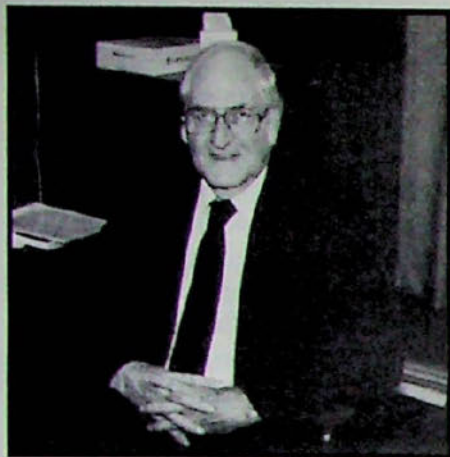
They began, after Gordon graduated OBC in 1949, by relocating in Ripley, Illinois, and pastoring the church there for a year and a half. Next they prepared to begin a work in South Africa. They sold everything, obtained a visa, and made plans to serve in Capetown. At the last moment word was sent from the South African government that their entry into the country was forbidden unless they had jobs already secured. Gordon contacted newspapers in Capetown hoping to find employment, but no job was available. Gordon and Barbara's hopes for

service in South Africa were halted. But they were ready to travel and serve—and so they did. Brother Clyde Randall suggested ministering to some isolated members in Douglas, Arizona. While in Douglas, a border town with Mexico, they also did outreach work across the border. After a year and a half, Gordon received word that his father in Louisiana was ill. At the same time a call came from the Blood River Church in Louisiana for a pastor. Gordon and Barbara went to Blood River and served for four years, then moved to Baton Rouge and stayed for 17 years. Gordon was a part-time minister and supplemented his income by being a timekeeper for a construction company and then working as a printer. Eventually he began his own printing business there, and subsequently merged with an advertiser.

One day in 1973, a call came from Stan Ross asking Gordon to come back to Oregon to work at the General Conference in the publishing department. Gordon accepted the offer. When he returned in 1974, he was also asked to pastor the Flag Center Church. His job in the publishing department included editing, proofing and paste-up work. His tenure ended in the position of Associate Editor in charge of managing all publications, including THE RESTITUTION HERALD, *The Progress Journal*, *A Journal from The Radical Reformation*, and various quarterlies, letterheads and envelopes, printing for Atlanta Bible College, and various printing jobs for churches.

Barbara came to work for the Conference's publishing department in 1977 as a proofreader and filing clerk. She moved on to do paste-up and some editing work. Barbara describes these past several years as "BUSY." Both she and Gordon recall that when they owned their print shop, publishing became a "family event"—there were times when collating was done around the family dinner table. Barbara often thought it was possible that a path might be worn into the floor from the constant shuffling of feet. Deadline time was often frantic.

(Continued on page 13)



“Belonging to Jesus”

by Pastor Hollis Partlowe (Ret.)
Oregon, IL

BEING A CHRISTIAN IS THE GREATEST privilege in all the world. The Christian is under the Lordship of Christ, since He has purchased us with His own blood. We belong to Him totally. A Christian is a worshiper of God. Someone said: “It doesn’t take much of a man to be a Christian, but it takes all there is of him.” That’s the secret.

Perhaps Jesus’ most embarrassing question is recorded in Luke 6:46: “Why call me Lord, Lord and do not the things which I say?” By the time you finish this article, you may think that I’m real square, in case you haven’t already come to that conclusion. At any rate, I want to be about as round as the Bible is and as square as it is.

Three Men Who Met The Master—Luke 9:57-62

Jesus called three men to follow Him, But all three had more important things to do. The first one said: “I will follow you wherever you go.” The second one replied: “permit me *first* to go and bury my father.” The third one’s excuse was: “*First* permit me to say good-bye to those at home.”

Did you notice that all three called Jesus Lord and in the same breath said, “*Me First.*” What a glaring inconsistency! No submission and yeildedness to the Master!



Small wonder that our Lord concluded: “No man having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God” (v. 62). The message of the Kingdom is more important than anything else—even family

(Cf. Matt. 10:35-39). The message and Messiah come first. Interestingly, Luke doesn’t record what happened later to these three men. However, His message is loud and clear. “If you want to be great in the Kingdom be My servant. Start doing what I say, or stop calling Me Lord. Change your vocabulary or change your life.”

It’s easy to pick out the servants in the Church. They are the ones who do all the work.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast our devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matt. 7:21-23).

Friend, you will hear the voices of the world, and the voice of Christ. You must choose which drumbeat you’ll follow. “Why call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” You will succeed or fail right here. Jesus is saying to you and to me: “If you follow Me you must give Me top priority. You must give Me visibility in your life.” Someone said: “If Christ has taken up abode in a human heart, He will be seen looking out the windows.” It seems we learn so much; we live so little. What I’m trying to say is behave your belief. “Remember Lot’s wife” (Luke 17:32).

Some of you have been Christians so long that you’ve forgotten what it’s like out there. Ha! We are greatly outnumbered. The strength and support of every member of the body is needed. To be a Christian every moment is no easy task, but Jesus supplies the power. It appears to me that the forgotten word in Christianity today is obedience. That’s a very unpopular concept, but we must remember that salvation is something that took place in the past, is taking place now and will be completed at the Second

Coming. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

The Example of Jonah

Jonah's message to Nineveh was very brief, just eight words: "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (3:4b). He had only bad news. Some Christians seem to be that way or worse. Some have no news at all—they are silent, tongue-tied. God said "Go"; Jonah said "No"; God told him to go to Nineveh. Jonah made a 180 degree turn. God said go east; Jonah went west.

Many Christians show a lack of interest in prayer, worship and Bible study. Consequently, there is a lack of fellowship with God in their lives and a terrible ignorance of the Word of God. A campus minister knew he was in trouble when he started his first service by saying, "Let us read in unison," and one student leaned over to another and said: "Is that in the Old Testament or New Testament?" Then he received a student information card under "church preference" marked: "red brick."

The Church, Society and Convenience

Many things that defeat the Church are socially acceptable. Your mate or date can be given first place. Your work can become your God. A house, a car, sports, an education or, a goal for retirement can become your idol. Over-emphasis on such things is motivated by "covetousness which is idolatry" (Col. 3:5b).

I'm appalled at Christians who will serve God only when it is convenient. It's possible to be doctrinally correct and still die in sin. Doctrine has to be applied. Jesus said: "If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them"

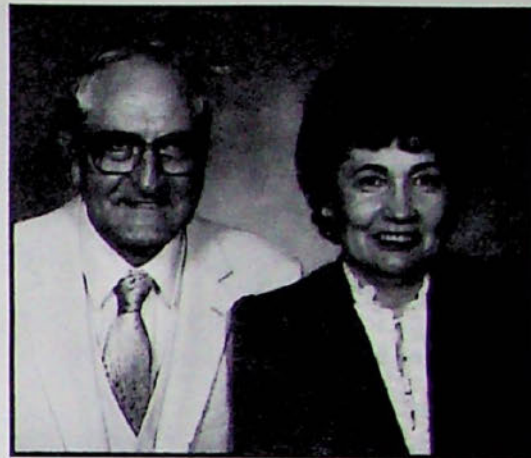
(John 13:17). It's not enough to impart knowledge. There must be a right response. People need to get involved in a learning experience. "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them is the wise man who builds on the Rock" (Matt. 7:24). The Apostle James echoes Jesus' statement: "Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (1:22). Not everybody talking about the Kingdom is going there.

Sin will take you further than you want to go; it will keep you longer than you want to stay; it will cost you more than you want to pay.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20). Notice where this church has Christ. The Lord of the church is outside knocking trying to get in. The Church is always telling the world to repent, but much call for repentance in the Bible is addressed to the Church. For example, Revelation 2 and 3 contain seven letters to seven churches, in which the Lord finds all except one coming up short and in need of repentance.

"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:19-20). Yes, God has a claim on us. We belong to Him, therefore let us glorify God. Paul's message is loud and clear: behave yourself; behave your belief, although to the world, "We are fools for Christ's sake..." (I Cor. 4:10).

There is a time to preach principles and a time to practice faith, and put our sermons and lessons in shoe leather. We must take time to



get to know each other and love one another. Love is a Bible doctrine. People who don't learn to love usually become critical and judgmental. Let's get into the doctrines—all the doctrines. Doctrine is studying Christ in detail.

One man said: "I'd like to be a Christian." His friend said: "Well, get into the Bible, and get into your church and worship." The man replied, "I'd like to, but I don't have time." You see, the problem is we want to serve God in our spare time. We want to give Him our leftovers, but Scripture says: "Honor the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase" (Prov. 3:9).

(Continued on page 33)



Thank God From Whom All Blessings Come

by Pastor Gordon Landry
Flagg Center Community Church

—Reprinted from the Nov. 15, 1962
RESTITUTION HERALD

"Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wonderous works declare" (Psa. 75:1).

AN UNGRATEFUL CHILD is a reproach to his parents. Many parents' hearts have been broken because their children turned on them in their twilight years and gave them into the care and keeping of total strangers. Reasons for such thoughtless actions are many. Often, too much of this world's goods have been lavished upon a child, and it has spelled his doom as far as good characteristics are concerned. Sometimes parents have shown little love and affection in the child's formative years, and the child has grown into adulthood devoid of natural love. Occasionally the child is at fault, for both parents have sought diligently to bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

Regardless of the reasons for rejection of parents by children, heartaches will result from the action, and the heartaches will evermore remain.



Now this is a sad and often disappointing fact, it is true. Of greater concern to us, however, is the regrettable fact that most of the earth's inhabitants have forgotten their God. God is no less loving than the best of parents, yet His children have turned their backs on Him. He made the earth a perfect dwelling place for man before ever creating man to inhabit it. But man ignored God's counsel and said in effect, "My way, God, is better than your way. I will decide what is best for me. You need bother no longer."

The reason man so readily turned aside from God was his own stubbornness in refusing to give God thanks in exchange for multitudes of free blessings. Said the Apostle Paul:

The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men . . . because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, *neither were thankful*, but became vain in their imagination, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen (Rom. 1:18-25).

We must not forget to be thankful as those men did. God has given us richly of His bounty. We too feel that *we* have expended *our own* time and energies to make a living, so why give God thanks for our daily bread? But

let us never forget that the energies we possess come directly from God. The air we breathe is His, loaned to us for a few brief years. The fertile ground that grew the food we buy was made by His mystical hand. Paul said, "He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:25,26). God said, in Psalm 50:10 and 11, "Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine."

So everything we can name belongs to God. Everything man has made, he has made with products God supplied. Whether it be lumber for building, oil for travel and smooth-running industry, or sand and gravel for roadbuilding, the products came from God. Truly He is worthy of honor and praise and thanksgiving from His creation.

Yet, for some unknown reason, much of creation goes about with its head empty, void of any high thoughts, useless in its race toward death. Psalm 10:4 records, "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts."

Remember the time ten lepers met Jesus? They were considered by the law to be unclean, and could not approach anyone who was not so afflicted. These men stood afar off: and they lifted up their voices, and said, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.' And when he saw them, he said unto them, 'Go shew yourselves unto the priest.' and it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, 'Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger?' And he said unto him, 'Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole' (Luke 17:12-19).

What a thankless life Jesus lived! So many of the people upon whom He had compassion failed to give thanks for deliverance from disease. Many later spurned him and called out to have Him crucified. Of ten lepers cleansed, one gave thanks. That is not a very high percentage, is it? Yet the percentage today is even less. Of the millions of people enjoying benefits from God, only a comparative handful return to give thanks. In which category are you?

We approach Thanksgiving for another year, and our thoughts turn, fleetingly perhaps, to giving God thanks. How best can we thank Him? How can we ever show our



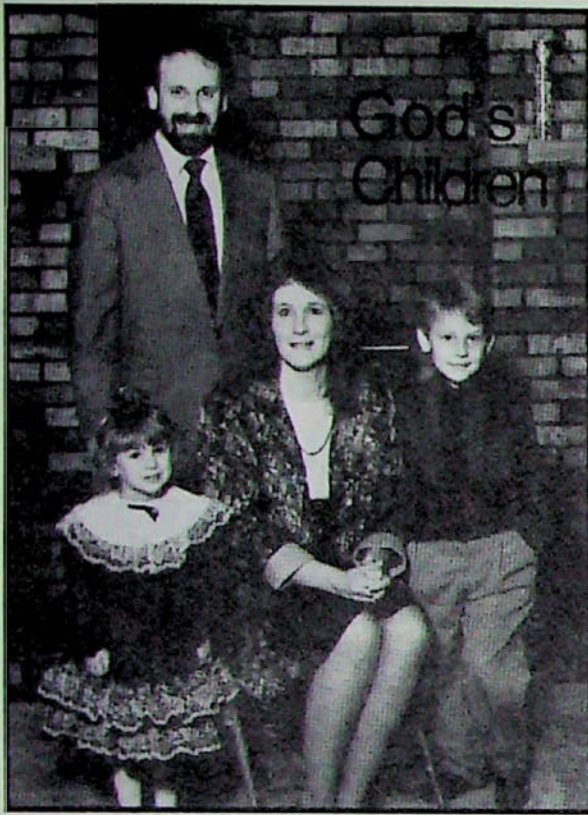
appreciation for the fact that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16)? "God commendeth his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

God had a beautiful and all-encompassing love for His creation. Jesus lived without sin, but died to save you and me from sin. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15). How, then, can we show our appreciation to God and His Son? Words sometimes seem futile when we approach our great and wondrous Creator. We can thank Him by word of mouth, to be sure, but here is another way. Jesus said, "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt. 10:8). Tell others about your God and your Saviour. This is the best way to thank them

for their sacrifices for you. And remember this, too—have Thanksgiving every day of the year, and your blessings will be wondrous to behold.



*Another article
by Pastor
Landry begins
on page 30*



by Rebekah S. Hall
Oregon, IL

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Prov. 22:6).

CHILDREN ARE A TREASURE FROM THE Lord. Being the mother of two small children is rewarding, challenging, and requires a lot of energy. God has entrusted us with two beautiful children that we love dearly and are a vital part of our lives. I count it both a blessing and privilege to be a mother. Brian is seven and a half and Kimberly is five.

Last year when Brian came home with papers that were not acceptable to my standards, I can remember telling him that he couldn't play that evening. He sat at the dining room table looking sad and doing his work over. He asked me, "Does this mean I won't be in the kingdom?" I tried to console him and tell him that it just meant he couldn't play that evening. After awhile, he said, "Does this mean I can't go to college?" I told him, "No, Brian, you are just grounded for tonight."



Kimberly was four years old when she learned "The Lord's Prayer" and the New Testament Books. How precious

it is to hear her say them. She sings herself to sleep with the cassette "Critter County," which is a set of study materials used by the Oregon Church this summer. She lies in bed and sings, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and "Be-e-e-e-lieve on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved."

Kimberly started Kindergarten this fall, and I decided to go back to work fulltime. It makes our time together even more precious. And so when I come home and Kimberly wants to go for a bike ride (she learned how to ride without training wheels this summer), I push myself to do it. When Brian wants to play Super Nintendo and my eyes are tired, I push myself to do it. I still can't tell spin jumps from fireballs or Yoshi from Luigi and I have only made it to Level Two. But I know that it doesn't really matter what we are doing, as long as we are together in touching and cuddling we are communicating love.

When I went to drop Brian off at school the other day I noticed when he turned to get out of the van a flash of green up around his neck. I asked him what he had on under his shirt. He said it was just his pajamas and it would save time later if he didn't have to change!

We were driving down the road the other day and Kimberly asked me where babies come from. I don't know why children pick riding in the car and sitting at the supper table to bring up such subjects; I guess it is just a given. I told her she was born in Rockford. She said she knew that part, but she wanted to know how she got in my tummy. I proceeded to tell her in five-year-old terms as simply as possible. The other day Dad was telling her how glad he was that she was part of our family and how lucky we were to have her. She looked at him very seriously and said, "Well, you know how I got here, don't you?"

We are fortunate enough to have my parents to watch the kids while we both work. I know they are being instilled with good, sound Christian background from two of the best teachers in the world. There is a special relationship between grandparents and grandchildren.

Brian likes to read to Kimberly at bedtime. Or sometimes we all cuddle together in one bed and read the Bible or do an "I Spy" book. I know these are special times.

When they started school in August, I was a little sad to think my "babies" were growing up. I'm excited for them and know they can't stay small forever. We, too, as Christians, cannot stay babes forever; we must grow and mature in the Lord.

We, as parents, are saddened when our children make poor choices and delighted when they make good ones. But we have to allow them to make their own decisions and deal with the consequences of those decisions. I'm sure God delights when we are in accord with His will and is saddened when we disobey Him.

May we be granted patience, wisdom, and a sense of humor as we bring our children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

RH



To Commemorate the Closing

(Continued from page 7)

Once one daughter, Jennifer, accidentally stapled off the end of her finger. But work hardly missed a beat. While Barbara and Gordon rushed Jennifer to the emergency room, the rest of the family dabbed off the blood specks from the pages and continued collating and stapling. (That's dedication, folks!) Curiously enough, Gordon says that in a way he'll miss deadline time. There is a certain unique sense of accomplishment generated by deadlines in the field of publishing. (Gordon must have experienced extreme joy in July and August, because the staff did double duty as far as deadlines, they worked ahead on winter quarterlies in order to create a buffer to ease the time constraints caused by relocating publishing and mailing responsibilities to Atlanta.)

Gordon and Barbara have made their home in Oregon and for the time being plan to stay. Family is an integral part of their life and ten of their sixteen living grandchildren are in the Oregon area. Gordon plans to continue pastoring at the Flag Center Church. Barbara plans to work at home. There are lots of calls for a good grandma like her to sit with the grandkids—although "sitting" is probably not the most important part of the job description.

* * *

Becky Hall began working at the General Conference in August of 1975 as a receptionist and secretary to Stan Ross. When Stan retired in 1980, Becky became a typesetter and secretary to David Krogh from 1980 to 1985. In 1985 she was in charge of computer operations, and went to parttime in 1986 after Brian's birth. She continued in that capacity until 1990 when she began duties as typesetter for the publishing department of the Church of God General Conference. She was also responsible for recording student payments, maintaining account balances, and entering daily receipts from the mail. In addition, she took care of running all mailing labels and address corrections as well as subscriptions for periodicals.

But all was not the picture of humorless professionalism and staid businesslike activity. Oh no, there were moments . . . there are moments! For example, each year as National Secretary's Day approached, Becky and a nameless co-worker (let's just call her Judy) saw to it that "subtle" reminders were left about the office. Once a calendar with the date vividly marked was found hanging from the ceiling about eye level over David Krogh's desk, and there were suspicious footprints on his desk - - - footprints from shoes with heart shapes grooved into their soles. (A few of David's lunches were also hidden out on the window ledge. Right, Becky?)

There was also a time when "Someone" taped down the buttons on the telephone under the receiver, so that when John Lewis (then president of the Bible College) picked up the phone and said "Hello, hello" he was met with complete silence and couldn't figure out how come the phones weren't working.

Then there was the time Stan Ross, having just returned from a trip, found that the office restroom was stuffed with so many inflated balloons that he could not enter without a terrific bumping and popping. Becky says she can still hear his giggle, he had so much fun popping those balloons.

When asked about those who had influenced her most during her time at the General Conference, Becky spoke of Stan Ross again—of his personal, one-on-one sense of caring for others. She worked most closely with him and is grateful to have had a chance to work with a man who was so sincere and who was so highly respected.

Becky and Mike, who has been employed for 19 years with Woods, have made their home in Oregon for several years and have two children, Brian and Kimberly. They all attend the Oregon Church of God where Becky has contributed her time as director of the bell choir, Sunday school teacher and substitute, Church Preschool Board member, and music committee member.

Now that her work for the General Conference is coming to an end, Becky has accepted a position with Stillman Valley National Bank in the real estate loan department. She has been working there part-time recently and is being trained for handling loan applications, appraisal orders, transmittal summaries, and many other real estate related tasks. [Note: Becky became full-time September 1 and has been asked to take some additional computer training in IBM WordPerfect 6.0 to do word processing for the bank. She has been asked to be the Network Supervisor for the new computer equipment and secretary to the Executive Vice President.]

She is happy to have found this promising position, but she says she'll always remember fondly the wonderful people who were more like family, not simply co-workers.

There are two members of the Oregon staff who will continue on in their work. Judy Myers, Missions Coordinator, will continue her work in the area of missions; and Gayle Guthrie, Christian Education Coordinator, will remain working with Christian Education. Both plan to work at home and send their work to Atlanta to be published.

Rgt

"An Attitude of Gratitude"

by Pastor Jack Hearp
Springfield, OH

THE MOST SENSITIVE NERVE in the human body is the one that leads to the pocketbook." This rather catchy one liner contains more than a little truth.

As I was thinking back on the topics of the sermons I have preached, I realized that very few were on the subject of "Money." Neither was it the most requested topic. Perhaps that is the case because I have been blessed to serve congregations that tended to be generous in their support of the Lord's work.

Money Talks

"Money represents us — our toil, our time, our talents." When anything is this closely identified with us it is only natural that we are going to be sensitive about it. What we do with money also talks about us. It can be spent, hoarded, or given unselfishly.

The way that we give says a great deal about us and our interests. The story is told of one Christian who was completely consecrated . . . except for his pocketbook. He would drop one dollar in the offering plate and then sing, "When we asunder part it gives me inward pain." *What we spend our money for, above the necessities of life, says*

a great deal about us. The man who opens the daily newspaper to the stock quotations probably has money invested in stocks. The lady who upon entering the Mall heads immediately for the dress shop is probably very much interested in her appearance and the latest fashions. Young people who use most of their spare money to buy the latest CD's reveal a love for music. What we spend our money for shows where our concerns lie.



Times Change . . . People Don't

How we distribute . . . or fail to distribute . . . our money has always said a great deal about any person or people.

Let's pause for a moment, and turn time backwards in its flight. From the pen of the prophet Malachi comes a message to the Jews living in Jerusalem. One hundred years earlier they had returned to their homeland from Babylon. Their earlier enthusiasm had subsided. Malachi's message is written with a heavy hand. In Malachi 3:7, he tells of a people who had turned aside from God's teachings and laws. God had given them laws to live by, (Deut. 4:4-8). Their greatness as a nation came from Him. Now, not only were they not keeping the rules, they were disobeying from the heart. Still, the God of love calls to them, "Return to me, and I will return to you," Mal. 3:7.

An Unthinkable Act

Next, Malachi charges his hearers with an act that is unthinkable. "You have robbed God!" v. 8. The word he uses indicates that they were robbing God continuously. These tithes and offerings were used for many things. They supported the Levites. Without the people's tithes, the Levites had to hire themselves out to do various tasks. As a result of this, the work of God suffered and was only partially done. Also, various special feasts for the poor (Deut. 14:28, 29) were severely curtailed.

Worse than a Tax Collector

Just two days ago the voice you don't want to hear spoke to me over the phone. "I'm calling from the Ohio Workman's Compensation Division. We would like to audit your church." My inward reaction was, "What have we done wrong? We were just audited a year ago." After I told the gentleman that we had just been audited a year

ago, that resolved the situation. "Some paperwork must not have come through" he said. "We only audit churches about once every three years." I heaved a noticeable sigh of relief.

If we react that strongly to a call from a tax collector, just how would the Jews react to the words found in verse 9? "*Ye are cursed with a curse . . .*" The people would lose God's approval. They would have no fellowship with Him. The land would not produce the crops that they needed for food.

When the people held back their tithes, or a portion of them, they were not hurting God . . . they were hurting themselves! Their sin was not just against the Levites . . . it was against God.

A Gracious Invitation

The command from God was to, "*Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse . . .*" v. 10. The *meat* mentioned means any food, not flesh. It was placed in storehouses found on three sides of the temple, and was given to the Levites as needed.

At this time, the Levites were having to *make do* with whatever portion of the tithes that were brought. When the Jews were faithful in bringing their tithes, then God's work was done in God's way.

"If we want God to open His storehouse, we must first open ours." And yet, that is not to be our sole reason for tithing. If our motive is strictly mercenary, I seriously doubt that God takes pleasure in it.

What About Today?

Perhaps of all the books of the minor prophets, Malachi's most nearly fits today. There is the constant, continuing love of God. He continues to reach out to men. Yet man continues to either disregard His love, treat it in a callous manner, or just go through the motions. We can put a new coat of paint on the sepulchre, but that doesn't make it attractive to God!

The church can have the very latest in machines and methods, in plans and programs. Nothing wrong with that. However; I believe that God is pleased when His people have a heart for Him. All the advances we have made in the above areas, as well as in other fields, have made us smarter . . . but not necessarily wiser.

God's Challenge

In geometry class, we were given a statement "*To Prove.*" But the bottom line was, "*The Proof.*" We were to prove that it was true.

In verse 10 are the words "*Prove me.*" God wants His people to prove Him, to put Him to the test. 'I have promised to bless you abundantly. I will open the sluice gates of heaven, and allow my blessings to fall freely to earth.' To my knowledge this is one of the few times in the Bible that we are asked to prove God.

The Apostle Paul has written some words on this same theme. They are found in II Corinthians 9:6-8. No one is ever the loser in giving generously to God. Instead, we become richer. Barclay

says that these riches can include: friends, love, help received when we need it, and riches toward God.

Jesus, in His teachings, told us that what we do for others, we do for God. However, we should do it with a happy heart. Again, Barclay writes, "There was a rabbinic saying which said that to receive a friend with cheerful countenance and to give him nothing is better than to give him everything with a gloomy countenance."

Learning from Jesus

The promise of abundant blessings to the giver in Malachi shows that God placed a high value on the tithe.

Seeing that Jesus was raised in a devout home, it is undoubtedly true that He tithed. If He hadn't, His enemies undoubtedly would have charged Him with a failure to do so. Although Jesus condemned the Pharisees for many things, He did maintain that it was right for them to tithe, (Matthew 23:23).

The Early Church

The Jewish Christians had a zeal to observe the law (Acts 21:20). Therefore, we can conclude that they paid tithes. Peter was called to account because he entered the home of a Gentile. He certainly would have been taken to task had he not tithed. Many Jewish converts went far beyond the tithe, such as Barnabas who gave all that he had.

Given these examples would it not be likely that the Gentile Christians be taught the principle of tithing?

The concept of giving to God a proportionate amount pre-dates the law. In Genesis 4:7, Cain is accused of failing to "rightly divide." This implies that Cain failed to give the proper portion. A literal translation of Hebrews 11:4 refers to "a more abundant sacrifice." Though some contend that tithing is legalistic, before the law was ever given God made it known that men were to return to Him a definite percentage of income.

A Personal Testimony

"*When you tithe, God makes the nine-tenths go further than the ten-tenths.*" Given a mathematics background in university, I look at that statement logically, and say that it can't be true. You don't have to have a degree to know that ten-tenths has to be more than nine-tenths. From a logical standpoint, it just isn't so. Yet, from a practical standpoint, I can say that it is.

I was privileged to grow up in a church that taught tithing. Those who had done it all of their lives testified to the fact that they had been blessed by doing it. I began to tithe while working various jobs after school, and continued while working in industry and now in the ministry. God has blessed . . . and I thank Him for His goodness. R+1

COMPUTERS CONFIRM FIRST FIVE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

Researchers in Israel say that data gleaned from special computer analysis of the first five books of the Bible shatter the notion that they were written by different persons at different times.

Such multiple authorship of the so-called books of Moses, called the Torah in Judaism, has long been commonly assumed by most modern biblical scholarship, outside fundamentalist circles.

But Scripture scholar Moshe Katz and computer expert Menachem Wiener of Israel Institute of Technology say their unusual system of analysis dispels the view that the books are a collection of documents of varied authorship.

In fact, they say the statistical evidence strongly suggests that the material couldn't have been put together, in its odd patterns of "hidden" basic words, by a mortal at all.

The particular phenomenon "cannot be explained rationally," says Wiener. "So we need a non-rational explanation. And ours is that the Bible was written by God through the hand of Moses."

A report of the findings was distributed through offices of Israel's consulate in New York.

The research was based on a theory mentioned in later rabbinic literature that significant words are concealed in the Hebrew text of the five biblical books, the words spelled by letters separated at fixed intervals.

Exploring that possibility by computer, analyzing the vast amounts of material and intervals, the researchers say they did, indeed, find such coded key words distributed through the books.

Katz says the statistical possibility that the patterns of words would be repeated only by chance was remote, sometimes as low as one to three million.

For example, he cited the Hebrew word "Torah," found repeated in the book of Genesis by letters at 50-character intervals, while the word "Elohim" (God) is formed by letters at 26-character intervals.

Wiener says the remarkable aspect is not that words are found in the text by stringing together letters at regular intervals, but that in every instance, the disclosed decoded words bear direct relevance to the text in which they are concealed.

For instance, he notes that the burial site of Adam and Eve is never mentioned in the text, but by the letter-skipping method, the names of "Adam" and "Eve" appear in the text describing the burial place of the patriarch Abraham and his wife, Sarah.

The above is intriguing, isn't it? I'm reminded of that famous passage: "All Scripture is *Inspired* by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

—September 13, 1987

—Selected from Flagg Center, IL. bulletin

In Need of Help

Sr. Betty Ackels, of the Raymore Church of God, often sends me clippings. This letter she sent me last summer speaks volumes. I don't know Mr. Larson, but the theme of his letter reflects how many feel about the place of the Lord in public life. Read Mr. Larson:

Way to go, *Star*. Again you've shown your disregard for America's spiritual heritage. When we need it most, you must deem it "old-fashioned" or irrelevant to even mention the National Day of Prayer, let alone give it any prominence.

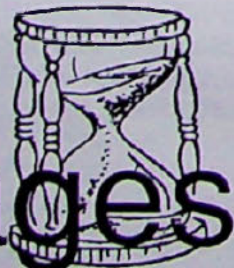
Here we are, a country up to our "eyeballs" in social, economic, interpersonal and moral/ethical problems, and it doesn't even merit a mention to admit our need for God's direction, wisdom and intervention. Heck, we only murder 25,000 of our countrymen each year, we have thousands of alcoholics, half of our marriages fail, we have millions of drug addicts, millions in deep depression and/or who are suicidal, bigotry and racism abounding, millions of people unemployed, we're on the brink of engaging in another faraway war... but we sure don't need any divine wisdom or intervention, do we?

No, as a people, we're so educated, informed, "politically correct" and sophisticated that we can handle it all ourselves, right?

Lord have mercy... Oops, guess if I mention "Him" this letter will be surely left out.

Well, to the *Kansas City Star's* credit, they didn't leave the letter out. But don't you often wonder how God gets left out of life? More than 90% of Americans say they believe in God, but we can't pray to Him at many public functions because somebody might be offended at the recognition of a deity. Public officials give Him lip service, but then push public policies and make laws that deny what He taught us in the Bible.

Brief
Messages



CHURCH OF GOD GENERAL CONFERENCE HISTORY NEWSLETTER

Atlanta Bible College
Church of God
General Conference

Box 100,000
Morrow, GA 30260

Volume 6

October/November 1993

Number 1

Our Correspondence

Dear Jan Stilson,

What's in a name?

I read with great interest your article in the CGGC HISTORY NEWSLETTER, primarily because the "issue" of names has been of great interest to me lately.

I am (Unamended) Christadelphian, but recently I "discovered" a huge group of people, namely the "Church of God General Conference" with whom I share much in common doctrinally. Needless to say this was quite a surprise, since I had been reassured by my fellow Ch.ians (sic) that only the Ch.ians had the "Truth," the whole "Truth" and nothing but the "Truth."

I no longer agree. I consider the CGGC close enough to what I believe that I have no difficulty fellowshiping with CGGC members, calling them "Brother" or "Sister," attending your services, etc. The doctrinal differences are minor, and I believe that we are saved by grace, and not by doctrinal purity anyway. We share much of our history, as well, so I have been reading with much interest the HISTORY NEWSLETTER.

I did have some comments on your article:

1. I believe that I am familiar with the group of five (six, actually, there is a church in Miami, FL that meets in the winters, composed of vacationing retirees, mostly) churches that you mention in Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. I knew that they were a split-off from the CGGC.

2. This group often refers to itself as the Church of the Blessed Hope (CBH), in order to distinguish itself from an old, but still used name of the CGGC, which was "Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith."

3. To add confusion to chaos, this group of five/six churches is referred to as the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith by those Ch.ians who know of them. They have been welcomed and fellowshiped at some (though not many) Ch.ian ecclesias. A certain amount of contact occurs between more accepting Ch.ians

(mostly Unamended) and the CBH. They have been welcomed and have fellowshiped at our annual Williamsburg Conference (one of our many "Gatherings," this one much more "ecumenical" than most). There was even an effort to include them in the recent Reunion effort to unite the Amended and the Unamended parts of the Ch.ians. I personally like them, and love to visit when I can, and I always enjoy seeing them at the Williamsburg Conference.

4. Whatever the split was about in the past it seems to have different purposes now. This group of churches has been moving culturally closer to the Ch.ians for some time now, and have adopted many of our "culture traits." Only one church in this group has a pastor anymore, and he only speaks once every four weeks. He is elderly and is kept on, I gather, out of kindness. The movement has been away from paid pastors and towards the "Ch.ian" system of speaking brothers, etc. Doctrinally, they tend more towards Ch.ianism, though some still continue to hold belief in "immortal emergence," "supernatural devil," "historical interpretation," etc. that most Ch.ians would look askance at. They are also very conservative and in that respect may be more from them, and they (CBH) have become more like the Ch.ians. The CBH are in a sense Christadelphian "wannabes," though they have tragically not met with acceptance by even a majority of Ch.ians.

5. I wonder why the CGGC chose to call itself the Church of God, General Conference. There is another denomination that often refers to itself by a very similar name "Churches of God, General Conference." Even when you add the "(Oregon, IL and Morrow, GA)" more about the CGGC, I ran into difficulty because of the similarity.

6. I like the name "Abrahamic Faith" to use to describe the group of denominations that includes the following: Unamended Christadelphians; Amended Christadelphians, Dawn Christadelphians; Church of God, General Conference; Church of the Blessed Hope. When I first discovered the CGGC and began to see that not only the "Ch.ians" had the "Truth," I began to look for a name to describe my beliefs, because "Christadelphian" seemed too narrow. For a while I liked "Radical Adventism,"

but I like "Abrahamic Faith" better because it brings out our unique emphasis on the Abrahamic covenant and our part in it. I don't like to consider myself so much to be a "Christadelphian," as a "Abrahamic Faither."

7. Therefore may I suggest that the "Abrahamic Faith" be used only to describe our group of denominations that share a certain amount of common history in the sense of being born out of the Adventist movement, and our founders having interacted with each other extensively, but also share a core of similar doctrine and belief, including, but not limited to: the coming Advent of Christ and establishment of the Kingdom, conditional immortality, rejection of Trinitarianism and Incarnationalism, etc.

8. For the sake of having commonly agreed upon abbreviations for the denominations in the "Abrahamic Faith" may I suggest the following:

CGGC	Church of God, General Conference (Oregon, IL and Morrow, GA)
CBH	Church of the Blessed Hope system (Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana)
UCHN	Unamended Christadelphians
ACHN	Amended Christadelphians
DCHN	Dawn Christadelphians

Dear Jan,

What a perfect delight it has been to see our Lord working through you and your associates with the HISTORY NEWSLETTER.

A short time ago I had been pretty apathetic regarding the past apart from the Bible and so when the time came to combine the wisdom of *The Restitution Herald* with the knowledge imparted by the HN, I was questioning the affair. But the April-May issue firmly settled the matter for me. I find it heartening to know that our fathers in the faith of Christ Jesus endured estrangement for holding to their belief. And that they overcame that wily

I suppose I should come up with an abbreviation for every little rinky-dink split amongst the Ch.ians but I would not want to bore and depress you with a monologue on Ch.ian "splitology." Suffice it to say that the Amended, the Unamended and the Dawn are the three big parts of the Ch.ians.

9. In terms of size, the ACHN are the largest. I am still trying to gather more precise statistics, but my estimate is 20-40 thousand worldwide. Next largest are the CGGC with some 4-5 thousand. The UCHN are 2-3 thousand and the CBH some 2-3 hundred. Statistics on the DCHN are unknown but they are unlikely to number more than a thousand. I am hoping soon to complete research for a paper on the geographical distribution of the "Abrahamic Faith."

I realize that my suggested usage of the term "Abrahamic Faith" may presume more unity amongst our groups than actually exists, but I think that the things we all agree are far more important than those that we differ on, especially when we compare ourselves to other denominations, even others in the Adventist movement. I hope to see at least more contact and informal fellowship amongst the groups. Is this out of the question this side of the kingdom? Most Ch.ians remain blissfully ignorant of even the existence of the CGGC or CBH, or even other branches of the Ch.ians. We

serpent, and are resting now in peace. Our battles are daily and sometimes drain our strength as though without sympathy. I personally am encouraged to "just say no" to various teachings that spring up every few generations to confuse our hearts. Unfortunately, there are many people without that wall of protection which is the Word of God.

Please continue this work of documenting the lives of our fathers and may God sustain the present and the future with faith.

Your servant am I,
—E.V.L
Oregon, IL

tend to exist in our own little sectarian worlds, but I for one am willing to let God in His infinite wisdom decide who is His, and to do my best to be as inclusive as possible.

Thank you for your informative article. I look forward anxiously to each issue of the HISTORY NEWSLETTER.

—N.T.B.

Alexandria, VA

Dear Bro. N.T.B.,

The ideas proposed in your letter about the common term of "Abrahamic Faith" (points 6 - 8) to refer to all sister denominations which stress the Covenant to Abraham have possibilities for removing differences and enhancing our common bond in Christ through Abraham.

In our case, we have begun this process of organization without focusing on Abraham (as yet). A group of people representing the Church of God General Conference, Advent Christians, Seventh Day Adventists and ex-Jehovah's Witnesses met in Aurora, Illinois, March 1993 and formed the Adventist Movement Historical Association (AMHA). One very important common point of investigation should be our emphasis on the "Abrahamic Faith." I have sent your name and address to Mark Mattison, our acting secretary. Keep in touch.

—JS

Dear E.V.L.,

Thank you for your encouraging letter. The trials and tribulations that Joseph Marsh endured for his belief in the Age to Come may be seen among our many other early evangelists. A.J. Eychaner tells about traveling in Iowa using a large canvas tent for meetings and a large trunk for his clothing packed for the tour. One particularly hostile pastor in a small Iowa town took his trousers from the trunk so he couldn't preach the evening service! We can always hope he borrowed a pair or had a spare pair!

—JS

Dear Janet:

I enjoyed talking with you yesterday. Since then I have done some research and it seems that Bro. Lindsay left Oregon in 1923. That was the year when the Conference selected Bro. Austin as the new Executive Secretary. Actually the Advisory Board recommended his selection. Then evidently Lindsay moved to Tempe and started his paper *Messenger of Truth* the same year. I do not know just when Lindsay started back to conference but it was after his illness. In 1937 and 1938 he was one of the teachers at the six weeks training class. I attended in 1937. Lindsay was also one of the teachers at the General Conference one of those years. At one conference, both Lindsay and Austin were present and at one session they each spoke kind words about each other. One year on one of their wedding anniversaries Bro. Lindsay and wife were presented with a sum of money that had been collected by all those at conference. I well recall when they walked to the front of the church and were given the money. Bro. Lindsay almost broke down in thanking the people.

As to Siple and Austin, there was animosity between them for some time but in later years they were real friendly. One year Bro. J.W. McClain was driving into Chicago and offered a ride to any who wanted to go. I had to catch a train to Chicago. Siple had some business in Chicago, as did Austin, so we all rode together to Chicago. During the ride Austin asked Siple who Bro. Randall had meant in a sermon he had preached at conference. Siple replied he thought Randall was reaching out to those who in the past had held ill feelings to some. Bro. Austin replied, "I don't care two hoots about the past" and Siple said "I don't either."

My information on Lindsay and Austin came from the book by Randall, *Historical Waymarks of the Church of God*.

As to Bro. Conner I recall one year he was elected President of the Conference

and in those days the delegates tried to select members of the board from different parts of the country. South, East, West, and North. But Conner refused to serve unless he had a board he could meet with from time to time. They had to be close enough to Oregon that they could attend meetings. The Conference yielded to his demands and elected a board that the members were close to Oregon that each could attend meetings. Being a lawyer he was able to guide them in legal matters. He also was a businessman and I think made one of the finest presidents the conference ever had.

Yes, I knew these ministers quite well and could tell many things I could recall their saying, etc. Bro. Siple was a fine speaker and could preach some of the best sermons. He preached a sermon on Joseph one time I will never forget. During one meeting at my home church in Salem he baptized 12 people, including my Dad.

Bro. Lyon was another minister that for years was one of my special friends and for years each winter during minister's conference in Oregon he and I always stayed at the Austin home. One year when I was pastor at Happy Woods Church in Louisiana, he held some meetings and it was during one of those meetings my daughter was baptized. Another year he held some meetings at Happy Woods and eight young people were baptized, including Gordon Landry and Gordon's sister Mary Helen. Mary Helen of course later married Jim Mattison.

Well if I see you and talk with you I probably could tell you much more. It is just too bad that Siple got involved in some wrong things. Also Bro. Austin from 1936 on began preaching and teaching more on Anglo-Israel and the Great Pyramid. As you know Lindsay was Jim Mattison's grandfather and Austin was Austin Railton's grandfather. And each had great influence on Jim and Austin.

By the way, my mother's father, John Claypool, was a good lay preacher and fine singer. He helped build and organize

the Salem church. And he and his family often attended conferences that were held at the Moriah church near Casey, Illinois. He would load his family in a wagon and drive to the Moriah church. A distance of about fifteen miles. I have a picture taken at one of these conferences with John Claypool among others. Also Lindsay and some of our earlier ministers.

Must close and get letter in the mail. Incidentally, Bro. Lindsay had a debate with a Baptist minister named Fuson. Lindsay said it was the only debate he ever had.

—Harry Goekler

Dear Bro. Goekler,

You have filled in many details regarding our earlier pastors. I always enjoy visiting with you by phone or letter. You have sent much material on the churches of Casey and Marshall, Illinois. Next issue I will devote space to their history. Please send me your photos of John Claypool and I will return them to you in good condition.

Thanks,
—JS

Editors Note: *In a recent issue of Vol. 5 of THE HISTORY NEWSLETTER I referred to the "Church of God Abrahamic Faith" which I thought had been incorporated under that name in the mid-1980's. The information given to me at that time had been erroneous. I am now told by Byron Williams, the son-in-law of Robert Huggins, former Editor of The Restitution, that as a trustee who helped in that corporation process, he could state authoritatively the official name is "The Church of God of the Blessed Hope." So, it would seem that our brothers, who chose not to charter with us in 1921, also elected not to officially become the "COG of the Abrahamic Faith," but, like us, have continued to use that term as a descriptive phrase. The reader is referred to a letter with yet another idea for using that AF phrase, by N.T.B. in this issue.*

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Dear Jan,

Just letting you know that I appreciated your article and that of Mark's in the April/May HISTORY NEWSLETTER. I can also appreciate the amount of research that underlies such articles.

This subject of Christadelphian founder Dr. John Thomas' "rebaptism" is very interesting to me. In the article re-immersion is said to be predicated on the idea "that a perfect doctrinal understanding must precede baptism." In effect, one is actually baptized into a theology or as in the case of John Thomas "into the Campbellite Movement." A change of doctrine, theology, or denomination (Movement) would then appear to make such a rebaptism necessary.

It is indeed fortunate for us that men like Joseph Marsh saw baptism in a very different light—one that responded to

one's simple faith in Christ. I very much like his teaching that through "the genius of the teachings of Christ, He makes provision for the imperfections in knowledge of His disciples."

The issue of rebaptism is not an old one, it is still with us today. In my church's constitution, membership eligibility has been based traditionally upon immersion "by a believer of this faith." This brings up the issue of rebaptism by inferring that a person's former baptism (outside of the context of the Church of God Faith of Abraham) is invalid. This also implies that the person was not formerly a Christian and was not properly converted until their experience with the Church of God. Fortunately, we are currently undergoing a revision in our constitution to strike the words "by a believer of this faith."

This was brought about by a recent examination of a secretarial record from the

1880's and 1890's of the Waterville Church of God that was founded and pastored by Richard Corbaley and was the first Church of God in the state of Washington. We discovered that our so-called tradition was not the tradition of the pioneers of our faith.

Waterville received into its membership Christians from other denominations. Those who were satisfied with their former baptism were not required to be baptized. Those who wanted rebaptism were given it. Those who had never been baptized were baptized. Somewhere along the line the Wenatchee Church of God narrowed its application to require rebaptism of those formerly affiliated with another denomination.

This requirement of rebaptism caused us to speak of baptism as "baptism into the church" or "baptism into the faith." We were challenged on the scripturality of these statements. We found them not to be the statements of Scripture. Truly, one should be baptized into a person and not a church. That person is Jesus Christ.

Thanks again for allowing these issues of the past to be brought up again for our consideration and review. Indeed we learn by our past mistakes.

Yours in Christian service,
—D.O.
Wenatchee, WA

Dear D.O.,

We are always glad to have your thoughtful replies to the articles in the HN. At the Oregon Church of God, while I was growing up, rebaptism was the official position. When my husband and I moved to Virginia, to assume two small valley churches, their position was to accept new members by letter if they had been formerly immersed. So I have seen both positions practiced in the Church of God over the years, representing both Marsh's and Thomas' point of view.

—JS

These three photographs came from J.W. McLain.

Verna Thayer, Child Evangelist of the Church of God from the 1940's through 1960, is shown with her children during and after a VBS. Can anyone identify this group of kids?



Can you tell from the motions in pix #2 which chorus they are singing? Vote for one:

- ___ "Climb, Climb Up Sunshine Mountain," or
- ___ "Fishers of Men"
- ___ ?????



Timothy Pearson (far right, third row) with a teenage class. Who will identify this great-looking group? Might it be Blood River, Louisiana; or North Salem, Indiana?



MEN ARE FOUR

Men are four:

He who knows, and knows he knows—he is wise—follow him;

He who knows, and knows not he knows—he is asleep—wake him;

He who knows not, and knows not that he knows not—he is a fool—shun him;

He who knows not, and knows that he knows not—he is a child—teach him.

—Arabian Proverb

FIRST AMENDMENT

Stated Senator Jeremiah Denton on the floor of the U.S. Senate when the subject was discussed: "How is it that High School students can address God profanely in the hallway, but not reverently in the classroom? Why must they pledge allegiance to a nation under God, yet be denied permission to discuss the nature of that God? By what logic can students meet after school to hear the philosophies of Plato, Marx, and Hitler but not Moses, Jesus and Paul? This is the First Amendment being interpreted through the filter of secular humanism."

—North Salem Church, IN bulletin

Danger!

You are in danger:

*when you grow bolder with sin, or with a temptation to sin, than you were in your more watchful state

*when you make a small matter of a sin which once was almost intolerable to you

*when you settle down to a course of religion that seems easy and comfortable

*when your God and Saviour seems even a little strange to you

*when your religion consists of conversing with men and their books, and not with God and His Book

*when you take more delight in hearing and talking of secular affairs than in prayer and in the Word

*when you grow more hot and eager about some disputed point of your own than about those matters which concern the great cause of Christ

*when you feel harsh, vengeful or bitter toward anyone

*when you think more of outward ordinances than of heartwork

*when you are thirsting after some worldly enjoyment and eager for it

*when the thought of God and His Kingdom does not stir a deep love and longing within you

*when the world seems near to you and eternity only a dream.

—Megiddo Message

THE BIBLE AND ITS CRITICS

In earlier centuries the Bible came under criticism from unbelievers who made no pretense of being Christians. In more recent times the heaviest criticism has come from within the professing church itself! Scholars in Christian seminaries and other such institutions of higher learning have made bold and unrelenting attacks on the truthfulness and authenticity of the Scriptures. This has led many people in our society to conclude that the Bible is not worthy of their trust.

The sad thing is that many of these people do not take time or make the effort to discover for themselves whether the attacks of the critics are really justified, or whether in fact the evidence now available supports the Bible after all. A branch of theology called "apologetics" has gone to great lengths to search out and to assess that evidence, with the result that any unprejudiced thinker who weighs it carefully can be assured that the Bible really does merit our trust and our obedience.

This writer finds it hard to have patience with those who claim to be Christians but who in subtle or not so subtle ways reveal their lack of submission to the authority of Scripture. Some of the theories of modern science, sociology, psychology, and other fields of learning often seem to be allowed to take precedence over the clearly revealed principles of God's Word. Such a thing is understandable in the conduct of those who are of the world and do not know God. But it is strangely inconsistent when seen in those who call themselves Christians and claim to believe the Bible as God's Word!

The time has come, at this late date, for the sons and daughters of God to stand up and be counted on the side of truth, insisting on the Bible as their only infallible guide despite all the theories of men. When we stand before the Judgement Seat of Christ, He will not be interested in our sophisticated theories that evade the demands of Scripture. Rather, He will be looking for simple trust and faith and obedience on our part—like that of a little child! (Mark 10:15)

—Pastor William Wachtel, Wenatchee, WA

Brief Messages



120 Things For Which Our Family Can Be Thankful

by Michael and Linda Hoffman, of Oregon, IL

Play a little word association game with us. We are sure you know how. Impending. What comes to your mind? Doom. Defeat. Flood. War. Usually thoughts associated with the word impending are not pleasant. May we suggest one more thought? Holidays. As you read this the holiday season will be very near, ready or not.

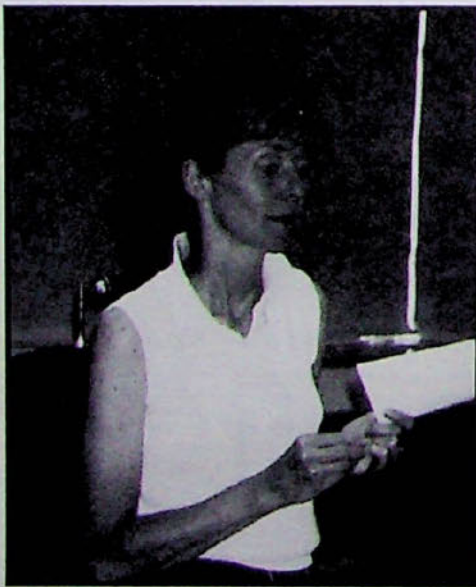
"The Holidays" are a wonderful time of year we have learned to both love and hate. It is so easy to love the special spirit that permeates our world, savory aromas, giving, others-centered focus, laughter, joy, heightened sense of thankfulness, and the plan God carried out through Christ. It is also easy not to like the rush, busyness, lack of balance, commercialization, financial demands, crowds, and traffic. "The Holidays" can be a time of joyous fun shared with family and friends or a time of bitter loneliness and isolation. The relative brevity of the season makes for rather intense feelings either way.

We would suggest to you the Biblical appropriateness of spreading out your thankfulness throughout the year. It is good and proper to observe Thanksgiving, but our God is faithful each and every day and deserving of our praise. We find it tragically easy to take God's daily provisions for granted and rob Him and ourselves of the joy of expressing our thankful praise. The Bible often challenges us with the

need for daily praise and thanksgiving. Consider the following verses as a very brief sampling of such challenges. Psalm 100 (NIV): (The entire Psalm but we will focus on verse 4) "Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name." Ephesians 5:19, 20: "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." I Thessalonians 5:16-18: "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

Verses like these and many others challenge us to recognize praise and thanksgiving as daily activities, not weekly or seasonal. So, we sat down and made a list of things we are thankful for and sometimes take for granted. The list comes both from our personal family experience and through observing others. We hope our list will even motivate you to "give thanks to God the Father for everything" and generate your own list. That would be a great family worship time.

More than just "the Holidays" are impending, so is life. Each day take advantage of the pleasure and privilege of praising our God, the Author and Creator of life. He is so good. We do indeed have so much for which to be thankful.



January (1-10)

- New beginnings
- Sculpting a snowman
- Sleeping in on Saturday morning
- Memories rekindled by browsing through old photographs
- Arizona winters
- The snow shovelling job being done
- Hot buttered popcorn
- Forgiveness
- The ability to read
- A song from your heart to God

February (11-20)

- Holding a sleeping baby
- The love we share at Valentine's Day, and every day
- Great men of history
- A box of chocolates
- The perspective gained from a chat with an elderly friend
- Reading out loud to children
- The words "I am sorry"
- A leisurely hot bath
- An unexpected gift just because
- Little girls

March (21-30)

- Fuzzy pussy willows
- Hearing the contented purr of a spoiled cat
- Watching a classic Disney animated movie
- The immense pleasure of prayer
- The scent of a newly powdered baby
- A simple "please" or "thank you"
- Ticklish children
- A new Easter outfit
- An empty cross
- Supper "out"

May (41-50)

- May baskets filled with fresh tulips
- The laughter of children at play
- The smell of freshly cut grass/hay
- Playing catch with your child
- The aroma of sheets hung outside to dry
- Counting down the last days of school
- Watching birds gathered at the feeder
- A favorite hymn
- The thrill of blowing big bubbles
- The beauty of a deer lazily grazing



April (31-40)

- Receiving a dandelion bouquet
- A refreshing rain shower
- The first robin returning for spring
- (Obnoxious) morning people
- The joy of a new insight into Scripture
- The excited lick of a puppy
- A big hug bestowed to "makeup"
- The time change bringing more daylight
- An empty tomb
- Growing boys

June (51-60)

- Starlit summer nights
- Watching the garden grow and develop
- Going swimming on a hot day
- The kids off to youth camp
- The sound of crickets on a pleasant summer night
- The smile that wedding picture brings every time
- Hamburgers on the grill
- The peace and calm after a thunderstorm passes
- Ice cream cones
- The kids home from camp

July (61-70)

- The taste of watermelon
- Grown-ups swinging in the park
- Fireworks and celebrating our country's independence
- Fried chicken and potato salad at a picnic
- Air-conditioning
- Playing in the sprinkler
- A Little League base hit
- Parades
- A walk on the beach
- Baptisms

September (81-90)

- Sunday afternoon naps
- A brilliant sunset
- Feeding ducks in the park
- A note of encouragement from an old friend
- Leaning on the fence for a pleasant talk with the neighbors
- Appreciating that your parents were right
- Your job
- A cleansing cry
- The last payment on a loan
- A cool drink of refreshing water

November (101-110)

- Remembering our veterans
- Cuddling by the fireplace
- Hot chocolate on cold days
- Homemade pumpkin pie
- The attentive eyes and ears of a friend
- The twinkle in Grandma's eye
- A terrific sermon
- A tear of joy
- The first snowfall of the season
- Refrigerator artwork

August (71-80)

- The annual vacation trip
- Fresh garden tomatoes
- Back to school
- Saying prayers and tucking in the kids—no matter how old they are
- A car just washed and waxed
- The amazement of finding the Big Dipper again and again
- Family reunions
- A juicy B.L.T. sandwich
- County fairs
- Family bicycle rides

October (91-100)

- Cool autumn mornings
- Raking leaves into piles and jumping in
- Hayrides
- A harvest moon
- Receiving a long distance phone call
- A leisurely Sunday drive to enjoy the colors of autumn
- Crisp apples straight from the tree
- Clean jokes
- An opportunity to help someone
- Little wagons with big loads

December (111-120)

- Advent celebrations
- A family cookie baking adventure
- Christmas traditions
- That feeling you only get on a bitter cold night while under piles of quilts
- Real Christmas trees
- Fudge
- That special spirit
- Thinking of others
- Snowball fights
- Singing in the shower

Led Astray

In a recent *Christianity Today* issue there was a lengthy article titled "Memories of Satanic Ritual Abuse." The article discussed, at length, the great interest in things Satanic, especially the sensational. Now we have always been of two minds on the issue of Satan, and that is not our concern here, but a sentence in the article referring to a biblical admonition struck home.

Deadly Pestilences

Last summer there was an outbreak of a deadly respiratory disease in the southwestern United States, especially among Native Americans. It was traced to a rat-carried virus that now is being passed to humans. The Associated Press reported that though the virus and the disease had previously been known in Korea in the early 1950's, these cases represented the first in this country in which the virus had made the leap to humans.

The article goes on, "The outbreak is an example of a phenomenon that researchers say is becoming increasingly common: the sudden appearance of previously unknown viruses, some of them deadly. 'These infections are increasing; the conditions that precipitate them are increasing,' said virologist Mr. Stephen Morse, author of a new book titled *Emerging Viruses*. 'In the foreseeable future, infectious disease will remain a major cause of death and disease, even in the United States,' he said."

Luke records Jesus as prophetically saying "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven" (21:10, 11, NIV). While open to questions of interpretation, the book of Revelation echoes that theme with the picture it gives of the Pale Horse. "Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth" (6:8, NIV).

It shouldn't surprise us that God's Word is true and accurate, and that events come to pass just as promised. But for believers these things, though frightening, serve as a reminder of a coming Savior and a coming Kingdom . . . and a reminder that that day may be closer than we even expect.

The authors, Robin Perrin and Less Parrott III, made the point that in all current topics which grab for our attention, we need to keep our focus on Christ. Paul writes such to the church in Corinth, "I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2b, 3).

We need to constantly be reminded that the more we focus ourselves on Christ, the less opportunity there is for our minds to become confused and for our faith to waver. It would be a good thing for every Christian to daily be reading God's Word, and daily finding time for prayer. Paul writes more to us, "The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things" (Phil. 4:5b-8, NIV).

The true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and admirable things need to be what our minds are filled with and need to be what we allow to fill our homes. How can we, or our children, or our grandchildren come to Christ in purity and with sincere devotion to Christ if our minds are filled with the sensationalism of Oprah, or the less than praiseworthy offerings of television in general? Is society too far gone for even a few people to step back, turn around and devote themselves to knowing Christ?

Brief Messages



Our Freedom To Worship

by Pastor Rex Cain
Bedford, OH

YOU DON'T APPRECIATE THE water 'til the well runs dry. Or, with our recent Mississippi valley destruction in mind, you don't appreciate a placid river until unrelenting rain causes massive flooding.

The point is, it's easy to become oblivious to the goodness of normalcy.

In America, our bountiful blessings are regrettably too often taken for granted. UNICEF claims approximately 40,000 children die daily somewhere in the developing world! Yet, America could have fed the 13,000,000 who starved last year just from the food we paid farmers not to grow! Or, we could feed the world from just 10 midwestern states! Has God blessed us or not?

At this Thanksgiving season, it's fitting that we reflect upon our bountiful and blessed heritage. Not that our forefathers treated the native Americans or the land with all due respect, but there does seem to be a divine destiny that we arrived here. Even Chief Seattle in an assembly of tribes in 1854 made this remark in his long speech as they were about to sign a treaty with the white man (these words followed a serious chastising of our moral ethics):

But in your perishing you will shine brightly, fired by the strength of the God who brought you to this land and for some special purpose gave you dominion over this land and over the red man. That destiny is a mystery to us...¹

Was that purpose to provide harborage for those European saints seeking freedom? Was it to create a strong nation that would help protect and preserve the nation of Israel? That's another subject, but that our nation did (and still is) provide a sanctuary for persecuted Christians and, that we have (and still are) provided resources to Israel to help them survive, there is no doubt.

But like a placid river, do we accept these spiritual blessings and benefits (to us and others) with little regard? How seldom we recall the price that brought the Pilgrims to our shores—saying nothing of leaving their native land and families... and the persecutions that prompted the severance:

It added up to seven full weeks of the hell of an ill-lighted, rolling, pitching, stinking inferno [the Mayflower ship], the kind that brings up sins that had lain buried for years—anger, self-pity, bitterness, vindictiveness, jealousy, despair. All these surfaced sins had to be faced, confessed, and given up to the Lord for His cleansing. No matter how ill they felt, or how grim the daily situation, they continued to seek God together, praying through despair and into peace and thanksgiving.²

How could we ever know and appreciate the pain of their leaving their country and families? We can't. But we do know why they chose this painful route—they wanted freedom to worship



as they saw fit without interference from a government that wanted to establish a state religion.

Many by 1620 lived in the New World. But where the Pilgrims landed (blown off course by 100 miles) they suddenly realized they would not be under the jurisdiction of the Virginia Company. Indeed, at Provincetown, they would be under . . . no one! Rebellion began to foment and for fear of mutiny the Pilgrim leadership acted quickly and decisively to draft a compact. This expresses the mindset of the Pilgrims:

They drafted a compact, very much along the lines of their first covenant back in Scrooby, which embodied the same principles of equality and government by the consent of the governed which would become the cornerstone of American Democracy. While the Pilgrims had no idea how significant this document was to be, it marked the first time in recorded history that free and equal men had voluntarily covenanted together to create their own new civil government:

In the Name of God, amen. We whose names are underwritten . . . have taken, for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian Faith . . . a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia, 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, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid, and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute and frame such just and equal laws . . . shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony. Unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed

our names at Cape Cod, the 11th of November . . . Anno Domini 1620.

Such ringing affirmation as: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal . . . ' would have to wait another century and a half, but here was their introduction onto American soil.³

From 1620 especially, the Pilgrims introduced into our land a Christian mindset that pervaded our nation in every walk of life—for that we are indeed grateful. God blessed our nation in spite of ourselves.

Are we guilty of ingratitude for the faith of our forefathers that "counted all as loss" in order that they might secure freedom of religion in this great nation?

Are these freedoms now being threatened? Why? Could it be the fault of "Christians" themselves? Prayerfully consider these questions.

As Chief Seattle closed his speech:

So if we sell you our land, love it as we have loved it. Care for it as we have cared for it. Hold in your mind the memory of the land as it is when you take it. And with all your strength, with all your mind, with all your heart, preserve it for your children and love it—as God loves us all.¹

✻

¹ "How Can You Buy Or Sell the Sky?" by Chief Seattle, as seen in the October 1980 RESTITUTION HERALD magazine.

² Peter Marshall and David Manuel, *The Light and the Glory* (Fleming H. Revell Co., 1977), p. 117.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

Note: If you want real insights into the Christian beginnings of our nation (so often omitted by secular writers), I highly recommend the reading of the 384 page book, shown above, by Peter Marshall.

A Prayer

Lord, for the erring thought
Not into evil wrought;
Lord for the wicked will,
Betrayed and baffled still;
For the heart from itself kept,
Our thanksgiving accept!

For ignorant hopes that were
Broken at our blind prayer;
For pain, death, sorrow sent,
Unto our chastisement;
For all loss of seeming good,
Quicken our gratitude!

—William Dean Howells




Psalm 96

Sing to the Lord a new song
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord, praise his name;
proclaim his salvation day after day.
Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.
For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;
he is to be feared above all gods.
For all the gods of the nations are idols,
but the Lord made the heavens.

Splendor and majesty are before him;
strength and glory are in his sanctuary.
Ascribe to the Lord, O families of nations,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
bring an offering and come into his courts.
Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness;
tremble before him, all the earth.

Say among the nations, "The Lord reigns."
The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved;
he will judge the peoples with equity.
Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
let the sea resound, and all that is in it;
let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them.
Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy;
they will sing before the Lord, for he comes,
he comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples in his truth.



A Prime Time Thanksgiving

by Pastor Francis Burnett
Belle Plaine, IA

IN ONE'S LIFETIME, ESPECIALLY when it covers more than 70 years, there are many special times. The Apostle Paul wrote that we are to be thankful for everything. Such events as baptisms, finding the right person to be your mate, having the first baby, plus many other items all find a special place in our lives.

For Francis and Iris Burnett, there is one Thanksgiving that probably has more memories than any other. It touched 17 other lives as well. It all began because of the fact that our grandchildren had not seen each other for more than 7 years in some instances. One of them was ready to graduate from college with a degree that would possibly give him a position taking him far away from all of us.

So father and grandfather along with wife, Iris, talked of everyone getting together. The problem was when? It could not be done with the children in school. It had to coincide with working conditions of several fields. The process began in April, 1989. I wrote each daughter—there are four of them. Of course, the matter was to be discussed with their families. The time suggested was Thanksgiving of that year. Also suggested was a central meeting place generally equal in distance for all to travel. There was one exception involving our daughter, Martha (Marti) who lives near Phoenix. Because of work, they must come by air. I thought that general expenses should be about the same. So, there had to be extra help for those from the southwest.

By the middle of June, reservations had been made at Four Coaches motel across the street from University of Memphis campus. Continued writing among the daughters and the parents was exciting. It was decided that all would travel on Thanksgiving Day to arrive in Memphis as early as possible. As to distance, one daughter, Miriam (Mimi) and family live in South Carolina. One lives in Rochelle, Illinois—Mary. Michal lived in Spring-

field, Missouri and Marti near Phoenix. The parents, grandparents, lived near Iowa City, Iowa. For three families, the distance was approximately 550 to 600 miles.

The time to complete the special event arrived. All had arrived at the Four Coaches motel by 7 p.m. Jim and Mary Mickey were out in front with a video camera taking pictures as each arrived. Michal was early enough to get Marti and family at the airport. What joy! There were 19 persons in all. By the way, the Burnetts had gained a grandson-in-law married to granddaughter Randee August 1989. When all had arrived, motel rooms were all in a row. The couples stayed four to a room. The granddaughters had one room as well as the grandsons. The newly married couple had their own room. In all, there were 6 rooms. One was donated to us to use because of being in the center of the rest.

Talk, talk, talk, and actually getting reacquainted with the grandchildren. No one bothered to go out for food Thanksgiving night. There were plenty of snacks and soft drinks that were brought in. More important was just to talk and reminisce. The breakfast and noon meals were eaten as desired in the motel restaurant or fast food places 4 to 6 blocks from the motel. A special Thanksgiving dinner was planned in the motel restaurant. The personnel put tables together with special tablecloths and napkins. All dressed in nice clothes for the occasion. Many pictures were taken as well as video. What a grand time! Oh! I forgot, on Thanksgiving evening, father and grandfather Burnett read some special passages from the Bible and then there was a season of prayer.

On Friday, the ladies went to a mall—ha! What else!! Jim Mickey took the young people and they played miniature golf and a few other games. Some just sat and talked. By 8 a.m. on Sunday, November 26, all were traveling home. Oh yes, there was a birthday party for Mimi on Saturday, the 25th. What a grand time for Francis, Iris, and all the daughters and families. Thank you God.



Thanks Be To God

by Pastor Gordon Landry
Flagg Center Community Church

AS WITH MANY FAMILIES, our Thanksgivings over the years have been varied. Thankfulness remains the same; God has been good to us. Though there have been times of sickness, surgery, heartaches, concerns, disturbances, problems—often near or even on Thanksgiving Day—God has been faithful, and we can never praise Him enough. Thank you, Lord, for your faithfulness.

From times when we had Thanksgiving next door with Barbara's folks, our own family, and sometimes several others—ranging as high as 35 people—to times when our finances were extremely low and we feasted on fish sticks and French fries, blessings have always been present. And this is true in the daily lives of all Christians. When burdens seem overwhelming, when problems seem to recur too often, when concerns shade our thinking, there is always the shining love of God to keep us going. God does not leave us without comfort (John 14:15-17).

A teaching of Jesus that is difficult for us Christians to claim as our own is this:

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (v. 27). The fears that naturally come to the human heart can be alleviated by trusting in Jesus' promise. Does this mean that we will never be concerned about sickness in the family, incessant indebtedness, or the death of a loved one? Will all problems automatically go away when we trust in the Lord? A word from the Apostle Paul shows otherwise: "We would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life" (2 Cor. 1:8). Despair can have devastating effects in a person's life, given free reign. But despair can be turned into faith. Paul continued: "But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf" (vv. 9-11).

Almost seeming to contradict himself, Paul later in this epistle declared, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;



persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (2 Cor. 4:8-10). It is normal, it seems to me, to fluctuate between faith and a lack thereof when distress sets in. The lack of faith comes from seeking solutions on our own, and distress builds. When that same distress is met head-on with faith, faith usually wins out, and is increased. Distress—despair—can be overcome with faith in our God and in His goodness to us. Thanksgiving to God results.

Thanksgiving as a special day as observed this year in Canada on October 11, and in the United States on November 25, is a good reminder of the provision of our God for our immediate needs. It's too bad, really, that many people refer to Thanksgiving Day as "turkey day," or "football day," or whatever. The Christian observes the day as a special time of thanksgiving, but he does not neglect the giving of thanks on every other day of the year.

The Psalms are filled with expressions of thanks to a forgiving and redeeming God, to a God of love and compassion, to a God of personal involvement with the faithful. David, who wrote most but not all of the psalms, gave thanks to God when he was on the run from King Saul, from his own son Absalom, and from heathen enemies. He gave thanks to his God for the forgiveness he received after his adultery with Bathsheba, and his subsequent murder (by proxy) of her husband Uriah. God indeed forgave David, but there were consequences nevertheless. The child bred out of wedlock died despite the fervent intercessory prayers of David, who was chosen to be king because he was "a man after his [God's] own heart" (1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22).

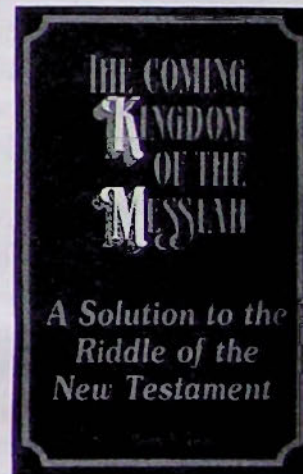
Though Christians always have problems of some sort, they are multiplied when we hold ourselves aloof from God's Word. Prayer, then, for the forgiveness of resultant sins, may be forthcoming, but consequences may be harsh. Our best decisions are always those that are based squarely, unequivocally, unashamedly on the desires of God as outlined in His Word. Then thanksgiving will be sincere and delightful. May God bless you as you observe Thanksgiving Day this year.

RH

Coming up: RESTITUTION HERALD SUNDAY

November 21 will be a special day to promote the RH by subscribing, so that our Conference's official voice can be clearly heard throughout the churches. You probably subscribe already, but consider showing a friend an article that interested you. They may not know what they are missing.

This book, by Anthony Buzzard, expresses and argues for the hope of the kingdom on earth. It is available from the General Conference for \$4.95. An accompanying study course is now also available.



Church of God General Conference License Board Lay Speaker's Course

If you desire licensing as a lay speaker, register soon, the cost is \$15.

The course requirements:

1. Systematic Theology Bible Study Course,
2. Basic speech course at a local college (local for you),
3. Participation in two Lay Speaking Weekends.
The first weekend is in Peoria, IL; Nov. 13, 14.
The second is yet to be arranged.

Phone for more information.

“Thank God for Nobody”

by Pastor Dale T. Bliss
Rockford, MI

RECENTLY I CAME ACROSS an article which began with a seemingly trivial quiz. The quiz posed questions such as, “Who taught Martin Luther and inspired his translation of the New Testament?” and “Who were the parents of the great prophet Daniel?” Having completed the little quiz, I found it obvious that the writer’s intention was to highlight the incredible contributions made to our world by typical “nobodies.” As I continued through the article, I began to appreciate the “nobodies” who make my life so complete.

Paul the Apostle did well to remember, with joy, a group of “nobodies” who had become the greatest object of his thanksgiving. In one of the most uplifting letters of the New Testament, Philippians, Paul earnestly expressed his thanksgiving to God by affirming the people who shared in his life and ministry. With deep affection, he demonstrates a wonderful way to show gratitude to God by showing gratitude to

God’s people. I believe that the Thanksgiving season will be enriched if we can learn to follow Paul’s example.

One of the more obvious means of showing gratitude to the people around us is to remind them who they really are. But before that, Paul wisely reminds them of who he is. “*Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, . . .*” (1: 1a). Paul leaves little room for

prideful introductions or sloppy false humility. He simply, but clearly, brings to mind that he is a servant—not one lording over, but one kneeling beneath to support and encourage. It’s a somewhat silent expression of thanksgiving. Yet, those who receive such an expression will recognize a spirit of gratitude. How do you present yourself when offering your thanksgiving? Is it tinted with the humility of a servant or with deserving pride or false humility?

Now, having removed himself from center stage, Paul begins the careful work of building up the body with skillful expression. “*To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons*” (1: 1b). At first glance it may seem that Paul is giving special mention of the overseers and deacons, over the common members of this fellowship. However, in light of his attitude expressed in his letters to believers in Rome and Corinth (Rom. 12:3-5, 1 Cor. 12:23-25), it’s more likely that he is actually calling attention to the “nobodies” of the church, calling them “saints.” The meaning behind the term saint is “one who is set apart to do the work of God.” By referring to the “saints” along with the overseers and deacons, Paul reminded every member that they, too, played an important role in the cause of Christ. If that he was grateful, I’m sure. How exciting it is when we see Christians, who are



incredibly different from one to the next, work together to make the body work as Jesus planned. Paul thought that worth acknowledging and so should we. When you see one who is striving to be set apart for God's work, whether it be teaching a class or washing dishes, do as Paul did—remind them that they are a "saint." Thank God by thanking them.

Paul continues his thank offering with words of joyful encouragement: "I always pray with joy . . . being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion . . ." (1:4-5). What a great way to say "Thanks!" One can't but feel appreciated when we care enough to remind them that God is alive and at work in things they are doing. When was the last time you told someone that, from the beginning (he who began) to the end (on to completion), that God is maneuvering them through every step. This, too, is thanksgiving.

Let me mention one last expression of thanksgiving from Paul's example in Philippians: prayer. Paul prays for the people for whom he is sincerely grateful.

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God (1:9-10).

His prayer is specific, obviously thought out in light of the relationships he has cultivated. It may be that you need to begin to pray for those for whom you are thankful. If you are already praying, it may be helpful to carefully map out the requests you lay before God on their behalf. Not that God needs your counsel on the needs of His people, but that you may be more involved and keenly aware of another's victories and struggles. Don't be afraid to let them know you are praying. Why not send a note to let someone know you remember them and that you are praying specifically for their situation. It's exactly what Paul did. The investment of prayer may be the purest form of thanksgiving we can offer, to one another and to God.

This season, as you count your blessings, chalk one up for the "nobodies"—the ones who silently surround us, holding us up, leading us on. Humbly take your place. Then lift them up as persons "set apart for God."

Remind them that their beginning and their ending are not beyond God's careful touch. And pray for them. Your gratitude toward others will also "be to the glory and praise of God" (1:11). RHT

"Belonging to Jesus"

(Continued from page 9)

The End Approaches

We are moving on target toward the climax of history and the return of Christ. We continue to emphasize correct doctrine, but perhaps our weakness is neglecting the quality of life that God expects. Obviously, this misses the Biblical balance and leaves much to be desired.

We must get our Christianity out of our heads and down into our hearts. We may join every church in town, but if Christ is not real to us we have missed the whole point. We want our church to be a place where God's Word is preached and Jesus Christ is real. I believe that many people will miss the Kingdom of God by eighteen inches—the distance from their heads to their hearts.

I know that God came out of eternity to meet us in His Son. God is not pressed for time; He has been around a long time. Man is the "Johnny come lately" on the scene. Consequently if we are to walk with God, we must find our place in this time period, and get in step with Him, and with joy and commitment use our gifts and abilities to His glory.

Comfortable Christianity

Many Christians today want a comfortable Christianity with no personal discomfort. They seem to say, "I like the idea of eternal life, free forgiveness, etc., but don't cramp my style. Don't ask me to go out of my way for Christ. As for my time . . . well, I'm too busy to get involved in the ministry of God's church. My family takes so much of my time, I have no time for God." Read Matthew 10:34-38. What is Jesus saying?

At the end of World War II a soldier in Europe saw a small boy looking through the window of a pastry shop, his mouth watering for the rolls and donuts. The soldier went in and bought a bag full and gave it to the boy. The soldier turned to walk away, and he felt a tug at his coat. The little boy looked up at him and said: "Sir, are you Jesus?" Friends, Jesus must have high visibility in our lives. Would anybody mistake you for Jesus?

Time is hastening on. Nothing is more certain than Christ's return; nothing more uncertain than the time of His return. Friend, get your act together. Prepare for the greatest event of the ages, the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in power and great glory. RHT

A Thanksgiving Past

by Pastor James A. Graham
Scottsdale, AZ

THANKSGIVING HAS always brought back good memories. I remember going to my grandfather's house and then later to my aunt's for the gathering of the Graham Clan. It was steeped in unspoken ritual and tradition. Aunt Mary always arriving late after two or three phone calls telling us all that she was on her way. Uncle Roger baiting my dad and Aunt Ruth into an argument over religion or politics or for that matter any other subject. One thing about a Graham is that it doesn't have to be important for us to feel strongly about it! I remember a table filled with food. Turkey, duck and ham were essentials. And, no one had better forget the scalloped oysters! I remember the adults holding court all afternoon. First around the dining room table and then around the kitchen table. Eating and talking. This Thanksgiving gathering of Grahams often resulted in solving every one of the world's problems in just one afternoon. I remember playing with cousins. When I was older, we would go hunting in the afternoon. I can't remember if we ever bagged a pheasant or rabbit but I remember being a part of a family. A family made up of all ages, sizes and personalities. And you know what else? I only remember the good. It seems that my selective memory has successfully allowed me to forget any bad memories. The disappointments, fears or anxieties . . . I

just cannot remember. I have successfully created a nostalgic Courier and Ives Thanksgiving, free of tension.

But, this is not what I want to share with you all. In fact, the Thanksgiving that I remember most is the one in which I experienced the greatest of emotional swings. I shed tears, felt confusion and found peace. It was one in which I had to stop being a little boy and realize that thanking God does not always mean being comfortable. I discovered that God keeps on working in our lives as long as we keep on living.

In August of 1986, my father, Charles Graham, died. He was, without doubt, the greatest single influence on my life. He had instilled in me integrity, honesty, moral values and faith. And I found myself missing him. This was especially so four years later as I drove my family, complete with a new son-in-law to be, to my mother's home in Louisiana for Thanksgiving. This was to be no ordinary Thanksgiving. It would be one that I would long remember! Gone were the Thanksgivings of my childhood. This was to be a Thanksgiving **For Adults Only!** No idyllic dreams of childhood were allowed. This Thanksgiving would be combined with helping my mother pack for a move back to her home state of Ohio and for her marriage to a new husband!

I had many thoughts and emotions. But before the experience of the wedding of my mother, I was asked to help sort through the papers, pictures, jewelry, and articles that belonged to my father. I felt that they were sacred things. A collection of a lifetime. As I looked with my sister through his things,



I was torn. Emotionally I found myself on a roller coaster as I remembered his life . . . the life he shared with us . . . with my mother. We would find things that prompted laughter. Then in the next box, something which brought silence. This went on all day long. I noticed that Cliff, my mother's soon-to-be husband, was quietly helping. It was as if he were conscious of our feelings, sensitive to this emotional, almost holy event.

My mother had asked if I would perform the wedding. I really didn't know if I could. It had nothing to do with Cliff. It had everything to do with me. I was being asked to grow. To see value in change. To see good in the pain that change brings. I had to be mature. And being mature is not always fun. It may be the right thing to do, but it is not always pleasant. So I asked if I could just stand up for Cliff. To be his best man.

The wedding ceremony provided me the opportunity to stand and observe . . . to see my mother smile. A smile that I had grown up with. My father had taught me how to work, how to stand up for my faith, to be honest. But my mother taught me how to smile. How to laugh. Ever since my father's death, that smile had been missing. But there it was. Still alive, still present. When my mother

smiles, her eyes seem to disappear in joy. And sure enough, I could not see her eyes. When I was a little boy it was my antics which would bring on her smile. As I became an older child, a teenager, and an adult, it came during times of pride, happiness and accomplishment. But my mother was not responding to me. She was not even looking at me. She was looking at Cliff. He had found her smile hidden away deep within her soul, in the clutter of her grief. He had picked it up, brushed off some of the sorrow and put it back where it belonged. As I stood there with the sadness of the past giving way to the future I was thankful. Thankful that God can take every circumstance in life, heal it and use it to bring about a blessing.

We walked out, my sister and I, behind the new couple. The bride is still my mother. Cliff, well, he did not take my father's place. He never wanted to. He just wanted to bring my mother's smile out of storage . . . and he did. And for that, I was full of thanksgiving. P41

THE RESTITUTION HERALD is seeking your Christmas remembrances. Please send them, c/o Kent Ross, for possible publication in our next issue. Thank you.

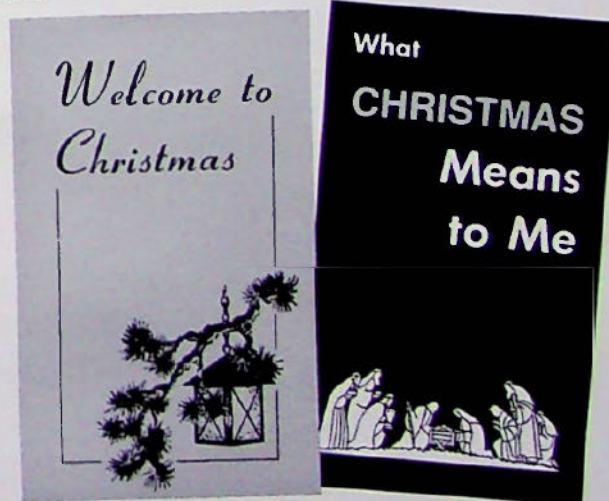
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Available for the Christmas season, these two tracts relate the message of Christ to a time which, while bearing His name, is often all too caught up with other interests.

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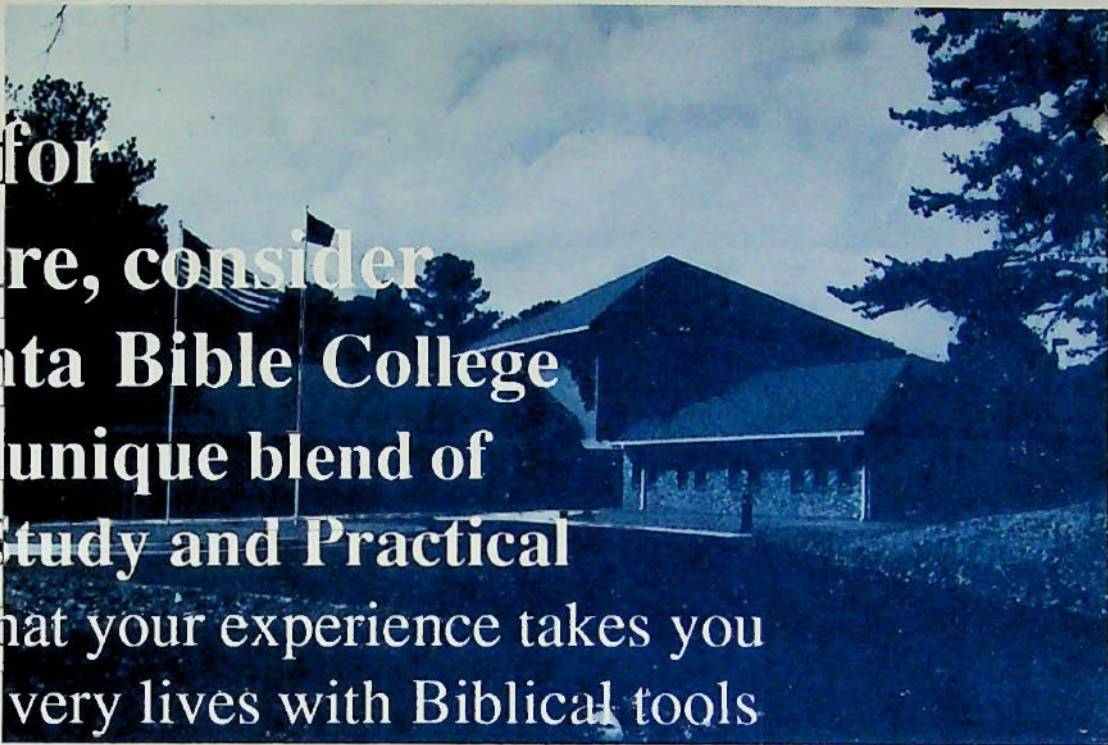
What Christmas Means to Me expresses the true joy brought to the world: Christ, the future king and ruler of the earth, and our savior.

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Consider including them with your Christmas cards, as a reminder (or explanation) of what holiness has to do with the holidays!

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RH

THE RESTITUTION HERALD
Volume 83, Number 2
December 1993/ January 1994

I Love Christmas



KNOW THAT ALL TOO OFTEN Christmas becomes a mad, pell-mell rush of materialism that bears no relationship to the man for which the season is named. I know that all too often we get so busy with the season that we forget the reason for it. That's why our cover shows the Christ-child fading in significance, and a jolly "elf" named Santa in the ascendancy. But for all of that, I still love Christmas.

I love the memories I have of Christmas past. I remember when we gathered at Grandma's late Christmas morning. The joy we felt in gathering together with family is still a warm and delicious memory to pull out and roll around in my mind. I remember the Christmas programs when we stood in back of the sheets that were our church's curtain, waiting with nervousness to do our part in telling again the story of Christmas. I loved walking through town with Dad and Mom and Scott, with the snow gently falling as we walked into Jack's 5¢ and 10¢ store. Mom would disappear so Dad could help us spend our \$1.00, or whatever it was, to buy something for the best Mom in the world.

I love remembering the first Christmas I could spend with my new wife in our apartment. We read the story from Luke 2 as part of our first Christmas together. Our tree probably was pathetic, a real "Charlie Brown" one, but it didn't matter because it was Christmas. I love remembering when my boys were small and all three of them crowded around me vying for places on my lap so we could read together during those special evenings before Christmas Day.

I love anticipating this Christmas. Sure, I'm going to watch *It's a Wonderful Life*, and I still

look forward to sitting down with my family, and some popcorn, and popping in one of the five Scrooge videos we have.

I also love anticipating hearing the words come again, "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus . . ." I will love it when we sing the first Christmas carol of the season. I love thinking about the inn in Bethlehem, the shepherds on the hillside seeing the majestic angels announcing Christ's birth, the wise men, or kings coming to pay Him homage.

Christmas is about how God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. It's about a giving love . . . of when God first gave . . . and then later when Jesus Himself gave . . . and it needs to remind us of love . . . a giving love . . . from us to our families, and friends, and our neighbors, and those around us.

I know we don't do it all year, but wouldn't it be wonderful if we did? And isn't that what Jesus would want for us . . . a giving love, or *agape* love, love that doesn't wait and ask what can be done for it, but a love that looks for what it can give for others?

Anyway, I'm excited to enjoy this special season of remembering God's most precious gift, His Son, and reminding myself to keep looking for when He will appear a second time, the time of the "restitution" of all things.

HAVE A BLESSED AND HAPPY AND HOLY CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR!

Kent Ross

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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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What Keeps Them Going?

by Barbara Trudell, Kenya

Nick and Lynne Swanepoel have lived with the Rendille people in the desert of northern Kenya for over 12 years. They have witnessed the slow wasting away of human lives. They have spent countless hours contacting funding agencies to provide emergency food for the people and to replace camels that have died in recent droughts. They are also translating Scripture and teaching reading classes.

What motivates Nick and Lynne, the Lloyds, the Austings, and men like Randolph? Surely not a financial reward nor great personal "success." It's the love of God who carries the Rendille close to His heart just as He carries you and me, and who is not willing that anyone should perish.

What keeps them going? It can only be the Lord who gives power beyond what they are able to do.

These are the "trenches" of Christian warfare. Our real enemies are not machete-swinging fanatics nor ideological opponents. Our enemies here on the "front lines" are discouragement, the sense of overwhelming needs around us, and pain for others and for ourselves that threatens to block our communication with God.

Our weapons? Prayer. A lot of prayer. The support of other believers. And God's living Word in our hearts.

Pray for Nick and Lynne. Pray for the Rendille. Pray for every Bible translator you know, because you can be sure that they need God's power to keep going and to be effective wherever they are.

—Taken from *In Other Words*, Sept./Oct. 1993. Used by permission, Wycliffe Bible Translators, P.O. Box 2727, Huntington Beach, CA 92647

Customs Inspector Discovers Treasure

Roger Reeck was going through customs at a Caribbean airport. As the customs agent inspected the contents of Roger's suitcase, he pulled out a book.

"What's this?" he asked sternly.

"A New Testament," Roger replied.

"But what language is it in?" the agent persisted.

"Garifuna," said Roger, who has been helping with the Garifuna (Black Carib) Old Testament near that area.

"Garifuna? That's *my* language!" the agent exclaimed. "I didn't know a Garifuna New Testament existed. Where can I get a copy?"

Sadly Roger explained, "They're all sold out. A reprint has been requested, but they're not available yet."

The man pleaded with Roger till Roger finally gave him the New Testament, then the customs official began leaping around the room in joy, clutching the New Testament and shouting, "Look what I have! Look what I have!"

We take a lot for granted, don't we?

—Taken from *In Other Words*, Sept./Oct. 1993. Used by permission, Wycliffe Bible Translators, P.O. Box 2727, Huntington Beach, CA 92647



Poll Shows Confusion Over Gospel Message

A survey by Barna Research Group suggests widespread confusion about the gospel—even among churchgoers who feel responsible to spread the gospel.

Almost half of the respondents (46%) say they have a personal responsibility to explain their beliefs to others. Most of those "evangelizers" (81%) believe that the Bible is accurate in all its teachings and that Jesus Christ was crucified and resurrected (94%). But, amazingly, 48 percent of the evangelizers also believe that "if people are generally good, or do enough good things for others . . . they will earn places in 'heaven.'"

"There is plenty of reason for churches to worry if nearly one-half of their people who believe in evangelism also believe in salvation by works," says George Barna, president of the Barna Research Group. "The central message of Protestantism is in salvation by faith alone in Christ, yet [many] Protestant evangelizers seem to be preaching a different message."

—from *Moody* magazine, October, 1993

Keep Christmas

... Church

By Pastor
Alan Cain



HAVE YOU EVER RECEIVED A birthday gift as an afterthought, that was more "after" than "thought?" Or, perhaps even worse, you were to have a party thrown in your honor but none of the guests brought you gifts, yet exchanged them among themselves? If we are not careful our corporate celebrations in the church can become much like one of the two scenarios above.

Christmas time should be our opportunity to lavish on Christ our gifts and our praise; He should be our focus. Yet, as a pastor, I have caught myself cringing as I look ahead to the Advent season. That should not be! Christmas among the church is usually controlled chaos and good-willed frenzy, and King Jesus is UNINTENTIONALLY made an afterthought. Unless we are deliberate in our steps, the busyness and noise of celebrating our Messiah's birth will drown our true HOLY moments that come only in *quiet* reverence. Amos said it well: "He who is prudent will keep silent in such a time" (Amos 5:13). Solomon taught us the need for balance with "there is a time for everything;" and indeed there are to be the moments of loud, joyful celebrations of our King's birth, yet we will miss the better half if we do not learn to calm and quiet our souls (Ps. 131) before God, allow ourselves to be gripped by the majesty of Godly silence, and afford God the opportunity to stir up in our hearts the true glory and significance of the Genesis of the Lamb of God!

Scripture has much to say about the need, at times, to become silent before God (Habakkuk 2:20, Zechariah 2:13). But I came across a powerful verse on silence in Revelation 8. First, we learn in Ephesians 1:9, 10 that God "... set forth in Christ as a plan for the 'FULLNESS OF TIME,' to unite all things on earth." And then Revelation 8:1 is a crucial moment in this "fullness of time" that will come at the end of this age. What we find going on in heaven during this monumental occasion is profound. Heaven, which is usually exploding with sounds of pure praise, becomes totally silent for a period of half an hour. I can only imagine how Holy and powerful that silence must have been. Why silence? In part, because of anticipation, yet most importantly silence is the most appropriate response in cases involving the "FULLNESS OF TIME." It takes the vehicle of silence for us to fully absorb the magnitude of situations as important as this.

There is one other passage that mentions an event that happened in the "FULLNESS OF TIME." Galatians 4:4 says, "But when the time had FULLY come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman. . . ." Scripture does not tell us so, but I can't help but wonder if heaven wasn't also silent at the birth of Jesus, as they pondered the miracle of the "Lamb of

God who would take away the sins of the world."

Isn't it also interesting that the only ones who received a direct message from God, other than Mary and Joseph, about the birth of the Messiah, were the shepherds out in the stillness and quiet of the fields, watching their sheep and quite possibly meditating on the promises of God concerning the nation of Israel? The angels did not break into the banquet rooms of kings or into the busy market streets. They came to the simple shepherds.

I feel very passionately that the Lord would have us learn the art of silence in not only our Christmas celebrations but in all our acts of worship before Him. "The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him" (Habakkuk 2:20). I believe that in that silence we will be able to touch the heart of God and also be touched in the most significant ways!

How do we incorporate Holy silence into our Advent celebrations? Also, how do we make sure to lavish gifts on the "birthday boy," since it is His party?

Jesus told us exactly what He wanted for His birthday. . . . "Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me" (Matthew 25:40). It is quite possible, then, to literally give a gift to Christ by giving to those in need and it is also possible to do the opposite: "Truly I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to Me" (25:45).

Many churches give gifts to their members, which is a fine way to show appreciation for their efforts. But maybe it would be better to pass that gift on to someone with a greater need, or challenge your church to use the money on the less fortunate in your area, which may really be a better gift for you anyway. Or, as a church, instead of having one of the many outings and programs that we do at Christmas, cancel one of those services, and, as a group, help serve in a soup kitchen, or go hold an elderly hand in a nursing home, or any host of other gift possibilities we could give to Christ.

Now, to the silence! Many churches have Christmas Eve services. Why not make all, or part, of that service nothing but Holy silence before God? To use the example cited earlier, try at least a half hour. Undoubtedly it will feel uncomfortable to be with a whole group of people and not say a word. But that is only because we rarely practice the art of Holy silence before God!

When the time had fully come, God sent His Son into the world, and He called His name Jesus for He would save His people from their sins! Have a peaceful Holy Christmas! God bless. P44



Holy In Your . . .

. . . Home

THE CHRISTMAS MORNING fulfillment drama opens with the Smuckster family gathered around an enormous stack of gifts. Clyde and Bunni anxiously anticipate the reaction of their son Hubert.

Act I - Hubert opens up two presents: a sled and a construction set. He is ecstatic and wants to play with the construction set, but Clyde insists he must open all his presents first.

Act II - Hubert continues opening presents and receives a toy car, poseable figures. His eyes are as big as saucers as he exclaims, 'Cool! What else is for me?'

Act III - More tearing and flinging of paper reveals a toy wrestling ring, a cartoon video and a toy guitar. Hubert's inner monster begins to show itself as he disdainfully points and says, 'I didn't want that wrestling ring.'

Act IV - Hubert opens more poseable figures, an electronic game and a radio-controlled truck. 'Not this one. I told you I wanted another truck.' Bunni consoles him, 'Don't worry, sweetie, we'll just take this one back and get the one you wanted.' Hubert sulks, pokes through the empty wrappings and says, 'Is that all I got?'" (by permission of *Christian Financial Concepts*)

Does that have a familiar ring to it? Is Christmas such a wonderful time of the year? Our pocketbooks become depleted. We sit in traffic jams. Stress is added by schedules that have commitments every night of the week for four weeks before Christmas. The suicide rate goes up. Oh, it's such a wonderful time of the year! It's true, because the song says it.

Oh, I guess for most of us it is a joyous time of the year. Most of the social occasions are fun. Caroling, followed by donuts and hot chocolate, is fun and does produce a ministry I wish would happen all year. At home the ritual involves parties, selected Christmas TV specials watched by the whole family, shopping trips, sending Christmas cards, trimming the tree, baking, and other traditions to enhance the festivities. There seems to be little to match the excitement of Christmas.

Is this to celebrate the birth of Christ? Have we actually succumbed to merrymaking and materialism? It seems the reason for the event has been lost in a chaos of celebration.

As Christians, we have to make some decisions. Can we celebrate the reality that God has given us an incomparable gift in Jesus and at the same time participate in a secular celebration that has little to do with that gift? Yet Christmas, sacred or secular, usually draws more Christlikeness out of people than any other celebration. For whatever reasons, at Christmas people's hearts seem to be more characterized by their giving spirit, focusing on others rather than themselves.

A few years ago, thanks to the influence of Vernis Wolfe, a Church of God pastor, my family began to observe the season of Advent. It is a four week period

preceding Christmas that focuses on: coming, light, repentance, preparation, joy, hope, prophecy, the future, forgiveness and renewal. Rather than giving minimal time to the Christ-event and trying to salvage the "true meaning of Christmas" during the last few days before Christmas, a whole season is set aside to consider this wonderful event in our salvation history. Every day time is spent in Scripture reading, devotion, prayer and family discussion helping us to honestly focus on "the important" in the midst of "frolic and play."

"In early times Christians used this period of four weeks to prepare their lives—every facet of life—to receive Jesus." It was a time for reflection and sober thought about one's participation in sin and how to deal with sin. It was a time to give up the old and put on the new, and devote a time to praying for the Messiah to come a second time.

The celebration of Advent gives balance and perspective to the whole scene. If God is speaking to you on this issue, get an Advent Calendar and commit yourself to getting the emphasis in the right place. The discipline of having a "Family Altar" time during Advent has encouraged some families to go ahead and establish the practice during the rest of the year.

My family also adopted the practice of caroling. We have found that there is a window of opportunity open at this time that is closed the rest of the year. People's hearts are softer to the message of Christ. This very fact gives some justification to observing the secular event in a minimal way just so you can meet people where they are. It is a great time to visit others who need God's warmth and hope. My wife goes on a baking binge at this time of the year; what fun it is to walk up to someone's door and hand them a gift of love. The smile you get back is worth all the effort.

I believe a balanced perspective demands that we de-emphasize the secular aspects of the season. "Scale Down Christmas!" I know one family, whose children are grown, who take the money they would spend on each other, pool it, and give it to the needy. Could that possibly be what Jesus would do?

Can we pursue actions or traditions that would please Him more? 1. Jesus might enjoy the spirit of Christmas: singing, giving gifts, merrymaking, and feasting. In the act of our celebrating, would He stop us and ask why? 2. The Jewish people commemorate and celebrate constantly, but always with a reason in mind, an event where God specifically acted in their history. The greatest act God ever did was to give Christ to mankind. So, let's have a party. God bless your Advent season! RJR

By Dale Ramsey



May This Season Be Filled With the Spirit of Christ

By Staff of
Atlanta
Bible
College

During most of the years that I was growing up, we lived away from grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Therefore, most of our holidays, including Christmas, were observed quietly with just four members of our immediate family.

One of my most memorable Christmases was when we decided to spend Christmas evening making a call on an elderly member of the church who had no immediate family with her. Though it seemed rather strange to be making a call on Christmas, I can vividly remember the happiness we brought to this individual. This dear lady had been a faithful Christian and member of the Church of God through her whole life. And now, in her nineties, I am sure that she had few visitors and probably never expected anyone to come on Christmas evening. I remember the happiness I felt in giving time to brighten someone's life.

And of course giving is what the Christmas season is all about. God, in His great love for us, gave us the gift of His Son. And what a difference He has made in the world and in our lives—Jesus, the promised Messiah who brought so much hope and light into the world.

How desperately people in our world today need to know Jesus. It seems as though many people live day to day, lurching from crisis to crisis. They face struggles with their marriage, the use of alcohol, drugs, etc. They struggle financially, and with their children. They cannot see beyond the next few minutes or hours.

Jesus, our Messiah, enables people to live the abundant life today and to have hope of eternal life in the age to come.

What a tremendous message of hope we have to offer the world today! Why not give this message of hope to a lost friend or relative during this Christmas season?

—David Krogh

For some of us churchgoing seemed to get off to a bad start. I remember the scene vividly. Sunday services were predictable and only mildly interesting. We met our friends and we sang together. It was all very pleasant, if irrelevant as far as really understanding what Jesus was about. What we were doing, however, had the sanctity of so many years of faithful churchgoing behind it. The names of the clergymen who had presided over our church were posted on the wall. The list went back in unbroken succession to 1200 AD. Much of the building has been standing there witnessing our Sunday ceremony for about 700 years.

Then came the big day. At Christmas the place was packed quite unlike the average Sunday. At Christmas the lesson was read by the local landowner, a titled gentleman who resided in a large house adjacent to the church. His presence in church was restricted to the two big holidays—Christmas and Easter. Being the village's "lord," he was expected to read the Christmas "lesson" from the Bible, a duty which he performed with some unsteadiness. He was well-known to have a problem with excess alcohol.

If only the church had really studied the Bible. We did not. We paid lip service to it. Anything more would have been viewed as regrettable fanaticism. The kind of Christmas observation I was exposed to as a child was all very "nice." Babies in mangers or anywhere else are always nice. They are harmless. But the real Jesus, I came to learn, was far from being a "nice guy." We don't crucify nice guys. He was a revolutionary and that is why so many hated him. We honor him rightly as the baby born in Bethlehem only if we recognize him also as the very voice of God, his Father. Jesus is the judge and savior of all mankind.

—Anthony Buzzard





The Atlanta Bible College Staff: (Back, Left to Right) Kent Ross, Anthony Buzzard, Joe Martin, Glyn Craig, David Krogh; (Middle) Amy Berry, Terri Tschaenn, Carolyn Swartz, Julie Isham, Sarah Buzzard; (Front) Seth Ross, Jason Catlin, Aaron Wells, Daniel Smead, Dan Kennedy, Dale Ramsey. (Not Pictured: Mark Tschaenn, Lisa Ikner, Gayle Guthrie, Judy Myers, Steve Zimbelman)

God is in Control . . .

As 1993 comes to an end it's only natural to reflect on the last 365 days. What has been good, what has gone wrong, what could we do better? The magazines and papers will print the top news stories of the year. How many of those can we say are good news? One or two? Sad to say, most of us tend to focus on the bad in this world.

What stands out in your life this past year? Hopefully everything was terrific and nothing went wrong. But in reality we each have had our own personal heartaches as well as joys. As I see it the most important thing is what we choose to focus on. We could dwell on the hurts, anger, trouble, and pain; or we could lift ourselves above all the worldly problems and focus on the hope God has given us in His Son Jesus Christ.

Living here at the Bible College has had a wonderfully positive effect on my outlook on life. People here are constantly looking for the blessings God is graciously giving us—even the little things. Now I wouldn't say that everything is perfect here; we all have our problems and hurts. But I feel that together we're all in a gradual learning

process as we begin to discipline ourselves to look for the good in every situation—to remember that everything is in God's hands.

As 1994 begins I hope you'll take an extra moment to look for the good in each new day. Focus on the promise God has given us that one day every tear will be wiped from our eyes, there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain. Everything will be made new. Most important, God is in control!

—Terri Tschaenn

"What's Christmas Got to Do With It?"

Christmas is a time to share joy, peace, and happiness. It is also a time when many people give unselfishly to others. I am reminded of the classic story *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. As everyone knows the hero of the story, Scrooge, has a change of heart towards Christmas after being visited by three very convincing spirits. Supposedly this man was made to see the importance of being a good neighbor at Christmas.

Many good sayings have arisen over the years. "Tis the season," "Joy to the world," "It's that magical time of the year" are among many. Their intent is to show the true meaning of Christmas.

My question, is why only Christmas? Why must we be a good neighbor at Christmas? Why is Christmas that magical time of the year? The truth is that as Christians we should not only be good neighbors and spread joy, peace and happiness at Christmas, but rather all year long. Christmas is a wonderful time of year for celebrating the birth of the Savior of the world. Just like any birthday, we give special appreciation to Jesus on December 25.

So many times I have heard "Jesus is the reason for the season." Yes, Jesus is the reason for the season, but can we keep Him the focus throughout the year? It is a shame the world can not keep the magic of Christmas year round, but perhaps if we dig inside ourselves in the middle of March or the end of July we will find the magic of Christmas. Then we can begin to share joy, peace and happiness year round. But for now let us enjoy the celebration of our Lord's birth.

—Dan Kennedy

(Please Turn to Next Page)

Have you ever wondered how Sarai felt when Abram came to her and said, "Pack it ALL up, we're moving, 'cause God told me to?" Last May I had the "privilege" to experience all of the feelings that she must have felt, when my husband, Clayton, and I packed up our whole lives and moved from Rockford, Illinois to Georgia.

Like me, Sarai probably fought against it, asking the same questions over and over, like, "where am I going to work?" and "how am I ever going to make friends like I have here?" and maybe even my biggest excuse, "we just can't afford it right now." I'm sure that back then she might have had different questions, but the underlying feelings were probably the same. And I would hope that Sarai saw God answering all of her questions in the same direct manner that He answered mine. God saw my fear of moving with our debts and provided an answer within three days with a simple phone call. Finally, after many such experiences, we had definitely decided to move, with only two concerns left on our minds: we needed to sell an old car we had been using, and I needed to secure work as fast as possible.

God must have been getting a bit impatient with "me of little faith," since I received the phone call from David Krogh, offering me the job of Assistant Controller, at the exact same moment Clayton was getting me to sign the title of the car to a man who agreed to the full asking price! Just as Sarai experienced hardships along the way, our move to Georgia has not been uneventful, but I have learned to trust in the Lord. I do enjoy working here, and being able to attend some classes along the way will also help in my walk with the Lord as I become a pastor's wife.

I am looking forward to our first Christmas in Georgia. It will be differ-

ent, not looking out of the window and seeing ten feet of snow, and not having to wear a warm winter coat everytime I want to go outside. But, most of all, it will be different because we are away from our friends. I can just imagine how Sarai felt her first holiday, not being able to jump on a camel and ride to her best friend's house just to talk. I know, like Sarai, I will survive; I have made new friends here in the South, and Christmas will still be a joyous occasion to celebrate the birth of Jesus. May you all have a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year, and think of all of us Sarai's here at Atlanta Bible College, preparing to do a life's work for the Lord.

—Julie Isham

The Ties That Bind

In remembering past Christmases and anticipating ones to come, one word keeps coming into my mind, and that word is "family." I have been blessed to have been born into, and raised in, a wonderfully solid and stable family with Christian values. Feelings of closeness rise and fall, as with any group of people, but there are not many times throughout the year when those family bonds feel as strong as during the Christmas season.

It is during the Christmas season when we suddenly seem to have more room in our schedules to stay at home with family members. We will gather in the living room sometimes and all read a book. We will all pitch in and make Christmas cookies. We'll sit down together and watch a Christmas special on TV, or maybe we'll all go to the mall together and enjoy each other's company more than the shopping. There just seems to be more time for each other.

But, in reality, there's probably not any more freedom in our schedules than there was before; we just choose to make

room. This is because our focus turns to the family unit and away from our individual plans. Why is it that family becomes so important all of a sudden? Our reasons may vary, but it's always refreshing to see our priorities return to the most basic social structure that God has planned for us: the family. It's interesting to note that this re-emphasis on the family comes at a time of the year when we celebrate the beginning of Joseph's family in Bethlehem. But not only were Mary and Joseph beginning a family that first Christmas, but God was opening the door to let another family grow and flourish: the Family of God.

The importance of family that we feel at Christmas time is more than just coincidence, I think there is real, spiritual significance behind it. The very first Christmas originated around the beginning of a family, and I think that fact has always affected my attitude at Christmas whether or not I realized it. I don't think it was ever directly pointed out to me that Christmas centers around "family," but the example was always there in the Christmas story. Every time the story is told and retold of Mary and Joseph having a child in Bethlehem, the model of Christmas being joined with family is communicated. It never had to be articulated that "family" was the basis for Christmas, because it was just a given. Family is an essential part of the story, without which the story could never have been written. For this reason, I think, we draw close to our families during the Christmas season.

When we make the time in our schedules for our families, we are in a silent way celebrating God's method of doing things. By emulating the example He set forth in Bethlehem, we give Him honor. May we continue to follow God's example in this way for many years to come.

—Seth Ross

Suggestions for Single Parents

As time goes by, I have become increasingly aware that one of the most difficult problems facing the divorced person is raising the children alone, and often under strained financial conditions. Therefore, I would like to offer some suggestions for single parents.

Raising a child by yourself is a trying experience. It's difficult to meet every demand of youngsters who are usually satisfied only through the combined efforts of a husband and wife working together as a team. But you can be an effective parent, even though you have been left to walk alone. I recommend that you follow these guidelines:

1. *Recognize your role.* A person who says "I have to be both mother and father to my child" is attempting the impossible. Your obligation does not go beyond being the very best mother or father you can be. It may be helpful, however, to find a trustworthy, spiritually mature uncle or aunt, or grandfather or grandmother, to provide the masculine or feminine influence your children need.
2. *Let your child be a child.* Because of the great void divorced persons feel in their lives, they sometimes burden their children with the responsibility of being to them what their mates were. But let's face it—children cannot possibly offer adult emotional support or love. It's asking too much.
3. *Be the parent.* A divorced parent, needing acceptance, may want to become the child's "buddy" or best friend. This is dangerous for a couple of reasons. First, you will be disappointed simply because a child cannot meet you on adult terms. Besides, your youngster needs a parent—not a buddy. Maintain your parental image.
4. *Avoid resentful criticism.* You may be inclined to say unkind things to children about the parent who initiated the separation. You'll do well, however, not to give in to this temptation. I would also advise you not to use your youngsters as "secret agents" during their weekly visits to find out what your ex-mate is doing. Don't pry information out of them with a hundred questions. To do so is to be unfair to them.
5. *Be honest.* Don't cover up with lies. Answer your children's questions truthfully, without volunteering sordid facts that are better for them not to hear. Along with this, be forthright about your social life. It will help your children realize that you have needs that go beyond them.
6. *Provide security.* You can give your children the security they need by creating an atmosphere of stability. Boys and girls need to feel secure. So be careful about expressing your worries and fears. Be positive in your outlook. If possible, avoid separating your children from the familiar things with which they feel comfortable.
7. *Get help when needed.* If you feel yourself "losing it" as a parent, or if you see that your child is having severe difficulties in making adjustments, seek guidance from your pastor or a Christian counselor. Watch for prolonged drops in grades, nightmares, regression to childish talk, or psychotic behavior. Don't delay. Better to act too soon than too late.

Following these guidelines will help you greatly in being successful as a parent who has been left to walk alone.

—From *Help for Those Who Walk Alone*, by Richard W. De Haan, 1981.

Children of Divorce Are Wedded to Anxiety

Adults who grew up with divorced parents tend to be more apprehensive about their own marriages.

Pamela Webster, a Brown University sociologist, and colleagues from the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, analyzed answers from more than 6,300 adults in their first marriages. Asked to rate their marital happiness on a scale of one to seven, those whose parents had separated or divorced before the children were 16 or who had never lived with their father showed happiness scores just about the same as those who had grown up in intact families.

Almost paradoxically, however, children of broken marriages were almost twice as apt to say that at some point during the preceding year they had thought their marriages might be in trouble—and this was true even for those who gave their marriages the highest scores. Asked to rate their own chances of divorcing, all but the most happily married children of divorce were far more likely than children of intact families to consider their own marriages at risk.

The researchers found also that among those in less-than-very-happy marriages, children of divorce were more than twice as prone to argue, to shout or hit when arguing, and to report that their spouses abused drugs or alcohol.

"The tendency to think that one's marriage may be in trouble appears to reflect a unique legacy of parental divorce," Dr. Webster observes.

—"Children of Divorce Are Wedded to Anxiety," *The Wall Street Journal*, Tuesday, October 19, 1993, B1.

The Quest for Peace

By Stephen
Bolhaus



THROUGH THE NEWS MEDIA the eyes of the world were focused on Washington, D.C. on Monday, September 13, as Yitzhak Rabin of Israel and Yasser Arafat of the Palestine Liberation Organization signed the Declaration of Principles for Palestinian Self-Rule. At last these ancient enemies have finally embraced a peaceful recognition of each other.

The Current Peace

There's been a hefty sprinkling of the words "shalom, salaam, peace." *Time* magazine's Jerusalem correspondent wrote, "For reasons that can be explained by hardheaded circumstance—that time comes when people understand that their malevolent dreams cannot be realized: neither Israel nor the P.L.O. can destroy each other" (Sept. 20, 1993).

Each side's new position has been formally expressed in letters by their leaders: Arafat: "The P.L.O. recognizes the right of the state of Israel to exist in peace and security"; Rabin: "The government of Israel has decided to recognize the P.L.O. as the representative of the Palestinian people."

The document signed in Washington states the two sides pledge to "strive to live in peaceful co-existence and mutual dignity and security and achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement and historic reconciliation."

The peace rhetoric was also echoed by Yael Dayan, a member of Israel's Knesset (parliament) and daughter of 1967 war hero General Moshe Dayan: "The end of the conflict will mean we can be comfortable in our own skin. We can stop being worriers . . . we can be Middle Eastern, Mediterranean; we can eat watermelon and sit under our fig trees."

The Question

The question which pesters my thoughts—and I'm sure the thinking of any other student of Middle East history—is simply, "Can this peace be believed?" Knowing the turbulent character of the Middle East, knowing the hostile behavior between Arabs and Jews in preceding years, knowing the deep-rooted animosity about land ownership, does this peace have a realistic chance to survive?

Arafat and the P.L.O. have gained administrative control of Gaza and Jericho; that may increase to

include parts of the West Bank. Arafat is gambling that this first step will induce Israel—prodded by U.S. pressure and world opinion—to allow the establishment of a Palestinian state. Arafat has publicly stated this goal: "The Palestinian state is within our grasp. Soon the Palestinian flag will fly on the walls, the minarets and the cathedrals of Jerusalem." With this type of agenda does peace have a chance? Has the leopard really changed his spots, or only his tune? Do you remember the Arab tale about the camel who only wanted to put his nose in the tent during the sandstorm?

The Bible Says . . .

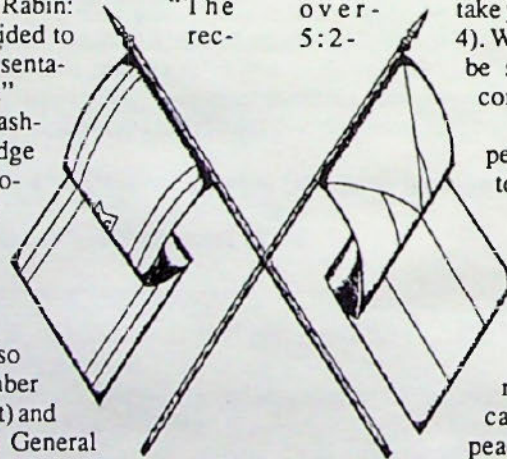
The Scriptures remind us that not all things are as they appear. "You yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, 'Peace and safety!' then destruction will come upon them suddenly. . . . You, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should take you like a thief" (I Thessalonians 5:2-4). We are not in the dark; we will not be surprised if this pseudo-peace comes apart at the seams.

The only real hope for world peace is the second coming of Jesus to the earth to establish a divine government over which He will rule as King. The words of

Paul in the text above show that human "peace noises" are actually a sign of the Day of the Lord and Jesus' soon return. Jesus is the only one who can accomplish the quest for world peace. In Isaiah Jesus is called the "Prince of Peace." The passage goes

on to say, "there will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace" (9:6, 7). The peace Jesus will bring is not just internal, but political world peace. "He shall speak peace to the nations, and His dominion will be from sea to sea" (Zechariah 9:10).

I'm sure Arafat and Rabin don't realize their behavior is a sign of Jesus' return, but you and I should see it and respond appropriately: "Be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming" (Matthew 24:42); "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem" (Psalm 122:6); "When these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near. . . . When you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near" (Luke 21:28, 31). Rt.



Churches That Are Effectively Reaching Secular People

In an interview, Dr. George Hunter described the kind of church that reaches persons *outside the church*. They:

1. Know that people *who aren't disciples* are lost.
2. Know that lost people really do matter to God.
3. See their church primarily as a mission to lost people, rather than a gathered colony of the faithful.
4. Have high expectations of their members, in regards to attendance and giving.
5. Know what to change and what to preserve.
6. Understand secular people.
7. Accept and socialize with unchurched people.
8. Use music that secular people understand.
9. Start new congregations.
10. Are involved in world missions.

—from *A Church for the 21st Century*, by Leith Anderson

It's Not Easy Being a Christian Parent

Dr. Seuss beat out the Bible in a recent poll of educators. Educators attending a conference on educational excellence sponsored by the Burger King Corporation were asked to compile a list of books that should be read by students before they finish high school. The group, including 106 teachers and principals representing each state, selected books for age groups from pre-school through high school.

The list is dominated by American books, and includes works by classic authors such as William Shakespeare and Mark Twain, as well as works by contemporary authors Dr. Seuss and E.B. White. Two authors who have been the targets of criticism by conservative Christian parents—Judy Blume and J.D. Salinger—made the list.

Notable by its absence is the Bible. No book of the Bible was mentioned on the list, nor was any overtly Christian title chosen by the educators. (Ed.—This should be shocking, but for those who have followed education, it is not. It must be realized that many educators in leadership positions simply do not want to include anything such as the Bible. It does not fit with what is considered "correct.")

—from *The Bible Advocate*, April, 1989

The Role of Witness

Walter B. Knighted said, "God hasn't retained many of us as lawyers, but he has subpoenaed all of us as witnesses." The late Paul Little said, "... A lot of us just don't know how to approach people: though we've built up a head of steam, we're still preparing for that great tomorrow that's never come. We're like the enthusiastic coach inspiring his team in the locker room, 'Here we are undefeated, untied, unscored upon . . . and ready for our first game!' We've never risked spoiling our record by going out to face the opposition. And our record will continue to be a perfect blank as long as we continue to avoid the necessary contacts."

— from InterVarsity Press, via North Salem COG



The Family of God

By David
Krogh



Originally a sermon delivered at the 1993 General Conference at Lafayette, Indiana.

YOU AS MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH of God are very dear to me. The Church of God is my life. I love God; I love His Church; I love each of you who make up the body of Christ. I have a deep love and interest in every local congregation of our Association of Churches. In 2 Cor. 11, after Paul lists many of his sufferings in ministry, in v. 28 he says: "Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches."

I know at least partially what he was talking about because I too face daily the pressure of concern for all our churches. Nearly every day I talk on the phone with one or more pastors or laymen. I receive letters from our members. I read church bulletins. I rejoice when I hear of baptisms in our churches, successful Bible schools, successful calling campaigns and new families attending. I grieve when I hear of problems that strike our churches: financial problems, the death of a faithful member, or the falling away of people who know better. I hurt when I hear of internal conflicts, power struggles, bitterness, anger and criticisms.

Out of my deep love for the Church of God, I call your attention to three topics that relate to your position in the Family of God and to your work as members of this Conference.

God's Faithfulness

What a tremendous privilege it is to be a part of the Family of God and the Church of God. For some time I have been compiling a Blessing Book of my memories of the ways God has blessed me over the years.

My life has been loaded with rich experiences. I have known so many wonderful people. I have seen so much of God's beautiful creation. I have attended so many State and General Conferences. I have been in so many of our churches. Many of you have shown hospitality to my family and me.

Yet I find that I need to be constantly reminded of God's faithfulness. If I do not remind myself of these things I tend to lose perspective. I tend to become cynical. I tend to become pessimistic

about the future. But when I look back and see all the ways that God has blessed me, my faith is strengthened and I feel encouraged.

For the past eight years I have kept a prayer journal of four columns: the date of a prayer request, the request, the answer, the date of the answer. I look back over all the answers to prayer, all the wonderful things God has done, and I rejoice.

God is so good. He is in control of the universe. As Jeremiah proclaimed, even in the midst of struggle and despair: "For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness" (Lam. 3:22, 23).

My friends, the pressures and demands of this world deter us from seeing God and being aware of His presence. Many do not take time from their busy schedules to read the Bible and spend time in prayer and meditation with God every day.

I went to a pastors' seminar recently where it was reported that a survey had been taken recently of how many minutes pastors pray each day.

less than 10 minutes	27%
10-19 minutes	32%
20-29	13%
30-39	14%
40-59	6%
one hour or more	8%

I don't know how much our pastors pray; I don't know how much our lay people pray, but I fear that when our prayer life diminishes, our perspective blurs. We are tempted to put our confidence in our own abilities or in the abilities of others. We become entangled with the affairs of this life that strangle our faith. God forgive us for being blind to what He is doing in our lives, in our churches, and in the world.

We are much like the servant of Elisha mentioned in 2 Kings 6. Elisha and his servant are in Dothan. The city is surrounded by enemy forces. Elisha tells his servant not to be afraid and then he asks God to open his eyes so that he may see. The Lord opens the servant's eyes, and he sees the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around.

We need our eyes opened to have a renewed vision of who God is and what He is doing in the world today.

Second, I wish to call the Church of God to greater

Unity

In Ephesians 4:1-6 Paul appeals to those who are in the Family of God to behave with humility. Christian humility comes when we see our own weaknesses. It depends upon having the courage to look at ourselves honestly (Rom. 12:3).

Christian humility comes as we compare our life with God and Jesus. When Isaiah saw God upon His throne in all of His majesty and holiness, he said "woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips" (Isa. 6:5).

Paul goes on to say that believers must be completely gentle. The word "gentle" comes from the Greek word that refers to an animal that has been trained or domesticated until it is completely under discipline and control. In other words, this a God-controlled person who is disciplined.

He says the believer is to be patient. William Barclay says "this is a spirit that bears insult and injury without bitterness and without complaint. It is the spirit that bears the foolishness of men without irritation. It is the spirit that can suffer unpleasant people with graciousness. And accept fools without complaint."

Paul says we are to "bear with one another in love." As you know there are four Greek words for love. This is "agape" love. Love not based on feelings. Love that does not expect anything in return.

He then says, "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." This instruction is not to be taken casually. The humility, gentleness, patience, and love mentioned ear-

lier depend upon self-denial. As long as self is at the center of things, so long as our feelings and our prestige are the only things that matter, there will never be unity. It can only exist when we cease to make self the center of things and when we think more of others than we do of ourselves. Self kills peace and unity.

Paul then lays down the basis on which Christian unity is founded: one body, one spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God. There are the things that unite us.

It brings great grief to me when we have so much in common, and yet many times we choose to focus on our differences and pick at each other over trivial matters.

"... It is the spirit that can suffer unpleasant people with graciousness, and accept fools without complaint."

You have heard the expression: "In essentials unity; in non-essentials liberty; in all things love." We should strive for unity in the basic teachings of Scripture. Our founding fathers listed some of these in our founding documents: oneness of God, Sonship of Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit as the power of God, Bible as the inspired word of God, mortality of man, belief, repentance, confession, and baptism required for salvation, Church of God scriptural name for the Church, Christian life—consecrated discipleship to Jesus Christ as Lord, Savior, and Teacher, Restoration of Israel, Return of Christ and the Kingdom of God established on the earth.

We should strive for complete understanding of these Bible teachings.

However, we must not arrogantly believe that our founding fathers had a

knowledge of all truth. There is still a need for us to be truth seekers. We need to study and grow. Though it would be nice to have unity on every topic and portion of Scripture, I think that is unachievable and those who try to force everyone to conform in every area will destroy the unity of the body. I am grateful that the Church of God grants freedom of understanding in portions of Scripture that are not essential.

In non-essentials, liberty—what are some of these non-essentials?

Methods

Some of our churches have chosen not to have Sunday School. Some have chosen not to have Sunday evening services. Some have Bible school, some do not. Some churches have a church Board; others an Advisory Council. Should we argue about these differences? Should we criticize churches that don't do it the way our church does it?

Music

Another area where we need liberty is in the area of worship and music. How ironic that our worship and praise time that is directed to God, sometimes ends up in arguing, bitterness, and strife over how we are going to worship. If Paul's words in Ephesians 4 mean anything: humility, gentleness, patience, love, and peace, they mean that we in the church must deal with these problems in a way that will preserve the unity of the body.

If someone wants to say amen, or raise their hands; or if someone doesn't want to say amen, or doesn't want to raise their hands, does this become a test of fellowship? Is this a reason to leave the church?

Some of our churches face other areas of conflict: power struggles, struggles over buildings, struggles over expectations of pastors, or expectation of laymen, personality conflicts—some

Is there such a place? Where there never (or seldom) is heard a discouraging word? Oh how I long for such a place!

How many times do you hear a discouraging word at a Board meeting, committee meeting, congregational business meeting, or in private conversation? People or ideas being put down, or criticized, or ridiculed.

How much better to hear encouraging words. There are so many Bible verses about positive speech: Col. 4:6—full of grace, seasoned with wholesome talk; Eph. 4:29-32—no unwholesome talk, what is helpful for building others up.

We dare not tear each other down. There is too much of that in the world. Many people are seriously wounded by unkind words—criticism.

Revival

There is an urgent need in the Church of God for people to be drawn closer to the Lord. We need to get down on our knees and confess our sins; we need to ask God to forgive us for our disobedience to the Great Commission; we need to rededicate ourselves to the task of making disciples. We need to acknowledge our dependence on God. We need God's help if the Church of God is to move ahead. We can't do it alone. We have all tried that and it isn't working. This is God's Church, and only when our hearts are in tune with His heart will progress be made.

I would like to call your attention to Joshua 24. As Joshua was about to die, he reviewed what God had done for His people and challenged them to remain faithful. The people affirmed their faith in God (vv. 14-18). Then Joshua took a large stone and placed it under an oak tree as a witness to the covenant of the people to serve and obey God (vv. 22-27).

Someone came into my office about a year ago. As he was walking by our property he saw the big rock and oak tree

and was convicted of his own lack of faithfulness as he remembered this passage in Joshua 24.

I propose to you that the rock and oak tree in front of the Atlanta Bible College campus be a reminder to all of us of our commitment to serve God. If there are foreign gods in our life that need to be thrown away, now is the time to do it.

The backdrop of my appeal to you to remember God's faithfulness, the importance of unity, and the need for revival is obedience to the Great Commission—to make disciples. The backdrop is our vision of strengthening existing churches, starting new churches, and

How ironic that our worship and praise time ... sometimes ends up in arguing, bitterness, and strife over how we are going to worship.

operating the best Bible College possible.

Is there any local church that doesn't need to be strengthened? Have we planted all the churches that we should plant? Do we have all the students we need at the Bible College? Should we just coast from here on until Jesus comes?

At times there is a lack of unity in our body about what should be done to strengthen our churches. There is a lack of obedience and commitment. There is a lack of unity about the need to start new churches and how to start them. Word reaches my office periodically of jealousy about the amount of time and effort that is spent on new churches.

God is not willing that any should perish but that all His lost children should be brought to repentance. We must not frustrate God's will in this area. We must love the lost. We must not have

jealousy toward others' churches. We must not squabble over money and resources. There must be no resentment in our hearts over starting new churches. God paid a high price to save the Church. If we expect God's blessing, we should get in step with His program.

I pray that you will catch the vision and ask yourself, "What can I do to strengthen my church? What can I do to bring others to Christ? What can I do to encourage the planting of new churches? What can my church do to encourage the planting of new churches?"

It was mentioned in the General Conference business session that there are many states, provinces, and territories where we have no churches. What prevents us from having more churches? We have members in nearly every state. I am aware of Church of God members who recently moved to Oklahoma, to Kansas, and to North Dakota. What will they do to get new churches started there? What will you do? What can we do together?

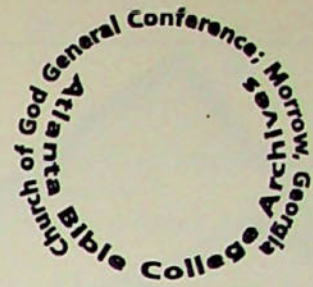
I know it is hard work. We are talking about starting another church in the Atlanta area. It is painful to think of giving up friendships to start another work. But that is what God calls us to do.

I challenge you as members of the Family of God to remember God's faithfulness. As we work, not everything will go smoothly. Things don't always turn out the way we want them to—but God is faithful.

Remember, unity is essential to accomplishment of our mission. Synergism will come into play. Synergism is joint action of agents, which when taken together increase each other's effectiveness. It means $1 + 1 = 3$. Our strength and effectiveness are multiplied when we work together.

Remember, revival is essential to accomplishment of our mission. We can't do it alone. God wants our total allegiance to Him as we work in partnership with Him to do His will. ❦

CHURCH OF GOD GENERAL CONFERENCE HISTORY NEWSLETTER



Volume 6

December, 1993/ January 1994

Number 2

Dear Janet:

I am enclosing a brief history of the Casey, Illinois church, otherwise known as the Moriah church. I asked Clement Richey, who attends Sunday School there, to find out about the history of the church, which he did as you will note in the enclosed history. He refers to it as the Church of God Abrahamic Faith, Restitution Church, Casey, Illinois. As I recall, this is the way the sign reads on the church.

Janet, I really enjoyed the article by your father in the last HISTORY NEWSLETTER [Vol. 5:6]. Also the one by Marjorie Bolhous.

Is there a picture of Bro. Crowe in any of the old Heralds?

We look forward to the next NEWSLETTER. You're doing a great job.

In Faith,
Harry Goekler

Editor's reply:

Thank you again, Harry, for getting Clement involved and for being a regular contributor to the HISTORY NEWSLETTER. Thanks also for the photos.

—Jan

A History of the Restitution Church Casey, Illinois

The Restitution Church was started by Lewis Weaver. He donated land for the church and the cemetery in the early 1900's. 1902 is the date on a plaque in the building. Prior to that time, they met in a community building at Moriah, a small village a few miles northeast of the present church. I have contacted some of the people who used to go there or the descendants of some and they tell me that in the early years it was Lewis Weaver's church. Then in later years it was Mel and June Weaver's church. Lewis Weaver is now deceased, being buried in a large mausoleum near the building in the cemetery. The church building is within the perimeter of the cemetery. The information has it that always on Sunday everyone went to Lewis Weaver's for dinner, Mrs. Weaver having planned and fixed all the eats. They lived a short distance west of the church.

Evidently there were some problems with that procedure, but Mr. Weaver was very strong in his beliefs and ways. Of course, back in the early years, oil income ruled the financial

end of the activity. I have heard talk of how different families came into the church, but I don't remember all of them.

Charlie Hickox was very strong against the sleep of death as stated in the Bible until he heard a debate between Bro. Conner and someone else that convinced him on that issue. The daughters of Charlie Hickox are still living but do not attend church with us as they are ailing or attending elsewhere.

So now it is we four most times . . . the two of us (Clement and Rosalie Richey), June Weaver, and another elderly lady from Casey, Margaret Heim. She is a Weaver descendant who went to Restitution Church as a child, but when she grew up and married she went to a Casey church. A few years ago she started coming with us because the church she went to was too much of just a social activity.

Of course, one reason there aren't more is partly because there aren't as many people in the neighborhoods as there were years ago, but I have a feeling that part of it is due to the controversies that have happened over the years.

I hope this gives you a little of bygone history as I know it.

—Clement Richey

Editor's note:

Nice to hear from you, Clement, and thanks for the update on the church of Casey. Sadly, some rural churches are becoming a threatened species in America and except for a faithful few, some would close their doors. Keep the faith and write us again.

—Jan

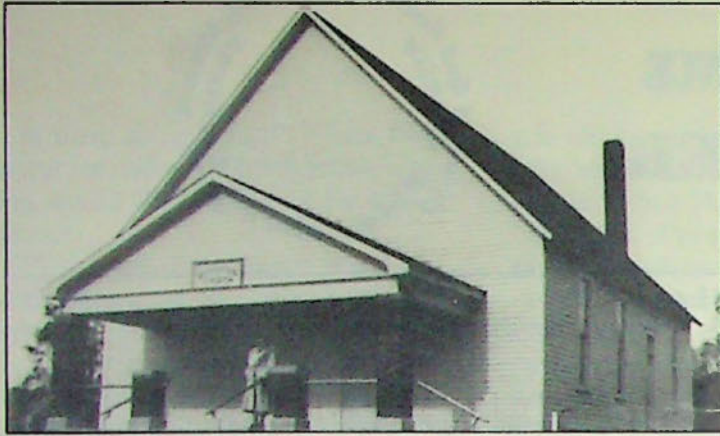
A Letter to James Watkins from Bertha Partlow

November 29, 1951

Bro. Watkins,

I will attempt to give you some of the early history of the origination of the Church of God of the Abrahamic faith in Clark County, Illinois.

In the year 1839 John H. Partlow established a home in Johnson Township, Clark County, Illinois. After some time he began preaching in the local community, holding meetings in different homes and in the little log schoolhouse near his home. At this date there were no churches of any kind in the vicinity as well as few public buildings with the exception of the log



Bertha Partlow on the porch of the Restitution Church

school buildings. Near the time of the Civil War, John H. Partlow, being in very poor health, moved to a western state and died without being able to return to the church of his founding. There were 15 to 20 members of the church at this time. For about 20 years the church lay more or less dormant and the membership dwindled until the year of 1888 when the late Marion Partlow, on hearing of a preacher by the name of S. T. Hook living in Sugar Creek, Indiana, contacted him and a series of meetings resulted. These meetings were held in a small log church built by the community at Moriah, Illinois, about 2 miles northeast of the present site, 6 miles south and 1 mile east of Casey, Illinois. The church was completed and dedicated on September 20, 1902. The dedication sermon was delivered on September 20, 1902. The dedication was delivered by Wm. L. Crowe of Lincoln, Nebraska. Other speakers that day were A. H. Zilmer of Plymouth, Indiana and H. Wh. Wilson of Chicago. The more active members in building and maintaining the Restitution Church included Lewis and Addie Weaver, Z. E. and Emma Brant, B. J. Woods, J. R. Lansbery, John and Roanna

Elliott, Marion Partlow, C. N. Partlow, and Peter Jeffrey of Murphysboro, Illinois. We have had numerous great preachers; more of the early ones include L. E. Conner, S. J. Lindsay, F. L. Austin, R. G. Huggins and G. E. Marsh and others equally great that don't come to mind at this writing. Enclosed is a new picture of the church and that is me standing on the porch.

Yours in the faith,
Bertha Partlow

Dear Janet:

I enjoyed the last HISTORY NEWSLETTER [Vol. 6:1]. Lots of interesting reading in it. Of course there was my letter. Ha.

Janet I do not have a picture of John Claypool, that is, an original picture. I do have a copy that I cut out of the Goekler Family history book. Enclosed is a picture of John Claypool and his wife Cynthia. I am also enclosing a group picture taken at the Moriah church. This is a different group than the one I sent you earlier. John Claypool is in the group.

I am trying to get a picture of the Moriah church building. I will send it to you if I get it. Would you please return this group picture as well as the other pictures when you are finished with them? I am also sending a picture of myself, taken eight or ten years ago. Janet, some time back you asked me to send a picture of Thelma and myself. Did you get that picture? I have other pictures to send you when I get them, or copies made of them.

Must close and get this in the mail.

Yours in the Hope,
Harry and Thelma

Dear Folks,

Thank you for the letter and photos. Yes, I received the photo of both of you, and will return all originals to you when they've been published. I always enjoy your help and advice on the history you helped make.

—Jan



Moriah Church Group photo. This is probably not an Illinois Conference photo, as no recognizable ministers appear in it. Notice how well dressed each individual is, even to the hats or bonnets atop their heads.



Harry Goekler, Harlingen, Texas. Retired pastor of the Church of God faithful at Happy Woods, Louisiana; Oregon, Illinois; Harlingen and elsewhere. Descended from the strong roots of John and Cynthia Claypool.



John and Cynthia Claypool, Moriah Church of God near Marshall, Illinois. Date unknown.

Germany: 133 na
 India: 146 na

Sources:

- * 1982 *World Christian Encyclopedia*, Oxford Univ. Press.
- # My own calculations (1993).
- + *The Bible Missionary*, October 1992 supplement.

Please note that this table only applies to the ACHN and does not include some 2,500 UCHN located almost entirely in North America, and the 1,600 DCHN, as well as a rough estimate of some 1,000 who belong to the other smaller, less well-documented fellowships.

This information is more or less the nucleus of the geographical study of the Abrahamic Faith that I have been talking about. Thought you might be interested!

I have been rereading back issues of the HISTORY NEWSLETTER, and remember seeing letters going back and forth about the possible JW influence in Pres. Eisenhower's family. Did you know that Pres. Lyndon Baines Johnson was a Christadelphian? Not really, but some of his close family were. He certainly knew "the Truth," according to his aunt, who I spoke to earlier last month. This aunt is a Ch.ian, alive and well in Austin. She mentions that Johnson learned "the Truth" as he was growing up, but was never interested. It is possible, however, that his upbringing may have had an effect on his policy towards Israel. Anyways, I hope this letter finds you well!

Grace and peace,
 N. T. B.

P.S. Further research is turning up more groups "like us" in Malawi, Korea, and New Zealand, more to follow!

Editor's reply:

I am still trying to track down W.H. Eisenhower, Abilene, KS. from 1893. He or she is not a member of Dwight Eisenhower's immediate family, so I am trying to become a "genie-ologist" and pull the facts out of Internet files—All you real genealogists out there, can't you help me??

—Jan

P.S. Your data is quite interesting and I hope you continue analyzing it.

Dear Jan,

. . . Yes, do what you wish with review in your history publication. To assist in that there are several new pages, not scrap this time in the OBITS. Two pages for CYNTHIA CAREY. Her marriage announcement was not completely readable, hence L_T_N, but in the obit she was married to LISTON. Genealogists love to find that stuff! The other two for FIELD and UNDERWOOD, where detail and primary sources are noted. (And wouldn't you know—in spite of endless proofreading I had omitted the period in ST. CHARLES. Now cor-

Dear Jan,

This is just a note to update some of the information I gave you in my last letter. I had stated that the Dawn Christadelphians "are unlikely to number more than a thousand or so." That is incorrect. I have better information from a member of the Dawn fellowship who states that the number is actually around 1600 members. They are located primarily in Great Britain, although they can be found in Africa and North America as well.

I also thought you might like to see a breakdown of numbers of Ch.ians [sic] by country:

	<u>Members</u>	<u>Associated Nonmembers</u>
Great Britain:	20,000	na *
Australia:	8,000	12,000 *
Canada:	1,500	2,000 *
New Zealand:	1,000	1,700 *
South Africa:	500	800 *
United States:	2,500	na #
Elsewhere:	4,500	na +
Total:	38,000	

Some of the larger populations in "Elsewhere":

Philippines:	400	na
Guyana:	140	na
Jamaica:	170	na
Kenya:	560	na
Malawi:	1,800 (!)	na
Cameroon:	100	na
Nigeria:	315	na

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rected—thanks to you!)

These thesis size books are not being sold. One hundred will be printed in good enough covers to be acceptable in most libraries. Librarians with whom I discussed the project also wanted the ISBN number. Whoever thought that up got a nice closed-end monopoly which is not cheap. My family members will get one copy each for memorabilia. You, Graham, and several regular corresponding genealogists, will get copies. The remainder will go to historical societies, libraries, and genealogical sources, free of charge. It was an interesting academic exercise that did not start out to be such. It was fun.

Guess that covers it. Keep in touch. Keep well. Keep busy?!

Cordially yours,
Byron Williams

Editor's Note:

Thank you for the "preview" of your reference work on early Church of God folks mentioned in *The Restitution*. Would you also consider donating one of those valuable copies to the archives at Atlanta Bible College Library?? Thank you also, for your kind words, and please continue with your research.

—Jan

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
ROBERT GRESHAM HUGGINS

1878-1955

Editor of *The Restitution*

1911-1925

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FORWARD

The Restitution was a weekly religious newspaper associated with the Churches of God in Jesus Christ organized in Philadelphia, 1888. Editions from 1874 to 1911 were published by the Christian Publishing Association, primarily at Plymouth, Indiana. From 1911 until 1925 the publication was done by the editor Robert G. Huggins at the Church of the Blessed Hope, Cleveland, Ohio.

These abstracts were derived from the original papers and microfiche for the period 1874 to 1900. Criteria for abstracting were that five facts or inferences were in the obituary. The marriage announcements were not abstracted, but selected verbatim because they gave insight to historical customs and language of the period.

Nine hundred thirty surnames are indexed. Where it was possible, surnames were cross-referenced. A maiden name and married name may be recorded. The text contains in excess of two thousand two hundred given names.

Where a submitter is noted, that person may have been a family member, a church associate, an evangelist, or pastor. High frequency names of submitters are known by the author to have been pastors or church elders, as in the case of Weethee, Chaplin, and Lyons. Experienced genealogists will find this a fine set of clues as to family, place, and migrations.

In addition to the primary religious teaching, exhortation, and debate, the paper was a conduit of local news and many letters from subscribers concerned migratory families and church friends. Some items appeared weeks or months after the fact, reflecting the isolation of certain people and the poor mail and transport of the period.

A large number of obituaries were accompanied by long columns of family relations and history, such as full military status of males who fought in the Civil War, or offices held in local towns or states.

For those wishing access to the original materials, these sources may be useful: Janet Stilson, Historian, Church of God General Conference, Box 100,000 5823 Trammel Rd., Morrow, Georgia 30260; Archivist, Aurora University, Orrin Roe Jenks Memorial Library, Aurora, Illinois 60506; Librarian Church of the Blessed Hope, 7450 Wilson Mills Rd., Chesterland, Ohio 44026.

My deepest thanks go to Janet Stilson for helping me start this project and uncovering needed materials.

—Byron P. Williams
9550 E. Washington St.
Chagrin Falls, OH 44023

Editor's Note to Marcus Heaster:

Please note Mr. Williams' address; he will welcome your questions, but is not sure he will be able to answer them! Thank you for writing, please write again.

—Jan

DAVID FULLER

Born May 16, 1812 Erie County, PA. Married 1839 to Mary A Whaley. Died May 4, 1887 74 yrs, 11 mon, 18 days of heart disease, at Mendon, St. Joseph County, MI. Leaves wife, daughter and son (no names). Lived in Livingston County, NY until 1844. Moved to Bedford, Wayne County, MI; to St Joseph 1846. Buried at Dutton Cemetery. Published June 1, 1887 Volume XXXVI #21

HENRY ESHELMAN

Died May 11, 1887 age 70 yrs, of heart disease, at Canton, OH. Leaves J.F. Eshelman of Seattle, Washington Territory, A.D. Eshelman, sister Anna (Mrs. George W. Young) of Brooklyn, NY. Published June 1, 1887 Volume XXXVI #21

CYNTHIA CAREY

Born Cynthia Messimore April 2, 1857 at New Chambersburgh, Columbiana County, OH. Married January 14, 1877 to Liston D. Carey. Died April 29, 1887 age 30 yrs, 27 days at Glasco, Cloud County, KA. Leaves husband, daughter Mabel, nine years; son Luther, seven years; parents. Only child of Henry and Margaretta (nee Edwards) Messimore. Sixth generation from Germany, 17th century at York County, PA. Maternal ancestors English, fifth generation from John Edwards, Chester County, PA. Parents moved to Kociusko County, IN March 30, 1864. Cynthia attended college at Warsaw, IN and Lebanon, OH. Careys moved to Cherokee, IA January 15, 1877. Adults baptism March 1874 at Lebanon, OH. This obituary occupies one and one half newspaper columns plus a poem.

Published June 1, 1887 Volume XXXVI #21

More genealogy and a review of this book are to come next issue.

Out of My Window

From My Office Window

Michele Millard



Out of My Window is a series of columns exhibiting different perspectives from members of our Body.

The view from my office window is not a particularly beautiful one. It is not a placid lake, a majestic mountain, or a lush golf course. It is a brick residence hall in which hundreds of students live while continuing their education in a university setting. This view is complex, for while it is exciting to see students grow and develop, I also see their struggles and pain.

When I first started counseling at Creighton University, my peers thought that this would be a "cushy" job, dealing with issues no more serious than roommate problems, breaking up with your boyfriend, or having an argument with parents. In reality, this environment has given me wide clinical experience. My schedule is filled with students who have been sexually abused as children, who have severely dysfunctional families, who are experiencing major depression, who are suicidal and many of whom are slowly killing themselves with alcohol or eating disorders. Why, in this environment filled with children of upper socioeconomic professional and religious families, are the problems so severe?

The bad news is that this is just a microcosm of society as a whole. We are just reflecting what is going on in the larger world. The reality is that there are many people hurting out there. The good news is that getting help for this pain is more acceptable. No longer are people holding their pain in for fear of being labeled as crazy for going to counseling. It is acceptable and even admirable now to get professional help to make life more "livable."

To continue this line of thought, it has become increasingly obvious that our churches are also microcosms of the bigger world. At one point, we felt that as Christians, we were somehow exempt from all the bad things that happen in the world. What we now know is that our churches are filled with hurting people—people who have been sexually abused, people who are experiencing major depressions, people with eating disorders, people with disintegrating marriages, people who are suicidal, and the list goes on "ad infinitum." What

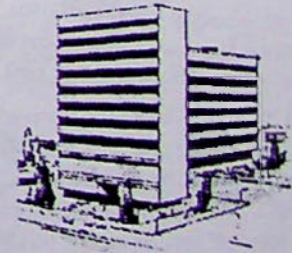
better place for hurting people to be than in a church—but only if we do something to alleviate that pain. For too long we have been putting the blinders on, coming together on a weekly basis to worship, and ignoring the issues that people bring with them through the church doors.

The good news of this new awareness is that Christians are connecting in a new way, encouraging and supporting one another in the way that Christ meant for us to do when he set up the institution of the church. The bad news is that ministers who are already overworked and fragmented into many directions are being placed in the position of being a professional counselor to these people.

The church, to become an instrument of healing, needs to focus on several areas:

1. Do preventative maintenance. Provide programs within the church to help alleviate stress and provide education (i.e. child-care programs, parenting education, classes on mental health issues from a Christian perspective).
2. Develop peer counseling programs/support groups. Many people need a listening ear and an objective perspective that could be provided within the congregational setting.
3. Develop a referral resource. Many communities have Christian counselors who provide the best of psychological services in conjunction with spiritual guidance and nurturing.

We are Christ to a hurting world. Perhaps we need to get our heads out of the sand and respond to the call of those "walking wounded" who sit next to us in the pew each Sunday morning. That's what ministry is all about. RH



Through My Kitchen Window

Joyce Houseman



Heavy gray clouds scud across the sky. They look angry and full of vengeance. Somewhere today someplace will be seeing new snowfall. Gone are the smells and the glory of fall. No faint aroma of burning leaves lingers—no trace of color in my flower garden.

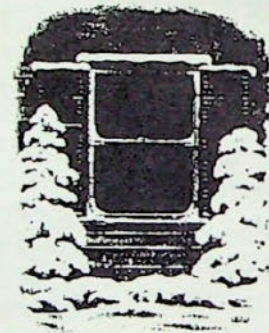
The wild turkeys have taken to roosting on the rafters in the machine shed away from the cold winds and snow. The guinea hens have taken their September hatched family to the rafters in the hay shed.

We people have prepared for winters as well as we can. Heat tapes are wrapped on water pipes, missing window panes are replaced, hay and corn are stored against the winter season. The snow blower has resumed its place of honor in the machine shed. We hope we're ready.

While we shiver and breathe the frosty air, the land sleeps. Beneath the frost and snow lie miracles which will reappear in spring. Even the

small wild animals move around only during the warmer hours of daylight, saving their energy to gather food and keep warm. All nature rests.

Although we dread the shortened cold days we rejoice in this time of year. Ahead of us are the holidays and, barring blizzards and ice storms, we will have family gatherings. We will celebrate the birth of our Lord with joy and adoration. We'll kiss and hug our loved ones, especially the grandchildren, and be content to stay in the warm indoors most of the time. As with each season God has given us, we will enjoy it and look forward to spring. RSH



From My College Campus Window

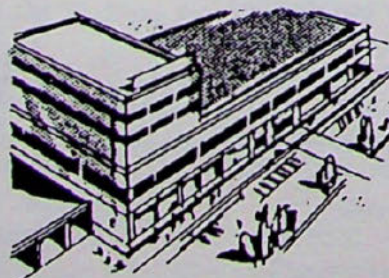
Andrea Anders



I am a graduate student enrolled in my third year of law school. Until recently, there was no church in my area. During my first year of law school, I became involved in Christian Legal Society, an interdenominational group that meets on campus at 7:30 Friday mornings to worship and fellowship. In addition to me, this group is composed of a broad range of individuals, including members of the Baptist, Catholic, Methodist, and Episcopalian faiths. At first, I was leery about becoming involved in a group such as this because I feared that I would be subjected to a weekly message of theology that would conflict with my beliefs as a member of the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith. To my surprise, I found a group that accepted differing theologies without emphasizing one set of beliefs as the "right way" to

interpret God's word. The basis for Christian Legal Society, or CLS as we call it, is Mark 12:30, 31 in which Jesus commands men and women to love God with all their hearts, minds, souls, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. I have been spiritually nurtured by this group. During our weekly meeting, I am reminded that I need to exhibit Christian attitudes in my daily interactions with others. This is not always easy to do when you are constantly surrounded at school or work by non-Christians. I believe involvement in groups like CLS at school or work is invaluable because this involvement reminds us to act as stewards of Christ in all aspects of our lives. In addition, we are provided with a support group when we encounter obstacles outside our church communities.

I also think that it is possible to share our faith with others in fellowship groups. When CLS decided to compile a songbook of verses for everyone to learn, I volunteered to help and now every Friday morning we sing songs that I learned at Southeast Youth Camp and National Berean Youth Congress. Some people have noticed the lack of Trinitarian themes in these songs and have in-



quired about my beliefs, which I have been happy to share.

I realize that not all interdenominational fellowship groups are as theologically neutral as the group with which I am involved. I am not encouraging anyone to become involved with a group that is theologically opposed to our beliefs. Nor do I believe that a fellowship group can replace attendance at a Church of God service. I do believe, however, that a fellowship group can enrich our Christian experiences. Should you have the opportunity to become involved in a denominationally diverse group, give it a chance. You may find yourself acquiring new spiritual depth. PH



From My Study Window

Don Nunemaker



Every once in a while I get fixated on numbers. That is, I begin to look at numbers within the church. How many attended Sunday School, or worship services? Did we really have a good turn out at Wednesday night Bible Study? And when I get obsessed with our attendance figures I begin to feel a little guilty. I rationalize that numbers are really not important, but the level of each attendee's spirituality is what is so very, very vital. And so as a result, I fall back, comfortable once again, knowing that the most important aspiration of the church is being obtained: spirituality. But, as I analyzed that thought I bolted up in my chair.

Wait a minute! Something was wrong with my conclusion! Numbers are important. . . they are clear indicators of the "spiritual level" of the church and its membership. If our church is seeking to do the will of Jesus Christ, didn't He say to "go and make disciples of all nations, and baptize them. . ." So if we are a spiritual people what do *low numbers* reflect? It would really reflect a church that was not as spiritual as it thought.

We can make excuses for whatever we want. But churches that are truly seeking GOD'S will for their lives, will be a lively, vibrant groups of people. And most likely they will be having a great time to boot. Over the years, I have heard of

several cases of neighborhood churches that were just barely making it. Everything was in the cellar, so to speak. Eventually, the doors closed, and the building sold to another church group. Suddenly, that old run-down building was bursting at the seams. Just months before, hardly anyone was there for worship. But, then a massive change had taken place. Many people were there attending and praising God. What was different? It was the same church, same neighborhood, and even some of the same people. While we could point at many things that brought about the change, there is one factor that never changes. Change was brought about because many people sought to do God's will.

When we look at numbers of people in our houses of worship . . . it should tell us something. And **NUMBERS ARE IMPORTANT!**

- How many did Jesus feed with the five loaves of bread and two fish? 5000 *men!* To say nothing of the women and children (Matthew 14:13-21).
- From Matthew 15:29-38, how many were fed? 4000 *men.*
- How many were healed by Jesus Christ? Many!
- How many were at the gates of Jerusalem to greet Jesus? Many!
- How many were in the room at Pentecost? 120.
- How many were baptized in Acts 2:41? 3000.
- How many were baptized in the home of Cornelius? A large crowd.
- How many are dressed in white in the Book of Revelation? 144,000 and a great multitude.

If numbers are not important, why were we given these figures? And if you look at Scripture you will note in many, many instances some sort of number is given. This is especially true where salvation is discussed. So the next time I look at the *numbers* of people who are in attendance at services, this observation will tell me the level of spirituality of each one there. If I see rising numbers it tells me each person there is seeking to do God's will and bring others to the Throne of God. But, if I see only a few in our houses of worship, what is the level of "spirituality" in that House of God? (The answer? I think you know). PH

Christmas Memories

Joyce Bolhous



"She Outgave Everyone"

I will never forget the wonderful experience of pastoring the East Oregon Chapel. God has indelibly etched in my mind some beautiful names and faces of Saints who have been an inspiration in my life.

One lady in particular who has taken up permanent residence in my heart is Catherine Ennenga. When I began pastoring the East Oregon Chapel, Catherine was in her mid-seventies and hard of hearing. Not wanting to startle her when I would walk into the church, I would blink the lights until she noticed or sometimes pull the plug on the vacuum sweeper. Those are great memories of this "Super Saint".

I think back to the first Sacrifice Sunday we had. The year was about 1981. We were involved in a building project and decided to designate a Sunday in November for the people to give a special sacrificial gift to the Lord to go toward the building expenses.

Having had this planned well in advance my wife, Carol, and I had started a Christmas Club at the local bank with the purpose of surrendering it to the Lord as it would mature about a week or so before the special Sunday.

When the time came to give our gift, it didn't feel like much of a sacrifice. Actually we were giving out of our abundance. I had been blessed with a good job at the Carlson Trucking Company in Byron and Carol was working in the bank. Generous support was being given from the Conference and individuals toward my education at Oregon Bible College. We certainly could do more than give the money we had put away out of our plenty. Wasn't it to be a "Sacrifice Sunday"? We decided that to be a true sacrifice, we both needed to surrender our week's pay check. We had asked the members of the church to consider giving a pay check as a step of faith and a gift of love. Shouldn't we do the same?

It felt good. In fact, I felt quite proud that with the combined money of the Christmas Club, both of our pay checks and the money given by our sons, the Eldred family was able to be very generous. It is something you are tempted to boast about. "God must really be pleased with US!"

I had the "pride" knocked out of me and realized my gift was only a pittance when Catherine later told me what she had given on Sacrifice Sunday. I knew that she lived on only her Social Security and the small amount she earned cleaning the church. With excitement in her voice and joy in her eyes and

not an ounce of boasting, she said, "I went to Cappy's (grocery store) and got some milk and bread and a few groceries. The rest of my check, I put in the offering, and I haven't even filled my oil barrel yet."

I know I had a lump in my throat and tears in my eyes (in fact, I do right now as I write this). She outgave everyone! Most of us gave out of our abundance and that was really not a sacrifice at all. Just think what we could do for the cause of Christ if each of us would give as sacrificially as Catherine did. Not only of our money, but of our gifts and talents also. Paul says, "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). At or near the top of His list, you will no doubt find the name, "CATHERINE".

—Dick Eldred

Dick Eldred



Joseph Fletcher



James Hill



Paula Kirkpatrick



The Christmas of 1987

The Christmas of 1987 is one that stands out in our memories. It was the only Christmas we spent in Columbia Station, Ohio. It was also the last Christmas that all the children and grandchildren spent with us. Cheryl, Dale, Jennifer and Rebecca drove up from Virginia since all parents and grandparents attended the Columbia Church of God. Debbie also came in from Virginia and even brought her little dog, Charlie, to be with us. Jeff and Karen came from Oregon, Illinois accompanied by one-year old J.J.

The parsonage was crowded that Christmas day and the small living room was filled to overflowing. There were



plenty of willing hands to help "Grandma" with the needed chores. There was a full-sized Christmas tree with many gifts beneath its adorned branches. The table was extended with all the extra leaves in place and overflowing with all the good foods of the season. One had to wait his turn to get through this crowded place. Out of the picture window, one could see the life-sized nativity scene located in front of the church. It was a blessed day that Shirley and I will long remember.

—Joseph Fletcher

Christmas as a Boy

Christmas for me as a boy was the best time of the year. It was so good to be out of school for Christmas vacation. We could forget about school for a couple of weeks and just have a good time. On the two days of Christmas there would be plenty of good food and I could stuff myself like a Thanksgiving turkey. But the best thing about Christmas was receiving all those gifts. It was so good I could hardly stand it.

Several years have passed since those days and I now look at Christmas a little differently. Even as I look back, I see those Christmas celebrations in a different light, although I'm sure that even then they meant more to me spiritually than I realized.

I grew up in Arkansas, just fifteen miles out of Hot Springs. My mom's parents lived next door and my dad's parents lived a half mile down the road. Both families were close-knit and most of my relatives lived within a few miles. There were 24 grandchildren on my dad's side of the family and 24 on my mother's side. And we got together with both sides every Christmas.

It would begin with supper at my Grandpa and Grandma Hill's on Christmas Eve. There were usually 30 to 40 of us there. The winters in Arkansas are usually mild, which worked out good because their house wasn't very big. It was warm enough that most of us kids would play outside until it was time to eat. Not many of my relatives on the Hill side were religious back then, but my dad always made sure that we prayed before the meal. The food was really good, especially

Grandma's chicken and dumplings. After the meal we exchanged gifts. I can't remember any of the gifts I received, but I have many good memories of those times together.

The next stop was Grandpa and Grandma Humphrey's. Grandpa was a Church of God minister. Again there were usually 30 to 40 relatives there, but they were on my mother's side of the family. They had a big living room and people would be sitting everywhere. We always started by singing Christmas Carols. We sang songs like "Ring the Bells," "Silent Night," "Away in a Manger," and many more. Grandpa would then read Luke's account of the birth of Christ. He must have looked forward to that every Christmas. After explaining the Scripture, he would then pray. The evening would end with the exchanging of gifts and all kinds of homemade candy that was so rich!

On Christmas morning we always awoke early to play with our toys. We then would eat a breakfast of ham, eggs, rolls, and melted cheddar cheese, along with a few other things. At noon it was back to Grandpa Humphrey's for a big dinner. When that was over, we were ready to rest.

The only one left of my grandparents is Grandma Hill. We still meet at her house on Christmas Eve. The Humphrey's family still meets, but now a couple of days before Christmas. These times at Christmas have drawn us closer together and closer to Christ. As a child I never realized just how much of a blessing the Christmas celebrations were. I thank God for the memories I have of those times and look forward to Christmas again this year.

— James Hill

I Remember Christmas

I remember Christmas at my grandma and grandpappy's (Ruby and John Railton) home on Yonge Street in Rockford, Illinois. My father (Austin Railton) attended Oregon Bible College for four years, so we were close enough to be with my grandparents. My brother, John, was five and I was eight when we moved to Oregon. Christmas was a special time of family

togetherness. On Christmas Eve we would all be together for dinner, along with my then single aunt, Mary Catherine, who later married Pastor Kenneth Milne. Our custom was to open presents that night.

Grandma greeted us at the door with three kisses for each of us—one on each cheek and a big one on the mouth; I remember how soft her face was. She had her apron on and was perspiring from being in the kitchen where all the good smells were drifting from. We were welcomed in and John and I were reminded to stay out of the kitchen if we wanted to "eat anytime soon." Of course, that was difficult, and we always ended up getting underfoot, whereupon we were promptly shooed out.

After dinner would be the *really big* event—opening presents! First, though, was the interminable waiting period known as "clearing up and washing of dishes." To John and me this was a test of tortuous endurance. We were sure the grown-ups had invented this to teach us patience. All it really succeeded in doing was to get us more wound-up. To pass the time, Grandpappy would entertain us with funny stories and do bizarre things with his face. Why, he could stick out his tongue and touch his nose with it—really! We were truly amazed and couldn't even come close to doing that ourselves. He was a happy man and always had a twinkle in his eye.

When we were *finally* gathered around the temptingly laden tree, it was time to read about our Savior's birth from Luke 2. We all listened because we shared a common faith in *God's Best Gift* to the world.

On Christmas Day the whole thing was re-created with more people, more food, and MORE PRESENTS! Our great aunt and uncle Mary and Leland Hanson, Leota Hanson, great aunt and uncle Ethel and Paul Johnson and son Robert came for Grandma's turkey dinner with all the trimmings. One Christmas I was *quite incensed* that Robert, my father's cousin whom I had a crush on, brought his girlfriend, Diane, to the family gathering. I couldn't see the need for her to be there—it almost ruined my whole Christmas! Anyway, Grandpappy carved the turkey from the head of the table and passed the plates down to each person. After a sumptuous

One Step Nearer to the Restitution of All Things

By Mark Mattison



THE RECENT TELEVISED IMAGES OF Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the PLO's Yasser Arafat shaking hands have vividly illustrated the beginning of a process few have thought possible: the prospect of peace between Israel and the Palestinians. There is of course no guarantee that a meaningful peace is on the horizon, as Jewish and Palestinian protesters are seeking to thwart the process and as much more remains to be resolved between these peoples. Yet, doubtless many are asking: What should be our response to this unexpected news? Can these events be illuminated in the light of biblical prophecy? What precisely does the Bible predict about the Middle East?

Peace in the Middle East

Sooner or later (probably later than sooner) peace will abound in the Middle East between Jews and Arabs. This may be a tenuous peace indeed, but it will be peace nonetheless. This is illustrated by Daniel 9:27, which states that a "ruler who will come" (9:26, NIV) "will confirm a covenant with many," i.e., with Israel. This "ruler who will come" is elsewhere described symbolically as a "little horn" (7:8, 11, 20-22, 24-26; 8:9-12, 23-25) and "the king of the North" (11:21-45), a Middle Eastern ruler known to Isaiah as the "Assyrian" and to the Apostle John as "the beast" (cp. Isa. 30:31-33 with Rev. 19:19, 20). This ruler is the "Antichrist" who will promise peace and prosperity, but "While people are saying, 'Peace and safety,' destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape" (1 Thess. 5:3). This false "Messiah" will defile the Jerusalem temple which will have been rebuilt (probably during this time of peace) and will initiate "a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then" (Dan. 12:1).

Jesus' Interpretation

This scheme is reiterated by our Lord in His Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21). In response to His disciples' questions about the fall of the temple and the end of the age, Jesus draws on the Old Testament prophecies, particu-

larly Daniel. In Matthew 24:15, 16 He states: "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."

The "abomination" of which Jesus spoke is found in Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11, and it is implied in 8:13. This abomination, Daniel prophesied, was to be "set up" by the armed forces of "the king of the North." Significantly, Mark 13:14 describes the "abomination" in masculine terms: "You will see 'The Awful Horror' standing where *he* should not be" (GNB; cp. NIV text note; emphasis mine). This suggests that the "abomination" may actually be "the king of the North" himself, opposing and exalting "himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God" (2 Thess. 2:4).

Partial Fulfillment in A.D. 70

Luke's parallel account of this sermon emphasizes a fulfillment of this prophecy by the Romans in A.D. 70 during the Jewish revolt. In Luke, the "abomination that causes desolation" is replaced by "Jerusalem being surrounded by armies," and this is a sign that "its



desolation is near." The inhabitants of Jerusalem, it was predicted, "will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (v. 24).

The Jewish historian Josephus records the terror unleashed by the Romans as they conquered a divided city. He also records the horrible carnage following the burning of the temple: "While the temple was in flames, the victors stole everything they could lay their hands on, and slaughtered all who were caught. No pity was shown to age or rank, old men or children, the laity or priests—all were massacred. As the flames roared up, and since the temple stood on a hill, it seemed as if the whole city were ablaze. The noise was deafening, with war cries of the legions, howls of the rebels surrounded by fire and sword, and the shrieks of the people. The ground was hidden by corpses, and the soldiers had to climb over heaps of bodies in pursuit of the fugitives" (*The Jewish War*, VI, 271ff).¹ He also records the activities of numerous false prophets (281ff), also predicted by Jesus (cf. Matt. 24:11, 24).

This vivid fulfillment has tempted many Bible students to regard the A.D. 70 destruction as the final fulfillment of Jesus' Olivet prophecy. Not all of the prophecy, however, found fulfillment in that destruction. The temple was then defiled by the Romans, not "the king of the North." Furthermore, Jesus linked the destruction of the temple with His return: "Immediately after the distress of those days" (Matt. 24:29), He taught, He would return (cp. Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-29). Of course He did not return in A.D. 70. Therefore, we should expect another "abomination" in another Jerusalem temple.

It is not hard to believe that this will happen yet again. It has already happened twice; in the second century B.C. a Syrian king, Antiochus Epiphanes IV, defiled the temple and rendered it unfit for use. In the first century A.D. this was accomplished by the Romans. Just before the return of Christ, it will happen

yet again. The principle that a prophecy can be fulfilled more than once is clearly demonstrated in other passages of Scripture. For example, 2 Samuel 7:12-14 predicted that David's son, Solomon, would be a mighty king and would build the Jerusalem temple. The prophecy was fulfilled. According to Luke, however, this promise made to David is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus (Luke 1:32, 33). Thus, God fulfilled His promise to King David twice.

A Question of Timing

Having said this, we must resist undue speculation about when these events are to happen. A popular timetable is sometimes read out of Jesus' parable of the fig

"Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door."

tree in Matthew 24:32, 33 (cp. Mark 13:28, 29; Luke 21:29-31). There Jesus said: "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door." This is immediately followed by His statement that "this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened."

It is sometimes asserted that the budding of the fig tree represents the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. Within one generation of that event, it is taught, the Olivet prophecy will be finally fulfilled and Christ will return. Then one can easily set—not a date, but a deadline—of Christ's return.

Before we speculate on the meaning of this saying, we must ask ourselves how Jesus applied this symbol. He is very clear in interpreting the parable (Matt. 24:33; Mark 13:29; Luke 21:31). As the budding fig tree points to the coming of summer, so do "all these

things," i.e., the prophecies of Matthew 24:4-25, Mark 13:5-23, and Luke 21:8-24, point to His return.

What, then, of the "generation" which shall not pass away "until all these things have happened"? It is noteworthy that the Greek word for "generation," *genea*, can also mean "age" (cf. Job 8:8, LXX). Jesus spoke of "this adulterous and sinful generation" (Mark 8:38), meaning not only the people living in His day but this whole "present evil age." Interpreted in this way, the saying that "this age will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened" becomes synonymous with the following statement that "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

Conclusion

Jesus taught that prior to the end of the age, the Jerusalem temple will be defiled by the abominating presence of a Middle Eastern Antichrist. This event will trigger the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:21; cp. Dan. 12:1) which will culminate in His return to destroy the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:8). These events will be preceded by some sort of peace in the Middle East, but we have no way of knowing how near (or how far away) these events are. They may begin to transpire next year or they may transpire hundreds of years from now; we have no way of telling.

In the meantime, it is appropriate that we should celebrate and support any and all efforts to see peace realized in the nations around us. Lives are spared and improved when the threat of war and violence is diminished. Of course the human race will not be able to achieve peace before Christ returns, and in fact the world will grow much less peaceful before He does, but that does not nullify our obligation to "live at peace with everyone" if "it is possible" and "as far as it depends on" us (Rom. 12:18). ^{RH}

¹Paul L. Maier, trans., *Josephus: The Essential Writings* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications), 1988, p. 361.

Group Moves Toward Trinitarianism

The Worldwide Church of God, considered a cult because of its heretical ways, appears ready to endorse the historic doctrine of the Trinity.

Herbert W. Armstrong, the founder of the Worldwide Church of God, denied the doctrine. He taught that the Holy Spirit was an impersonal force. During doctrinal meetings held at church headquarters in June, officials confirmed that they now held that the Holy Spirit was personal, not impersonal.

Current leader Joseph Tkach wrote, "The Bible teaches that the one and same God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Thus far, however, church officials have been reluctant to use the term *Trinity* when describing the new teaching.

—from *Moody* magazine, October, 1993

Ancient Monument Points to David

An Israeli archaeologist has discovered an ancient stone referring to the "House of David," the first non-biblical mention of Israel's most famous king.

The monument was discovered in the ruins of Dan, a city near the modern-day border with Syria. Though incomplete, its 13 legible lines mention a "king of Israel" and a king of the "House of David." Avraham Biran, the archaeologist who found the stone, dates it to the 9th century B.C., after the division of the Jewish kingdom.

—from *Moody* magazine, October, 1993

How Can It Be So Difficult? Compare for Yourself:

There are so many people who seem confused over who Jesus is in relationship to God. And yet it seems so simple when the Bible is simply read. See for yourself.

JESUS

Was created (Gal. 4:4)
Died and was raised (Jn. 19:30)
Slept (Matt. 8:24)
He, whom God sent, prayed (Jn. 17:1-3)
Did not know all (Mark 13:32)
A mediator between God and man (I Tim. 2:5)
At God's right hand (Rom. 8:34)
Power granted to (Matt. 28:18)
Was sent (Jn. 3:16, 17)
Seen by all (Rev. 1:7)
Must reign until (I Cor. 15:23-27)

GOD

From everlasting (Ps. 90:1, 2)
Is immortal (I Tim. 1:17)
Never slumbers (Ps. 121:3, 4)
Was prayed to (Jn. 17:1-3)
All-knowing (Heb. 4:13)
One God (I Tim. 2:5)
Majesty on high (Heb. 1:3)
Omnipotent (Rev. 19:4-6)
Sender (Jn. 7:16-18)
Seen by Pure in Heart (Matt. 5:8)
Even the Son is subject to God (I Cor. 15:24, 28)

—from Rex Cain

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How Far Can It Go?

In the August 16, 1993 issue of *Christianity Today* is an article by Elizabeth Achtemeier entitled, "Why God Is Not Mother." Ms. Achtemeier, an author whose works I admire, has courageously taken up the banner against ultraist feminine theology. Rosemary Reuther is perhaps the leading feminist theological writer in the United States today.

"Reuther wants to use female language for God, and therefore she names the divine God/ess. For Reuther this God/ess is very much bound up with nature's life. Therefore in her book *Women-Church*, Reuther offers liturgies for worshipping groups of females that celebrate the cycles of the moon, the solstices and the seasons, as well as the cycles of menstruation and menopause. We 'reappropriate the hallowing of nature and cyclical time of ancient pre-Judeo-Christian traditions,' she says. We 'reclaim our true relationship with somatic reality, with body and earth, and with the Great Goddess that sustains our life in nature.' That is clearly a return to the worldview of Canaanite baalistic and Mesopotamian pagan theologies.

"The result is that Reuther and all those feminists who want to erase the distinction between God and His creation finally share with the most radical feminists, who have abandoned the Christian church and faith altogether, a view of divinity that is at home in modern witches' covens. Writes Starhawk, a self-proclaimed Wicca worshiper,

"There is no dichotomy between spirit and flesh, no split between Godhead and the world. The Goddess is manifest in the world; she brings life into being, is Nature, is flesh. Union is not sought outside the world in some heavenly sphere or through dissolution of the self into the void beyond the senses. Spiritual union is found in life, within nature, passion, sensuality—through being fully human, fully one's self.

"Our great symbol for the Goddess is the moon, whose three aspects reflect the three stages in women's lives and whose cycles of waxing and waning coincide with women's menstrual cycles. . . .

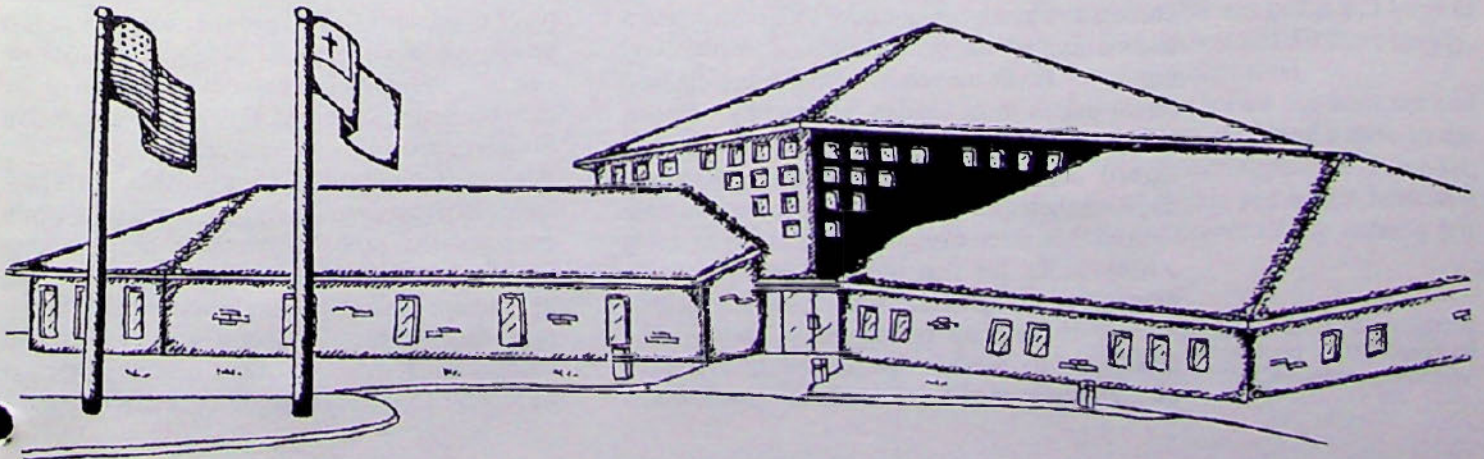
"The Goddess is also earth—Mother Earth, who sustains all growing things, who is the body, our bones and cells. She is air . . . fire . . . water . . . mare, cow, cat, owl, crane, flower, tree, apple, seed, lion, sow, stone, woman. She is found in the world around us, in the cycles and seasons of nature, and in mind, body, spirit, and the emotions within each of us. Thou art Goddess. I am Goddess. All that lives (and all that is, lives), all that serves life, is Goddess."

"In such views, meaninglessness haunts human life. Perhaps that meaninglessness can be most poignantly illustrated by Reuther's view of death. There is no eternal life for those of faith in Reuther's female God/ess religion. Rather the end she envisions for all of us and our communities is that we will simply end up as compost.

"Most disturbing of all is the radical feminists' claim to embody the deity within themselves—in other words, to be divine. 'I found God in myself and I loved her fiercely,' exults Carol Christ; that is the logical result of a religion in which the deity is believed to be contained in all things and all persons. . . .

"The radical feminists, believing themselves to be divine, think that by their own power they can restructure society, restore creation, and overcome suffering. But the tortured history of humanity testifies to what human beings do when they think they are a law unto themselves with no responsibility to God, and those feminists that are claiming that God is in them will equally fall victim to human sin.

"The God of the Judeo-Christian biblical faith is holy God, the almighty Creator and Lord, totally other than everything and everyone He has made. We therefore cannot know and worship Him unless He reveals Himself to us. But with a love surpassing human understanding, He has revealed Himself to us as the Holy One of Israel, who delivered her out of the house of bondage, and as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In that revelation, now mediated for us through the Scriptures, He has offered to adopt us as His beloved children (John 1:12; Gal. 4:4-7), to allow us to call Him Father, *Abba* (see Rom. 8:14-17), and to know Him as His Son Jesus Christ knows Him."



My Father's Left Hand

*A Death He Did Not Deserve **

By Geraldine
Gorman

This and the following article confront the extreme difficulties with modern medicine's ability to prolong life. The answers to such situations are impossible to ascertain for all families. Each must be approached by the family involved.

MY FATHER DIED EARLY THIS YEAR, hours after his transfer from the drone of an intensive care unit to the stillness of a hospice unit. The initial diagnosis that propelled him into the foreign world of high-tech medicine was oat cell carcinoma; what killed him is impossible to isolate. "Multi-system failure" is the convenient term to describe the body's surrender to disease or its attendant treatment. By the time he died, the bronchial tumor that began his month-long medical odyssey was irrelevant. The treatments had so ravaged his body, at the end the malignancy was the most benign of insults.

In the years preceding his last, he would declare with animation—cigarette in the right hand, left hand sweeping the air—that he renounced the "maintenance" of artificial support. When his time came, he would go. Death was never his fear; it was loss of dignity and control he could not accept. He had been a scrappy kid who came of age during the Depression and he knew no dependency. And we, his children, would counter with cultivated irreverence: we would maintain him at all costs, prop him in his favorite chair, a permanent spectator of the televised sports he so enjoyed. He would laugh and gesture in affectionate dismissal.

It was a joke, the blackest sort. We are enlightened adults, my father's children. His labor produced three liberal arts graduates. Together we comprise an English major turned clinical psychologist, a history major now a journalist, and a second English major who became an oncology nurse. As Jesuit university students we debated moral ethics in obligatory philosophy courses. We firmly rejected life-at-all-costs arguments and agreed, with our father, that it is the substance of days, not their quantity, that gives life its meaning.

And then three days after voluntarily entering a hospital for the first time, two days after the diagnosis that explained the dramatic weight loss, he was at the brink of respiratory failure. The bronchoscopy that had determined the definitive diagnosis produced an inflammatory reaction that,

together with the rapidly growing mass, threatened to strangle the airway. With our father gasping for breath we faced the choice of agreeing to a ventilator or conferring upon him a "do not resuscitate" status and watching him die, eyes wide and chest heaving.

This was a man who had driven himself to his routine check-up two days earlier. Three years before he had climbed to the top of Yeats's tower in County Sligo and surveyed the landscape of his ancestral Ireland. An abrupt death sentence in the face of such recent vitality was obscene. He was placed on a ventilator which the pulmonary specialist described to him as a "breathing machine."

For the next three weeks the machine did its job, breathing for him, "supporting" him through emergency, high-dose chemotherapy, through three nightmarish trips to radiation treatments. It continued to breathe for him after numerous unsuccessful attempts at weaning, during which his heart raced with the sheer effort of attempting to do what, until recently, had come quite naturally.

All the while we drew specialists to us as if by magnetic force. There were principal specialists—pulmonary and oncology—and auxiliary specialists—infectious disease and nutrition. There were specialists who spoke to us and those whose existence we knew only by virtue of illegible scrawls in the chart. Some acknowledged our emotional strain; one gently touched my shoulder. Another instructed without solicitation: "A little piece of advice? Don't read the chart. Try to just be a daughter, not a nurse." My father's hand rose and fell, attempting to express something of the man becoming obscured beneath the aggressive assault on malfunctioning systems.

Over a month's time, at the bedside, this is how it unfolded: the chemotherapy and radiation, given concurrently, probably worked; his breathing improved. Unfortunately, the treatments decimated his immune system, leaving him vulnerable to any opportunistic infection loitering in the ICU. To compensate for the loss of this natural protection he received a variety of antibiotics that may have

killed some bugs but also irreparably compromised his renal function. He could not tolerate tube feeding. Steroids sent his blood sugar skyrocketing and insulin was added to his hyperalimentation. His limbs swelled, his hair thinned, his mouth dried. As a nurse privy to his records, I watched the lab reports chart his inexorable decline.

And our father, the inquisitive and gentle self-made man who continued to work crossword puzzles even as his breaths became gasps, where was he? After the intubation, a sedative drip separated us. His consciousness dimmed, his eyes glazed. When titrated off the drip he resurfaced. He nodded, he mouthed words, he raised his restrained arms in abortive gesture. On the eve of my birthday, he squeezed my hand and smiled, delivering as sweet a gift as this daughter shall receive. On his last "good" day he attempted to write but we could not decipher the message. We left him that night in hopes of better luck the next day, but during the early morning hours he developed intractable hiccoughs and when thorazine did not work he was restarted on a sedative drip. He never again fully broke surface.

He slowly faded, exiting by increments, Cheshirelike in a medical wonderland. We were repeatedly cautioned not to relinquish hope prematurely. Each specialist had a case to make: his tumor type displayed "exquisite" sensitivity to treatment; his blood gases remained "good"; a broad-spectrum antibiotic might be helpful; nutrition must not be withdrawn while a machine continued to pump in breath. We waited, hoping he could somehow mend these disparate parts by force of will. We watched and he disappeared, leaving behind not a grin but the legacy of his left hand.

Why the essence of my father, the great vitality of the man, settled in his left hand, I do not know. But long after his voice was silenced by an endotracheal tube, his arms tied down to protect the airway, and his eyes had been clouded

by drugs, his left hand continued to open and close, to rise and fall. It did so in testimony to that which tests cannot measure. His grip remained strong even though his body was exhausted. When it became clear that extending his life meant prolonging his dying, we gathered the specialists.

The multidisciplinary conference we requested lent medical sanction to the obvious: aggressive treatment had become useless, crossing the invisible but crucial line between support and maintenance. The ventilator was turned off; we drew the curtain around us. We removed the restraints, freeing our tethered father from the tinkering of spe-

He slowly faded, exiting by increments, Cheshirelike in a medical wonderland.

cialists. With so little left to do for him, we directed our solicitude toward each other, taking turns in the chair closest to his left hand which continued to gesture with an eloquence made more profound by all that had been stripped away.

At the foundation of current nursing philosophy is what is known as systems theory: We are, each, a web spun of interconnecting strands, multiple systems. The gentlest of vibrations spreads reverberations throughout. Always the whole transcends the sum of its parts.

How quickly theories crumble when they meet reality, in this case when the nurse becomes the daughter of the desperately ill patient. And still, with what tenacity I struggled to believe further medical manipulations might restore integrity to the whole.

As the final reality descended with its attendant remorse, I thought my great sorrow was born from our inability to care for my father as we had wished, to offer him what all our grandparents had known—a gentle death in one's own

home. We had been contemptuous of medical technology; now we were defeated by it. At the end, however, I was less certain. That last night in ICU, alone with my father, I shared the quiet and what sleep we could manage. With my head against his chest I moved in tandem with his breathing and it was unclear who was taking care of whom. "O body swayed to music, O brightening glance/ How can we know the dancer from the dance?" asked the Irish poet from his tower.

There is no final and absolute moral to this family's story. It speaks to what can become the shackles of medical technology but it is more than a reiteration of the limits of specialized, reductionist medicine. What happened to my father and his children serves as a caveat. We were catapulted from holiday celebrations into a medical morass we could not control, justify, or escape. It happened without warning and it unfolded with unimaginable rapidity.

As a nurse, I hope the health-care reforms to be fashioned protect the dignity of the individual from what can be harsh and intimidating in institutionalized medicine. With a daughter's hard-won insight, I hope for a health-care system that does not contort the whole to serve the parts, an environment in which one can be both nurse and daughter without feeling one betrays the other.

I have left the hospital for community-based nursing. The full burden of all we cannot know still weighs heavily. With it to guide my practice, I hope to help others to live and die more simply, with less fragmentation.

Death is a process that does not end with interment. To remain alive to the mystery and preciousness of the whole, this is the legacy and lesson bestowed through the power of my father's left hand. RH

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Finding the "Fairness" in Suffering and Death

By David L. Wilsterman



Death is never fair, it seems. But it must be fairly faced by each one.

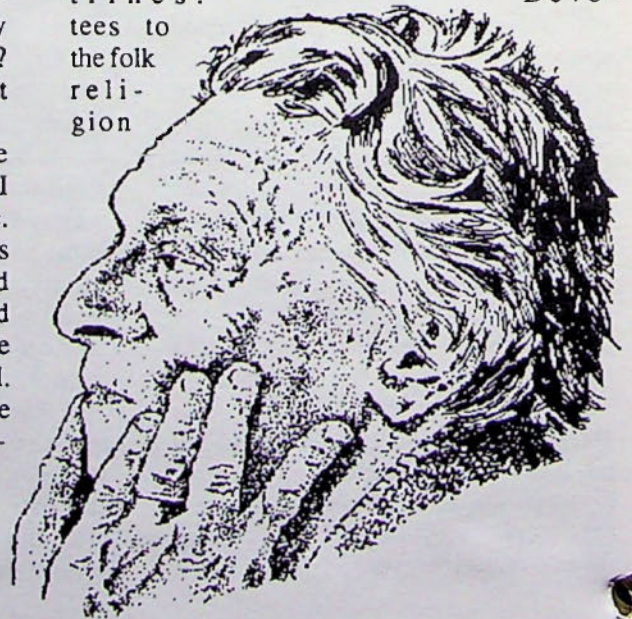
HESAT AT HER BEDSIDE JUST staring at her withered form. His brow was furrowed and his hands wrung with anxiety and fear. She had been ill for nearly a year now and he didn't know how much more pain and suffering she could tolerate. He had been surprised at what she had been able to bear to this point: the diagnosis, the surgery, radiation and chemical therapy, the loss of her hair, the constant vomiting, and the extreme weight loss. She hardly resembled the woman he loved, and to whom he had been married for the past 27 years. She had been through so much. She had suffered so long. And, it just wasn't fair.

Fairness was something he thought about a lot, especially as it concerned his good wife. She was a dedicated Christian, raised in the church and committed to honoring her God with all her energies. She had raised two children with her husband, served as a Cub Scout leader and a Sunday School teacher. She had made a good home for her husband and children, had volunteered at the kids' school, and even served meals on holidays for the Salvation Army. She had always conducted herself decently, had been kind and generous to neighbors and strangers alike, and had been devoted to her faith. So, why did this happen? Why was she the one to contract so horrible a disease? Why did she have to suffer so incredibly? It just wasn't fair! It just wasn't right!

Solomon felt this, too. In the 900's B.C. he wrote, "What do we gain from all our work? I know the heavy burdens God has laid on us" (Ec. 3:9, 10). His observation was that, work as hard as one might at living an upright, industrious and honorable life, for as long as one has life, and likely as not one will be frustrated and miserable in the end. It is not logical. It makes no sense at all. And, it's not fair! Further, the king noted the probable source of our frustration, writing, "Everything is appropriate in its own time. But though God has planted eternity in the hearts of men, even so, man cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end"

(Ec. 3:11). At the heart of this question of the "fairness," or "rightness," of our suffering and dying is the notion that we believe that we are made for more, for eternity. We imagine that we are unique in creation because we have the distinction of having been made by the Creator's own hand, and are not the product of His spoken words alone. Further, we have been crafted in His very image and endowed with the very Spirit, which is, in fact, His own creative "juice."

And I think that's it, this notion that we were made for more and that we should never die, which is the source of our believing that sickness and hard times are unjustly deserved by good people. It's the source, too, of our disbelief and dismay whenever one of us is confronted with mortality. We have not known a pure form of Christian faith, but rather one polluted with bits of folk religion. This teaches that righteous people will be rewarded for the good they do, while wicked people will be punished for the bad things they do. It teaches that those rewards will be immediate and obvious to all. It either is ignorant of the actual promises of God, or it ignores them, preferring to believe the folk doctrines. Devotees to the folk religion



ive a simple faith, but one which rarely affords them any comfort or peace in life's most difficult times.

Folk religion reasons that "good" people do not deserve to either suffer or die. But, if one *must* die, folk religion posits that death will likely be experienced without either pain or suffering—in one's sleep if at all possible. It is ignorant of one of life's most basic truths: while death itself is not horrendous, dying, on the other hand, is hell. The thought of becoming ill to the point of death shakes us. It is so contrary to what we've always thought we deserved, to what we believe is intended for us. Many of us have imagined that in our dying we ought to be able to maintain a modicum of respect and dignity. We think it reasonable to expect a shred of decency and honor be afforded us in the hour of our death. But it would serve one well to remember, it would serve to preserve one from distressful depression, to reflect on this reality: man was made from the dust of the ground; God is aware that we are dust; all come from the dust, and to the dust we all return (Ge. 2:7; Ps. 103:14; Ec. 3:20). C.S. Lewis wrote, "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world" (*The Problem of Pain*, MacMillan, 1962). The thought of actu-

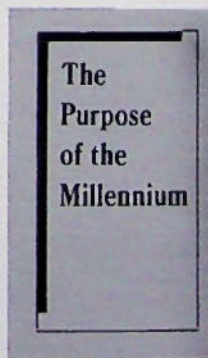
ally dying *must* shake us from our complacency, and rouse us to authentic living, and do that while we have life.

In *Theologia Germanica, XX*, we read, "Since the life of Christ is in every way most bitter to nature and the Self and the Me (for in the true life of Christ, the Self and the Me and nature must be forsaken and lost and die altogether), therefore in each of us, nature hath a horror of it." Indeed, nature and the Self and the Me have a horror of the life of Christ, not so much because it is itself (the Life of Christ) threatening to us, but rather because that Life confirms the truth that all have sinned (lived, with regard to the Creator's principles specific to His relationship with His creation, in opposition), and fallen short of God's expectation for our dealings with the rest of His human-family, and that the recompense for living so alienated from God and His plan for our living is death. Even non-Christians have some sense of this truth, though they may not be able to isolate and define it, neither may they be able to articulate it.

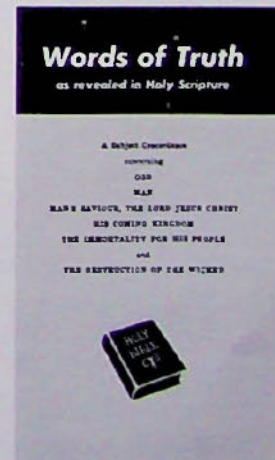
He sat at her bedside continuing to reason that this was not fair, continuing to examine her pattern for living and the good she had done. He thought of her determination to relieve the suffering of others and the kindness she had always shown others, even complete strangers.

He reminisced about the security her faith had always afforded, and thought, too, about the peace that was hers because she was the Lord's. And, he remembered her commitment to her God, and her confidence in His Son Jesus, whom she knew as both her Savior and the Director of her steps. And though she could not speak, it was almost as though he could hear her say, "Though this seems not to be right, God is good, and He will make it so. He loves me immeasurably and will never let any circumstance of life shake me from His sure embrace." And the conclusion of his consideration: no, it's not fair in the traditional sense, this suffering, this dying. It is predicated on legitimate, godly principles. And so, it's just, and it's right in that regard. But he doubted if he'd ever become more comfortable with the reality of his bride suffering so and dying. And I doubt if that's even reasonable for us to expect of him. R-1

Dave Wilsterman serves as the Minister of Education at the Valley View Bible Church in Phoenix, Arizona, where he and his wife, Janis, and their daughter, Hilary, have lived for the past seven years. He also serves as a pastoral counselor with the Hospice of the Valley, ministering to the unique needs of those people living with life-threatening illnesses.



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repast, the table was cleared, and the games came out: dominoes, chess and checkers, Grandpappy's favorite.

Later in the afternoon we tickled our palates with steamed cranberry pudding and butter sauce—Railton tradition, which, along with the Bible reading of Jesus' birth, is carried on in John's family and mine to this day. Although I took it for granted at the time, it was our belief in God's gift of salvation that really unified our family clan in a closely knit bond.

—Joyce Railton Bolhaus

MY FIRST CHRISTMAS SHOPPING TRIP

Saturday had finally arrived. I had waited so long for it to come. I could scarcely believe my older brother and I were actually walking downtown. Oblivious to the frosty air, I shivered nonetheless, with anticipation.

Hopelessly, I tried to match my small steps with his long strides. But it was futile. My brother was nine, I was five, and he always seemed to be ahead of me in everything we did. But today was different. Today we were equals. Together we were going to

buy my mother a Christmas gift, a wonderful gift, something she actually needed. Today, we were going to buy my mother a meat fork for Christmas.

As we walked through the doors of the Ben Franklin dime store, holiday music was playing over the loudspeaker. The aisles were crowded with shoppers, their boots forming puddles on the hardwood floor. It seemed strange to be weaving through the clusters of people toward the left hand side of the store where the housewares department was located. When I came to Ben Franklin with my mother, I always made a beeline for the toy section. I never realized a housewares department even existed in Ben Franklin.

Suddenly, I was staring up, up, up at a gleaming display of kitchen utensils covering the wall. They seemed to go on forever, in endless variety, yet collectively reflecting my face in their silvery forms.

"When would one mother ever use all these gadgets?" I wondered. I didn't have time to consider the thought as my brother jerked me over to the display of meat forks. Before me hung long and short forks, ones with fat tines and thin tines, and a myriad of handles attached to all of them. "How can we ever choose?" I asked my brother, trusting he'd have an answer to this dilemma.

"I like this one," he replied with nine-year-old authority. As I gazed at the fork he held in his hand, I nodded my head in rapt agreement. The long fork tines were sharp and shiny, and the wooden handle was painted a bright yellow, with single stripes of white and black encircling it. It was perfect!

Proudly we carried our gift to the front of the store, dropping our collection of quarters and dimes on the counter next to it. "It's for our mom," I confided to the cashier, my eyes shining. "She really needs it!"

The cashier gave an understanding nod. "Even she can see how wonderful this present is," I realized happily. We shared a smile across the counter.

Once more we were outside in the chilly morning air, hurrying home to wrap our special present. My first Christmas shopping trip was a success, and is imprinted still on my memory even though 37 years have passed. Perhaps you'd like to know what my mother thought of her 1956 Christmas present. Nestled amidst the various utensils in her kitchen drawer today is a meat fork with an almost bare wooden handle, and just a hint of faded yellow paint.

—Paula Kirkpatrick

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IS IT TIME TO RENEW?

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February, March 1994
Vol.83, No.3

HERALD

THE RESTITUTION

*"Hear, O Israel:
The Lord our
God, the Lord is
one. Love the
Lord your God
with all your heart
and with all your
soul and with all
your strength."*

Deuteronomy 6:4,5 (NIV)

In My Opinion . . .



Truth Versus "It Doesn't Matter"

In the Church of God we have cause to rejoice that we have been entrusted with certain fundamental truths from God, and about God, that seem to have been misunderstood by many, even most, of those that bear the name of Christian.

It becomes our responsibility to witness faithfully to those truths with boldness and fervor to all those around us. But those great truths—the oneness of God, the sonship of Jesus, the coming Kingdom of God to this earth, baptism by immersion, conditional immortality—are to be balanced and validated by the great truths of love for one another and our fellow humans, by living lives of justice and honor toward all around us, by seeking justice and equality for all persons, by morally pure lives.

That needs to be our challenge. It is not enough for us to know the truths which are so precious to us, but those truths need to cause us to seek and live the other equally important truths. When church members fight with their pastor, or when they fight with one another and divide into two angry factions, the first great truths are negated. Our lives, lived that way, do not validate our words.

We must be whole. True through and through. Jesus said some amazing words in John 5:39, 40, "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life." The life to which Christ calls us is more than knowing the Scriptures, as important as that is. It is also living those words in all that they mean toward one another and the entire world.

Our feature this issue is a group of short articles on what Galatians 5:22, 23 means! These character traits should be becoming evident as a result of God at work within each of us that bear Christ's name. They are to be the fruit, or the result, of God's Spirit at work. When we measure what our lives are against what God wants to make them according to these two verses we're challenged to let Him do more with us. That means yielding to His Will, and not just calling Him Lord, but making Him our Lord!

"Strange Cover"

Those words referred to last issue's cover with Santa Claus, Mary, and Jesus on it. Probably others of you muttered similar words, or others that were stronger. The cover was meant to provoke thought and comment. Actually the mail ran two to one in favor of it, but many more than wrote had feelings about it. Thanks for caring, and now let's do something about bringing the image of Jesus into sharper focus for all the year.

Your Help Requested

Years ago the HERALD was filled with articles by both pastors and lay people. I'd like to see that again, especially from lay people, and, of course, from our pastors. I ask you for your submissions. I can't guarantee to use them all, but I encourage you to send them. Keep them short, rather than long. Write on those issues that concern you regarding the work of God in our world, and especially through you and our churches.

Kent Ross

THE
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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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You've Got To Be Kidding!

WHAT A CHANGE

"The university is not here to teach us morals, it's not here to teach us character, it's only here to teach us academics."

—Residence hall association president JAN DAVIS, 21, objecting strenuously to a decision by the trustees of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to rescind a policy allowing students to stay overnight in dormitories of opposite-sex students.

REINVENTING PSYCHO-BABBLE

If you're hurting, Tammy Faye feels your pain. The ex-wife of jailed televangelist Jim Bakker told ABC's *Prime Time Live* last week she has started a 900 telephone help line for people who are depressed. The former Tammy Faye Bakker says her help line will draw on her experiences from the PTL scandal during which she cried incessantly. "I hope that people that are hurting will call in," she said in an interview. "And . . . I can maybe somehow through my experience help them get up that day, put on makeup, shave, brush their teeth and get out and not just stay hovered in the house."

—"Reinventing Psychobabble," *World*, November 27, 1993, p. 20.

REINVENTING JESUS

Meeting in Phoenix last month, the controversial Jesus Seminar agreed to step up its attack on the New Testament. The panel of liberal scholars, which has questioned the authenticity of Jesus' sayings in the Gospels, now wants to jettison several books of the New Testament, including the Book of Revelation. "These scholars have no ecclesiastical authority," said Donald Hagner of Fuller Seminary. "They can scheme away until they are blue in the face, but it's not going to change the church."

—"Reinventing Jesus," *World*, November 27, 1993, p. 20.

MORE PSYCHO-BABBLE

"Since that old reliable vessel for channeling passion, institutionalized religion, has been eclipsed by secular culture, we are now stuck with a kind of yuppie revivalism. Instead of tent services, we now have talk-show hosts and facilitators. And just as those sweaty, sawdust tent meetings provided relief and distraction from the stultifying everydayness of small-town life, so too do our modern soul-saving histrionics relieve and distract us from our depression and ennui. . . . Now even our sociopaths and perverts speak fluent psychobabble, and why not? Psychobabble exonerates us from everything. In Therapeutic America there is no such thing as sin. There is no place for wickedness in a support group."

—*New York Newsday* cartoonist DOUG BARLETT, writing in *Esquire*.

"KNEE-JERK LIBERAL PRESS"

Is this how a Southern Baptist should talk? "I have fought more **** battles here for more things than any president has in 20 years, with [the] possible exception of Reagan's first budget, and not gotten one **** bit of credit from the knee-jerk liberal press," said President Clinton to an interviewer for *Rolling Stone* magazine. "and I am sick and tired of it, and you can put that in your **** article." (All the asterisks represent the same word.) James A. Smith, the Southern Baptists' representative in Washington, says Clinton's outburst actually represents an improvement. "At least this time, he didn't take the Lord's name in vain," Smith told *World*, referring to an incident in which Clinton was recorded by a television news crew chewing out an aide.

—"Knee-Jerk Liberal Press," *World*, November 27, 1993, p. 9.

Below you will find several quotations and paragraphs about Thomas Jefferson, one of our country's early presidents. Called a "deist" by most, some of the so-called "heretical" beliefs that he held, won't seem so controversial to you. It's interesting to note that because he wouldn't hold to the orthodox doctrines, he is vilified and his belief system is lumped as atheistic, or deistic. Perhaps so, but I think you'll find this interesting!

Jefferson Was a Deist (pg. 85)

To most religious people, including Jefferson's enemies, there was little difference between being atheist, deist, or infidel. All were suspected of being nonbelievers, opponents of Christianity, and dangerous to society. Jefferson vigorously defended himself against the charge of being atheist or deist in this derogatory sense. "The priests," he complained, "have ascribed to me anti-religious sentiments of their own fabric. They wished him to be thought atheist, deist, or devil, who could advocate freedom from their religious dictations."

But in the intellectual sense of being one who believed in the Deity as opposed to the atheist who did not, Jefferson was a staunch deist. His religious thought is steeped in the ideas of the English deists, Baron Herbert of Cherbury, Charles Blount, Matthew Tindal, John Toland, and Conyers Middleton. His own religious notes and comments indicate a special debt to Lord Bolingbroke and Joseph Priestley, whom he had "read over and over." They formed "the basis of my own faith," he wrote to Adams. From these favorite deist writers Jefferson drew authority for his preference for a religion based on reason rather than supernatural revelation or mystical faith, his fondness for historical study of religion and the Bible, his belief in natural law rather than miracles, and his conviction that medieval mysticism was a corruption of the original teachings of Christ.

Jefferson Not an Atheist (pg. 83, 84)

Years later, Jefferson wrote to John Adams that he could never be an atheist and asserted that Calvin was the atheist or at least worshiped a demonic God. Calvinistic sects, he continued, gave "a great handle to atheism by their general dogma that proof of God depended on revelation" and not reason. Five-sixths of the present world, Jefferson wrote, had never accepted the Christian revelation of God, and many thinking Christians had been repulsed by the dogmatic sects into believing in atheism. It was those narrow Christians who accused him of atheism who were the real atheists, Jefferson insisted. He was real Christian in the sense of believing and following the simple teachings of Jesus.

God, Seen in the Creation (pg. 86)

Continuing the discussion later with Adams, he pointed out, "The atheists say that it is more simple to believe at once in the eternal pre-existence of the world, as it is now going on, and may forever go on by the principle of reproduction which we see and witness, than to believe in the eternal pre-existence of an ulterior cause, or Creator of the world, a Being whom we see not and know not." Jefferson gave this eloquent answer to the atheist: "I hold, on the contrary, that when we take a view of the universe; . . . the movements of the heavenly bodies, so exactly held in their courses by the balance of centrifugal and centripetal forces; the structure of our earth itself, with its distribution of lands, waters, and atmosphere; animal and vegetable bodies, each perfectly organized whether an insect, man or mammoth; it is impossible, I say, for the human mind not to believe, that there is in all this, design, cause and effect, up to an ultimate cause, a Fabricator of all things from matter and motion."

One God, Not Three (pg. 88, 89)

As one might expect from his belief in deism and his emphasis upon reason in religion, Jefferson was opposed to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. He referred to the belief sarcastically as "an unintelligible proposition of Platonic mysticisms that three are one, and one is three; and yet one is not three, and the three are not one." "I had never sense enough to comprehend the Trinity," he wrote in refusing to be godfather for a friend's child, "and it has always appeared to me that comprehension must precede assent." In the Episcopal baptismal service he would have been required to profess publicly his belief in the Trinity.

Jefferson was incensed against Trinitarian Christianity because he regarded it as a relapse from the true "religion of Jesus founded in the Unity of God into unintelligible polytheism," he wrote Jared Sparks, a minister friend. To James Smith, Jefferson expressed the belief that it was the emphasis by Christianity upon "the unity of the Supreme Being which gave it triumph over the polytheism of the ancient" religions and their immoral and all too human divinities. He regretted the subsequent growth of Trinitarian Christianity, which he called "the hocus-pocus phantasm of a God like another Cerberus, with one body and three heads." Over the centuries, the pure, "primitive deism" of Jesus had been changed and degraded by the church, Jefferson believed.

One God, Not Three (pg. 90)

Jefferson also condemned the teachings of Calvin and his burning of "poor Servetus" at the stake because he would not subscribe to Calvin's Trinitarian doctrines. "The Trinitarian idea triumphed in the church's creeds," he wrote to James Smith, "not by the force of reason but by the word of the fanatic Athanasius, and grew in the blood of thousands and thousands of martyrs."

Jesus Was Not a Divinity (pg. 113)

Another reason Jefferson opposed the belief in the divinity of Christ stemmed from his opposition to Trinitarian theology. The Trinitarian theorem that "three are one, and one is three, and yet that one is not three nor that three one," as Jefferson was wont to put it, outraged the reason, science, and logic his Enlightenment studies had taught him to reverence. The metaphysical ideas of "Athanasius, Loyola and Calvin" were "insanities" to Jefferson and represented "relapses into polytheism" and "corruptions of Jesus' doctrine of one only God." He thought they "differed from paganism only in being more unintelligible."¹⁶

One God, Not Three (pg. 90)

As the result of his study of church history, Jefferson picked out Athanasius, the bishop of Alexandria who vigorously championed Trinitarianism against other groups of Christians, and who was responsible for the Trinitarian emphasis of the Nicene and Athanasian creeds, as the chief villain who burdened Christianity with this "metaphysical insanity." It seems evident that it was the Creed of Athanasius, which was in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, that convinced Jefferson that the doctrine of the Trinity was "incomprehensible, unintelligible, and insane." Three-fourths of the Athanasian creed seeks to explain "one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity," using such terms as "confounding the Persons"; "Ghost"; "Glory equal, Majesty co-eternal"; "Father, Son, and Holy uncreate, incomprehensible, and eternal"; "Father made of none, begotten, Holy Ghost preceding"; "Father made of none, Son greater, or less." It is not surprising that the Athanasian Creed was dropped from later prayer books for lack of use.

God Creator of Man (pg. 88)

"The God who gave us life, gave us liberty at the same time: the hand of force may destroy, but cannot disjoin them," Jefferson wrote. It was the "Creator" who, by "the laws of nature," entitled people to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." The hunger for freedom and equal rights established by God in creating man appertained not only to his body, and hence his political and social rights, but more to his mind and soul, and thus his religious rights.

One God, Not Three (pg. 89)

Plato was one of the earliest philosophers who was used to corrupt the pure Unitarianism of Jesus, in Jefferson's disparaging view: "Plato's foggy visions have furnished a basis for endless systems of mystical theology." Jefferson was probably led by his reading of Priestley, who quoted Saint Augustine and Constantine as both saying that Plato was the source of their knowledge of the Incarnation of God in Christ. Priestley explained that early Christian philosophers had "confounded" Plato's idea of the Logos, or Word with that found in the Gospel of John, "making of it a second person in the Trinity, than which no two things can be more different."

Jefferson adopted and elaborated on Priestley's explanation of Logos in a letter to Adams in which he quoted the Greek of the Logos passage of John, chapter 1, and translated it to mean: "In the beginning God existed, and reason (or mind) was with God, and that mind was God. All things were created by it." This text showed, Jefferson argued, that Jesus taught "that the world was created by the supreme, intelligent being." Later Christians, in order to make sense out of their "mistranslation" of Logos to mean "word or speech" "undertook to make of this articulation a second pre-existing being, and ascribe to him, and not to God, the creation of the universe."

The passages are taken from *The Religious Life of Thomas Jefferson*, by Charles B. Sanford; 1984, University Press of Virginia.

Conclusion (pg. 101)

Jefferson's critical statements about religion came from some of his deepest convictions, the need for a new emphasis upon belief in one God, the Creator of the universe, and upon the simple teachings of Jesus, which, he felt, had been too long obscured by passion and bigotry. He wanted to "do away with the incomprehensible jargon of the Trinitarian arithmetic, that three are one and one is three and knock down the artificial scaffolding reared to mask from view the structure of Jesus' doctrines," but only so that people would be "truly and worthily His disciples." Jefferson was convinced, from much unpleasant personal experience, that orthodox Christianity, with its emphasis on faith and emotion, was dangerous. "Once surrendering his reason," he observed, "man has no remaining guard against monstrous absurdities and, like a ship without a rudder, the mind becomes a wreck." It should also be noted, in considering Jefferson's energetic iconoclasm, that he never used his power as a public figure to foster his own religious ideas and steadfastly refused to publish them. He sought to avoid the argumentation and debate about religion that his intellectual ideas provoked from more orthodox people but did not always succeed. He did, however, become a champion of the right of religious dissent and a hero for later Unitarians.

Through His Spirit, God Produces in His Children Fruit of . . .

By
Contributing
Authors

Love

What is love, and how would you define it? According to *Strong's Concordance* there are three words that tell what love is and how to explain it. The first word is taken from the Greek word "phileo" which being interpreted means "to be a friend," i.e. have affection for (denoting personal attachment). It is like the license plates in Pennsylvania, which say, "You have a friend in Pennsylvania." This is the affection or attachment that one feels for an acquaintance or casual friend.

The second word which describes love is "agape," which means to love in an affectionate or benevolent manner, such as a love feast (feast of charity), dear love between husband, wife, and children, mother, father, etc.

The love of the Spirit is the agape love, which is a "hot" or "fervent" love that we are to exhibit to our brothers and sisters in Christ as He has for each of us, as well as those outside the family of God.

I always thought that I had the agape love for everyone, but how wrong I was. I only exhibited the casual type of love, until I came to know and accept Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior. It was then that Christ gave me a love such as I had never known, and since that time my wife has said to me many times, "you are not the same man that I married." Praise God!

Christ Jesus allowed me to reap the bountiful harvest: the Fruit of the Spirit, called "LOVE."

—EARL POLAND

Joy

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace. . . ." As with all of the aspects of spiritual living mentioned in this passage, each is to manifest itself in our lives as the result of the presence of God's Spirit within. But they come to us in different, and often unexpected, ways.

I always felt that JOY was a wonderful sense of exhilaration and happiness that was to be ours as Christians. I desperately wished that was so in my life, but not only did I not see it in my life, I didn't see that sort of joy in anyone's life. Nobody was happy and cheerful and exhilarated all the time.

Over a number of years, experiences in the pastoral ministry began to temper and change my perception of what God meant by joy. James wrote,

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything (1:2-4)

That definition of what joy is certainly differed from the happy exhilaration I expected. In fact, it didn't fit at all. That kind of joy came through, and in the midst of, difficulty. That is really difficult to understand for someone like myself. Why, I would ask, doesn't God want us happy? Why can't He do good things for us? I was sounding like my children when they were small. "Daddy, I want some candy!" "Why can't I have that toy? I want it" . . . and their immature selfishness suddenly appeared as my own immature spiritual selfishness! "I want. . . . Why not . . . ? How come?"

But that kind of parent, earthly or heavenly, isn't allowing for the growth of their child. It is through being told "No," and in being denied what we want that our character grows larger and more mature. Sometimes it is in the midst of the most terrible of circumstances that we begin to perceive the joy of which James wrote.

A little over a year ago my father was told he had about six weeks to live. It was a horrible sentence of death that was pronounced by the doctor. It was through this time of crisis for our family and his friends that we found a deep well-spring of joy that is this gift of God.

In those last two months of life, all three of us, myself, my brother and my sister, made it a priority to go home and be with Dad and Mom. There were rides in the country, sitting on the deck in the warm sunshine, playing games around the dining room table in the evening . . . all the while reflecting on our lives together. We were to find a joy, even in the presence of death.

When Dad died, we felt grief and sadness at not having him with us, but it was not "grieving like the rest of men, who have no hope." Our sadness was not despair. How much more could we have hoped for from Dad and his life? Eighty-one years of largely robust health, a godly heritage passed on from both Mom and Dad to us, the opportunity to say our good-byes in gentleness and love. Strangely, both Scott and I have mentioned to one another the strong sense of peace we felt in the midst of this time.

Yes, there was joy! That was it. Joy, that in the midst of trials, could stand and persevere. That joy is a deep well-spring of confidence in the blessed hope of the coming of Christ and the Kingdom of God. That's not some far-off, ethereal dream, but a coming reality when these trials and times of trouble will be behind, and our joy may indeed become giddy exhilaration when we see Jesus coming back to this earth, and hear His words, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Welcome. . . ." Now that's JOY.

—KENT H. ROSS

**Why, I would ask, doesn't
God want us happy?**

Peace

It was one in the morning and the sun was just beginning to rise on the Alaskan frontier. That fantastic moment, the peace I experienced is something I will never forget. I was sitting on a tree stump at the inlet of the Tanninah River, just a few hundred yards south of the Yukon River. Both rivers were like mirrors reflecting the blue morning sky. There was not a ripple except for the occasional fish breaking the surface to catch some hapless bug. It was an incredible sight; the two rivers appeared motionless as far as the eye could see.

The tranquility flooding the area was absolutely numbing. Every fiber of my being was immersed in the silence that surrounded me. There were no roads or rail lines within 400 miles. The northmost jet routes were several hundred miles south. The Alaskan frontier was at rest. The wildlife were in silent repose in respect and honor for their Maker. Alone for those fleeting moments, I was absorbing this beauty of a sleeping and silent world. It was as if my body and my mind were suddenly tranquilized by a new and powerful sedative. For the first time in my life I was experiencing a **PEACE OF GOD, WHICH PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING**. As I sat there I thought "If the coming Kingdom of God is anywhere near this, let it come now. I am ready." Praise GOD!

Most of us have some idea of what it means to be at peace, and try to achieve a semblance of peace within our lives. But, do we understand and follow the Biblical concepts concerning peace? Looking at Christians, churches, and people in general I see we are often far from being at peace.

A close look would reveal constant turmoil in many lives. Very rarely do we feel the peace I found on the Alaskan frontier. But in "Christian reality" this type of peace should be an everyday occurrence.

God wants us to experience peace more often than strife. When we experience the

negatives in life it is GOD'S demand that we get our lives back in order! In other words, if we are having trouble in our lives it is because we rebelled against His laws, with the net result of a life in agitation! He is telling us to get our lives back in order. Probably about 90% of our difficulties . . . or lack of peace . . . are self-inflicted. That is, we sin and due to guilt we suffer. Further, guilt can be intensified when others apply pressure for us to correct our lives. Our response can end the problem or make it worse. We can eliminate the guilt if we admit our sin to God and family. Then we are again at peace with God, our loved ones, and ourselves. But we don't always admit our flaws. *More than likely*, when confronted with our sins our first reaction is to boldly state that someone else is at fault. We do not take the responsibility and we are at war with God, with those around us, and with ourselves—we are no longer at peace.

There are problems that are in absolutely no way your fault. You still have a choice—live in total peace or be at war with the person who inflicted damage upon you. It doesn't matter how minor or grievous the sin is . . . you have a choice! Choose to be at war with another and you also will be at war with GOD and yourself. Ordinarily . . . we choose war. Which is senseless when the way to peace is so simple. You go to GOD and forgive them. If someone sins against you it may not be possible to go to them and make peace (they may not want peace). But allow GOD to make His judgment and to take His action. For us to take revenge, or even to desire to, is not in GOD'S will. The desire to have revenge destroys our lives. Then peace is as distant as Alaska.

In Galatians 5:19-25 Paul shows the ends of a "spiritual spectrum." On one end are those who are at war with GOD and with about everybody else. The negative end of the spectrum is in serious trouble. Their ungodliness is pretty obvious. Evil things cannot be hidden. But, at the other end of this spectrum we have those who are good. I would clearly state that the godly group's actions are just as obvious.

We must recognize that those who

belong to Christ will exhibit very positive qualities, the fruit of the Spirit. Paul told us that these traits are necessities for the "real" Christian. If you are to consider yourself an honest to goodness Christian, peace is an indispensable part of your life.

So here is a test. Do you find yourself frequently angry? Unable to sleep? Do you blow up easily, because you are under some sort of stress? Do you worry that someone is going to discover your "secret sin"? Are you at war with someone? If *any one* of these conditions exists in your life, the root problem may very well be hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, or factions (v. 20). If these things continue in your life you will not see the Kingdom of God. You must be at peace . . . even when you have been terribly wronged. That is one of the attributes of one who "belongs" to Christ!

GOD SAYS "Be holy as I am holy." If He said be holy it is entirely possible to do it. Paul is telling us this in reference to the fruit of the Spirit. That fruit is something that is produced. And in this instance God's Spirit in a Christian *WILL* produce peace. No "if's," no "and's" and no "but's."

It is a simple fact. Whatever is going on in your heart and mind will come out. If your spirit is producing the fruit of peace . . . there is no doubt what was in your heart and where you stand with GOD.

I can remember very clearly that day on the bank of the Tanninah River. There was a peace that was just incredible. Have I ever had that feeling again? The answer is, YES! But it comes not by way of a fishing trip, but by way of the Word of God and obedience to Him. While I may not experience the same level of euphoria as on that day the peace that I do experience day by day is highly desirable. But it requires that I reject sin and live a life that will *produce* "a peace of God, that passeth all understanding."

—DON NUNEMAKER

Patience

Patience is something most of us wish we had more of but we are often unwilling to experience all that is needed in order to secure it.

Funk and Wagnall's gives this definition for patience:

1. The quality or habit of enduring without complaint.
2. The exercise of sustained endurance and perseverance.
3. Forbearance toward the faults or infirmities of others.
4. Tranquil waiting or expectation.
5. Ability to await events without perturbation.

I don't know about you but I am uncomfortable with this definition. It makes me anxious about my reactions to others and the events of this life.

Does this mean the Fruit of the Spirit is not present in my life? If we don't have patience are we lost and without hope? Maybe not.

As we grow in Christ, patience comes along. I grew up with a father who had the patience of Job. I cannot say that my sons had the same blessing. But as I have grown in Christ and learned of His grace and mercy to each of us I am finding more patience in my life. Praise God!

1 Thessalonians 5:14 tells us to "be patient with everyone." I guess that we are all in the training process or we would not have to be instructed to "be patient." What do you think?

Thankfully God is patient with us and by His mercy and grace we will continue to grow in this area of patience so that He might be glorified. May the Fruit of the Spirit increase in all of us.

—DAVID W. CHEATWOOD

*As we grow in Christ,
patience comes along.*

Kindness

Recently *Dear Abby* quoted: "Kindness is the only service that will stand the storm of life and not wash out. It will wear well and be remembered long after the prism of politeness or the complexion of courtesy has faded away. When I am gone, I hope it can be said of me that I plucked a thistle and planted a flower wherever I thought a flower would grow" (*Lincoln the Unknown* by Dale Carnegie, 1937, p. 222). How true this saying is. It is my prayer that I will be able to plant the flower of kindness and take away the thistles of hurt for others.

This world desperately needs the virtue of kindness. There is an organization called "The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals." People who are cruel to defenseless animals are vigorously prosecuted. But there is no organization dedicated to the prevention of cruelty to people. A person may be unkind to another because of difference in the color of his skin, his manner of dress, his language, or his national background. A husband or wife may be unkind by cutting down the one who loves them.

The Bible tells us that Jesus went about doing good. There was the miracle at the wedding in Cana, when the host ran out of refreshments. It was an act of kindness when He multiplied a boy's lunch and fed more than 5,000 hungry people in the desert. He was kind to His dear mother, as He charged (while on the cross) His beloved disciple with the responsibility of caring for her needs. Also, while on the cross He gave assurance and redemption to a repentant thief who shared His agony of crucifixion.

This is a little girl's prayer: "O God, make the bad people good, and make the good people kind." Love is kind. Each one of us must work at being kind. It is one thing to say . . . and another thing to do. This is one of the things we must strive to do.

What is our view of those who are not Christians? Many call them sinners, which they are, but so are we. Our difference is

that we are saved by grace. It is easy for us to be unkind toward those who are victims of sins which are no temptation to us. We love to talk about someone else and the sin they are committing. In Jesus' day, the unkindness of the religious leaders toward a poor woman "caught in the act of adultery" was a scandal. A sinful man had exploited her body to satisfy his lust. Outwardly decent, religious people exploited her *sin* to confront and embarrass Jesus. They seemed actually gleeful that she had sinned, in order that they might use her as a thing—rather than a person. Jesus said sterner words against self-righteousness than against lust and adultery. Self-love is judgmental, stern, and unkind. Christian love is kind.

One of the primary questions that Jesus will ask on the day of judgement is, "Were you kind to the sick, the naked, the prisoner, the thirsty?" "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matt. 25:40). The Kingdom of God is a place for loving people.

Some American tourists once helped a young Irish girl with a heavy burden she was carrying. They chatted with her while giving assistance, but she, being overwhelmed by such kindness, was unable to speak. Finally, when the tourists had completed their good deed and turned to leave, the girl said, "I cannot repay your kindness, but I can pass it on" (Allan J. Weenink). As Christians, let us show to others the kindness that Jesus has shown to us—by doing good to others.

—JOE ASTOLFI

Love is kind. Each one of us must work at being kind.

Goodness

In Mark 10:18 Jesus said, "Why do you call me good? No one is good—except

God alone." Wow!! What a statement from the sinless Son of God. No man is capable of being good, not even the Christ of God. But goodness is a fruit of the Spirit which we as Christians possess. Goodness is simply a state of being good, or having good qualities. This encompasses a whole range of other qualities. Profitability, wholesomeness, uprightness, zeal for truth and honest motives and conduct are just some of those qualities. God is the only one who truly possesses "goodness." We are to exhibit God's goodness by allowing His Spirit to permeate our bodies. Without God's Spirit we are hopelessly lost and cannot expect to live the Christian life. Man in his own strength is not and cannot be good. Even with God's strength we cannot be good; rather it is God who is good and He lives in our lives. My motives are still impure while His motives are the purest. We as Christians should stop thinking we can be good enough to be accepted by God. Is that to say we should stop trying and throw away all of our moral values? No, but no matter how high our values are, they are not high enough for God. Goodness comes in our lives when we let God in, for He alone is good.

—DAN KENNEDY

No man is capable of being good, not even the Christ of God.

Faithfulness

I notice that "faith," the basis for the word "faithfulness," has a lot to do with belief, yet in the Fruit of the Spirit I feel that Paul meant it a different way. After all, to have the Fruit of the Spirit, you must already have faith in God, so it seems that "faith" wouldn't be meant here. The words trustworthiness, loyalty, and consistency

come to mind as replacements for faithfulness in this instance.

"Faithfulness" is tied to action, to doing something. It means more than having knowledge, it means acting upon knowledge. Think about your mailman. If you consider him faithful you are basing that on his regularly delivering your mail—his performance, his action. The same could be said of a hunting dog. "That's the most faithful dog I've ever had." Why? Because he always comes when he's called, he's always there to patiently listen to your troubles, he'll follow close behind you.

Faithfulness seems to be based upon those same criteria throughout the Scriptures. I looked up the words "faithfulness" and "faithfully," and found that they were almost exclusively related to acting upon knowledge. Let me cite some examples:

- Deut. 11:13, "If you faithfully obey. . ."
- 1 Sam. 12:24, "Serve him faithfully with all of your heart. . ."
- 1 Ki. 2:4, "If they walk faithfully before me. . ."
- 2 Ki. 22:7, "They are acting faithfully."
- 2 Ch. 31:12, "They faithfully brought in the contributions. . ."
- 2 Ch. 34:12, "Men did the work faithfully. . ."
- Neh. 13:34, "What I have so faithfully done. . ."
- Jer. 23:28, "Who has my word speak it faithfully."
- Eze. 18:9, ". . .and faithfully keep my laws."
- 1 Pet. 4:10, ". . .faithfully administering God's grace."

What strikes me the most about these actions is that they were determined by a decision of the person. Acting on God's behalf doesn't always flow naturally out of our emotional responses to Him. Sometimes we don't feel like serving Him, going to church to worship, or giving money. Emotions fluctuate, and that's why faithfulness is a Fruit of the Spirit. Only someone who is growing in maturity will be able to act faithfully towards God. That includes a conscious decision to do what is right in the Lord's eyes with consistency, week in and week out.

A frustrating thing about working in God's church is trying to get from people that dreaded thing called commitment. We encounter people who think they're very mature spiritually, but who lack enough faithfulness to the church to be counted on. Their reasons differ. Some feel they worship more freely in another church, so they disappear and miss a service from time to time to be elsewhere. What they're really missing is the faithfulness that God made a mark of mature Christians. Someone will miss a Sunday here and there to golf. Many times it is an elder who does so. Where is the faithfulness that Paul wrote about? I don't think that we have to make every Sunday worship service or be expelled from God's retirement plan, but there needs to be real commitment to the body of Christ. Sometimes we have nothing else to do, but we don't really feel like going, or we're mad at the preacher (or something similar), so we just miss church. What do you mean by Faithfulness?

On the other hand, we have those who are accused of being unspiritual, "dead" Christians because they show up every Sunday, sit in their pews, and leave. Many times it is older members who don't exhibit the emotion that a young, vibrant, alive Christian "should." Why is it that we overlook their faithfulness? We can't accuse them of being unspiritual when their lives show such strong evidence of faithfulness. Not only that, these same people are often full of love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and gentleness—which are fruit of the Spirit.

I'm very thankful that Paul has so clearly spelled out the Fruit of the Spirit for us. We can check ourselves to see if we truly are experiencing growth in Christ's body. Remember that faithfulness springs from decisions more often than it springs from emotions. It involves our actions. We are called to do something in response to our beliefs if we are really to be considered mature Christians. Our faithfulness will be rewarded by our Father in heaven when He sends His Son to finally establish the Kingdom of God on the earth.

—SETH ROSS

Gentleness

During the late sixties and early seventies, I was a student at Indiana University, a quaking epicenter of political activism at the time. The Vietnam war was raging in Southeast Asia. Militants on both sides of the issue were screaming for attention back here at home. I and many like me were continually distracted by the shadow of the predatory military draft circling overhead. We were confused. We were afraid, seeing the future as something ephemeral at best. Many turned to alcohol and/or drugs to cope. I drank.

My temperament has always led me away from mindless confrontation and toward the ideal of peaceful coexistence. Considering this, I suppose that it was inevitable for me to reach a point where I could no longer tolerate all of the shouting and shooting going on at home and abroad. Even less could I withstand the fierce battle being waged in my conscience, the conflict between good will and intoxicated weakness.

Disillusioned with the mass of humanity, I chose to leave school (ultimately I graduated). I returned to my hometown and went to work in a factory, though still on the lookout for that elusive phantom called "peace of mind." My steady vigil finally bore fruit, but the discovered calm came from a totally unexpected source.

I was not a Christian by any stretch of the imagination, so it was very much out of character for me to choose the New Testament for casual reading, but one day I did—and I was absolutely awestruck by the Sermon on the Mount! There in those few pages I found a rare gem that I had never seen in my world, a honed conveyance of pure, intense GENTLENESS. I thought the concept both appealing and healing. I was literally in the process of being saved by Jesus' teaching. The gentle spirit of the words would lead to my redemption.

The word "gentleness" must not be misunderstood! It by no means implies infirmity in either message or Messenger. The Word of God, both written and Living, remains eternally steady and strong.

Furthermore, to be gentle is not an implication of spiritual or emotional weakness. In fact, it takes a superior inner strength to withdraw from society's perpetual shouting match and enter into a state of gentleness. To participate in this attitude is a demanding, focused spiritual exercise. And, considering our contentious human natures, we must lean on the holy power of God Almighty in order to advance and sustain this "unnatural" matrix.

In Galatians 5 (NIV), Paul describes "gentleness" ("meekness," KJV) as a spiritual fruit, i.e., it stands in contrast to usual worldly mindsets and activities. The original Greek word can be translated as gentleness, mildness, meekness or humility. Paul uses the same Greek word in a telling and compelling bit of correspondence to Timothy. I've enhanced a few words for emphasis: "And the Lord's servant **MUST NOT QUARREL**; instead, he must be **KIND TO EVERYONE**, able to teach, **NOT RESENTFUL**. Those who oppose him he **MUST GENTLY INSTRUCT**, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 2:24-25 NIV).

Do you begin to behold the beauty now? Can you see how wonderfully unnatural and godly is gentleness? It was precisely what I had been searching for, yearning for. In its graceful way, gentleness stood in decided opposition to the world, I knew.

It breaks my heart to see so many Christians caught up in violent verbal bouts with unbelievers. Such actions hurt me, empty me, remind me of the bleak spiritual wastelands I inhabited before the Christ inhabited me. We yell and demand, and our hurting, misguided world lies scorched.

But consider the testimony of Light that a tired and darkened humanity would see if only we Christ-followers would "stick to our guns," the unyielding weapons of grace and peace. We've each been impacted by friends and acquaintances who seemed to live and breathe gentleness. They were, and are, embodied Encouragement. God blesses them as beacons on a high hill. Dark hearts would stir

up trouble. Gentle lights step in to calm things down. Dark hearts would shout threats and epithets. Gentle lights softly speak saving words of forgiveness, new life and fresh hope. What a pleasure it is to fellowship with gentle people. Jesus promises that the meek (gentle) will inherit the earth. In my mind, that's a firm guarantee: There will be no violent people among God's resurrected saints. God, how I look forward to your Gentle Kingdom. God, I wish more than anything to be a gentle testimony for you.

—KEN HOWE

The Word of God, both written and Living, remains eternally steady and strong.

Self-Control

Just hearing the word "self-control" tends to make us feel guilty. It also raises our awareness of things in our own lives that seem to be out of control. In order for us to deal with this issue of self-control, it's important for us to understand the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The Apostle Paul says that self-control is part of the fruit, or result, of the Holy Spirit being active in the life of a believer (Galatians 5:22-23); therefore, self-control is not something that is totally up to us to accomplish but is rather a work of the Spirit. If you are struggling with losing your temper, or dealing with jealousy or a variety of addictions from drugs and alcohol to sex or work, or even an addiction to church, the very first step when beginning to get a grip on self-control is to admit that you have a problem and that you need the power of the Holy Spirit to help in overcoming it. This first step is by far the hardest, but it is the most important. It is extremely difficult to admit that we have a problem that we cannot solve by ourselves. Paul understood this struggle: "For I have the desire to do what is good but I

cannot carry it out. For what I do is not what I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing" (Romans 7:18b-19). Once we acknowledge our need for the Holy Spirit, we have made a giant first step in living life in the Spirit. The second step is trusting and relying on the Holy Spirit to teach us self-control. "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good" (Titus 2:11-14). The role of the Holy Spirit is to stand beside us and to give us the strength that we need to deal with things that try to control us. If the Holy Spirit is going to be active and produce fruit in our lives, it will be because we learn to totally rely on and trust what God's Spirit can do in our lives. "So I say, live by the Spirit!" (Galatians 5:16).

—STEVEN R. FEWELL

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James
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My Father's Kiss

By Lonni
Collins Pratt

I SAW THE CAR JUST BEFORE IT HIT me. I seemed to float. Then darkness smashed my senses, and I came to in an ambulance.

I opened my eyes but could make out only shreds of light through the blackness. My face was bandaged because the impact of the car had ejected me into the air and then dropped me facedown onto gravel.

I didn't know it then, but small particles of rock, dirt and debris had embedded in my freckled 16-year-old face. As I tried to touch my cheek, someone tenderly pressed my arm down and whispered, "Stay still."

A wailing siren trailed distantly somewhere, and I slipped into silent unconsciousness. My last thoughts were a desperate prayer—"Dear God, not my face, please . . ."

I don't think it's unusual for a teenage girl to find a good deal of her identity in her appearance. Everything about adolescence seems to revolve around the image presented on the outside.

The way others related to me was different from the way they related to less attractive girls. That had been true since childhood, and like most cute children, I learned that lesson early. I got out of more than one jam by batting my eyes and tilting my head just right so the light caught my red hair and set it ablaze.

My father doted on me. He had four sons, but only one daughter. I remember one week as we got out of the car at church. Mom had stayed home with the sick baby. My brothers, the scruffy three-some in swishing corduroy and cowlicks, ran ahead.

I was gathering my small purse and Bible. Dad opened the door. I looked up at him, convinced in my seven-year-old heart that he was more handsome and smelled better than any daddy anywhere.

He extended his hand to me and with a twinkle in his eye said, "A hand, my lady?" Then he swept

me into his arms and told me how pretty I was and that "no father has ever loved a little girl more than I love you."

My father wasn't given to outbursts of emotion. He worked morning till night on the farm and also as a welder at a small shop in town. The Irish clan he came from showed strong devotion to their families, but it was a practical devotion, not an emotional kind. He loved us by putting fresh milk and chicken on our table.

I don't know what it was about that spring morning in the church parking lot—I just don't know. In the heart of a child, one who didn't understand what a father's love is really about, I thought it must have been the pretty dress—and most of all, my prettiness—that Father loved.

A few weeks before the accident I had been in a local pageant and had won first place, crowning me the festival queen. Dad didn't say much afterward; he just stood beside me with his arm over my shoulders, beaming. Once more I was his pretty little girl, and I felt the warmth of his love and acceptance.

Unbandaging

About this same time, I made a personal commitment to Christ. In the midst of student council, honor society, pageants and parades, I was shaping my friendship with God.

In the hours immediately after my accident, I drifted in and out of consciousness. Whenever my mind cleared even slightly, I wondered about my face. I was bleeding internally and had a severe concussion, but I wondered most about my face.

In the midst of shots and doctors probing at me, it never occurred to me that my concern with appearance was disproportionate and unhealthy. I knew only that I had been able to depend on my looks. Pretty meant lots of dates and a wide circle of friends. When I was four Santa picked me out of 600 kids to be his helper. Why? Because I was pretty.

I couldn't open my eyes more than a slit when I asked a nurse for a mirror. She didn't look at my face

as she took my blood pressure. Instead, she gazed at my arm and said, "You just concern yourself with getting well, young lady."

Her refusal to give me a mirror only fueled my determination. *It must be worse than I imagined*, I reasoned.

My face felt tight and itchy. It burned sometimes and just ached other times. I didn't touch it, because my doctor told me that might cause infection.

My parents kept watch at my bedside continually. They also battled me to keep mirrors away. As my body healed internally and my strength returned, I became increasingly difficult.

At one point, for the fourth time in less than an hour, I had asked, pleaded, and demanded that Dad give me a mirror. Five days had passed since the accident.

Angry and beaten down, he snapped, "Don't ask me again! I said no, and that's it!"

I wish I could offer an excuse for what I said. I propped myself on my elbows, and through lips that could barely move I hissed, "You don't love me. Now that I'm not pretty anymore, you just don't love me!"

Dad looked like someone had knocked the life out of him. He sat in a chair and put his head in his hands. His shoulders heaved. My mother walked over to him and put her hand on his shoulder. I collapsed against the pillows and the room was quiet, filled with the soft sound of my father trying to control his tears.

I didn't ask my parents for a mirror again. Instead I waited until someone was straightening my room the next morning. I figured a worker from the housekeeping division wouldn't know about the "no mirror" order.

My curtain was drawn as if I were taking a sponge bath. From behind it I asked for a mirror, explaining, "I must have mislaid it." After a little searching, the woman found one and handed it to me around the curtain.

Nothing could have prepared me for what I saw. Instead of the familiar glowing complexion and pretty features, I stared at an image resembling a giant scraped knee, oozing and bright pink. My eyes and lips were crusted and swollen. Hardly a patch of skin, ear to ear, had escaped trauma.

A little while later, my father arrived with magazines and homework tucked under his arm. He found me staring into the mirror. Over and over my mind cried, *my life is over; everyone will be repulsed by me . . .*

He pried my fingers from the mirror, saying with each finger he loosened, "It isn't important . . . this doesn't change

"Dear God, not my face, please . . ."

anything that matters . . . no one will love you less . . ."

He tossed the mirror onto a chair, then sat on the edge of my bed, taking me in his arms. He held me a long time before making me lie down.

"I know what you think," he said.

"You couldn't," I mumbled, turning and staring out the window.

"You're wrong, though," he continued, ignoring my self-pity. "This will not change anything." He put his hand on my arm, running it over an IV needle. "The people who love you have seen you at your worst, you know."

"Right. Seen me with rollers or with cold cream—not with my face ripped off!"

"Let's talk about me, then. I love you. Nothing will ever change that, because it's you I love, not your outside. I've changed your diapers and watched your skin change to a cluster of blisters with chicken pox. I've wiped up your bloody

nose and held your head while you threw up in the toilet.

"I've loved you when you weren't pretty." He hesitated and then continued. "Yesterday you were ugly—not because of your skin, but because you behaved ugly. But I'm here today, and I'll be here tomorrow. Fathers don't stop loving their children no matter what life takes—you will be blessed if life only takes your face."

I turned to my father, feeling that these were words, the right words, spoken out of duty—polite lies. I looked at him through swollen eyes and spoke through bloody lips.

"Look at me then, Daddy. Look at me and tell me you love me!" My tone of voice defied and accused him.

I will never forget what happened next. As he looked into my battered face, his eyes filled with tears. Slowly, Father leaned toward me, and with his eyes open he gently kissed my scabbed, oozing lips.

It was the kiss that tucked me in every night of my young life, the kiss that warmed each morning. A kiss echoing eternity. A kiss that works on twisted lips. Even lips that curse more often than bless.

My only scar, many years later, is one tiny indentation just above my eyebrow. But my father's kiss and what it taught about love remain with me. ¹¹

EDITOR'S NOTE Perhaps only parents can fully comprehend the love that prompted the father's kiss, but all of us can sense by his action what real love is . . . what our Christian love should be to one another. "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8).

View From the Marketplace

By Scott
Millard



In the earlier part of this century, labor unions sprang up across this country to focus attention on the needs of the working class. Indeed, working conditions oftentimes were pathetic. Managements were oblivious to the concerns of their workers, with their sole attention being personal profit. In the years since the government has involved itself in the working relationship between management and labor. Many laws have been passed, some good, some bad—all with the intention of making the working environment more user-friendly. In fact, in recent years, legislation has poured out of Washington with the purpose of leveling out the playing field for all workers. Equal opportunity is the goal, whether you be male or female, black or white, disabled or not (sound familiar? Gal. 3:28). OSHA, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, was commissioned to oversee the health and safety of people in the workplace. While I'll refuse to get into a long discussion about the role of government in the workplace (because I definitely have many mixed emotions about the role of government in the workplace, because I definitely have many mixed emotions about their usefulness), I can agree with their intent of making the workplace better for all concerned.

Just this year, congress signed a bill providing families the right to take time off from work to care for seriously ill family members or for the birth of a baby. While personally I view government intervention in business with a weary eye, I don't object to the aim of this bill. Our company has had a history of allowing our people to take time to care for their families, oftentimes with pay.

In today's competitive market place, companies have come to realize the need to show a human side when dealing with their employees. The Human Relations Department has gained prominence because management has discovered that treating workers with respect has payoffs for the bottom line "PROFITS". This HR Department's function is to create a more human relationship between management and work force. Businesses have realized that in order to get the best performance out of their employees (an outdated term, now employees are known as work associates) they must attempt to create a more pleasant work environment, taking into account the needs of their associates.

The "Ultimate" authority on human relations walked this earth 2,000 years ago. As both a Christian and a businessman, I have a Chief Executive Officer who demands more from me than bottom line profit. As an employer He expects me to deal in a humane way, not because some law requires me to do so or because it has a payoff my banker can appreciate. Jesus asks me to deal justly and mercifully with those who work for me because, simply put, "it is the right thing to do". The golden rule has never been more needed than it is in today's society. We have lost sight of doing good unto our fellow human beings. It's sad to say, but today's interpretation of the golden rule is "He who has the gold, rules!" I guess, in a world where such attitudes exists, governmental laws ensuring

fairness are a must. However, when Christ rules in one's heart, we have moved beyond the law . . . we love, because we understand the love of one who gave Himself completely for us.

For the Christian, the view from the marketplace and the pew are the same. There are no compartments in our lives where in the church we live by the commands of Christ, and at work we live by some other creed. In Christ we have been called to be His ambassadors, to live as His people, showing His heart and mind. Whether we be bond or free, labor or management, in Christ we are all one. Our Lord calls us to extend His mercy and love to those we meet day-to-day. When Monday comes, remember who it is that guides your decisions in the workplace. He's the One you worshipped on Sunday! R+1

In the Hand of God

By Joyce
Housman



Here I am, it's another cold winter day in Minnesota. As I stepped out early this morning into the Christmas card world, I could almost believe I was the only living thing around. The sound of my footsteps in the crunchy snow was the only sound I heard. Looking around in this early silence I saw no other creature stirring. But I am not alone. Most of the other winter dwellers just sleep in a little longer.

Soon the pair of dainty red squirrels will be coming out for breakfast. They share in our summer's bounty of corn stored for their convenience in the steel bins. Later they will be leaping from limb to limb high in the trees. As squirrel watchers know, squirrels gracefully play tag and delight those who watch their antics. I'm not sure where they sleep when the winter is severe but God gave them the wisdom to protect themselves.

When I walk through the grove, I see the tracks of seemingly hundreds of rabbits, or else two or three very active rabbits. Their trails crisscross over all the snow drifts. They too make daily trips to the corn bin.

We see deer grazing on the meadow grass which sticks through the snow—they too are silent creatures scarcely disturbing the air as they go about the business of surviving.

I know too that, beneath the cold snow, the roots of grasses, bushes, trees and my flowers lie waiting for spring's call. Even those pesky little weed seeds will awake then. They are simply giving all gardeners a winter break. God has planned well.

We hear the crow's raucous voice often and the screech of a blue jay occasionally. The sparrows seem to wait for warmer days to do most of their conversing, although each day finds them searching for their daily bread. Most of our feathered friends have gone south on vacation but will return next spring. God gave a lot of wisdom to those warm-weather friends.

When I worry about problems in my life or wonder about the future I should remember the creatures of winter. God watches over them and provides for their needs. Surely He will hold me in the hollow of His hand too. R+1

CHURCH OF GOD GENERAL CONFERENCE HISTORY NEWSLETTER



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REVIEW

By Jan Stilson

Williams, Byron. *Abstracts of Obituaries and Verbatim Marriage Announcements Printed in The Restitution 1874-1900*. Chagrin Falls, Ohio, 1993.

AT LAST!! A Reference work has been written and published based on historical information available from the Church of God General Conference Archives. Mr. Williams researched the works of Robert Huggins, who had been Editor of *The Restitution* for a number of years, while the Archives was still in Oregon, Illinois. At that time he mentioned that he wanted to index *The Restitution* including some abstracts in a way which

Wedding announcements are given verbatim to allow the reader the feeling of 19th century literary style.

would pick up names that would assist genealogists in their research. This directory could be done easily on the computer, and could be made available to library local history rooms for research, particularly in the states where *The Restitution* had been published and widely distributed; i.e. Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Iowa, Arkansas, Kentucky, Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma.

It is designed so the reader can spot names easily. Each proper name in the original work is in bold Caps. Each obituary entry includes vital data on the deceased, family members and the name of the submitter if known. Wedding announcements are given verbatim to allow the reader the feeling of 19th century literary style. Readers will recognize names of early pastors in the samples Mr. Williams has supplied to the HN. Names of early churches will be available now, and historians

may be able to track movement of families from state to state and the times in which new churches were planted during the 26 years this directory covers.

This is valuable for COG historians, because we have not been able to focus on this time period with any definitive analysis yet. Now, we have the means to more easily document our conjectures. Each entry is documented with the citation from *The Restitution* to which it was originally submitted. The citation includes the date, volume number and issue number.

Kudos to you, Byron Williams, for a valuable addition to our growing collection of research tools available for historians in the COG.

BACKGROUND ON ROBERT HUGGINS

Dear Jan,

The enclosed papers are abstracts of the things I hunt for. Note that the letter from R.H. Gresham relates to Lankford Huggins who was the father of ROBERT GRESHAM HUGGINS, named after the evangelist who so impressed Lankford. The contents infer things we had wondered about. R.G.H. was born into poverty. Was Lankford an illiterate "hill billy?" I guess not—his letter reads well and he was attracted to *The Restitution* and various tracts. We had often wondered how R.G. came out of the "hills" with such a secure education.

Truly Yours,
Byron P. Williams

Editor's note This excerpt is from an early letter from Williams to Stilson. Here follow several paragraphs describing Robert Huggins and his father, Lankford Huggins. Byron Williams is the son-in-law of R. Huggins, early editor of *The Restitution*.

CAMP MEETING IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

The brethren in Christ who are looking for the soon coming of the Great King, expect, if providence permit, to meet for worship on their new campground, near Edneyville, Henderson Co., N.C., Aug. 10th to Aug. 21st. The place may be reached by way of Spartanburg, S.C., or Morristown, Tenn., or Asheville, N.C. It may be well for those coming from a distance to bring heavy shawls or blankets, and if convenient, such provisions as tea, coffee, sugar, crackers and cornstarch.

Lankford Higgins [sic], Brights Creek, Polk Co., N.C., E.M. Anderson, Edneyville, Henderson Co., N.C., J.D. Bartlett, Turnpike, Buncombe Co., N.C., R.H. Gresham, Jeffersonville, Ind. committee.

The Restitution, 27 (29), Aug. 7, 1878, S.A. Chaplin, editor, Plymouth, Indiana: Christian Publishing Association.

LETTER CONCERNING ELIAS M. GIBBS, BLUE RIDGE, HENDERSON CO., N.C.

Editor Restitution: I here send a short letter for publication, intended to strengthen the good cause in western North Carolina, and especially to strengthen Brother Gibbs. . . . Brother Gibbs had been an able Baptist preacher. . . . I think that all our brethren out in that country will subscribe for *The Restitution* as fast as they get able—if they do get able at all in this life. Most of them are so poor that it is difficult for them to pay postage on the few letters they write, and a number of them write to me oftener than they do to all other persons. I sometimes send them paper, envelopes, and stamps. . . .

R.H. Gresham

Jeffersonville, Ind.

The Restitution, 27 (39), Oct. 23, 1878.

A LONELY PILGRIM IN THE LAND OF STRANGERS

Elias M. Gibbs, a farmer, in poverty as to this world's goods, yet rich in the one true faith and in good works, whose post office address is Blue Ridge, Henderson County, North Carolina, is that lonely pilgrim. He has been taught in the two years past, mainly, I think, by the kind and earnest assistance of our very worthy and intelligent brother, Lankford Huggins, at Bright's

Creek, Polk County, N.C. It was my privilege, by the grace of God, to be used as one of the means of bringing Deacon Huggins into the clear light of the truth, and I know his capacity and zeal as a teacher, and when he has taught a truth-seeker for two years the things concerning the kingdom of God and concerning the great King, I think the person thus taught should be well prepared to put on Christ in baptism. . . . The nearest person[s] to him who are in the truth, I think are Brother and Sister Huggins, and they are, I think some twelve miles distant, in a country of high mountains. . . .

Your brother in Christ,
R.H. Gresham

Jeffersonville, Indiana

The Restitution, 27 (39), Oct. 23, 1878.

A BLESSED CONVERSION

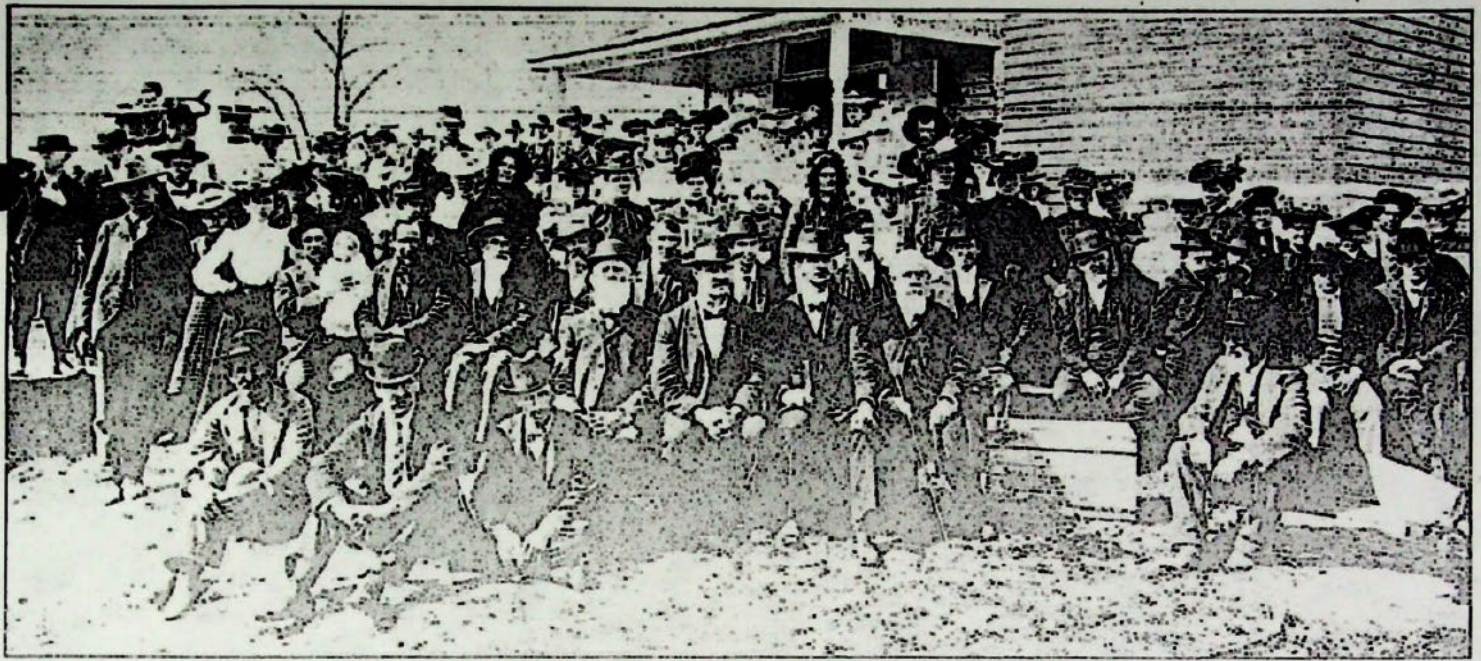
Editor Restitution: Through the providence of God there was a man sent to this neighborhood, whose name was Robert H. Gresham, of Indiana. He began to teach the gospel of the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, which I verily thought was heresy, and he an Anti-Christ—in the way he taught. So I took down my old Bible—which had been undisturbed for several years—to prove such; but to my surprise I was convicted, and, as I hope, converted to the whole truth. I became, I trust, a true believer above three years ago. Since that time I have been wonderfully blessed. I subscribed and paid for *World's Crisis* one year and a half. I received some tracts from that office, numerous letters, papers and tracts from Brother Gresham, two copies of the blessed old Bible from Sister Susan E. Teeple, one package of tracts from Brother McLaughlan, papers from Brother Thompson, several copies of *The Restitution* from John Hoar, *Restitution* with a bundle of tracts from Brother Magruder, reading material from Dr. N. Field, and from various other persons not now remembered. I am very poor, but the friends and brethren have furnished me with such matter as Brother Gresham did when he first visited me, and it has taken deep root. . . . I have read several numbers of *The Restitution* sent me, but I have not been able to subscribe for it on account of the poor health of my wife. As she is getting better, I hope to soon be able to do something for the cause. . . .

Your brother, looking for the Master
L. Huggins

Bright's Creek, N.C.

The Restitution, 27 (39), Oct. 23, 1878.

A PERSONAL PORTRAIT of a longtime member. James W. McLain was first known to me as a musician. He played the harmonica, as well as other instruments. In fact he represented the M. Honher Co. for a few years before the "Crash" in 1929.



George Lansbury has donated this rare photo of the Restitution Church located south of Casey, Illinois near Moriah. Mr. Lansbury and his sister, Esta, grew up in this church. The ministers of Illinois around 1902 are seated in front.

Front, left to right: Second man: George Lindsay, brother to S.J. Lindsay; J.H. Williams, father of Grace Marsh. Second row, second man seated: S.J. Lindsay, founder of Oregon Church of God; A.H. Zilmer; W.H. Wilson, author and founder of Happy Woods Church of God, Hammond, LA; behind Wilson to right is Z.E. Brant. Behind George Lindsay is John Claypool, grandfather of retired pastor Harry Gockler.

HISTORY NOTE Thank you for sending this photo. The original is being placed in the archives.

Jim could play wind instruments and stringed ones, too. His father lived on a farm next to where I lived near Ripley, IL. When the Great Depression of the early 30's came, Jim came to live with his father and stepmother. He became acquainted with Bro. C.E. Lapp, minister of the Ripley Church of God. Jim became very interested in the great Truths of God's Word. Soon, he was an ardent student of the Word. Bro. Lapp baptized him.

In 1939 or 1940 he was hired by the board of the National Bible Institution (now Church of God General Conference) to be national evangelist. He started visiting the Churches of God throughout the U.S. In 1943, after graduating from Oregon Bible College, I was hired to assist Bro. J.W. in evangelism. We be-

came close friends and often studied the Scriptures together.

Jim has continued to be an ardent Bible student, enjoying very much the prophecies and is quite well schooled in them and the history surrounding such. It was in the latter part of July 1993 that Jim sent me an obituary of his wife who had been a sufferer of arthritis for several years, confined to a wheelchair and bed. She had always been kept at home. Jim is not past 85 years of age, I think, and still corresponds with several Church of God persons by telephone and cassette tape.

It has been a pleasure for me to have him as a friend but even more to have him as a brother in Jesus Christ. He taught me many things about the Scriptures.

Francis Burnett

HISTORY NOTE Bro. McLain has donated many photos and documents to support the ministry of the HISTORY NEWSLETTER.

FOR GENEOLOGISTS

*Excerpts From a Work Based
On The Restitution*

RICHARD CLEAVELAND
Died October 12, 1874 - age 74 yrs., 7
months at Lemont, Cook County, IL.
Published November 5, 1874 Volume
XXII # 45

The HISTORY NEWSLETTER is published concurrently with *The Restitution Herald* by the Church of God General Conference at Morrow, Georgia. Janet Stilson, Editor; Daniel Smead, Technical Director of Publishing; Jason Catlin, Layout and Design Coordinator; Amy Berry, typesetter. Annual subscription, \$12. Church of God General Conference, Box 100,000, Morrow, GA 30260. Letters of inquiry, manuscripts to editor, 607 S. 4th St., Oregon, IL 61061.

WILLIAM H. HORNADAY

Died December 24, 1874 age 31 yrs. at Hartford City, IN of typhoid fever. Burial at Windfall, Tipton County. Leaves wife (no name) and children (no name). Published December 9, 1874 Volume XXII # 48

CELESTIA A. YOUNG

Age 23. Died Rushville, Schuyler County, IL. Parents: H. E. and M. E. COOPER of Fort Scott, KS. Leaves husband and four children (no names). Published December 23, 1874 Volume XXII # 50

RUTH WORKMAN

Died May 2, 1874 age 71 at Union Grove, MO. Funeral service October 29, 1874.

Leaves husband DAVID WORKMAN. Obit by S. WORKMAN. Published December 23, 1874 Volume XXII # 50

WATERMAN PHELPS

Died December 16, 1874 age 60. at Busseyville, Jefferson County, WI. Born in NY. Wife living, not named. Lived in McHenry County, IL as a youth. Moved to WI in 1854. Church Pastor in Busseyville. Funeral December 20, 1874. Published January 6, 1875 Volume XXIII # 1

SUSANAH BROWN

Died November 8, 1874 age 57. at Ringgold County, IA. Husband WILLIAM BROWN. Submitted by J. BROWN. Published February 3, 1875 Volume XXIII # 10(?)

MINERVA E. FANSET

Born March 16, 1954 in IL. Married October 21, 1873. Died January 12 1875 age 20 yrs, 26 days at Galesburg, KA. Leaves husband, infant, parents (none named). Published March 24, 1875 Volume XXIII # 12

DANIEL BELLOWS

Died March 5, 1875 age 6 mon, 7 days at Lanark, IL. Parents TALMANT and CHARLOTTE BELLOWS. Published March 24, 1875 Volume XXIII # 12

G. STACEY

Died April 1875 at Iona, IL. Leaves wife and four children (no names). Published April 28, 1875 Volume XXIII # 17

SARA CARPENTER

Died February 22, 1875 age 50 yrs, 7 mon, 16 days of typhoid pneumonia at Blockville, NY. Leaves three children (none named). Submitted by GERTRUDE CARPENTER. Published April 28, 1875 Volume XXIII # 17

ELIZABETH DEMMICK

Died May 12, 1875 age 60 yrs, 1 mon, 12 days at South Ellipton, ME. Leaves husband and seven children (no names). Published June 9, 1875 Volume XXII # 25

GARRET TERBUNE

Died April 16, 1875 age 47, at Webb's Prairie, IL. Leaves wife and six children (no names). Published June 9, 1875 Volume XXIII # 23

JENNIE HEBBELL

Born December 28, 1849. Died May 8, 1875 age 28 yrs, 5 mon, 11 days. Survivors were parents W. C. and N. GUFFIN, husband BENJAMIN HEBBELL, one daughter, one year old, and two sisters. Published June 16, 1875 Volume XXIII # 24

ALICE NELSON

Died June 13, 1875 age 16 yrs, 8 mon, 13 days at Mt. Carroll, IL. Published June 30, 1875 Volume XXIII # 25

EVA BURK

Died June 2, 1875 at Ravanna, MO. Leaves husband WALLACE BURK.

Sister MARTHA (deceased).

Published June 30 Volume XXIII # 25

SAMUEL B. FOX

Died February 23, 1875 age 75 near Windfall, IN. Leaves wife and three children (no names). Published July 7, 1875 Volume XXIII # 27

IVY P. BUCKELS**SARAH MABEL BUCKELS**

IVY died March 25, 1875 age 7 mon, 17 days.

SARAH died May 16, 1875 age 2 yrs, 8 mon, 15 days both at Atchison County, KA. Parents were PETER and ELSE BUCKELS. Published July 7, 1875 Volume XXIII # 27

FRANCIS DICKINSON

Died June 13, 1875 age 48 yrs at Louisburg, KA. Leaves wife and four children, brothers and sisters (no names). Submitted by JAMES DICKENSON (sic). Published July 14, 1875 Volume XXIII # 28

JOHN J. JAEGER

Died (no date) age 34 yrs, 7 mon, 5 days at Winnebago County (no state). Leaves wife and three children (no names). Submitted by P. A. JAEGER. Published July 1, 1875 Volume XXIII # 28

Permission granted by Byron Williams to reproduce this material.

Corrections: From the photo in the Dec/Jan '93 HISTORY NEWSLETTER. The gentleman with the circle around him is John Claypool, maternal grandfather of pastor Harry Goekler and member of the Salem Church.

Robert Huggins was erroneously credited with editing *The Restitution* from 1921-1925. Your editor will comment on this in a later issue of the HN.

Missions

RETOOLING FOR THE FUTURE

"The greatest challenge facing missions today is the challenge of the unachieved," says Jack Frizen in his book *75 Years of IFMA*. He adds, "The challenge of an unfinished task demands that past performance be honestly and thoroughly examined. Every facet of past mission activity must be examined."

American evangelicals will continue to have a significant presence in world missions in the 21st century. And while Americans will continue to bring into the picture a significant proportion of resources, they will not be able to maintain the leadership in decision-making, expertise and field personnel.

The Church in the non-Western world has come into world missions to stay. It has learned much from the American missions enterprise, but it also brings its own unique experience, ideals, zeal and mistakes.

Two mighty rivers meet not far from the city of Manaus in the Amazon River Basin of Brazil. Geological conditions at the source of each have caused the Negro River to look like Coca-Cola seen through a glass, dark and clear. The Solimoes, however, is grayish-white, full of sediment. Though they meet not far from Manaus, they are, for a while, two rivers sharing the same river bed. They travel several miles trying to muscle each other out before their dark and white waters begin to mix and form one mighty river. One can actually see, in the middle of this broad current, the sharp line between dark and light waters. Traditional and third-world missions met some time ago and have been running in parallel for decades. The moment has come in which mixing is inevitable. Will it be a healthy mingling?

—Araujo, Alex, "Retooling for the Future," *World Christian*, November/December 1993, p. 30.

LARGEST MISSION FIELD

Minneapolis, MN (EP). George Hunter, author of *How to Reach Secular People*, says America has become the largest mission field in the western hemisphere. Hunter predicts by the year 2000, 37% of the population will have no church background. Hunter also states that Uganda has a higher percentage of professing Christians than the US.

—"Largest Mission Field," *Bible Advocate*, January 1994, p. 19.

CHURCH REVIVAL IN AFRICA

NAIROBI, KENYA (EP) Rev. David Kitonga, the Africa Regional Coordinator for Partners Int'l, believes that leadership development is the key to continued church growth in Africa. He attributes the steady growth of the evangelical church to timing, the current economic and political situation, and especially to the church leadership being turned over to nationals. Africa, said Kitonga, is one of the poorest continents, and with political instability in many nations, people are looking to God for help. There are a reported six million new Christians each year on the continent. He also noted that Africa is increasingly becoming a dominant missions force in world evangelization as nationals train their own people. Kitonga said that strife in many African nations has both helped and hurt the church. People, through war, "saw the worst that humans can do to each other, but they saw their hope in God because of that." He added, "People have stated that they don't trust in humans anymore. They are looking to God as their only hope in life."

—"Church Revival in Africa," *The Church and the World*, December 1993, p. 17.

"WHENEVER I GIVE, GOD BLESSES ME."

Surrounded by people enjoying a service of Christian worship, Asaf Pirali felt confused. The young Muslim thought that worshipping God was strictly a duty. But in his homeland of Trinidad, West Indies, visiting his girlfriend's church, he was witnessing young people like himself who delighted in the Lord.

At first he felt that his girlfriend, Cadillia, was "stupid and foolish." Though it seemed foreign to his Islamic understanding of God, he soon liked what he saw. If only, he thought, the word of Christ could be replaced with God. Then he could believe, too. But without Christ there is no Christianity.

The confusion tore at his soul. Finally, he fell before God and cried out for understanding. In his humility, the spirit of God filled him, Pirali says. All he could do was cry.

"I felt a new understanding come into my heart," he said. "God did it. I don't believe that anyone could have talked me into becoming a Christian." Not even Cadillia, who later became his wife.

That was in 1974. Almost 20 years later, Pirali continues to grow in his understanding of the Christian faith and how he can serve the living Christ.

—Burton, James B. "'Whenever I Give, God Blesses Me.'" *H.I. News* November 1993, pp. 20-21.

This past summer Pastor Arlen Rankin, of the Bible Faith Church of God, in Bellevue, Washington traveled to the Philippine Islands to visit Church of God members and to proclaim the gospel to others. He invited Tim Driskill, from Atlanta Bible College, to go with their group. The article is Arlen's and the pictures are Tim's. They share with us what God called them to and what He placed on their hearts.



The foremost and foundational of all Biblical commandments are love of God and love of our fellow men (Mark 12:28-34; Matthew 22:35-40). The essence of sin is the transgression of these two principles. Nonconformity to the character, nature or expressed will of our Creator or the substitution of another god above Him is missing the mark of righteousness or true holiness. It is divinely decreed that we are to be holy for He is holy (1 Peter 1:14-16). We are to love as He loves (Matthew 5:43-48). To this high standard no one measures up. There is no god so great as He and there is no man who does not fall short when compared to the One who is "glorious in holiness" (Exodus 15:11; Romans 3:23). It is here that faith in Christ makes up the difference as we are imputed righteous in Him; are justified by faith (Ephesians 2:8-10; Romans 3:20-26; 4:1-25; 10:4-13).

Without faith one living with a self-centered, flesh-focused disregard for the good of others cannot please God (Hebrews 11:6; Romans 8:7, 8; 1 John 4:20, 21). We are directed to do good to all men and when we do not do the good we know to do we sin (Galatians 6:7-10; James 4:17). Our doing of good is first for the glory of God (Matthew 5:16), then for the edification of others (Romans 15:1, 2).

To love God is to yield ourselves to Him in obedience unto righteousness (1 John 5:3; Romans 6:13, 16; 12:1, 2). As we thus yield ourselves to Him, relying on His strength, He will enable us to love and serve our fellow men in greater measure (Romans 5:5; 1 Peter 4:8-11; Philippians 2:13; Hebrews 13:20, 21). Part of our yielding is the seeking of His wisdom and direction within the pages of His enabling word (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

Look Out!



2 Timothy 3:15-17; Acts 20:32; Psalm 119:11). The power of God will produce in us that fruit unto holiness and eternal life (Romans 6:22; 8:4-11; Galatians 5:22-25; 6:7-9). As we live by the faith of the Son of God, we can have the confidence of accomplishment through His strength (Galatians 2:19, 20; Philippians 4:13, 19; 1:6).

To love our neighbors is to seek their greatest good whether in the sharing of the gospel with them (2 Corinthians 4:1-8) or in the giving of a cup of cold water (Matthew 25:34-40). Love is serving one another, restoring the down-fallen, bearing the burdens of others, relieving their afflictions, strengthening them in weakness, seeking to live harmoniously with all (Galatians 5:13, 14; 6:1, 2; James 1:27; Hebrews 12:12-14; Romans 14:19; 1 Corinthians 13:1-7). If we profess to be of the faith, we



must of necessity demonstrate it actively in the doing of good (Galatians 5:6; James 2:14-26; Titus 1:16-2:14).

Essential godliness is that which LOOKS UP to God—loving, yielding, obeying, glorifying—and LOOKS OUT toward our neighbor—loving, sharing, doing good. The focus of our life should be outside ourselves vertically and horizontally. R41



Look UP!



ABORTION AMONG BLACKS

Washington, D.C. (EP). Writing in the March '93 issue of *Crisis* magazine, Michael Novak observed that of the 30 million unborn children lost to abortion since 1973, about 10 million were black. "Since the number of currently living blacks is 31 million, the missing 10 million represents an enormous loss," he noted. "Abortion has swept through the black community like a scythe, cutting down every fourth member." Syndicated columnist Cal Thomas noted, "For blacks, abortion has achieved what lynch mobs did not. It has kept the black population down and 'under control.'"

—"Abortion Among Blacks," *Bible Advocate*, January 1994, p. 19.

IT'S WAR!

Reporting on the 1992 Emmy Awards ceremony, *The New York Times* headlined, "It's War!" and proceeded to comment that the presenters and recipients had made it perfectly clear that the Hollywood elite had declared war on the Republican party, moral Americans and traditional family values. Soon after, Jonathan Taplin, producer of the movie *Mean Street*, wrote in the *Los Angeles Times* that the left had already won the cultural war since the American people voted for their leftist, anti-Biblical agenda every time they chose to watch *Roseanne* or *Murphy Brown* and that the people only had to be made aware of their true preferences so they could vote the same way at the polls.

—"It's War," *Crosswinds*, Spring/Summer 1993, p. 86.

"When you're sent into an ordinary hostage-rescue situation, you don't ordinarily pack your Bible. That was their first mistake . . . Koresh would start into this Bible stuff, and they would hold the phone away from their ears. When he was through, they'd ask, 'OK, back to the subject.' But that was the subject." —*Religious studies professor JAMES TABOR of the University of North Carolina in Charlotte, explaining how the FBI misunderstood the thinking of cult leader David Koresh in Waco, Texas, last spring.*

—*World*, November 13, 1993, p. 9.

A KEEN GRASP OF THE OBVIOUS

On the campaign trail, candidate Bill Clinton called Vice President Quayle's Murphy Brown/Family Values speech a "cynical political ploy" designed to divide the nation. Fast-forward to Dec. 3: President Bill Clinton, in an interview with NBC's Tom Brokaw, is asked, "Was Dan Quayle right?" Clinton pointed out that he had read the entire speech and said that while the vice president was trying to be "too cute" with the Murphy Brown remark, there were "very good things in that speech." Clinton added: "It is certainly true that this country would be much better off if our babies were born into two-parent families." He made the same point in an interview with *Newsweek*.

"What a difference a year makes," Quayle responded in an interview on ABC television last Monday morning. "Bill Clinton is on to something." The former vice president said Clinton's statements were a welcome relief from elite culture's constant trashing of family values. "The American family is getting hammered every single day," Quayle said, adding that Clinton could do the country a service by using his "bully pulpit" to keep family issues before the public.

Most Americans, by the way, do believe Quayle was right. The Family Research Council unveiled that and nine other significant findings from a national opinion survey Dec. 7 at a National Press Club news conference.

—"A Keen Grasp of the Obvious," *World*, December 11, 1993, p. 8.

Do Schools Value Values?

Anthony O'Hear, a professor of philosophy at Bradford University in England, believes that English schools are undermining moral values taught by parents.

In an article in the *Daily Mail*, he cites several reasons. First, morality is taught in relative terms, as something society expects, rather than as absolute truth.

Second, students are asked for their opinions about complex moral issues before learning traditional moral values.

"Without being taught virtuous conduct," he writes, "children cannot understand how to make sense of difficult moral questions."

Finally, Professor O'Hear feels that children are not encouraged to respect the thoughts and accomplishments of past generations.

—"Do Schools Value Values?" *The Plain Truth*, Jan. 1994, p. 29.

GAY AGENDA BACKLASH

Voters reject gay rights; evangelicals prepare for new battles

Voters in three municipalities in three states said a clear "no" last Tuesday to ordinances designed to protect homosexuals from discrimination. While the results came from only three communities scattered across the nation, they were seen as one of many off-year election signals that the troops are restless about the way things have been going lately.

Citizens of Cincinnati and of Lewiston, Maine, repealed previously enacted legislation. Residents of Portsmouth, N.H., served notice on their town fathers that they didn't even want them to think about passing such a measure. In Cincinnati, 62 percent of those voting repudiated language about homosexuals in a civil-rights ordinance. Portsmouth's non-binding referendum registered 59 percent against any special protection for homosexuals.

"The whole issue wasn't about discrimination; it was about morality," declared Cincinnati Baptist preacher K.Z. Smith, leader of the repeal effort in the Ohio River city. His side won over such defenders of the ordinance as Roman Catholic Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk and the League of Women Voters.

Duncan warned that if homosexuals are successful in their campaign to gain social acceptance, "it could be the beginning of the end for religious pluralism in America." He predicted that faiths that accept "homosexuality, bisexuality, and cohabitations as lifestyles that are pleasing to God will find favor with Caesar [but those] that stubbornly cling to old-fashioned beliefs about sexual morality and marriage between husband and wife will face persecution and discouragement from a government that brands these 'intolerant' beliefs as illegitimate."

—Matthews, Arthur H., "Gay agenda backlash,"
World, November 13, 1993, p. 15.

STILL WAITING . . .

It would have been refreshing to read a distinctively Christian review of ABC's *Home Improvement*. After Denis Haack's article in the Nov. 13 issue, it still would be refreshing. Yes, *Home Improvement* is amusing and pleasant. The characters are largely very likable, and the dialogue is witty. I watch it regularly, and always chuckle—but my chuckles are becoming a bit more pained as the show progresses.

Why "pained"? Because in some ways, *Home Improvement* is all too typical. Here is a standard plot: Dad, who is an idiot, does something stupid. He then lies to cover it up. When his lie is discovered, he tries a few alternative lies before reluctantly and half-heartedly coming clean. Then he is forgiven by the real brains and character of the family, the nearly-always-right Mom. He realizes some truth (as a rule very PC and feminist-friendly, Haack to the contrary notwithstanding), and only then is received back into the human family.

In sum, here we have disrespectful, smart-mouthed kids and a sometimes-well-intentioned bumbling idiot of a father, barely saved by an omniscient woman, to whom he is lucky to be married (as we are frequently reminded). Mom is essential, Dad an inept bungler.

Nor do I hope too fondly for value-ward improvement of, ahem, *Home Improvement*. Its creative genius (Tim Allen) has said more than once that he thinks that the show would be better if he could bring in some profanity. He, like his character, clearly does not get it.

Nor, I fear, does Mr. Haack, who finds *Home Improvement* to be a refuge from attacks on traditional values, from PC-ism, and from hostility toward the family. If by "traditional" values, Haack means biblical values . . . isn't truthfulness such a value? And isn't feminism the essence of being PC? And does the Bible not call on Dad to shoulder responsibility as the leader of the family, who for their part are called on to respect him?

Or is it Mr. Haack's position that, these days, Christians should gush with gratitude when the media doesn't launch "outrageous assaults" on us and our values?

—Phillips, Daniel J., "Still Waiting . . ." *World*, December 11, 1993, p. 5.



Tracy and Olya at Red Square (Moscow)

To Russia With Love

Journal entry: December 25, 1993. Saturday.

"I have decided that were I an African slave being sent by ship to America, I would have gone insane and died long before the boat reached its destination on account of the cramped quarters. I love to travel, and can't wait to see Tracy and where she lives, but right now I'd have to say I might give that up just to straighten my legs and back and lie down. I believe I am somewhere over the Atlantic Ocean on my way to Amsterdam. Once there I have about another five hour flight to St. Petersburg. I've got pouches of money and papers around my neck and stuck down my pants, jabbing me in the sides (at least I won't get robbed). But I really have to thank God that I am here, as it is only by a direct work of his hand that my visa came yesterday. Thank you, Father."

The hand of God truly did allow me to go to Russia this Christmas to spend time with my sister, Tracy. After months of planning and waiting, I was ready to leave on the plane departing on Christmas day. The only setback was that my visa (allowing me permission to enter the country) had not yet arrived. By the 24th of December, I and my family were a bit on edge. Thank the Lord for Psalm 20:4-5, and a series of coincidences that brought me my visa on the day prior to my departure. Finally on my way, I wasn't sure just what to expect once I arrived in St. Petersburg.

I had heard all the rumors of how Russia is a country on the verge of poverty: no food anywhere. I wondered if while there I would enjoy the luxuries of heat and hot water I so easily take for granted here in the States. What I discovered in some ways was exactly what I



A corner tower in the wall surrounding the Kremlin (Moscow)



An old church which is now a government building (St. Petersburg)



In the courtyard outside of the Hermitage (St. Petersburg)



Tracy and Olya on a bridge over the Moscow River, cathedral in the background (St. Petersburg)

expected, and in other ways surprised me.

Although Russia does not enjoy the material blessings of the United States, it is by no means a backwards nation. The Russian culture is beautiful, the sad thing is that they are trying more and more to be like Americans. For example, the most popular brand of cigarettes I saw advertised was called "Hollywood Cigarettes" the slogan and ad led one to believe that all of America smokes Hollywood Cigarettes (a brand I have never even seen in the States). Interestingly, I noticed the advertising company's name on the many signs around the city: Bablyon Industries.

The architecture and history of the cities I visited (St. Petersburg and Moscow) amazed me. I learned more about the history of Russia in the 7 days I spent in Red Square in Moscow, than I had in fifteen years in the U.S. public school and university system.

I had known, because of Tracy, that the public transit system was very popular in Russia. The metro (subway), buses, and trolley buses are much used. I knew that and expected public transportation to be busy, and it was. What I didn't expect to see, however, were so many cars on the road as well. I came to the conclusion simply that there are a lot of people in Russia. Like any big city, St. Petersburg is a crowded and busy place.

On a more personal level, I got to meet several of the people I had heard of through my sister. On my second night in St. Petersburg, we visited the Children's Home Tracy and Olya have been working with. We also visited a couple of the children who were in the hospital during the holiday season. What an encouragement to me to see the joy and love in the children's eyes when Tracy and Olya came in!

I also got to meet Sergei, Lucya and their family: the family with whom Tracy is meeting for Bible studies. The Lord has truly led these people to Tracy. Sergei is hungry for the word of God; Lucya, their daughter and her husband are interested—yet still skeptical. Despite their skepticism, it amazes me that they continue to study at all. Imagine being raised without ever hearing the name of Jesus. We cannot imagine that because we've been raised on it. It's not that they've been raised to deny Jesus, they've just never heard.

Our Lord is working in these people. Pray for them. And pray for my sister, Tracy, the Lord's servant. I admire greatly the heart our Father has put in her, and lift her daily in prayer. Won't you join me? **RH**



Arches leading into courtyard in front of the Hermitage (St. Petersburg)



The Hermitage—Used to be the Tsar's winter palace, now an art museum (St. Petersburg)



A cathedral inside the Kremlin (Moscow)

Church

CALLED TO AN INVISIBLE SOCIETY

The time is a quarter past four on a white-hot Florida afternoon as two cream-colored buses glide to a stop in front of a community center. Brakes hiss, door cranks turn, and the passengers empty onto the pavement. Some walk stooped over, ungainly and loose-limbed, others are almost unnaturally erect. Some are in wheelchairs. Some wear football helmets. Some look ordinary. One wears a large medal on a multicolored ribbon that reads "Special Olympics." These are members of an "invisible" society—mentally disabled adults.

The occasion that brings them together is a rally of the Special Gathering, a ministry to the mentally challenged community in Cocoa, Florida. The Special Gathering is directed by Richard Stimson, a tall, yuppie-looking pastor in his thirties. Right now Stimson is standing by the door, greeting everyone. There is no condescension in his manner, not a trace of paternalism. If anyone suggested that he is like a father to his flock, he would bristle with indignation. To them, he is never Reverend Stimson; he is always Richard, their brother, friend, and spiritual guide.

After graduation, from Southeastern College in Lakeland, Florida, where he studied Bible and special education, he and his wife, Nancy, moved to Cocoa, where they opened a new branch of the Special Gathering. At the first meeting, only two attended. The ministry today extends to over 200 people in four locations and is supported by 54 churches. It publishes *Networks*, a magazine "for those with specialized ministry."

In the eyes of members of the Special Gathering, Stimson is clearly on the right track. After the rally, they all line up at folding tables for pizza. They laugh. They joke with each other. They flirt. And they even talk about God. Here, they have found the grace of belonging. The Special Gathering has given them, through a language of love that anyone can understand, their own special key to God's great treasury.

—Fleming, Bill. "Called to an Invisible Society." *Christianity Today*.

AN INTERESTING FINDING

Recently published statistics show that countries which lead the way in sending missionaries are growing slowly or actually losing attendees in their annual church growth records.

The USA is the country with the highest number of missionaries. Its church growth is a mere .3 percent. Spain, Italy, France, Germany and Canada follow the USA as countries with a high number of missionaries. Each of them has negative church growth—minus 1.2 percent in Spain, minus .2 percent in Italy, minus .6 percent in France, minus 1 percent in Germany and minus .5 percent in Canada.

The remaining countries in the top nine missionary-sending countries show a similar pattern. Their annual church growth rates are: Netherlands, zero; Britain, minus 1.5 percent; and Belgium, .5 percent.

—Compiled from: Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World*, Zondervan Publishing House, 1993; and John A. Siewert and John Kenyon, editors, *Mission Handbook*, MARC, 1993.

THE INVISIBLE CHURCHES IN AMERICA

Three of the ten largest denominations in the United States are African-American, reports the recently released 1993 *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*. The African-American denominations, the National Baptist Convention (USA) and the Church of God in Christ, and the largely African-American National Baptist Convention of America join the Catholic Church, Souther Baptist Convention, the United Methodist Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Mormons as top denominations. Of the 14 largest denominations, six have largely African-American membership; yet these denominations receive little or no media visibility.

The top 10

Roman Catholic	58.3 million
Southern Baptist Convention	15.2 million
United Methodist Church	8.8 million
National Baptist Convention (USA)	8.0 million
Church of God in Christ	5.5 million
Evangelical Lutheran Church of America	5.2 million
Mormons	4.3 million
Presbyterian Church (USA)	3.8 million
African Methodist Episcopal	3.5 million
National Baptist Convention of America	3.0 million

An interesting note: it is estimated that there are more than 4 million Muslims in America.

—Taken from *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches-1993*, Abingdon, 1993.

IMMORTALITY:

The Irresistible Offer

THE TASK OF PRODUCING A DAILY fifteen-minute radio program seemed daunting. The computer screen needed to be filled four times over for every broadcast. One just had to sit down and produce script—fifteen K (kilobytes) per day.

What I learned is the value of intense Bible study. Starting in Genesis one rehearsed the monumental fact that mankind—you and I—are mortal, but on probation for immortality. For what? Yes, immortality. I began to see what was at stake. "If you would enter life, keep the commandments." It dawned on me how utterly compelling were the words of Jesus. Who else ever went about offering the public *life*? "If you would care to live for billions of years, follow me. I will begin to teach you now, and if you complete the struggle, I will one day pull you out of the grave and make you death-proof forever." Some deal!

I saw again the stark fact that both man and the animals share the same spirit of the breath of life (Genesis 7:22); that our fate was the same in terms of death. Both were taken from the dust and both must return to dust. I was struck again by the beautiful consistency of the Old Testament (the Hebrew Bible) teaching about my condition five minutes after I die. "The dead do not know anything" (Ecc. 9:5). "There is no activity, no wisdom nor knowledge in Sheol where you are going" (Ecc. 9:10). David, Job, and Hezekiah understood it perfectly. The blackness of death made the hope of resurrection shine all the brighter. Again and again I was driven back to Daniel 12:2. "Many of those who are asleep in the dust of the ground shall awake, some to life in the Coming Age." There it was again, the doctrine of the sleep of the dead.

A trip to the local bookstore informed me that to hold such a "negative" view of death was to have a regrettable, cult opinion. The bookstore was equipped with publications designed to set me straight. The Jehovah's Witnesses and others were soundly reprimanded by "orthodoxy" for daring to agree with

David, Job, Daniel and Jesus about what happens when we die! How can this be, that sincere Bible readers miss out on such a simple teaching? "Many of those who are asleep in the dust will awake. . . ." That tells you what the dead are doing and where they are doing it.

My five-year-old Heather seems to have no difficulty with Daniel 12:2. But then she has not had the "benefit" of a Platonic training in immortal souls leaving their bodies at death. Heather never has believed that while John Brown's body lies-a-moldering in the grave, his soul goes marching on, consciously. No. She understands with Daniel that when you are dead, you're dead. That makes the future resurrection a really powerful doctrine. Doctrines, you see, are not theological dead wood. They are dynamite because they are truths taught by Spirit. The doctrine of the resurrection promises you and me that death is not the end.

But there *is* death after life (although listening to my competitors on radio, you would never think so). What Jesus taught was that there is also life after death, but only on God's terms, and only by resurrection. Seventy times in the New Testament resurrection is described as a "wakening up from sleep." (Get the feel of this by substituting "woke up" and "was woken up" for "rose" and "was raised" in I Corinthians 15.)

Jesus was the great exponent of the doctrine of the sleep of the dead. Mary had read Job, David, and Daniel to Him from early childhood. In John 11—that wonderful chapter giving us the "mechanics" of death and resurrection—Jesus pronounced Lazarus dead and sleeping (John 11:11, 14). My *International Critical Commentary* pointed out that Jesus' view in John 11 was the sleep of death found also in Job 14. Of course. I cannot see why

By Anthony F. Buzzard



Christians of all stripes do not rush to follow their master and agree with Him that the departed are sleeping, not conscious in bliss or tormented in hell.

The trouble is that Plato is calling the shots in many church circles. When faith in the coming of Jesus to raise the dead wanes, Plato's fiction about the immortality of the soul steps in to fill the void. It is comforting. And people want to be comforted. But why shouldn't we take comfort in the words of Jesus?

Church history testifies to the truth that heaven-going at death was the mainstream view in 150 A.D. Justin Martyr's famous saying should jolt us back to reality. "If you meet some who say that their souls, when they die, go to heaven, do not think that they are true believers."

Little known to the Bible-reading public is the fact that souls-going-to-heaven-at-death originates not in the Bible but in the gospel of Nicodemus, an apocryphal work circulated in post-Biblical times. The legend was that when Jesus went to Hades—the world of the dead—He released all the Old Testament saints and moved them to a state of blessedness.

The idea caught on. It seemed much more attractive to suppose that you could bypass the resurrection and make it to glory the moment you die.

The protests of Martin Luther and William Tyndale, both of whom believed in the sleep of the dead, could not prevail over the public taste for immediate survival at death. Plato won out and still wins out. When Jesus challenged the Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection, He did not brush aside their ignorance as harmless. "You are badly mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures or the power of God." When Paul encountered men in the church who proposed that the resurrection was past already, he sounded the alarm (II Timothy 2:18). So today, it is necessary in the name of Jesus to remind the public that Job did not say, "If a man dies, will he go on living?" but "If a man dies, will he live again?" (Job 14:14).

But then Job did not have to compete with Plato as we "conditionalists" must.

With sixty-five programs and two hundred and fifty pages of script behind me, I feel renewed and refreshed that there is power in truth. The Spirit is,

after all, according to John "the Spirit of the truth."

Jesus abolished death and brought immortality to life. The dead *can* and will live again. Christianity is unique in its claim to offer endless life to those who seriously follow Jesus. "Jesus is the author of salvation [i.e., rescue from death] to all those who obey Him" (Heb. 5:9).

It beats me that anyone could turn down a man who offers them immortality. Yet the world goes on its merry way, largely unaware that Jesus has the secret of endless life. After all, He has been appointed as the one who can bring you up out of the grave for your second life. That is why we must start life over again even now, so that we can obtain immortality in the resurrection. That second life is forever. The alternative is the second death. Is there anyone who is not for immortality? Choose life—billions of years of life.

(Three months of daily fifteen-minute programs are available to anyone who would like to air them. Please contact Atlanta Bible College.)

Revised . . . Expanded . . .

The third edition of *The Prophecies of Daniel Concerning the Antichrist* has just rolled off the presses. Revised and expanded, this latest edition is a must for students of Bible Prophecy.

The Prophecies of Daniel is a foundation-stone, a building-block, a primer in prophecy. It examines the Danielic view of world history and the coming of the antichrist, with an emphasis on the geographic location of his evil empire. A brand new appendix contains additional supporting material.

To obtain your copy of *The Prophecies of Daniel Concerning the Antichrist*, send \$2.95 plus \$1.50 postage and handling to: Ministry School Publications, 3880 Jefferson SE, Wyoming, MI 49548.

THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL *Concerning the Antichrist*



by Mark M. Mattson

ABC

ATLANTA BIBLE COLLEGE

*"It's More Than an Education . . .
It's a Way of Life!"*

Thinking about going to college? Have you ever wondered why people go to college? They go so they can succeed in life. They go to get a good job and make lots of money, and maybe find romance on the way. This is the way that the world says we will be successful and happy. So we spend endless hours filling out applications to colleges and requesting information. I went through this tedious process last year as a Senior and wondered if it would ever end. In this process, however, God taught me the difference between the world's definition of success and His definition of success. Success isn't measured by money. It isn't measured by the clothes you wear or the car you drive. It isn't even measured by how prestigious your educational background is. It is measured by faith in God and submitting to His commands. It is measured based upon how much you love Him and other people. A poor person who has all of this is much more successful than a rich person who lacks in these areas.

Why Atlanta Bible College?

Had you gone up to me a year ago and asked me if I had any intentions of going to a Bible college, I probably would have laughed in your face. Me, go to Bible college? Why? I served the Lord in my local church and had experience serving at Christian camps and conferences. Only people who want to be pastors go to Bible college, right? **WRONG!** As my Senior year came to a close, I realized that you don't have to have the desire to be a pastor to go to a Bible college (but, within a couple of months of attending ABC, I realized that God may very well want me to become a pastor). I also learned that there isn't a secret formula here that will make you an instant representative of Christ. That depends on your personal commitment to Jesus. ABC is a tool. Atlanta Bible College has several advantages over a secular university. If you attend ABC for only a year, that year will provide you with a strong foundation in Christ for the rest of your college career . . . and your life. You will receive Biblical knowledge and learn how to serve others. You learn that your decision to come to ABC will unlock a new way of life. At Atlanta Bible College you are a person, and are treated as a person instead of a number in a school computer. You will experience a home-away-from-home atmosphere. You will recognize that you are part of a family, and that everyone around you cares about your needs. That can't be said of secular colleges.

Is Atlanta Bible College For You?

That is a question that should be between you and God. I encourage you to send for information and attend the upcoming college invitational this March. Pray about your decisions. Contact an ABC instructor, and along with him, find out what you feel God is calling you to do. The instructors at ABC are willing to help you out.

—Jason Catlin is a Freshman at Atlanta Bible College

Schedule of Events at ABC 1994

March 4-6	ABC College Invitational
March 28	Registration for Spring Quarter
May 16-17	Pre-registration for 1994-95 School Year
June 10	Graduation
June 22	Summer Session Begins

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE WRITE TO ATLANTA BIBLE COLLEGE, ATTN: MR. KENT ROSS,
P.O. Box 100,000, MORROW, GA 30260 OR CALL 1-800-FISHCO1

Theology

THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST AS NON-OPTIONAL

This was never doubted by the vast majority of the church until around 1830 when dispensationalism, antinomianism and strict pietism captured large portions of the Bible-believing Church. As a result, thousands of evangelists, "soul-winners," churches and organizations presented (with all sincerity) a false gospel which taught that one could accept Jesus as Savior without at the same time accepting Him as Lord of their lives. They would say that the Lordship of Christ in their convert's life could come later. This unbiblical view is still taught and defended by sincere Christians, several seminaries and Bible-schools and thousands of churches. It is extremely destructive and has little resemblance to the strong gospel of the Kingdom taught by Jesus, St. Paul and the Church the first 1,800 years.

—"The Lordship of Christ as Non-Optional."
Crosswinds. Spring/
Summer 1993, 2.

ANNIHILATION

This is a buzz word that I do not care for and do not have to, since it isn't in the bible. By association with those whose words are stronger than their argument, it immediately conjures up images of wild-eyed, Enlightenment liberals. The Biblical word is "death." I prefer it.

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah suffered the vengeance of eternal fire, but they are not still burning. If you go over there and look, you will see no smoke and feel no glowing embers. The point is that the fires of God's judgment destroyed them, and they shall remain destroyed forever, never to rise from the ashes. So it is with the wicked dead. Everlasting destruction does not mean to be everlastingly in the process of being destroyed. The wages of sin is death, not a tortured form of eternal life, which is a pitiful concept of the loving judgment of the Great God (loving because final judgment is designed to rid creation of the rot of evil forever). It is partly due to Biblical misunderstanding, partly owing to the inherent fear and foreboding in man somewhat owing to a mystical concoction that is part Gnostic, part Platonic and part Roman Myth. An eternal, living condition of the unrighteous dead after final judgment, however it is defined, is nowhere taught in the Bible.

—"Annihilation." *Crosswinds*. Spring/ Summer 1993, 65.

THE INERRANCY OF THE BIBLE AS NON-OPTIONAL

Up until the 1830s in Europe and until the 1930s in America, the inerrancy of the Bible was hardly doubted by anyone except pagan or liberal philosophers. Since the early 1900s the inerrancy of the Bible has been attacked both in a frontal assault by the more honest liberals, and worse, by subtle, devious, evangelicals with little integrity within many of the evangelical seminaries, colleges, denominations and churches in this century. From the 1960s on, corrupted, devious professors who became neo-orthodox (Karl Barth's theology) have infiltrated Christian seminaries, Christian colleges and churches to the point that a large percentage of "evangelical" professors and pastors are now neo-orthodox and have rejected the inerrancy of the Bible. They remained often "in the closet" with their liberal view of Scripture and subtly and quietly inserted their beliefs into their schools and denominations because they believed they had been entrusted with an "enlightened and more modern" view of the Bible but realized their school's constituency and denomination would not take well to the new, liberal theology. This is thus an issue which has to be settled, discussed openly and exposed to Biblical "air and sunlight" to clean out the theological "germs" which now are running rampant in the bloodstreams of most denominations and evangelical schools. Once a firm belief in the inerrancy of the Bible is gone, there is absolutely no logical point at which a slipping liberal can put on the brakes to stop his descent towards any non-Christian view on anything from abortion, to adultery, to heaven and hell. As Dr. Schaeffer said, inerrancy of the Bible is the watershed issue in the Church in the 20th century. No doctrine affects so many other doctrines as this inerrancy issue.

—"The Inerrancy of the Bible as Non-Optional." *Crosswinds*. Spring/ Summer 1993, 3.

Days of Evangelism

(Continued From Back Cover)

For thirty years after learning that lesson on salesmanship, I applied it to everything in life except my relationship with Jesus Christ. I made a few feeble attempts to tell others about Jesus but was easily overcome by the rejection and soon said nothing to anyone. I justified my lack of effort by saying, "People will know that I am a Christian by my actions." Two verses in Scripture stuck in my mind and bothered me during that time. They were Mark 8:38: *If anyone is ashamed of me and my words I'll be ashamed of him*; and Matthew 28:19: *Go and make disciples!* I knew and understood that they both applied to me and that I was willingly doing nothing about either verse. In 1987 I felt God's gentle, quiet call to enter into ministry. In making the decision to follow that call I knew I had to take a stand for Jesus based on those two verses. I had to overcome being ashamed of Him and I had to overcome being rejected by people who I was talking to about Jesus. Through my willingness to open my life to the leading of the Holy Spirit I was able to overcome both problems. I became a full-time pastor in 1988 and through God's leading became involved in something I had never heard of before, "church planting." It was new to me and to our conference and it was an innovative way to reach large groups of people who did not know about God's love and grace for each of us. I now feel God in my life as I commune with Him on a daily basis. Instead of being ashamed, as I was before, I am now driven to share God's love with people around me. I have found my personal spiritual growth depends on my willing-

ness to fulfill all of the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20. We have to first make disciples out of lost and hurting people around us and then teach them to obey the commands of Jesus. This is evangelism as Jesus intended it to be.

In my five years of pastoring Family Bible Fellowship I have been asked, "Why is church planting so much better than church growth?" It isn't! To begin with, we have to put aside the myth that one way of fulfilling the Great Commission is better than another way. Any way that we can lead someone to Jesus Christ is the right way to do it. I have found, after talking with thousands of people, that there are certain obstacles that Satan has put in front of unchurched people to keep them from discovering the light of Jesus Christ. Those obstacles are some of the very things we are doing in established churches. Issues like seat arrangements, dress, singing of hymns and length of service are not salvation issues and yet they are some of the reasons why many people are not going to church today. In established churches far too many people feel that we have to do these things and are unwilling to change for the sake of lost people. Planting new churches can eliminate these problems from the start.

At Family Bible Fellowship we are working on the principle that if we give, God will give back to us. We are working to fulfill the Great Commission in a different way than what has been traditional within the Church of God. On our fifth anniversary we celebrated with giving a part of our finances and our group to our new daughter church, Be-

loit New Life Church of God. We have planted the vision of starting more daughter churches and have sent two families to Atlanta Bible College. We have the possibility of three high school seniors and another family going to ABC in the fall of 1994. All of these people are looking forward to returning to the greater Rockford area to be used by Jesus to plant new churches. Our goal is to have a total of ten churches in the Rockford area preaching the oneness of God and His coming kingdom on the earth. We hope to reach this goal by the year 2000!

We are financing these new works on the same principle. We tithe to the State and General conferences from the weekly tithes and offerings that we collect. In January, 1993, we began to tithe to a Church Planting Fund from the money that we receive from outside sources. When Beloit New Life was started, in August, we were able to contribute almost 20% of the start-up costs of \$6300. The balance came from the Illinois and General conferences. As we start each new planting effort, if they will work off of the same principle, church planting can become completely financed by newly planted churches.

For the message to go out as Jesus intended is going to take sheer determination by all to fulfill the Great Commission. Three strikes and you're out applies to baseball, as I learned in 1959, but it doesn't apply when we are dealing with lost people. Our mission is to tell people about the good news of Jesus Christ and we must begin to do whatever it takes to reach out to those in darkness!

PH

Days of Evangelism

By Gary R. Turner



IN THE YEAR OF 1959 I WAS TWELVE years old and I learned a valuable lesson in life. I had attended my first baseball game at Milwaukee's County Stadium, discovered a love for the Chicago White Sox, and taken on the responsibility of a newspaper route. With all of this "growing up" taking place at once, I had little knowledge that out of it would come a lesson that would help me in ministry over thirty years later. In the middle of a sales contest for the paper route I went out one evening to sell subscriptions door to door, but after three rejections came home defeated. My dad asked me, as I came through the door, how my sales had gone. I responded "No one wants to buy a newspaper!" He asked me what I based that knowledge on

and I quickly informed him that I had made three calls and hadn't sold a thing. Dad gave me this piece of advice and I have never forgotten it: "If you want to sell anything, it takes at least ten calls to make one sale!" He quickly encouraged me to go back out and try selling the paper with that thought in mind. That night I raised my sights and in the course of the next two hours sold three new subscriptions. In a little over a year I built up the route from thirty-two customers to nearly ninety. I discovered that year that if you are going to be successful at anything it takes hard work, determination, an ability to handle rejection by people, and a goal in sight.

(Continued on page 31)

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IS IT TIME TO RENEW?

HERALD

APRIL, MAY, 1994

VOLUME 83, NUMBER 4

Declared with **HE** That Power which He
 Power to be **IS** exerted in Christ when He
 the Son of God by **IS NOT** raised Him from the
 His Resurrection **NOT** Dead

Christ Jesus has **HERE,** Christ was
 destroyed death and **HERE,** raised from
 has brought Life **HE HAS** Death by the
 and Immortality **HE HAS** Glorious
 to light through **HE HAS** Power of
 the Gospel **RISEN** the Father

In My Opinion . . .



THE UNKINDEST CUT

"Good to have you here, son," the man said.

"Nice to see you, Dad."

"You've had a rough time." The eyes clouded with pain. "Hope you don't think I let you down."

The younger shook his head—"You warned me, Dad. But it wasn't the nails. It was the kiss."

—Roger Woddis, adapted from *The Book of Mini Sagas*

Testimonies of Faith

As I write this Nora Randall has just died. In this issue we have an article about JoAnn Painter, a young mother who died. This would all be very depressing except . . . and that is precisely what Easter is about. There is an "except" that makes all the difference!

Hardly anyone is prepared for death when it comes. We know it will come, and with some diseases we know it will visit shortly, but it is still a shocking realization when death actually occurs. How people handle death without faith is hard for me to understand. It must be very difficult.

But to know that one day I will again be able to be with Dad, that Nora's family will greet her again, that JoAnn will greet the other three "musketeers," and you will be able to hug and love your family and others that have died in the Lord—that makes it bearable. There comes into your grief an element of hope. Paul says that we don't grieve like others who have no hope.

There is coming a day when Christ will return and call from the grave His family. The world will be in shock when it occurs, but what rejoicing there will be for us who are still alive . . . and what rejoicing when we again meet face to face. "Hey, Dad! Hello, Nora. Greetings, JoAnn." What a day!

I Love the Church of God

Well sometimes it's a love/hate relationship. We get angry with one another and hurt one another and those are not pleasant times, but overall I love our church. One of my pleasant responsibilities is to visit our churches from time to time. Last fall I was with the church in Waterloo, and later with the church in Peoria. This spring I'll be with the church in Bethel, South Carolina, and in Rockford, Illinois, and Beloit, Wisconsin, and Columbia, South Carolina. Everywhere I go I find loving and warm people. Yes, we have our faults and weaknesses, but we also have some very special strengths.

We need to focus on our strengths and appreciate them. We need to remember how God wants to work in us and through us. We need to love one another more and acknowledge that. We need to love pre-Christians more and show that.

Thanks, Church of God.

It Does Make a Difference

Sometimes there is a desire to soften our doctrinal standards . . . to not be so abrasive. The hope is that somehow that may allow us to reach more people. There is some logic in that. It is important to build a relationship with people, so that the strength of that helps as they confront unorthodox doctrines.

But in early March we had the experience of being identified by a group of "cult-hunters" as being Atlanta's newest cult. That group was quite prepared to denounce us and castigate us as being outside of Christ and doomed.

The doctrines of Christ are unpopular, as He said they would be. In John 15:18, Jesus said, "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first." He later adds, ". . . a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God," (John 16:2b).

We will receive persecution for what we believe the Bible teaches. We need to expect that, but we need to be strong and continue to preach and teach what the Bible teaches . . . no matter the consequences.

Authors in Previous HERALD

Through error, two articles in the Feb./March HERALD did not have bylines. The authors of those articles were Arlen Rankin for "Look Up, Look Out!" and Susan Savage for "To Russia With Love." We are sorry for letting this get by us.

Kent Ross

This issue's cover references are Romans 6:4 (TEV); Eph. 1:19, 20, Romans 1:4, II Tim. 1:10, Matt. 28:6 (NIV).

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

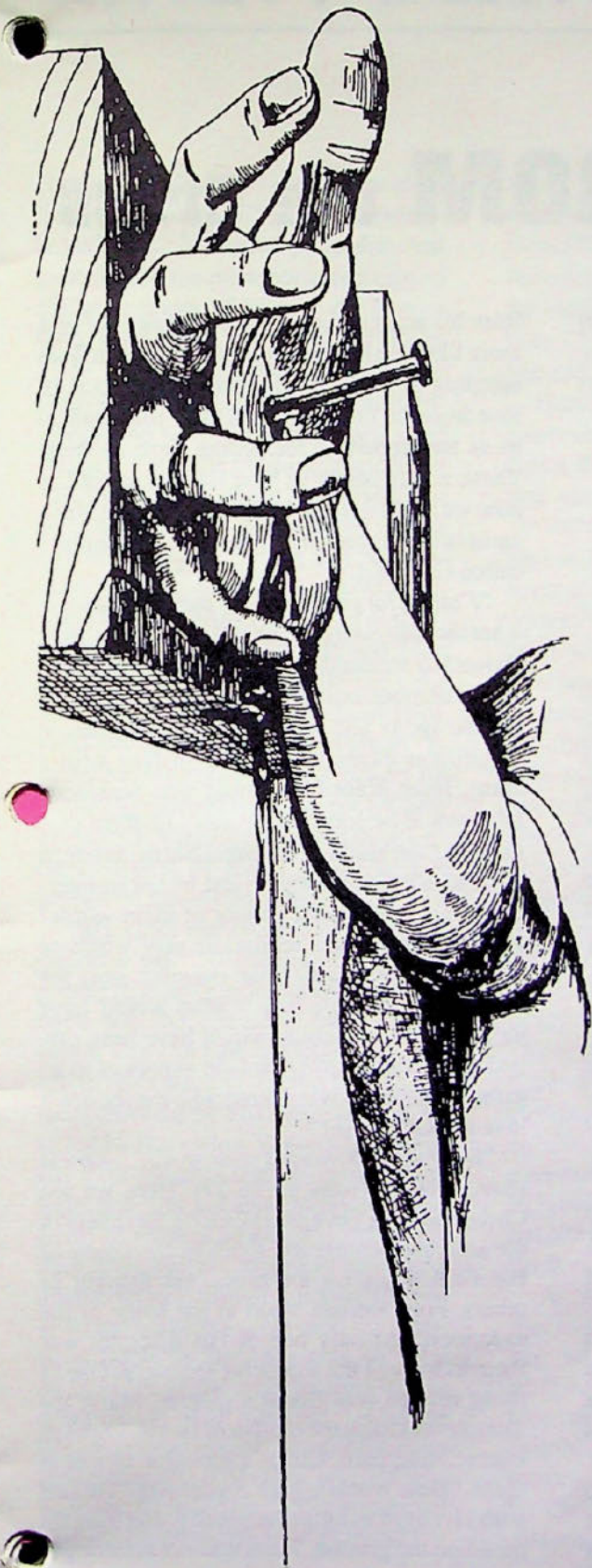
God under the kingship of Christ (Luke 1:32);

- 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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Then after that, they put this purple coat on him
and smash some thorns on his head.
They made him carry this cross up a hill
and he's tired because they already whipped
him
and laughed at him and spit on him.
And the sun's burning and he's sweating
and the cross is getting heavier
and he can't see where he's walking
because of the blood from the thorns.
So they get this friend of his
to drag the cross the rest of the way.

And when they get there they drive real nails
into his hands
and blood spurts out onto the ground
but he just lets them do it.
And they raise him and the cross up high
and he hangs there hot and thirsty
and numb from the pain.
He asks some guy for water
and the guy brings him vinegar to be funny
but nobody laughs.

And the time goes on and they're all
standing looking up at him
and he's hot and thirsty
and the flies are buzzing around his head
and he's telling Somebody to forgive them
because they really don't know what they're
doing.
And then at last he raises his head
and looks up at the sky
and everybody notices how human he looks
hanging there
and they all know he can't last much longer.
And then all of a sudden he opens his mouth
and with the blood and tears
all over his face
he screams real loud
about Somebody forsaking him
And then he dies

for me.

The View **FROM** the Cross



By Pastor
David
Riley



THE WORDS OF THE ANCIENT hymn ring true as we examine that day of the cross so long ago yet so important for us today:

*No one ever cared for me like Jesus,
There's no other friend so kind as
He;
No one else could take the sin and
darkness from me,
O how much He cared for me.*

If you've ever experienced a dying person's last words you know that they hold special significance. They often give profound insight into his or her entire life. Of all the dying words of all of humankind, none have greater impact or power than those of Jesus Christ. His dying words stand apart from all others because He stands apart from all others. Jesus Christ is one of a kind, the Son of God with a uniquely significant death. For the next few moments, let's examine Jesus' death from the Cross of Calvary, but let's look at it from His point of view. Briefly, I want to remind you of His words and His death that changed the course of mankind. Mostly, I want you to know of the love that He has for you and me that makes our eternal life possible.

Six hours passed between the first pound of the nail and the last breath of Jesus on Calvary's Cross. But during those awful hours the Son of God spoke seven times, looked down upon His mother, spoke to His disciples, and displayed His great love for us. The words He spoke were difficult to speak. You see, crucifixion takes a man's breath away. Breathing becomes almost impossible when one can inhale but not exhale. To release his breath, the crucified man pushed up on the nail through his feet, straightening his legs and body until the pressure was relieved

from his arms and chest. A crucified man was more likely to die from asphyxiation than from bleeding to death. That makes these words of love from the cross so much more important to us as we prepare to reexamine some of them. These words taught us how He died as well as how we are to live and how we are to love. Read them as if you were there on that day at the place called Golgotha.

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). Here Christ shows His tremendous love for His executioners by demonstrating His *mercy*. At a time of intense agony and pain, when most victims of crucifixion might scream out in fury with a curse, Jesus prayed that those who sentenced Him would be forgiven. It was J.C. Ryle who said, "As the blood of the Great Sacrifice began to flow, the Great High Priest began to intercede." Do you see the beauty of these words? Jesus is putting into action His very words of Matthew 5:44: "Love your enemies, pray for them that persecute you." Who would have thought such a teaching would have been carried to this extreme? Does God expect us to go to the extreme of loving those who maybe don't love us? Of course!

"Dear woman, here is your son . . . here is your mother" (John 19:26-27). Here we see Christ showing yet again His love for others in the area of *compassion*. Even in the agony of His final hours on the cross, He thought of others. Four women stood at the scene of the execution, but only one of His disciples was there to witness the shameful spectacle. One of those women was Christ's mother, Mary; the disciple was John, the brother of James. Through excruciating pain, Christ's thoughts turned to them. "Dear woman, here is your son," He said with His head hanging helplessly, His eyes focused on the ground. Jesus was not referring to

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Himself; this "son" was John, also identified in Scripture as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Year after year, Mary had experienced the pain that accompanied the great honor of bearing the Son of God. As Simeon had predicted (Luke 2:35), a sword pierced her soul. Remember the innocent babies near Bethlehem who were massacred because of Herod's fear of the Messiah (Matt. 2:16-18). Don't forget about the rumors that were whispered in shame when people said that Mary's firstborn was "illegitimate." Jesus was mindful of how much pain He had caused His caring mother. He felt her pain as she watched Him dragged away to Golgotha. He knew she would have to face life without Him. Jesus probably called her "woman" to avoid having more ridicule placed on her because others were listening. Compassion for others marks one of the greatest attributes of Jesus. Never was it greater than from the cross.

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). Far greater than any physical pain Jesus suffered was the emotional pain He endured. One can hear the *anguish* in His call to His Father in heaven as He hung there deserted by His disciples and rejected by His nation. Even Peter, one of His most intimate friends, denied Him. Rejection and anguish, however, were never so evident as when God His Father, with whom Christ had enjoyed a unique relationship of oneness, heaped all of the sin of mankind onto the sacrificial lamb. In that agonizing moment on the cross, Jesus Christ bore the weight of all the sin of all mankind. Under the weight Jesus cried out: "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*"—"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" The anguish of abandonment seemed to overshadow

Jesus' words in John 16:32: "*You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.*" Think of how Jesus felt as it seemed, while hanging on the cross, that even His Father had left Him. Christ bore that emotional pain for you and for me.

Finally, we come to the words most celebrated and remembered that crucifixion day. The words of *victory* that ring out from John's Gospel in John 19:30: "*It is finished.*" Jesus knew that He had fulfilled His Father's will as the battle of the ages was won. J.W. Shepard writes, "It was a shout of triumph. He cried with a loud voice, not the weakened utterance of one dying from physical exhaustion but of a Conqueror in the full flush of strength and victory. His task was complete." Christ seemed to live in the shadow of the cross His entire life. He lived with the reality of death very close. This makes it even more meaningful for us to realize that we can be reconciled to God. We must not forget the victory from the cross of good triumphing over evil, the victory that lies in store with the resurrection nearing. The course of the prince of darkness, along with all his demonic forces, was changed in that one victorious moment as, according to Scripture, "*Having disarmed the powers and authorities [Christ] made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross*" (Col. 2:15).

As we approach the season of remembering the resurrection of our Lord, may we not forget Christ and His view from the cross. The cross must mean far more to Christians than an ancient and painful method of execution. It must mean more than a piece of jewelry worn by Christians and even those who profess other religions. Remember the words

of Christ from the cross as He gave His life for us. Never forget His words of mercy, compassion, anguish, and victory. Most importantly, may we remember the words of the Apostle Peter as he reminds us of Christ's example for us to follow: "*To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps*" (1 Peter 2:21). **RH**

BRIEF MESSAGE

Religious Renewal

A 1991-92 survey of 19,000 people in 13 nations, including former Soviet-bloc countries, indicates that religious beliefs are stronger than ever.

"God didn't die, not even under socialism," said Andrew Greeley, author of the survey.

The study "has more indepth information about religious belief . . . in a cross-national perspective than has ever been collected," according to Tom Smith, the director of the General Social Survey, the U.S. participant in the study. Among the findings:

Two thirds of Hungarians reported attending church in 1991. In 1986, only a quarter had attended. Also, about three times as many Hungarians were frequent churchgoers in 1991.

More than 90 percent of those polled in Ireland and the United States said they believe in God.

Eighty percent of those polled in Italy and Poland said they believe in God.

The study, conducted by the International Social Survey Program, polled at least 1,000 people in each of the 13 nations involved: England, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Northern Ireland, Poland, Slovenia and the United States.

—"Religious Renewal," *The Plain Truth*, January 1994, 28-29.

The View **AT** the Cross



By Pastor
Ken
Howe



“THE EARTH WAS A VAST WASTE, darkness covered the deep, and the spirit of God hovered over the surface of the water” (Genesis 1:2, NEB).

Light presupposes darkness, darkness anticipates light. The Beginning was shrouded in infinite darkness. Then the Almighty created the photon, allowing the Great Shadow to be divided and individualized through the awakening of form and outline. Stars appeared, having sudden meaning and purpose against the black background of space. Our star, our sun, proceeded to energize the new earth, and God created wonderful living things to dwell beneath this solar engine. Ultimately humankind, the zenith of life, was born; and the light shined into the eyes of our Genesis ancestors; and they each cast their own shadow, physically AND spiritually. For with the knowledge of good and evil came the Fall, and with the Fall came the darkness of sin. So now mankind needed an inner light to be awakened in order to give meaning and purpose to existence, to bring hope for their fallen natures.

We are told in the first chapter of John’s Gospel that Jesus is life, and this life is the light of mankind. Jesus thus becomes that longed-for light of promise, meant to progress and prosper in our hearts as the primary challenge to the darkness of sin. This light could not possibly shine apart from God’s forgiving grace, a gift activated by the sacrifice of the Son. As Paul relates to the Colossians, “[God] rescued us from the domain of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of his dear Son, through whom our release is secured and our sins are forgiven” (Colossians 1:13-14, NEB).

In other words, the spiritual light of Jesus gives form and outline to our “inner man,” revealing with His holy brightness the shadows cast by our individual sins. Our recognition of the

Son’s light plus the acknowledgement of our own dark natures equals that knowledge which leads to repentance. Light presupposes darkness, darkness anticipates light. We must understand this before we can understand what went on in the minds of those who witnessed Jesus’ execution. Because, inevitably, His death defined each onlooker as a sinner veiled by the shroud of moral darkness.

We take as our representative verse Matthew 27:45 (NEB), which reads: “From midday a darkness fell over the whole land, which lasted until three in the afternoon.” For us this “darkness” becomes symbolic as it mirrors and mimics the crucifixion drama in general, and the relative attitudes of individual participants in particular. Let’s begin with the crowd at large. How did they perceive the execution of this Nazarene?

The Gentiles who had been touched by the ministry of Jesus probably felt the loss deeply. They were not burdened by Jewish religious biases, and so evidently took Jesus at “face value.” For them the teachings and commands of Jesus were new and authoritative (backed by manifest power). Jesus was going to be missed. His life held such promise! The centurion guard noted as much.

The Jewish laypeople also saw potential in Jesus, but His authoritative teachings and wonderful miracles were important only as far as they went. The real Messianic test would come with the anticipated destruction of the Roman oppressors. The true Christ must rule! And so there was probably a mixture of disappointment, cynicism and bitterness at Jesus’ demise. Another pretender. “Crucify him!”

The Jewish religious elite, however, were probably simply relieved. The Nazarene had been a threat to traditional Judaism, and so also

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to their religion-based power structure. To turn this false Messiah over to the Romans was to do God (and themselves) a great favor. Isn't it interesting that their cohort, Judas Iscariot, was overwhelmed, not with relief, but with absolute hopelessness? Jesus' end was also his own.

This brings us to those closest to Jesus, the Apostles and other faithful. What feelings were moving and manipulating them?

I suppose that the state of their psyches could be described in one word—ambivalence. Fear was the instinctive reaction of the men (Apostles). They did not yet have full faith or understanding of things to come, so they were afraid to

be associated with Jesus, lest they too be tried. Peter even went to the extent of cursing his way through an absolute denial of association with the man. But fear was mixed with shame, shame with doubt, doubt with a small spark of hope. What have we done? What can we do now? We must note here that it was Jesus' dear female disciples who showed the most courage, having stood closely by Him to the last breath (though John boldly states many years later that he, too, was with Jesus to the very end). The love of the women for the Master was evidently stronger than any phobia. They must have felt the sorrow that anyone does who loses a close friend.

The ultimate point is that, on this day, spiritual darkness reigned. Fear, doubt, sorrow, shame—these are shadows we have each felt in our own hearts and minds. These are the dark places which yearn for, cry out for deliverance. Help me! Forgive me! Please forgive me. Light presupposes darkness. And, once understood, the crucifixion offered forgiveness. And that forgiveness was Light and Life. Into the darkness beams grace, and new life is created. Many who had denied and doubted on that fateful day at Golgotha would one day repent at the hope-bringing light of the Resurrection of the Christ, an event which presupposes the darkness of the Sacrifice. But then, that's another story . . . **RH**

Miracle Time

By Joyce Housman



It's my favorite time of year. All nature is getting ready to multiply. Spring is a miracle time from God.

The first sign of approaching spring is the pussy-willows. A farm close to us has a slough with willows along the road. Every time I pass it, my eyes search for their cheery velvety branches. Though there is snow around them, they bravely announce that spring is almost here. I simply have to pick an armload to take to church on Sunday. There are thousands more

flowers to greet me later, but none so awaited and welcomed as the pussy-willow.

Meantime, down on the farm, the animals get into the swing of things. Our beef cows are delivering their calves. Little white-faced red calves race across the pasture—hunting for mama and a warm drink of milk. In the broader house my baby chicks are beginning to feather out. They just don't stay babies very long. I hunt through the hay shed and back in the grove,

searching for our wild turkey hen's nests which have been carefully hidden. It's only by accident that I stumble across them—hopefully before they are hatched out. I have to steal the babies or the hen will take them out and gradually lose them all. The second hatches will have warmer weather and stand a better chance to survive. The guinea hens too, hide away nests. It's not uncommon to see a mama guinea with twenty babies surrounding her guarded by uncles, aunts, and father guineas. The Canadian geese have established territories and are busy incubating their eggs.

My tomato seedlings need transplanting, my garden needs to be planted, the flower bulbs dug in, and it all needs to be done immediately. What wonderful pleasure to get my hands into the warm fertile soil and *feel* spring!

While I'm glorying in the sensation of the earth, I'm listening for my early-bird arrivals; the robins, the meadow larks, and the orioles. Each one is busily marking territory and looking for their dream-home nesting site.

How quickly I forget the cold miserable winter. How glad I am that God lets me enjoy another wonderful spring! **RH**

The View From Above



By Kent
Ross



AS OUR EYES ARE LIFTED TO THE cross we've noticed how it would have appeared to people looking up at it from the crowd. We've also tried to think how it would have been for Jesus to look out upon the crowd, as well as to look up and to think about His Father in Heaven. In this article we want to give some thought to how the cross must have been viewed from Heaven itself; how God must have felt as He watched His only begotten son die.

ANGUISH

In Isaiah 53:10 (KJV) it is written that "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him." What an abomination that language is, to think that it would have "pleased the Lord." There must have been *anguish* in the mind of God when He saw what was happening to His son, but in order for the world to have a way of salvation God had to allow it to happen that way. Man had taken himself away from God back in the Garden of Eden. If there was to be reconciliation God knew He would have to initiate it Himself, but secondly He had to take into consideration His perfect holiness so that He could be consistent with His very nature in allowing man to come back into His presence.

Think of God's feelings as He heard Christ's words, "*Eli! Eli! Lama sabachthani!*"—"My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?" As God looked at His son in pain, there was anguish within God Himself. Not only could He not stop the pain that His only son was feeling but, more than that, He had to turn His own back and utterly forsake His son who at that moment became the most sinful object that had ever existed as He bore upon Himself the sins of the world. As a father, I cannot imagine being able or even being willing to turn my

back upon my son. That first emotion that God must have felt as He looked down from above was one of deep anguish.

ANGER

Perhaps that anguish turned to *anger* as He looked upon what was being done and realized that most of the people there had no appreciation of what was happening. They didn't even care. "And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split" (Matthew 27:50, 51 NIV). It is clear that nature itself revolted and rocked Jerusalem with the injustice of what was happening there. We read the words of Matthew 27:39-40 (NIV), "Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, 'You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!'" How hard it must have been for God to withhold Himself in that moment as He looked upon the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and in fact the entire crowd, who like little poppin-jays strutted themselves before God's son and mocked Him as He suffered. They shouted abuse at Him. You wonder if they had any understanding of how close they came to being utterly destroyed. If at that moment God had decided to pour out His vengeance and retribution upon them, He would have been utterly justified.

LOVE

The third reaction that we can perhaps surmise that God had, as He looked down upon the cross where His son was dying, was one that overcame the first two. The anguish and possibly the anger that welled up in Him, as it well would have

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within any of us, was overcome by His great *love* for us.

Paul wrote, "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation" (Romans 5:6-11 NIV).

It was while we were yet sinners that God expressed His love for us. And now that we have been justified, He will save us from the wrath that will be poured out upon the world as justice is finally done. In verse 10 it says while we were enemies we were reconciled to Him, how much more now that we are reconciled will we be in close relationship with Him?

The words of John 3:16, 17 (NIV) come back to mean more and more to us: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." For God so loved the world that, yes, He gave His only begotten son.

I think about those three emotions that we surmised may have been within God as He looked down upon the cross. The anguish He must have felt over the

injustice of what was happening. The righteous anger over what men were doing so unwittingly. But finally the great love that overcame the other two to pour out upon us. It stayed God's anger and He poured His love out upon those very people, and He continues today. . . .

As we look at the cross, we understand the *anguish*. Many people today do not. But those who understand can feel the anguish that God must have felt and our own hearts are burdened by what Christ had to undergo so that we could be made whole.

I think it is easy for most of us to identify with the *anger* that God would

It was while we were yet sinners that God expressed His love for us.

have felt towards seeing His son treated this way. Any parent who has seen his daughter or son bullied or pushed around by older children knows the anger that wells up within as he or she responds to his precious child being abused. Probably most of us would not have withheld our vengeance and retribution, but at that moment would have sent a hundred million angels to rescue our child and destroy the wicked and evil men that were crucifying him.

But finally, as with God, that third reaction of *love* ought to grow within us even as we look with horror upon the crucifixion of Jesus. In John 17:22, 23 (Living Bible) Jesus prays "that the world will know you sent me and will understand that you loved them as much as you love me!" That love that God had and

has for us is the love we need to in turn have for those around us.

I think of the words in the last verse of the hymn "The Love of God." It reads,

*Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment
made,
Were ev'ry stalk on earth a quill,
And ev'ry man a scribe by trade,
To write the love of God above would
drain the ocean dry.
Nor could the scroll contain the
whole,
Tho' stretched from sky to sky.
O love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure
The saints' and angels' song.*

In the old hymnal there was a note at the bottom of the page that said, "The last stanza of this song was penciled on the wall of a narrow room of an asylum by a man said to have been demented. The profound lines were discovered after his death!"

God's kind of love needs to overcome both anger and anguish as the world, many times unfeeling and uncaring, needs to know a love that in its view is demented. It is agape love. Love that is not deserved—that is the love that God showed us when at that moment He looked down and saw what men were doing to His son.

To be able to look down at the cross from above needs to be our viewpoint as we look at a world that today struts in unconcern, unaware of a coming day of judgment. We might feel the anguish and even anger that God felt in seeing the injustice of it all, but, as God did, we continue to express our love to a world that is dying now and that will die for eternity unless they come to know the one hanging on the cross. **R41**

A Dedication To a Friend

By Janice
Hart



This is dedicated to my dear friend and sister in Christ, JoAnn Painter, who fell asleep in death September 8, 1993.

I was privileged to know JoAnn only a few short years. We met at a church function before we became traveling buddies to Christian Worker's Seminar in April 1992.

I didn't know JoAnn had already been fighting cancer several years. She never spoke of it, never complained or fussed. I never heard JoAnn say a bad thing about anything! You really get to know a person when you travel together. For the week at Christian Worker's Seminar we shared meals, classes, spiritual discussions, shopping trips and free time together. We talked about our families. She had a daughter the same age as my Alisa. We had such fun shopping for gifts for our families. She kept up with Lana Welch, Joyce Bolhous and myself, running all the time. I didn't realize she had already had a mastectomy. She never looked for sympathy or attention. She was always concerned for others. I found her amazing for a woman so young. How could she not be bitter, angry or even upset with life's treatment of her? Her faith held her together.

In early 1993 we made plans to travel to Christian Worker's Seminar. JoAnn, Rachel Baldwin, Lana Welch and myself would all be together again. JoAnn had been very ill during the previous fall and winter and had taken massive treatments for the cancer. She lost weight and her hair fell out. She wore a wig and it was so real-looking I never realized it was a wig! We left home a day early so that we could "shop till we dropped" on the way to Tennessee. Not until we settled into a hotel for the night did I realize JoAnn's perfect hair wasn't hers! As we prepared for bed that night she was afraid she would offend us by removing her wig! I couldn't see how she could possibly sleep in the thing and I en-

couraged her to be at ease with us. We were all friends and we would not be put off by her appearance.

At Christian Worker's Seminar 1993 we had the best time ever! JoAnn was struggling with a decision but never let on. We shared JoAnn with her family members but we still had time together to talk and share feelings and experiences. She looked so good and really seemed to enjoy her trip. She never fussed or complained and was always ready to do whatever the "gang" wanted to do.

After Christian Worker's Seminar she had the second mastectomy. Doctors gave her encouraging news. They felt they had gotten it all; she would be fine. She seemed to recover fairly well until late July. More tests would be done while I was at General Conference. I remember praying a lot for JoAnn. They were selfish prayers. I wanted God to heal JoAnn so I wouldn't have to face losing someone who had become very important to me. I wanted God to heal her so Mike and Alicia wouldn't have to be without her—ever.

Then in August she told us. She'd lost the war. The cancer was consuming her at an alarming rate. But she accompanied Alicia to her first day of church camp. She was too sick to get out of the car, but she saw her go off to have a good time. She had good days and bad days. JoAnn seemed to *accept* God's plan for her. She never gave up. She always had her faith. She was realistic but never morbid.

I was at JoAnn's side several hours before she fell asleep in death. Mike asked Jon Welch to call me shortly after she was admitted to the hospital. I spent what seemed like hours rubbing her back, neck, shoulders and head as she struggled for every breath. Still she never complained or fussed, never even cried. My own tears blocked my vision as I struggled to hold myself together. I was so tortured by her pain and her struggle. But she was so grateful that Rachel Baldwin and I were there.

Her mother sat in a corner chair and watched as we tried to provide her with a second's relief. When I left her late that night I fully intended to return in the morning, as soon as I put my children on the school bus.

The Lord ended JoAnn's struggle at 3:30 a.m. Ironically, I was awakened at that time by a huge clap of thunder and lightning. JoAnn was my first thought. At 6 a.m. my pastor, Gary Smith, called to tell me she suffered no more. I remember my first reaction was denial. I was going back in just a couple of hours to read to her, hold her hand, or whatever she wanted.

In the weeks that followed her death I really struggled. I didn't want to ask "why" but I found myself doing it. How could the Lord take someone so sweet, so generous, so loving, so selfless? How could He deny her child a perfect mother and Mike a wonderful wife? How could He take someone from us who was such a beautiful Christian example for us all? I wanted answers as to why the Church



"The Four Musketeers" (Left to right): Joyce Bolhous, Janice Hart, Lana Welch, and JoAnn Painter

of God lost a very important contributing member, why the community lost a tireless volunteer, why a husband and child were left to fend for themselves???

I had a lot of help processing my grief. The Lord gave me the answers. In JoAnn's death I came to realize the purpose of her life. She *invested* herself in the Lord and in people. She invested herself in her family, friends, church and community. She trusted the Lord to take care of her. She touched so many people in a positive way. She taught me so many things about life and loving

people. The lessons JoAnn taught perhaps wouldn't have been so clear had she lived to be 80 or more. Those lessons of investing herself in family and friends were much sharper and more poignant at age 38.

The Lord has comforted me in my grief through my prayers and friends He has given me. I could not have gotten through this without my faith. God will take care of Mike and Alicia; I know that now. They will be

fine. Yes, we all miss JoAnn, her smile, and that great laugh of hers! But her love is with me always because she took the time to become a part of my life. She taught me to invest myself in the Lord and the special people He puts in my path. JoAnn taught me lessons that without her I may never have learned. I thank God for JoAnn and her short life and I am grateful I could share it, if only for a few short years. She will be with me always. ^{RH}

But Wait A Minute! I'm Confused.

By Pastor
Rex Cain



THE LATEST RAGING SOCIAL ISSUE IS the recent practice of harvesting human eggs from an aborted female fetus and implanting them in the wombs of infertile women—some past menopause—enabling them to give birth to a child.

But wait a minute! Haven't we been told by pro-choice for over 20 years (since *Roe vs Wade*) that embryos are not human until born; that they are only non-viable tissue like an unwanted tumor? Have things now changed? Are we now being told that the body-form is still "tissue" but the eggs in the ovary of the non-body can create a human being?

Just think about this: ovum from the aborted female ovary "tissue" is *GIVING LIFE* to

another human being. How, then, can the embryo not be a child? If a child, how can civilized people practice genocide against the unborn at the rate of 4,000 per day in America alone?

No, I'm not confused, but I am angry and grieved. How must God feel? Will He not judge a world which nonchalantly plays the game of life and death with sacred things? A game that springs out of selfishness, convenience, greed and money.

"... when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe (John the Baptist) leaped in her womb" (Luke 1:41). Would non-viable, non-human "tissue" do this? ^{RH}

The Joy of Easter

By Vernis Wolfe



"CHRIST IS RISEN." "THE LORD IS RISEN indeed."

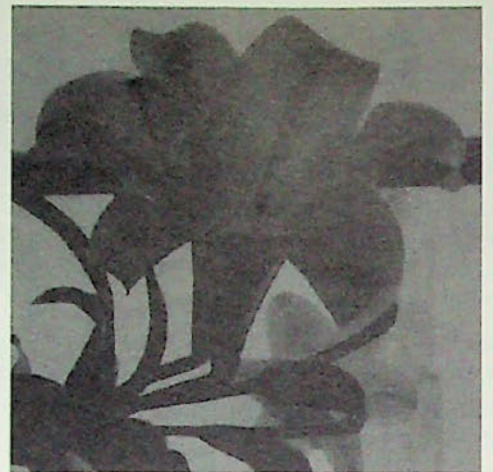
It was Easter and I had arrived at the church early to take care of a number of details for the worship service. Preoccupied with my task, I was barely aware that an older couple of the congregation had entered the church. I heard their greeting: "Christ is risen," and as if some from primordial urging I heard myself saying: "The Lord is risen indeed." It was Easter and we were here to relive an event and renew our faith like Christians everywhere on this high day of the Christian year. Would it happen here? Would it happen everywhere?

The hour for common worship had now arrived and the people of this particular community of faith were all in their places. This time I heard myself saying as though from a script: "Christ is risen," and the people's weak answer as by rote: "The Lord is risen indeed." The service had started but there was little evidence that the worship had begun. The church that was filled with people had a weak common voice. There was a body but the spirit seemed to be lacking. Surely the event and the faith had more to offer.

The organ sounded the first notes of "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" and the people stood to sing. It became a mighty chorus and at the end when we repeated those words, "Christ is risen," the response came like thunder: "The Lord is risen indeed." We were beginning to catch live coals rather than cold ashes. Would there be a fire? What might the fire be?

There were the readings from Scripture, prayers and other offerings presented as gifts to honor God and benefit His community. Worship of God was happening!

The pastor's sermon, based on Luke 24, was a catalyst. The sermon reminded us of the struggle of those first disciples with their doubts and fears and the awesome happenings for which their own experiences provided no basis for understanding. The pas-



tor invited us to step into the scene of this drama, not with the artificial problems of others but with the baggage of our own doubts and fears. He then challenged us to consider that, whether past or present, all share a common experience. The answers began to emerge as we listened again to Jesus' initiative in this situation, for Jesus pointed to the Scriptures and explained that as we hear and understand the Scriptures we begin to know Him and understand Him (Luke 24:27, 44, 45). The hearts of these first disciples their hearts burned within them (Luke 24:32) and they were beginning to catch the fire and it was a fire of faith. Now they could speak of the new reality: "The Lord is risen indeed" (Luke 24:34). "As they were saying this, Jesus himself stood among them" (Luke 24:36). With this experience and the continued exposition of Scripture by Jesus (Luke 24:44-45) they heard Jesus explain the purpose of God in this event: "That repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:47, 48).

In our human predicament of sin, disbelief and mortal striving there enters the reality of joy in the ongoing activity of God to meet and save people. It can happen anywhere. It can happen anytime. It most often happens in community when God's people turn to Him. In spite of our own contrivances and not because of them, God's Spirit can bring us to a point of concentration at which the whole of Christian life and faith can be brought into focus and be experienced in our worship of Him.

Response to God is beautiful and to the one who responds it brings the eternal Easter joy.

Brief Message

BEHOLD, I AM ALIVE FOREVERMORE

His enemies feared that He might pull off the greatest miracle yet, and so they set every possible precaution against it. The disciples, whom He had trained and told about this stupendous event, went home! He was dead in the tomb! The stone, the wax, the seals, the soldiers, demons and all the sin of the world were set against that stone. But—

“He arose a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives FOREVER with His saints to reign.
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!”

Jesus stood in splendid isolation, death, the tomb, the powers of hell shattered at His pierced feet. He had led captivity captive and given gifts, fabulous gifts, unto men. And yet as He emerged from the tomb, there was not a soul to meet Him.

I believe He had been celebrating His triumphant resurrection long before Mary got to the sepulcher.

I would have thought that that disciple “whom Jesus loved” would have been shivering all night in the cold to cry,

“Hail, my Lord and my God!” when the Saviour rose from the dead. But not so.

I would have thought the one leper who returned would have risked the scorn of every friend and foe to be the first to declare, “Master, I know you are alive forevermore.” But he was absent, too!

I would have thought that impulsive, blundering Peter would have tried to make up to the Master the pain he gave Him in the judgment hall, by crying, “Because you live, we shall live also!” But no.

Blind Bartimaeus could have used his new eyes to behold the miracle of the ages. But he, also, was missing.

Matthew could have been there to hail the King and scorn the foolishness of men who thought that *they* could put Eternal Life to death. But he was some other place.

—Ravenhill, Leonard, “Behold, I am Alive Forevermore,”
Message of the Cross, May/June 1979, p. 12.

The 1994 Annual General Conference

July 1-5, 1994

STOUFFER CONCOURSE HOTEL AND
ATLANTA BIBLE COLLEGE
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Jesus Is Coming! Prepare!



Proposed Constitutional Amendment

At the 1993 General Conference, the Southeast Conference proposed an amendment to the General Conference By-Laws, Article II, Section 6, concerning the duties of the Board of Directors. The amendment is to add Section (G): “To take action regarding the admission, discipline, dismissal, and restoration of member churches in the Church of God General Conference.”

Explanation: At the present time the Constitution does not specify how churches are added or subtracted from our Association of Churches. The amendment clarifies the responsibility of the Board of Directors to handle these matters.

This amendment will be considered at the summer General Conference July 1-5, 1994.

I'LL NOT Fly Away!

By Pastor
James D.
Ritch



MAN'S GREATEST DESIRE FOR AGES of time has been to fly with the eagles or birds of the sky. We all have been fascinated by the power of flight, but we as Christians must of a necessity come down to earth with God's truth.

For many years of my younger life I understood that at death I would fly away either to heaven (place of eternal bliss) or hell (place of eternal torment). These were the only Biblical thoughts I had been taught by family and concerned Christian people. I can remember being so frightened of God because I believed that if I was not good He would give me over to hell fire and torment.

The great truth of the resurrection of the dead was a beautiful light in a world of darkened error. Once a preacher gave me a challenge to find the words "immortal soul" or "never-dying soul" in the Bible. He said if I found those words in the Scripture he would give me a thousand dollars. A thousand dollars to a thirteen-year-old boy was like a million to anyone else, so I began to search for these words in the Bible. To my surprise they could not be found. The more I searched, the more I kept coming back to the resurrection of the dead. The word "immortal" kept coming back to God only and the resurrection day in I Corinthians 15:51: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." I personally did not have a road of Damascus experience, but when God's truth entered my heart I believed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

God's message of resurrection is not one that speaks of flying away to heaven. Many I know have watched the movie "Ghost" and can relate to the concept of flying away to heaven and being taken away to hell by demons. The word of God is plain on where the dead are in Job 14:13-15:

O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that thou wouldst keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldst appoint me a set time,

and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.

This man of God believed, as I believe, that the grave is awaiting all of us. As the Scripture says in verses 14-15, our resurrection is the only possibility for our return from death and the grave. The change that is spoken of here in this Scripture of truth is echoed in I Corinthians 15:52 where Paul the Apostle said, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." We believe as written in Job 14:14 that our change will come on that resurrection day when Christ commands the dead to rise from their graves.

I believe that a great deal of the confusion about resurrection from the dead stems from the teaching of "natural immortality." Many see themselves as having an immortal soul, as in the movie "Ghost." The Bible is so plain on immortality that our conclusion should be that immortality comes at the resurrection at the second coming of Jesus Christ to our world. Job awaited a change after being in the grave (Job 14:14). He also awaited the call from God which he said he would answer (Job 14:15). In I Corinthians 15:51-54 again the word of truth speaks to us, from the Apostle Paul, that we shall be changed from mortal to immortal and corruptible to incorruptible at the resurrection day. Why should I want to fly away when all the action and changes are going to happen here on the earth at the resurrection of the saints? I am so glad that in my darkness of untruth there appeared the light of God's truth of the resurrection from the dead. REI

CHURCH OF GOD GENERAL CONFERENCE HISTORY NEWSLETTER



Volume 6

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Number 4

JESUS LIVES!

By Jan Stilson

We serve a risen Savior! Jesus lives! Because He lives, our faith lives! It is, or should be a living, acting, doing faith. While history continues as Todays-Gone-By, our faith in a risen Lord propels us into the future, looking forward to the day when the heavens part to reveal Jesus Christ returning to Earth.

While we watch for the Lord's return we must not be idle. We must spread the good news of Jesus in word and lifestyle. Each has his own ministry. Let us press on entering our future in faith and leaving a record of faithful history behind us while the Lord tarries. Even so, Come, Lord Jesus with angels and trumpets!

Here follow two articles selected from *The Glad Tidings* published in Council Bluff, Kansas 1893. Also in this issue are more entries from William's book, *Abstracts of Obituaries and Verbatim Marriage Announcements printed in The Restitution 1874-1900*.

We appreciate our readers and we like to hear from you. Send letters, articles or documents to Jan Stilson, HISTORY NEWSLETTER, 607 S 4th St, Oregon, IL 61061. 815-732-7439.

TRIBUTE TO GRACE MARSH

Grace Marsh died Sept. 29, 1993 having lived more than a century. I remember visiting with her at her 100th birthday party at Pinecrest Manor, her home for several years. She was lucid and gracious to her guests although she tired quickly. I will remember her fondly. She was one of the Lord's most precious saints.

Grace Williams lived in Ogle County, Lafayette township, as a youngster at the turn of the 20th century. Her father, JH

Williams, owned a farm on Flagg road near the present day Washington Grove Congregational Church. He was a member of the Cemetery Board across the road from the Congregational Church; many of our early COG members are buried there. This church and Williams' church, the Antioch Church of God, were neighbors. Antioch was three miles east of Washington Grove Church, just on the corner of Flagg road and Chana Road. It sat on a plot of land donated by a member. The church building sat back in a field with plenty of room for buggies to park. While the church building has been gone for years the entrance to the church yard is still present.

The Antioch church declined and eventually closed as the new church at Oregon became more established. When the Williams began attending church in Oregon, Grace met GE Marsh. She was about sixteen. He was a teacher at the Wells Academy at the north end of Third Street. He also was a preacher. He and Grace were married in 1912. Both of them achieved prominence in the COG for their faith, dedication and intelligence. Grace was interested in church history. She gave little talks about our early leaders and wrote a brief history. This is still on file in the Archives in Atlanta and is used for reference from time to time. While her history is not documented, it may be trusted as a primary source because she knew many of the people she wrote about. It is a kind of memoir. HV Reed and wife Elizabeth—noted scholars from Chicago, AJ Eychaner, JM Stephenson, Mary Woodward, FL Austin, JM Hatch, WH Wilson and others were known to her from her childhood on.

She was one of the Committee of Ten which was the organizing Task Force which helped bring our present General Conference into existence in 1921.

A few years ago she donated all her notes to the Archives and for the first time we were able to review all the original correspondence which grappled with all the volatile issues of forming a new denomination.

This research was aptly summarized in an article which was completed just in time for the Heritage issue of *The Restitution Herald* in 1986. This issue was the first time the HISTORY NEWSLETTER was published concurrently with *The Restitution Herald*.

Grace, who gave me most of the information in this article, said the General Conference was born out of a year of toil and

prayer. She attributed its successful organization to the prayers of the people for its success. She was a hearer and doer. Her ministry alongside her husband was a labor of love. While we have missed her, we look forward to seeing her again in that "great gettin' up morning."

—Jan Stilson

THE FORM OF ANGELS

[Both spelling and punctuation in this letter differed with our modern conventions in numerous places. Most of these differences are unchanged, to retain the original's style.]

EDITOR GLAD TIDINGS: Can you, or any one (sic) else inform us where the idea originated, that angels are winged spiritual beings? I have sought, but find not. This idea has obtained among christian people the world over, and taken fast hold of their religious faith, yet the Bible does not contain the idea, neither does it authorize faith in it. Then whence came it? Our commentaries (sic) every where (sic) exhibit numberless ideal angels, all having wings on. Our artists' studios, endorse the same error; and our illustrated Bibles and many other illustrated books when picturing forth angels, present them all alive and bristling with wings, which is a deformity of a form, that in itself is perfect.

During the Mosaic and patriarchal (sic) ages, and indeed in every age which preceded the christian era, angels appeared to men, were seen of men, and conversed with men; but never one of them was seen having wings on.

Many christians honestly believe they have embryo (sic) wings, which will be fully developed in the resurrection, and that upon these beautiful pinions they will soar away to meet the Lord in the air. It is a pretty conceit, nevertheless an error.

Angels have no wings; neither will any man ever develop wings. Both angels and men already exist in the highest form of all created beings, even in the form of the "Most High God," as is clearly shown forth and proven by the form of our Lord Jesus Christ, both in the flesh and in his resurrected, or spiritual body.

Our Lord developed no wings when he ascended to his father, and it is testified that Jesus Glorified, is the express image of the father's person.

Well, then, if we really do not have wings, how are we to walk or move about upon a foundation so ethereal and yielding as ether or air? Ether presents as firm a foundation, as firm resistance to the tread of angels as does the solid earth to the tread of man.

In all spiritual beings, as well as beings of flesh, the motive power of locomotion is vested within themselves. They move in obedience to their own will. The grosser law of gravity which bounds the vaulting ambition of flesh, has no control over a

spiritual body, and a spiritual being moves up or down or in any other direction according to its own pleasure or wishes.

Angels, so far as is revealed, have no applicable weights or gravity. Their center of gravity being vested in their own will. Our Lord has not only revealed, but demonstrated the fulness of a spiritual being's power and form, giving an illustration by and in his own person, which clears away all doubt, and answers all questions concerning angels.

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the spirit."

The fact here stated, Jesus demonstrated after his resurrection, coming and going at his own will, now visible now invisible. See St. John 3.7-8. None could tell whence he cometh or whither he goeth.

Man, when made as the angels, will have no need of wings with which to ascend up on high.

When will our builders build after the pattern showed them?

Remembering that the true sanctuary is now being cleansed, both in faith and practise, all who are laboring to overcome, will be thankful for light that will correct any error however trivial, nor will they regard by whose hand God gives a cleansing touch.

Z.

—The Glad Tidings of the Restitution, Vol 1:4, April 1893.

Editor's note Could be Z. B. Chase

AN ILLUSTRATION OF FAITH

One of the simplest and best illustrations of "faith" is given in a story told by M. Theodore Monod. A Sunday School teacher, when teaching his class on one occasion, left his seat and went round among his scholars with his watch in his hand. Holding it out to the first child, he said, "I give you that watch." The boy stared at it and stood still. He then went to the next and repeated, "I give you that watch." The boy blushed, but that was all. One by one the teacher repeated the words and action to each. Some stared, some blushed, some smiled incredulously, but none took the watch. But when he came nearly to the bottom of the class, a small boy put out his hand and took the watch which the teacher handed to him. As the latter returned to his seat the little fellow said gently, "Then if you please, sir, the watch is mine?" "Yes, it is yours." The elder boys were fairly roused by

this time. "Do you mean to say, sir, that he may keep the watch?" "Certainly, I gave it to any one who would have it." "O, if I had but known that," exclaimed one of them, "I would have taken it." "Did I not tell you I gave it to you?" "O, yes, but I did not believe you were in earnest." "So much the worse for you; he believed me, and he has the watch." Saving faith is as simple as this. It just takes God at His word and trusts Him. Though it sounds too good to be true, Christ is the gift of God, freely and fully offered—"His unspeakable gift."—Selected.

—*Glad Tidings of the Restitution*, Vol. 1:2, Feb. 1893.

FOR GENEALOGISTS

*Excerpts from a Work Based
on The Restitution
by Byron Williams,
Chagrin Falls, Ohio.*

RICHARD CLEVELAND

Died October 12, 1874 age 74 yrs., 7 months, at Lemont, Cook County, IL.

Published November 5, 1874 volume XXII # 45

JACOB SYPHER

Born June 14, 1829 at Union County, PA. Died September 19, 1875, age 46, at Turn Grove, Green County, WI. Moved to Green County 1855. Leaves wife and two daughters (no names).

Published September 29, 1875, volume XXIII # 42.

BENIE HERN

Died March 6, 1875 age 8 yrs, 1 mon, at Lot's Grove, MO. Parent was **ALLISON HERN**.

Published September 29, 1875, volume XXIII # 42.

JOHN H. BROWN

Died October 15, 1875, age 20 yrs, 5 mo., 2 days, at Mansfield, IL. Parents were **JAMES A. BROWN** (deceased) and **EMILY F. RUCKMAN** (submitter).

Published November 17, 1875, volume XXIII # 49.

MAY PALMER

Died December 3, 1875, age 12, of typhoid fever, at Madisonville, VA. Parents were **HIRAM** and **ELIZABETH PALMER**. Had removed from Alden, IA within a few weeks. Submitted by **S. R. FURRY**.

Published December 22, 1875, volume XXIV # 2.

MRS. CHESTER WOODWORTH

Died December 15, 1875 at Millfield, OH. Leaves husband **CHESTER WOODWORTH**. Submitted by **J. P. WEETHEE**. Long funeral sermon attached.

Published December 29, 1875, volume XXIV # 3.

J. C. LAMBERT

Died December 8, 1875, age 46, 15 miles east of Nevada, MO. First wife deceased. Surviving wife and two sons. Submitted by **HAYDEN**. Long sermon and poem.

Published December 29, 1875, volume XXIV # 3.

SQUIRE BAKER

Died November 30, 1875, age 73, at Bourbon County, KA. Submitter **LEWIS HICKLIN**.

Published January 12, 1875, volume XXV # 2.

ARTEMUS CHASE

Died December 17, 1875, age 67, of apoplexy, at Raisen, Lenawee County, MI. Leaves wife, two sons, adopted daughter, brother **L. N. CHASE** (age

69). A. Chase resided in NY state until 1862. Buried from Quaker Friends House. Submitter **JAMES WATKINS**, minister, Clayton, MI. Published January 12, 1876, volume XXV # 2.

GEORGE HERRON

Died January 12, 1876, age 65, at Carthage, MO.

Published February 23, 1876, volume XXV # 8.

ELIZABETH J. HORNADAY

Died February 24, 1876 at Indianapolis, IN. Leaves husband **ISIAH HORNADAY**, four married children, two not married (no names).

Published March 1, 1876, volume XXV # 9.

FELIX GOOD

Died September 28, 1875, age 81 yrs, 27 days, at Frederick County, VA. Wife **RACHEL** deceased. Submitter **N. J. MORGAN** of Winchester, VA.

Published March 8, 1876, volume XXV # 10.

MARTHA (CULBERTSON) MILLER

Born March 3, 1809 in PA. Married November 8, 1827 to **JOSIAH MILLER**. Died March 30, 1876 at Somerset, Wabash County, IN.

Published April 19, 1876, volume XXV # 16.

MARY JOHNSON

Born in PA. Died November 14, 1875, age 60 yrs, 5 mo., 16 days at Bourbon County, KA. Leaves husband **GEORGE JOHNSON**, son **ANDREW JOHNSON** (deceased). Moved to Fairfield, OH; then Miami County, IN; to Marshall County, IN; thence to IL and KA. Memorial service April 9, 1876.

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Published May 3, 1876, volume XXV # 18.

ANDREW JOHNSON

Died March 27, 1876, age 39, at Bourbon County, KA. Leaves wife (no name). Parents were **GEORGE** and **MARY JOHNSON**. Funeral April 9, 1876.

Published May 3, 1876, volume XXV # 18.

CATHERINE CRUZAN

Died on forty-first birthday (not given) at Akron, Fulton County, IN. Funeral April 30, 1876.

Published May 10, 1876, volume XXV # 19.

MAHETABLE FUNK

Died April 12, 1876, age 67 yrs, 3 mo., 1 day, at DeWitte, Carroll County, MO. Leaves children (no names).

Published June 7, 1876, volume XXV # 23.

ADAM CARTER

Born March 28, 1808 in OH. Died August 23, 1876 in IN. Leaves wife and five children (no names). Submitter **WILLIAM A. WEBB**. Published September 20, 1876, volume XXV # 38.

LUCIE A. LAWHON

Died September 5, 1876, age 15 yrs, 8 mo., 20 days, near Plum Bayou, AR. At the residence of **MR. W. E. CHAMBERS**. Submitter **THOMAS J. SALLEY**.

Published September 20, 1876, volume XXV # 38.

WILLIAM A. DIMAN

Died November 12, 1876, age 39 yrs, 6 mo., of "lockjaw" at McClintockville, Venango County, PA. Leaves wife and three children (no names) and his brother's wife, "who looked to him for support." Submitter **JOHN T. ONGLEY**.

Published December 6, 1876, volume XXV # 49.

MARY HORNADAY

Died October 28, 1876 at residence of son-in-law in Florida, Madison County, IN. Husband **NATHAN HORNADAY** (deceased). Son **WILLIAM H. HORNADAY** (deceased); three married daughters and two married sons. Born in VA. Moved at 3 years to Franklin County, IN; Rush County, Marion, (1846) and Tipton Counties, IN. Submitter **A. M. LEGG** of Windfall, IN.

Published December 6, 1876, volume XXV # 49.

C. L. (PARKS) GILBERT

Married 1847. Died October 31, 1876, age 61 yrs, at Tomah, WI. Leaves husband **C. L. GILBERT**; two sons, one daughter, and three sisters (no names). Submitter **J. M. STEPHENSON**.

Published December 13, 1876, volume XXV # 50.

JOSEPH BRADLEY

Died November 22, 1876, age 76, near Fawn Creek, Montgomery County, KA. Leaves wife and children (no names). Submitter **E. G. SMITH** (text indicates **SMITH** is daughter).

Published January 17, 1877, volume XXVI # 3.

ANN E. MOORE

Died January 3, 1877, age 27 yrs, 11 mo., 15 days, of consumption at Argos, IN. Husband **JESSE R. MOORE**.

Published February 14, 1877, volume XXVI # 5.

LOUIS SONGER

Died January 14, 1877, age 65, of pneumonia, at Vermillion County, IL. Leaves wife and children (no names). Church member at Peach Grove, Warren County, IN.

Published February 14, 1877, volume XXVI # 5.

LEVI ADAMS

Died December 25, 1876, age 66 yrs, 2 mo., 11 days, at Ventor, Ontario, Canada. Leaves wife and children (no names). Detailed obituary and additional information of a civic nature. Submitter **R. V. LYON**.

Published April 11, 1877, volume XXVI # 13.

WILLIAM O. DANN

Died March 24, 1877, age 45 yrs., of consumption, at Austin, IL. Leaves wife **ADA**. Submitter **WILLIAM W. WILSON**.

Published April 18, 1877, volume XXVI # 14.

JESSE HAWK

Born Warren County, NJ. Died April 2, 1877, age 79 yrs, of pneumonia, at Elk Falls, KA. Arrived KA 1869. Submitter **JENNIE R. SCHAFFER**. Published April 18, 1877, volume XXVI # 14.

LUCY SHAFFER

Died April 14, 1877, age 30 yrs, 8 mo, 19 days, of consumption, at Plymouth, IN. Leaves husband **HIRAM**.

Published April 25, 1877, volume XXVI # 15.

CAROLINE MCGONAGLE

Died July 5, 1877, age 27 yrs, 9 mo., 24 days, of consumption, at Pierceton, Kosciusko County, IN. Leaves husband **JOSEPH** and three children (no names). Submitter **S. R. WINCE**.

Published July 11, 1877, volume XXVI # 24.

JOHN C. HOBART

Died June 16, 1877, age 4 yrs, 4 mo., 4 days. Leaves parents **JOHN** and **CELIA HOBART**. Submitter **J. E. CADAWAY** of Ravanna, MO.

Published July 11, 1877, volume XXVI # 24.

Brief Messages

ONE OF THE LAST TABOOS

Pedophiles as teachers: just a matter of academic freedom?

A spate of events has put pedophilia in the news, putting a face (or faces) on one of [this] culture's last remaining taboos. The publicity has given NAMBLA members a chance to defend their cause, but few in the public seem persuaded that advocates of adult-child sex deserve anything other than their current pariah status.

The biggest headline-grabber in a series of recent pedophilia-related stories has been the effort by New York City school officials to remove from the classroom a teacher who is an active member of NAMBLA.

Peter Melzer, a physics instructor at the prestigious Bronx High School of Science (better known as "Bronx Science"), was the focus of an undercover expose on NAMBLA on WNBC-TV by reporter John Miller. The story aired on the New York City station in March.

Awaiting an administrative hearing before an independent arbiter to decide his future at Bronx Science, Melzer has been temporarily reassigned to a desk job in a Board of Education district office. The hearing, which will focus on a special investigator's report that recommends Melzer not be "returned to the classroom," has been delayed until March, school officials told *World* last week.

In September, special investigator Edward Stancik, working for the New York City School District, recommended that Melzer—who has professed his sexual desire for "boys up to the age of about 16"—either be fired altogether or at least not be allowed to have "unsupervised contact" with students and be barred from teaching. The report said parents have vowed to boycott Melzer's classes should he be allowed to continue teaching. It has drawn the ire of some civil libertarians who say that firing Melzer would violate his freedom of association.

Melzer received some support from high places. On Oct. 9, *The New York Times* editorialized that the Board of Education's moves to dismiss Melzer—who has a clean record in three decades of teaching at Bronx Science—"raise troubling issues of free speech and civil rights." First Amendment defender Nat Hentoff also penned a column sympathetic to Melzer's right to teach.

The New York Chapter of the ACLU also has backed Melzer. Executive Director Norman Siegal said the "mere association" of an employee with a group advocating illegal acts is not sufficient grounds for his termination.

—Labarbera, Peter, "One of the Last Taboos," *World*, November 20, 1993, p. 15.

NO ROOM FOR IMPARTIALITY

Interestingly, in September the Clinton Justice Department made some noises about possibly appointing some federal judges who are not on "the right side" of the abortion question. The pro-abortion faction went ballistic at the suggestion that Clinton might appoint judges who did not pass their test of orthodoxy on "women's reproductive rights." In its lead editorial, "A Threat to Abortion Rights," the *New York Times* fulminated that Clinton "must act swiftly to reel in those officials who would lure him into a disastrous political betrayal." The Justice Department officials say that they would not categorically rule out of consideration jurists who are personally opposed to abortion but acknowledge the legal right to abortion. That is far from being enough for the *Times*, however. The test of judicial fitness could hardly be put more starkly: "The issue is too important to American society—and Mr. Clinton's promise too clear—to fiddle around with judicial candidates who don't have a forthright record of legal and moral support for the constitutional right to abortion."

In other words, Mr. Clinton corrupted the process by promising to impose a litmus test for judicial candidates, and he is now bound to abide by his promise. It is not enough that a judge compromise himself by saying that he would, despite his personal views, support existing abortion decisions. Nor is it acceptable if he has no strong personal views and has never had occasion, as a judge, to rule on an abortion-related case. In all these instances jurists are, according to the *Times*, disqualified from being considered for the federal bench. The only ones who are qualified are those who "have a forthright record of legal and moral support for the constitutional right to abortion."

Not just legal but moral—they must actually consider abortion as birth control (which is what the current "right" means) a morally good thing. And they must have a "forthright record" on the matter, which means they must have spoken out on the issue in no uncertain terms, whether or not they ever had judicial occasion for doing so. Those who, like most Americans, are undecided about the legal and moral aspects of abortion, those who have not yet made up their minds in a way that is closed to further consideration, need not apply. Impartiality on abortion is no virtue, zealotry in favor of abortion is no vice. The only good judge is a partial judge whose partisan credentials are beyond question. The *Times'* editorial is but another instance of the don't-give-an-inch fanaticism of the pro-abortion faction. Thus is democratic deliberation replaced by civil war.

—"No Room for Impartiality," *First Things*, December 1993, pp. 70, 71.

Triumph Through Christ

By Alva G.
Huffer



BIBLE CHRISTIANITY IS A RELIGION of triumph, hope, and joy. It is centered in the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, who died on the cross as man's sacrifice and rose from the dead to immortality.

Christ's Resurrection Triumph

Christianity is the religion of the empty tomb. He who became man's substitute and died for the sins of the world has risen from the dead. He is living today at God's right hand in heaven. In His glorious resurrection, our Savior rose from the dead to immortality. "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him" (Rom. 6:9).

The triumphant risen Lord declared, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:18).

Personal Triumph Through Christ

Exalted triumphantly at God's right hand in heaven, the risen Christ dwells within the lives of believers through His transforming power, the Holy Spirit. The indwelling risen Lord enables believers to live triumphantly today. Because they have *within them* that which is *above them*, they are able to triumph over that which is *around them*.

The triumphant Lord produces the fruit of the Spirit within the believer (Gal. 5:22, 23). He enables the believer to know the peace "which passeth all understanding" (Phil. 4:7), and to experience "joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. 1:8).

Having experienced God's love *for him* in Christ's sacrifice and God's love *in him* through Christ's indwelling power, the believer becomes a channel through which God's love can flow *through him* to all mankind.

Throughout the world all people in all places are hungry for love. Someone has observed that every

person experiences a threefold hunger: the hunger of the body for food, the hunger of the mind for ideas, and the hunger of the heart for love. Every person in the entire world needs to know God's transforming love. Let God love the world through you!

No matter who you are or where you may live, you can have the assurance that God loves you. His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, died for you on the cross and He rose from the dead to immortality. Christ is the answer to every question, the solution to every problem. He is precisely the person you need to make your life complete.

Personal Potential Realized

The risen Christ, glorious and triumphant, enables each individual to achieve his greatest personal potential. Every circle needs a center. Every solar system needs a sun. Every person needs a loving redemptive relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him, one acquires fulfillment of personality, purpose, and potential.

Man is made in such a way that he is incomplete apart from a vertical relationship with God through Christ. Augustine, in his famous book *The Confessions*, wrote: "Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it repose in Thee."

As planets in the solar system revolve around the sun as their center, so man is made to be centered in God. As flowers reach maturity, beauty, and fulfillment of purpose through their response to the sunshine, so man finds heart satisfaction, life-sufficiency, and completion of personality through his relationship with God through Christ.

Jesus said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

As a candle is incomplete apart from the flame; as the sailboat is incomplete without the wind; as

The new electrical appliance which one may purchase will not function until it is plugged into the flow of electrical current, so the human personality is made in such a way that it is incomplete apart from the power and presence of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

Man can realize his greatest personal potential through his loving relationship with this person, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). He declared, moreover, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Jesus is life itself. He who lives against Christ lives against life. Some persons seek all things that they may enjoy life, when they should seek life so that they may enjoy all things. Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

Life apart from Christ is like literature without the alphabet, mathematics without numbers or symbols, and astronomy without stars. Apart from Christ, one can have no righteousness, no fellowship with God, no power for service, no hope for eternity. Outside of Christ, one finds emptiness and chaos. In Christ, one finds everything he needs. To the believer, Jesus is the all-sufficient Savior; He is the altogether lovely.

Inspiring music is produced when the violin surrenders itself to the fingers of the musician. A beautiful painting is created when the canvas surrenders itself to the brush of the artist. Improved health and vitality result when the patient surrenders himself to the wisdom and skill of a great physician. In like manner, an individual realizes his highest potential as he surrenders himself to the transforming love of the triumphant Christ.

The risen Christ longs to become the transforming power in your life. He will change your defeat to triumph, your despair to hope, and your sadness to joy. He will fill your heart with love. Life for you will find meaning and purpose as you permit the risen Lord to live triumphantly through you. "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ" (2 Cor. 2:14).

Christ's Triumphant Return to Earth

Someday Christ will return in triumph and glory to this earth. The second coming of Christ will result in physical redemption for believers. Christians asleep in death will be resurrected to immortality. Living Christians will be changed instantly from mortality to immortality. Resurrected and living believers will be caught up to meet Christ in the air. They will be glorified with Christ.

The triumphant Savior will return to earth and establish His kingdom with power and glory. As the conqueror from outer space, the king of kings will leave heaven, come through galaxies in space, enter our solar system, and return to this planet which God has given to Him as His property. Nations of earth will be compelled to yield their authority to earth's rightful king, the only begotten Son of God.

Jerusalem will be the capital city of Christ's future kingdom on earth. His kingdom will be worldwide in extent. It will be eternal in duration. His coming kingdom is that golden age of which all nations dream and to which all believers look forward in hope.

Christ's coming kingdom will be established upon this planet which will

be cleansed and transformed. The new earth will be the setting for the eternal revelation of God's glory.

This planet, the scene of paradise lost, is destined to be the scene of paradise restored. Earth will be made heavenly; it will be pervaded through and through with glory. "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14).

Yes, God has a plan for man and a program for this planet. This planet, in this solar system and in this galaxy in space, is the place to which the Son of God will return to reign as king of kings. It is to this planet that the holy city, new Jerusalem, will come "down from God out of heaven" (Rev. 21:2) to become the capital city of the new earth.

Bible Christianity is characterized by triumph, hope, and joy. Sinners face a hopeless end; believers have an endless hope. Believers who accept God's gift of salvation through Christ will reign with Christ in immortality and glory in His coming kingdom. ^{RH}

—Huffer, Alva G., *Triumph of the Resurrection*, Oregon, IL: Church of God General Conference, 1981, pp. 13-17.



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I Believe . . .

By R.C.
Sproul

Editor's Introduction

It may take a little pondering to get the sense of this, but Mr. Sproul is correct when he says, "These differences in theology are real and they matter." As a trinitarian, he understands that the monotheism of the Jews is not compatible with that of orthodox Christianity. He understands that you either believe in the God of Judaism, or in the trinitarian Incarnated godhead of orthodoxy... he understands that there is not a neutral position toward both . . . either one is true, or the other is true . . . they cannot both be true! With that we quite agree.

Credo . . . This Latin word means simply "I believe." It never can properly stand alone. To believe means to believe something. We can believe in or believe that, but we cannot simply believe. Belief always has a content.

Faith always has an object. That is why the Church has creeds. A common cliché we hear is "It doesn't matter what you believe, as long as you are sincere." Such sentiment is on a collision course with Christianity.

A few miles outside of Waco, Texas, there is a smoldering ruin of what once was the headquarters of a religious sect descended from the Branch Davidians. Scores of charred bodies were recovered from that site. These were the bodies of people who believed in David Koresh. I don't know if David Koresh was sincere in his belief that he was Christ, but it seems clear that there were some people who sincerely believed in him.

A day or so after the conflagration that consumed most of Koresh's followers, one woman who was spared affixed a sign to the ashes with words declaring her faith that Koresh was still alive. I don't know if she still believes it or not, but this I do know: What she believes or believed about Koresh matters to her. It matters profoundly to the surviving relatives of those who perished in the inferno.

Recently a famous evangelist was interviewed on national television. In the course of the interview, he made a comment that Protestants, Catholics, and Jews all believe in the same God. I was surprised by that. The creeds of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism differ sharply at crucial points. The faith of Judaism differs significantly from that of Christianity.

For example, historic Judaism is monotheistic. So is historic Christianity (as well as Islam). These religions all claim to believe in the God in the Old Testament. Yet how the Muslim understands the nature and character of God differs seriously from how He is understood by Judaism or Christianity.

The Orthodox Christian faith affirms that God is *triune*; the Jewish faith does not agree. It clearly repudiates the Trinity. We must ask: Is a triune God and a non-triune God the *same* God? Orthodox Christianity rests on the assertion that God has become incarnate in Christ. Judaism flatly denies that.

These differences in theology are real and they matter. If Judaism is right in its concept of God, then it follows inexorably that Orthodox Christianity is guilty of an idolatrous view of God. By the same token, if Orthodox Christianity is right, then Judaism is guilty of denying the true Incarnation of God.

The conflict inherent in these differences cannot be resolved by relativizing the content. It may be politically correct to say we all believe in the same God, but it is not theologically correct. It is theologically naive in the extreme.

Nor does it help to assume that it doesn't matter what you believe about God. That might be true if God didn't exist. If that is the case, I would insist that it doesn't matter what you believe. I would go even further and say, not only does it not matter what you believe, but it doesn't matter what you do, for ultimately nothing matters at all. I say with Dostoevski, "If there is no God, all things are permissible."

The Reformation was, in some respects, a tragic necessity in Church history. It was tragic in that it resulted in a woeful fragmentation of Christendom into literally thousands of disparate and conflicting faiths. It was a time of theological tempest.

The Reformation was a debate about faith. It was a serious conflict about the content of faith, and of the role of faith in salvation. If we compare the historic Protestant creeds with those of Rome, we will see important points of agreement—but also points of serious difference. (More than he knows—Ed.) ^{RH}

Sproul, R.C., "I Believe," *Table Talk: A Divine Assembly*, September 1993, pp. 4-6.

BRIEF MESSAGES

TRUTH HAS SURFACED

Seattle, WA (EP). About 1% of American men consider themselves exclusively homosexual, according to a national survey of male sexual behavior released last year. The study was conducted by the Alan Guttmacher Institute, the former research arm of Planned Parenthood, and is called the most thorough examination of American men's sexual behaviors since the 1948 Kinsey report. Kinsey said that 10% of men were mainly homosexual, as were about 5% of women. Though Kinsey's methodology has been widely criticized, the 10% figure has been frequently cited by hat activists and the popular press. The 1% figure is in line with other studies of sexual practices that have been done in Britain, France, and Denmark, and at the University of Chicago. "Finally, the truth has surfaced," said Rev. Lou Sheldon, founder of the Traditional Values Coalition. "Homosexuality is a behavioral oddity, certainly not entitled to special protected status."

—"Truth Has Surfaced," *Bible Advocate*, February 1994, p. 17.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE DOES NOT VIOLATE CONSTITUTION

Reciting "one nation under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance does not violate the Constitution, according to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In a case brought by Chicago-area atheist Robert Sherman, the court, without comment, let stand an earlier ruling by the 7th District Circuit Court of Appeals that said the pledge's reference to God was "ceremonial deism" that has "lost through rote repetition any significant content."

—"Pledge of Allegiance Does Not Violate Constitution," *The Christian World Report*, cited in *ACTS*, January 1994, p. 19.

Pastors at Risk

Just a few weeks ago my wife and I attended a seminar hosted by a local church and sponsored by Focus on the Family. Seated in the auditorium were nearly 400 pastors and many of their spouses. Included were men and women whom I have worked with for several years, including Church of God ministers and their wives. It was rather nice to be surrounded by caring friends dedicated to the same cause—declaring THE WORD OF GOD.

However, the theme of this seminar was "Pastors at Risk." The speaker, H.B. London, Jr., from Focus on the Family, concentrated on the fact that pastors are now leaving the ministry in ever increasing numbers. And all denominations are being affected—no church has been spared from this hemorrhage. And the assumption is "you ain't seen nutt'n yet!"

So, we now must ask the question, what in the world is the problem? To adequately answer the question I would need to write a book. But, to meet the constraints of this column, I can only say, "attitudes; ungodly, unclean, unholy, unfitting attitudes of GOD'S people!" A story was told about an Indiana church (and I would ask you, would you want to be a member of this church?). To wit: "A church board docked a pastor vacation time while he attended the funeral of his daughter, who had been killed in an automobile accident." I was not impressed with the level of love from that church board.

Isolated incident? Long before I ever considered the ministry, I sat in a church meeting where "my pastor" received the most unwarranted chewing out I had ever seen or heard. I had just completed a four year tour as a Military Drill Instructor (D.I.) and I was shocked!!! What pastors do for their congregations doesn't warrant contempt, but encouragement. Lots of encouragement, prayer support and love! What does Scripture say? "See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns from the living GOD. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness" (Heb. 3:12-13 NIV). I can't help but won-

By Pastor
Donald G.
Nunemaker



der where the "gift of criticism" is found in the Bible.

Pastors very often face situations that most members never see or hear about. And it is those situations that can sap the life out of your pastor. Facing petty criticism pushes that pastor even lower. As an example, in one week's time, I held a little baby who was about to die. I cried with the parents as that baby took its last breath. I held the hand of a dying man and cried with his wife (they were members of another church). I counseled with a husband and wife whose marriage was collapsing. I was drained; all I wanted to do was escape. And it was that same week I was criticized by a family because I "failed" to visit them. Needless to say, I was crushed!

I hope you are now saying, "I don't want to be a discourager, but I want to help my pastor." Here are a few suggestions that can help turn your pastor from an average pastor to "SUPER-PASTOR." Pray for your pastor. He is responsible for your spiritual welfare, so give him the spiritual power to do his job well. *Always look for the positives* in whatever he does. When you see that he looks drained, he may have just come through a week like I described. And your word of encouragement may well be the word that gives him strength. Finally, love your pastor—when you do you are telling him it is worth the effort. But, just in case you do these things and you don't get a "super-pastor," just remember this: you will be making a difference in his life—a positive difference! And God will be pleased! [✠]

¹H.B. London, Jr., *Pastors at Risk*, (Focus on the Family, 1993) p. 5.

When We Come to Worship

By Connie
Scott

THERE ARE VERY FEW CHURCH leaders who will not agree that worship has become the hottest topic of the day. There are other equally important topics but few of them have more potential for controversy and strife in our churches than the subject of worship. We are continually confronted with worship songs, worship tapes, worship books and magazines, seminars on worship, videos, and even sermons. Everyone has a different idea about what worship is and how it should be done. These opinions stretch to the limit of telling us what is "right" and what is "wrong" in our worship.

Back in 1983, when I first began my own journey into the study of worship, there were very few worship products on the market. Those that existed were very hard to find. For most people worship consisted of going to church, singing a few songs, having an offering, a Scripture reading, perhaps some special music and then the main event—the sermon. It was no big deal. If asked to define worship most of us would have been at a loss for words. Today, worship is the one word that can cause major arguments, hurt feelings, anger, and for some, reason enough to leave the church. I have come to dread the word "worship." If that surprises or distresses you, it does me too. You see, I have witnessed first hand what happens when worship becomes a decisive issue in the church.

I'm not a fighter and I don't wish to rehash the well debated topic of worship in this limited space. Instead, let me briefly say that I believe God expects and desires for the body of Christ to worship Him. Our corporate gatherings are for the glory and benefit of God and not ourselves. Our method of worship, as long as it meets that criteria, is irrelevant.

Ideally, I believe that when at all possible the church would do better to offer a variety of styles of worship, whether traditional, contemporary, members only or a seeker (geared toward visitors and new people) service. But let's be honest; not very many of us can do that. At Pine Grove, where I oversee the worship services, we have adopted a "blended" service. We try to incorporate some traditional and some contemporary elements. Yes, we ride the fence. To be honest, it hasn't always worked. But, however right or wrong that decision may be, we have chosen not to alienate those who have a preference for any one particular style of worship. We have lost some members because of that decision. On the other hand we have many new people who really like our worship services. But we are open to change and I hope that in the years ahead we will continue to evolve in our struggle to learn to worship God.

I know that what I have yet to say will be of little or no help to some churches in the area of worship, but for those who have not yet begun or are struggling with the issue of worship I hope I can offer some help.

First, you don't have to be the minister to implement change or get involved in the planning of the worship service. Most ministers would dearly love to have someone do that job for them. For the person who has many other responsibilities, the planning of the worship service may not be a high priority. Second, learn all you can about worship. But remember, there are many differing opinions and you must ultimately come to your own conclusions based on Scripture and what will work for *your* church. One style of music may appeal to one group but not to another. Third, get the support of your church elders and leadership. You can't do it

alone and when people complain, as they surely will, the leadership can be there to support you. Fourth, don't be afraid to experiment, but go slowly. Slow changes can creep up on people without them even knowing it.

The following are some ideas you might try:

Songs— Use the choruses of several hymns to form a medley; blend songs together without any breaks between for a smoother flow of music; shorten the musical introduction used in between songs in a medley to the absolute minimum; intermix hymns and choruses (try to keep the same theme); don't make medleys an emotional roller coaster (choose songs of a similar mood, either all fast or all slow); sing all Scripture songs; use accompaniment tapes for congregational songs; sing the last chorus a capella; don't introduce every song in a medley, let the music flow from song to song.

Prayers— Vary the types of prayers: silent, one person aloud, two or three people assigned specific topics; ask members to pray aloud from their seats; play very soft, slow background music (taped?) during silent prayers or play softly on the piano; use written prayers. **Communion**— Ask people to come to the front to serve themselves, or come as a family; play soft music during this time (make sure the accompanist gets served); use a common cup in small groups (pass a napkin with it); move communion to before the sermon or after the sermon.

Readings— Use different translations; divide up verses between several people to be read from their seats; intermix a modern translation with one less modern, reading each verse two ways; use poems; read the text of hymns rather than singing them; ask people to share their favorite Scriptures from their seats

while music is being played in the background.

Skits/drama— Use puppets; consider the many new drama books out with short, simple skits on a variety of topics; keep the skit related to the overall theme of the service; **MEMORIZE IT**—it makes a tremendous difference.

Sermon— Have someone do a children's sermon related to the theme; ask a woman to preach on Mother's Day; have lay people give short sermonettes; do a dramatic monologue about a character in the Bible (Joseph, Mary, Paul, etc.); do the sermon in parts, intermixing songs or specials at the appropriate places.

Other— Have an artist do a chalk drawing while someone sings or during a tape; have the children re-enact the triumphal entry with real palms; the sermon doesn't have to be last, move it up sooner, then sing or have specials that reinforce what the sermon is about; have a quiet meditation time using soft music and a suggested text to be read.

As you can see, variety can play a big part in making changes to your worship services. I don't change things just for the sake of change but because I don't want people to get into a routine that they can do without thinking. Let them anticipate what will happen next and give them something to look forward to. Visit other churches and observe how they worship. Adapt what you can to your own situation.

Last, I have two rules I like to follow: 1) Don't embarrass anyone— not the pianist if she makes a mistake, not the new person by pointing him out, or a member by calling on him unexpectedly to pray. 2) Whatever you do, do it the very best you can. My favorite word is **QUALITY**. It doesn't have to cost a lot, it only has to be done the best way you can within your means. Whatever you

choose to do with your worship I hope you do it aided with a lot of prayer and that it enables your people to worship God from a sincere heart devoted to Him. "Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart. . . . Let us not give up meeting together. . . . but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Heb. 10:22-25). **RH**

BRIEF MESSAGE

ANGELS, GOD'S MESSENGERS

"The rush to publish books about angels began in 1990 and has been sustained ever since," writes F. Lynn Bachleda about a major cultural trend. "If it's got an angel on it, it's working. Angel titles are selling across the board; there is no price resistance."

Joelle Delbourgo, of Ballantine Books, writes, "We knew people had a hunger to connect with the spiritual world, and angels are a positive symbol. People have always believed in angels, but the last five or so years couldn't have been more timely. When the recession set in and unemployment rose, people turned inward."

Andrew M. Greely, Catholic author, writes, "We live in a problematic and dangerous universe and one in which we feel that God is a great distance from us. Angels are wonderful and exciting, and they have the appeal of beings who will take care of us and manifest God's personal concern."

—from Martin Marty's *Context*
(10/1/93)

Brief Messages

ROBBING CHRIST

Christians do not know how much they rob Christ by reading so much of the literature of the world. They are often so occupied with their newspapers that the Bible gets a very small place. Bring this noble power of a mind that can think heavenly, eternal, and infinite things, and lay it at the feet of Jesus.

The Church of Christ suffers more today from trusting in intellect, in sagacity, in culture, and in mental refinement than from almost anything else. The spirit of the world comes in, and men seek by their wisdom and by their knowledge to help the gospel, and they rob it of its crucifixion mark.

—Andrew Murray

PHILANTHROPY Choosing Not to Fund Choice

United Way donors are getting picky these days about where their money goes. A United Way study shows designated giving—both positive and negative—rose 43 percent from 1989 to 1991. Topping the list of positive designations was specific diseases (16.5 percent of all earmarked funds), particularly for the American Cancer Society. The number one “charity” United Way givers wanted to avoid was Planned Parenthood: 45.7 percent of all negative designations.

—“Philanthropy: Choosing Not to Fund Choice,” *World*, November 20, 1993, p.9.

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY

“This is one more organization that has become morally relativistic and that’s deeply disappointing.”—*Focus on the Family* spokesman TOM MINNERY after the Girl Scouts of America decided to allow new members to pledge allegiance to Allah—or no god at all—instead of requiring the historic commitment, “On my honor, I will try to serve God and my country . . .”

—*World*, October 30, 1993, p. 9.

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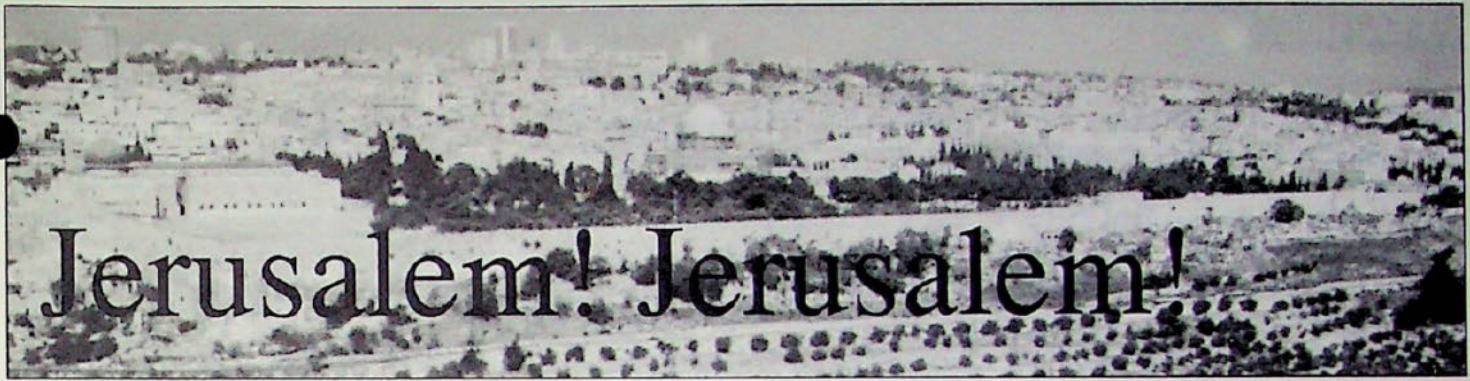
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“O JERUSALEM, JERUSALEM, KILLING the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!” (Matt. 23:37, RSV)

This was a groan from the visceral depths of the Messiah's soul. As He grieved, centuries of Israel's stubbornness flashed through His mind as He recalled their mocking, brutalizing and killing of God's prophets. Their stubborn rejection of God's protection broke His heart as He recalled their calamitous history.

Has anything changed? Has Israel bowed humbly before God? Have they accepted the historical Messiah? Is anything different now than then? Not really.

“The chaos and violence which typifies Israeli-Arab relations dominates arrangements for the handover of some functions to Arabs in Gaza and Jericho. Arabs against the agreement (Peace Accord) have killed three leading Arab negotiators while hundreds of Jews and Arabs have been killed and injured in protests and rallies. Iran-backed Hamas is dedicated to stop the process at all costs and the government is to act against Israeli settlers who are attacking Arabs on roads. The peace talks are stalled, resumed and off again. The Arabs demand an immediate Palestinian state.

“In this chaotic atmosphere, the most important decisions since the birth of the State of Israel are being made by an Israeli government devoid of any interest in God's requirements, revealed will or plans. [Is Christ still groaning?—Rex] For this reason alone, the Israeli government's aims are doomed to failure. The Christian Bible — and the Jewish Torah — are full of dire warnings to avoid such a course of action. Time after time, Jewish history is testimony to the folly of such actions.”¹

Only when Israel turns to God in humble obedience and professes that Jesus is the Messiah will heartache and bloodshed end in that holy land. But, regretfully, the Scriptures relate that this will not happen without there yet being greater tribulation for this people. Jeremiah 30, Zechariah 12 and numerous other passages explain this future ordeal — something Jesus already knew, and which surely added even more pain to His lament, “O Jerusalem! O Jerusalem!”

If I may make an application, Jesus continues to groan, not over Israel alone but the world. Indeed Christ and His followers collectively groan over the state of world affairs. There is no faith in God; no love, no trust, no obedience, no hope.

Paul wrote vividly,

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies (Romans 8:22, 23, RSV).

Hence, Jesus still cries out: “O Jerusalem! O World! Why will you not hear the voice of the Shepherd (as the chicks hear the protective mother hen) who would gladly love, guard and keep you . . . but you will not.”

But praise God for the text just a few verses before:

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God (Romans 8:18, RSV).

Are you one of God's children? **REX**

¹Present Day Events, No. 410

**By Pastor
Rex Cain**



Growing Through Dark Valleys

By Pastor Jeff Bull

I HAVE THREE OLDER BROTHERS and their greatest joy, and my least pleasant experience, was scaring the daylight out of me in the dark. I slept with my head under the bedcovers until I was 16 years old. But no darkness or fear could compare to the black blanket of depression that threatened to suffocate me during the spring of 1993. The worst part of it was not knowing that I was suffering from depression. I was battling colds and flus, restless nights, lack of energy and motivation; I was irritable and insensitive to the needs of others. I just thought I was a loser and was finding out that I wasn't cut out for the pastoral ministry. However, through the help of some close Christian friends, the Pastors' Pastor, Russ Magaw, my very patient and loving wife, a God-gifted counselor, and a wonderfully supportive church family, I have begun to find my way back to wholeness. Growing through my dark valley has taught me so much about the Christian life and about the Lord; I hope my sharing some things will act as an encouragement to others who are struggling.

• **Professional vs personal:** It is tempting for lay Christians to believe that pastors have all day, six days a week, to do nothing but read the Bible and pray. Nothing is further from the truth. Not only are there other items vying for your attention, but there is the added difficulty of professional vs personal. What I mean by that is the view we take of Scripture reading and prayer. It is very easy for pastors, teachers, staff and leaders in the church to get sidelined into looking for sermon ideas, illustrations, lesson outlines and messages to "use" for others and overlook the need they have themselves to be fed and nourished by the Word. The mind becomes trained to look for ideas to share, for

ways to tell others, and just naturally falls into that pattern with time. You use a professional view, and no longer a personal view. The same with prayer. The needs of the flock, the ill, church issues, and spiritual burdens of others consume prayer time. Not that these needs should be ignored, but neither should personal needs and hurts. The most important change for me, an ongoing change, is giving priority to my personal relationship

with the Lord through the Word and prayer. I've experimented with private worship time using chorus tapes, sermons on cassette and contemporary Christian music. A prayer log and journaling are very helpful, but I truthfully still wrestle with making them a priority. It has been a joy to again feel God speaking intimately to me, knowing it is a treasure just for me, not an item to be jotted down and stuck in my sermon file.

• **Give others the freedom to not understand:** One of the hardest things for me has been to allow others the freedom to not understand my hurt and my depression. Well-meaning brothers and sisters in Christ have tried to encourage me with such things as, "That all happened before you became a Christian; just give it to Jesus" or "When you get depressed, you just have to go help somebody else who is worse off." And then there are those who won't understand, who think being a Christian means a trouble-free life.

The greatest stress-buster my counselor taught me was to give others the freedom to not understand, to not feel pressured into making them see my side of things.

• **Finding my significance:** The Bible is filled with verses that tell me of my worth. According to Romans 8:37 I am not a loser or a failure; I am more than a conqueror. Nor am I powerless; "I can do everything through him who gives me



strength" (Phil. 4:13). The Word is filled with promises, with facts about who I am in Christ. My importance doesn't come from the approval or acceptance of others, financial success, being a pastor of a large church, giving the world's greatest sermons, being thin or pleasing my parents. My significance has nothing to do with who I am or what I do. It has everything to do with whose I am and I am God's child, Christ's co-heir.

• **Help others with the help I've received:** God has already used me to provide comfort, support and encouragement to a fellow Christian who I couldn't have helped before. Paul praised God in his letter to the Corinthians for giving comfort to us so we can in turn share that comfort with others (II Cor. 1:3-7). The Lord has used a frustrating, hurting time of turmoil in my life to bring about good. Someone else has benefited from my difficult time of growth. Praise God for His wonder!

• **Prepared for ministry:** I am convinced that while I was blind to the baggage I brought into my relationship with Christ, God was aware of it and patiently brought me to the point where I could face it and allow Him to bring me through it. In doing so, He has prepared me for the ministry He has set for me to do. If not for this refining, I'm sure I wouldn't be prepared for what is ahead for me. God has passed me through the fire to burn out my impurities so He can use me for His glory (see Mal. 3:2-4).

• **No shame in admitting the need for help:** For a long time I fooled myself into thinking that I would just get better with time. Well, it is a lie: time does not heal all wounds; sometimes they fester and cause gangrene. I was too proud to admit I needed outside help. After all, I was a pastor; I was supposed to be a spiritual giant and model for my flock. The best example I've given my people is in admitting my need for professional help because now they know that I'll

understand if they need to come to me and they know that I need Christ's power and God's presence in my life just as much as they do. Melva Lea sums it up well in her book *Desperate Women*, "I don't pray because I'm spiritual. I pray because I'm desperate." Not wanting to confess my need for help was my way of saying I could manage without God. How awful! Not only do I know I can't get along without Him, I don't even want to try!

• **Honesty:** With myself, with my wife, with my friends, with my congregation and with my God. It's no use playing the game—trying to be someone I'm not. I know the truth, my wife knows it, my friends know it, my congregation knows it and God knows me better than anyone. People can see through you when you're faking it. Don't waste your energy or their time. Be honest. The mirror is not always a pleasant place to look, but at least it never lies. Face your dark valley and let the Lord grow you through it!

Rgt

COLUMN

Surrender Everything to God

By Andrea Anders



Surrender everything to God. A friend said this to me recently and the phrase has become stuck in my mind. This spring I am in my final semester of law school. What a happy thought! After May 13, 1994 I never again have to sit in a classroom where the professor employs the Socratic method. In non-law school jargon that means you go to class and the professor questions one or two students the entire class period on the assignment for the day.

This can be a very intimidating, and potentially embarrassing, experience when there are ninety people in the class. Yes, I am glad my law school career is almost over. The flip side of this gladness is a gnawing anxiety about what the future holds for me. I feel as if I'm about to step off a cliff with no idea where I'll land. Questions concerning my future constantly crowd my thoughts. What kind of law do I want to practice? Where will I live? What will my life be like ten years from now?

I expressed these feelings of apprehension to one of my friends. She challenged me to quit worrying about these things by surrendering all my concerns to the Lord through prayer. I began to think about doing just that. First, however, I had to get over my reservations about the term "surrender." To me, surrendering has negative connotations. It is what the losing party is forced to do. But then I realized that it takes strength and courage to admit that you are weak and unable to control a situation. Finally I thought, "Who better to surrender to than God?" Once I came to terms with surrendering I realized I must have confidence in God and His knowledge of what is best for me. I also concluded that I need to exercise faith in God. Really exercise faith. I've decided that a true exercise of faith in God translates into feeling less anxious about the future and having a positive outlook on life. The bottom line is that this spring I'm handing my life over to God. My mantra is going to be "*Surrender everything to God.*" That means surrendering all my personal decisions and worries. That means acknowledging God's hand in achievements and positive happenings. Most of all, I'm endeavoring to let the Lord control my life. Rgt

God in the Marketplace

By Scott
Millard



"This is the day that the Lord has made, we shall rejoice and be glad in it." (Psalm 118:24)

Do you ever wonder about this verse, or is it just me? Yeah, I know what I am supposed to feel as a good Christian, but some days are simply not as good as others. On some days I think the psalmist identifies with me better in scriptures like Psalm 42:6, "O my God, my soul is in despair within me." Rejoice and be glad? Not hardly!

At a casual glance my cause for despair is not within me, but out there somewhere in my surroundings. I've got some employee complaining about some unfair situation on the job. Some customer is fuming because somebody shipped him the wrong part or he got charged too high a price. My competitor just stole one of my best customers. Someone just wrecked one of our company trucks. Our insurance costs just went up 20%. This all happens before 10 a.m.! The psalmist might say it like this, "My soul is among lions; I must lie among those who breathe forth fire . . ." (Ps. 57:4). Some days it just isn't very fun going to work.

True, the scriptural promise is there,

- *"I can do all things through Christ."*
- *"Let not your heart be troubled . . ."*
- *"If you ask anything in my name, I will do it."*

Sometimes it seems like these verses only burden me down with more guilt, then hold out the promise of hope. "Why am I not in touch with these truths? I'm a church elder, and *my heart sometimes is troubled.*" When things at home or on the job aren't going as planned it's difficult to identify with the principles of Victorious Christian Living! This is not just a symptom of today's believers, but people of faith in every generation. The fact that the Bible gives an honest accounting of its greatest heroes is often the one thing that gives me the most hope. We don't have a weeping prophet; a "king

after God's own heart" who battled himself as much as his enemies; a "father of the faithful" who confused his wife with his sister; and a group of disciples who denied their master, vied for power and squabbled amongst themselves because they constantly experienced spiritual empowerment. In pointing out these saints' darker moments I am not excusing or justifying our own weaknesses, but rather simply stating the reality of our human condition—we sometimes fail. We aren't always on the mountain top. There is only one God, and we aren't Him! In our weakness, we identify with the psalmist, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" (Ps. 22:1). All people of faith carry on a spiritual struggle.

Once recognizing the struggle that's going on in me and in you, we need to ask, "Are we doomed to do battle all our days? Are we doomed to never get beyond where we are right now?" The answer to the first part is "yes", the answer to the second part is "no." The battle never ends, but growing into more mature people of faith is not only possible, but a must!

You may ask, "What does all this have to do with 'God in the Marketplace?'" Well, it's in the marketplace, the home, the school, and the mall that we carry on the struggle. It is there that we encounter the obstacles that call our faith into question, whether it is going to be a viable answer to real-life situations.

I said earlier that, at a casual glance, the cause of my despair appears to be out there somewhere, not inside me. A deeper look reveals that the despair is not caused by simply what surrounds me, but by how I choose to react to my world. Again the psalmist speaks to our needs, "I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord." (Ps. 27:13). You see, it's when we take our eyes off the Lord and place them on other things, (i.e. success, profit, happiness, etc.) that our lives seem to crumble. When we place our focus on our troubles, rather than the source of our

solutions, we find ourselves depressed, defeated and despairing. Regardless of how we might want it to be, "faith is not a natural response or reflex to troubles." Fear, doubt, anger, and frustration are our natural human tendencies when confronted with trials. It takes an effort from within us, our believing, our trusting . . . in order for us to experience real help from the God who cares. Faith/trust does not develop overnight. It is a lifetime relationship with God, through His Word, through prayer, through worship and through fellowship with a body of

believers who reflect the One they believe in.

As believers we go our separate ways during the week, to live in a world that is oftentimes hostile to faith. The only way we are ever going to wake up with a sense that we can rejoice and be glad with what we have to face today is by taking this relationship with God, His Word and His people with us into the fray. If we expect it to just "naturally happen" we're fooling ourselves. It takes a constant effort and focus to live in Christ. It's when I take my eyes off of

Christ that I despair. I doubt if I'm any different from you.

This is a day we can rejoice in. The reality is, however, that we won't do it every day. Something is going to try to take my focus away from my God, and I will lose my way some days. The good news is, we have a God who accepts His human children and loves them and never turns His back on them. Hey, come to think of it, this is a good day—and I am going to rejoice and be glad! ^{RH}

Is God Speaking to Us?

(Continued From Back Cover)

water an hour! That is as much as a foot of rain an hour. Thunderstorms can destroy crops with hail as large as a softball. In a matter of minutes sugar beets, corn, oats, or any other crop can be destroyed.

Tornadoes are another force of nature that does tremendous damage. 1,297 tornadoes hit the United States between April and September last year. Fortunately with better detection devices and warning systems fewer deaths are being recorded than in past years. The wind speeds generated by a tornado is truly staggering—winds reach up to 330 miles an hour.

The most costly of all of the tragedies occurred here in Southern California.

The "wake-up call" was at 4:31 a.m. January 17, with a 6.6 or 6.8 earthquake. It caused damage in excess of \$30 billion dollars. Since then there have been some 4,000 aftershocks, some as high as 5.6. Not a day goes by but there is shaking! If that earthquake had hit during a school day no doubt there would have been thousands of casualties. Cal State University, Northridge was nearly destroyed.

It is interesting to note that four cities were actually moved, and one mountain is now 16 inches taller according to scientific measurements!

What do these natural phenomena mean? Is God seeking to get man to turn from his evil ways? Is God saying to

mankind, "Turn from humanism and worship me?" Man can say that these storms are merely the result of the El Nino, the mysterious change of water temperature in the eastern Pacific Ocean. But what causes the El Nino? Scientists admit that they don't know!

God is all powerful. "He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (II Peter 2:9 NIV). God has spoken to mankind through the ages in many different ways. It may be that He is speaking to our nation today, saying to those who will listen, "The end is near." Could this be the beginning of the tribulation? ^{RH}

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Is God Speaking to Us?

By Pastor
Delbert
Jones



AS I READ REVELATION 16:17-21 MY thoughts turned to the present day. What tragedy has hit our nation in the past year. It seems as if the weather maps forecast sever thunderstorms and possible tornadoes on a daily basis.

The past year has brought unprecedented damage to our nation. Last September Hurricane Andrew devastated Florida. Literally millions of people watched television in awe and horror as the winds blasted the land. The strength of the wind was staggering.

In March the largest storm in the history of the weather bureau struck the East coast from Florida to Maine. The storm unleashed rain,

sleet, hail, and snow which was 4 feet deep in some areas.

We hardly had time to catch our breath before the rains started pounding the Midwest. The incessant rains caused catastrophic floods. Midwesterners fought a valiant fight with dikes and sandbags; however time after time the dikes broke and flooded thousands of acres of farmland.

Hurricanes, blizzards, and flood cause millions of dollars of damage, but lightning kills more people. Did you know that lightning hits the ground 20 million times a year in the United States and it kills a thousand people a year? A giant thunderstorm called a supercell can cover 120 square miles and drop 18 million tons of

(Continued on page 31)

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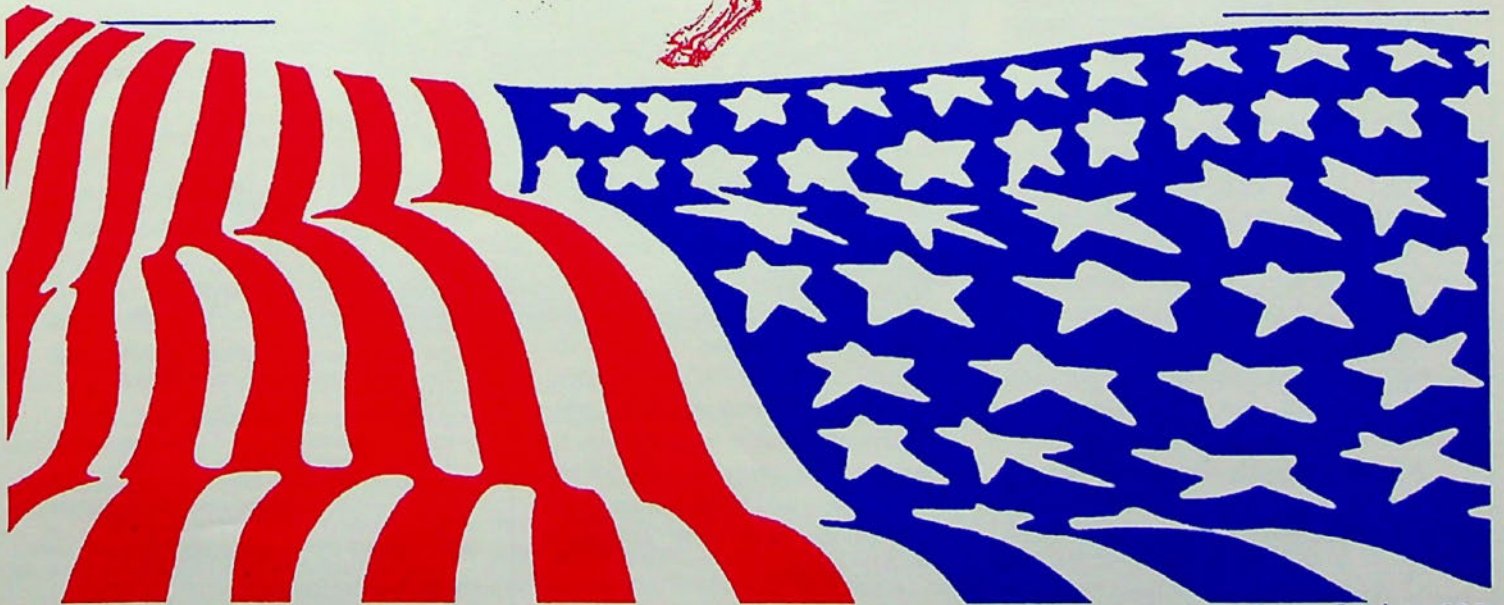
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IS IT TIME TO RENEW?

THE RESTITUTION HERALD

JUNE, JULY, 1994

VOLUME 83, NUMBER 5



Revelation 6:2-8

What Does the Future Hold?

Looking to What's Ahead

Vol. 83, No. 5: June, July, 1994

Prophecy - The theme verses of the RESTITUTION HERALD have been Acts 3:19-21, especially emphasizing that Jesus must remain in heaven "until the restitution of all things." Because that fact of Jesus' return to this earth is our hope, we have been strong proponents of prophecy, looking for His literal return to this earth. This issue has several prophecy articles that show how close His coming may be. And in our next issue Hollis Partlowe will have a special article on help in understanding how to interpret prophecy. We encourage you to participate in your HERALD by sending us prophetic materials you find. What a tremendous day it will be when He comes again!



"As part of the end times . . . Christianity is under attack."

Attacks on Christianity - As part of the end times, it is becoming more and more apparent that Christianity is under attack. It's not just apathy out there, but it has become an attack aimed at destroying Christianity's voice. The recent court decision applying a law passed against racketeers to abortion protestors is only a sample. Certain work regulations make it incorrect for you to have any indication of your faith on your desk or in your office—even if it is your own business. It creates a "hostile work environment" for others. We can have bitter, hate-filled, vituperative diatribes against others on our campuses, but Christ's words of love are not to be read or displayed in our public schools. Condoms can be distributed to our children at school, but New Testaments cannot.

A Little Strength - Recently it was my privilege to be with some of our churches around the country. My first visit with the brethren in Harlingen, Texas, was made with sadness. Although treated warmly and graciously and found real joy in being there, it was the last service of the church in that building. Bro. Jim Mattison had

been instrumental in starting that work, and many had come to faith there, but now it was closing. Faithful people still remain there—the church—but they could not sustain the building. Christ's words to the church at Philadelphia come to mind: "for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name" (Rev. 3:8). Thank God for the faith being kept alive even when the strength grows weak. Many of our churches have lost strength over the years, but hold on, hold on, hold on . . . "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 10:37).

Sunday School - Over the years, perhaps no organization or department of our churches has done more to draw people into the life of the church than our Sunday Schools. Today's climate portrays Sunday Schools as no longer a viable vehicle for the 90's. That may not be so. Next issue we'll be beginning a series of short articles on the worth, value and purpose of Sunday Schools. They may need to be revitalized and renewed, but they still can be an important and vibrant part of your ministry.

Thanks again - In one of my first editorials I mentioned the need for new subscribers, and you've responded. Though we're moving ahead and gaining new subscribers, we need you to continue to be subscribers, to give gift subscriptions, and to encourage more subscriptions from your churches. Anyway, thanks!

Kent Ross

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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 28 when corresponding concerning your subscription.

War, Rapture, Famine

By Syd Magaw



THE DAY AND HOUR ARE NOT KNOWN. God knows. It may be soon. There has been a falling away. The Church has become worldly, and Laodicean Christians "love to have time can-

not be seen in the head, or breast, or belly, or legs of the Great Image—we are somewhere down in the toes! Perilous times have come, and if Jesus were to return today, would He find faith, the true faith, in the earth? Are men learning today of the gospel which was preached to Abraham? Are they repenting of their sins? Are they "requesting" baptism? Who goes with Jesus to the sinful and the poor? Who "follows in His train"? Suddenly, with little or no warning to the world, the Lord Jesus will come to claim His chosen and faithful ones. The more it might seem He is not coming soon, the more certain His coming will be soon. When scoffers mock, let Christians pray: "pray al-

ways, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son

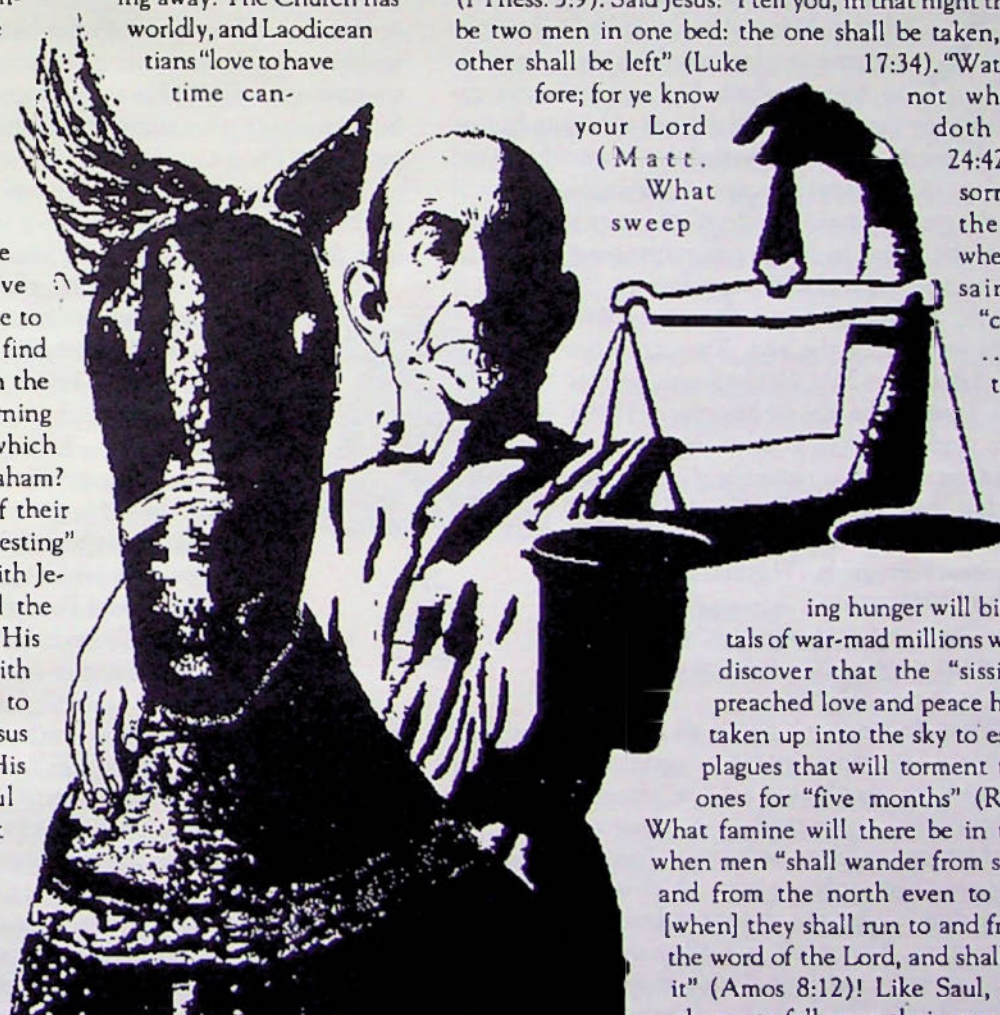
of man" (Luke 21:36) for "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:9). Said Jesus: "I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed: the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left" (Luke

17:34). "Watch therefore; for ye know your Lord's day" (Matt. 24:42). What sweep

not what hour doth come" (1 Thess. 5:6).

sorrow will the earth when all the saints are "caught up ... to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. 4:17)! What gnaw-

ing hunger will bite the vitals of war-mad millions when they discover that the "sissies" who preached love and peace have been taken up into the sky to escape the plagues that will torment the "left" ones for "five months" (Rev. 9:5)! What famine will there be in the earth when men "shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, [when] they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it" (Amos 8:12)! Like Saul, men will choose to fall upon their own swords—but, alas, "in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them" (Rev. 9:6). **RM**



The above was written more than 50 years ago, but it could have been written today. Although it is always dangerous to insist that your generation is the last generation and that Jesus is duty-bound to return "tomorrow," still it does seem that the violence, the wars, the sinfulness of the world, and the "peace and safety" of Israel's recent experiences are pregnant with possibilities. I commend to you the following articles about our future.

The End or the Beginning?

RECENTLY (MARCH 1) NETWORK television aired a program titled "Ancient Prophecies." Hosted by David McCullum, the program cited sources from various periods in history which had one common denominator—they all foretold the end of human history as we know it . . . and prophesied that it would occur at the close of the twentieth century. Egyptologists noted that the great pyramid built by Khufu was a kind of road map to the future. Its design reflects the great wars of our century and the end of human history. St. Malachi of Ireland listed the popes that would serve until the end. Two more are named after John Paul. Nostradamus, born in 1503, foresaw the rise of Napoleon, Hitler and a world ruler yet to come. He also predicted cataclysms in nature and plagues for the last half of our decade. Unrevealed prophecies, alleged to be horrifying, received at Fatima, Portugal in 1917, and Garibandel, Spain in 1961, awaken us to an ill-fated end. Edgar-Cayce and contemporary "visionaries" were cited as seeing "fire in the sky" (nuclear war?) at humanity's end.

What do we think about all of these doomsday prophecies? Are they simply the works of fanatics to be dismissed, or should we take a second look? The environmental signs tend to confirm a rapidly approaching end to life as we know it. Fossil fuel combustion produces greenhouse gases which are warming the planet, destabilizing the climate and radically changing our weather. The result is earthquakes, windstorms, famine, drought, melting polar ice, receding glaciers and rising sea levels. The depletion of the ozone has affected health. According to law, children in Australia must wear protective clothing to school because 140,000 new cases of skin cancer are occurring there every year. The destruction of the rain forests has released previously unknown viruses. Some of these spread through air-borne transmission and may prove far more dangerous than AIDS.

Looking at this evidence, what do we think about these doomsday warnings? Is there any validity to them?

It has been said, "Truth is where you find it." I believe God uses numerous witnesses to echo the prophetic truths of His Holy Word! Psalm 19 and Romans 1 tell us He uses the elements of nature to testify of His creative work. Could He not also use voices other than Scripture to make humanity aware that we are approaching the end of history?

These "Ancient Prophecies" mirror the truth of God's Word that this world is going to end with a bang! The Apostle Peter wrote, "the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. . . . The heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat" (2 Peter 3:10, 12).

Before you get too depressed I need to tell you that the Bible gives us the good news which the doomsday prophecies of history do not tell us. This world is going to be replaced with a better one! Peter goes on to say, "but according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells" (verse 13). Jesus is

going to come back to this earth—soon—to replace human history with HIS-STORY—the total redemption of humanity and the planet.

Some are preparing for the end with nuclear bomb shelters and food supplies to last for several years, but the preparation that is most needful is a personal, spiritual one. We need to know with assurance of faith that our sins are forgiven. We need to be in a covenant relationship of salvation with God through His Son Jesus. Peter states: "What sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God? . . . Since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless" (verses 11, 14).

Those who know Jesus don't see the doomsday messages as harbingers of the end, but rather as signs of the new beginning. What are you looking for—the end, or the beginning? *RH*



By
Stephen
Bolhous

A Prophetic Outline

ONE CARDINAL DOCTRINE THAT unites the Church of God is certainly its premillennialism. Over a hundred years ago we were known as "Age to Come" Adventists, meaning that we placed special emphasis not only on the return of Christ, but also on the Age to Come which, we believe, will witness the millennial restoration of Israel and the glorification of the Church.

Our premillennialism is more than a doctrine; it is a world view. It is a conviction that this present age is languishing in bondage, hopelessly scarred with sin. It is a deep conviction that this present evil age will come to a startling end at the return of Jesus Christ, who is both the ground and the goal of our Christian hope. As the Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans: "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (Rom. 8:22, 23, NIV). He is of course writing of the first resurrection, when we will be glorified, granted immortality, and united with our Lord forever (1 Cor. 15:12-57; 2 Cor. 5:1-10; 1 Thess. 4:13-17).

Upon these cardinal doctrines we are all agreed. There are other doctrines, however, issues within this issue, which are not of fundamental importance. There is certainly room for some areas of disagreement among brothers and sisters of like minds, and the area of Bible prophecy is one of them. As it has often been pointed out, frequently the matters about which the Bible speaks the least divide us the most.

Issues which continue to be discussed in our Church include the nature of the tribulation period, the timing of the Church's rapture, and the scriptural identification of the Antichrist. While not heaping disdain upon the many good Bible scholars and respected pastors who have advanced other theories, I would like to contribute to this discussion by suggesting a prophetic theory based on Paul's Thessalonian correspondence, particularly the second chapter of his second letter.

Historical Background

The Thessalonian Christians were no strangers to suffering and tribulation (cf. 1 Thess. 1:6; 2:14-16). The persecution was so fierce that Paul was virtually driven out of town after only three weeks of evangelizing and building up the church (Acts 17:2, 5-10). Though some of the "charter members" of the Thessalonian church were Jews who had a sound grasp of such doctrines as the resurrection hope, a significantly larger portion of the church comprised Gentiles and former pagans with little understanding of that hope (cf. Acts 17:4; 1 Thess. 1:9,10). As a result, Paul had to address this issue and emphasize things he had taught them during his brief tenure with the Thessalonian church (cf. 1 Thess. 4:13; 2 Thess. 2:1-3, 5). Thus, the Thessalonian correspondence is replete with teachings of Christ's Second Coming and the events surrounding it.



By
Mark
Mattison

The Resurrection

In spite of their suffering (1 Thess. 1:6), the Thessalonian Christians had received the gospel with joy as they patiently awaited the return of God's "Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath" (1:10). Paul and his companions encouraged them "to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory" (2:12). "For what is our hope," Paul writes, "our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you?" (2:19). He prayed that God would strengthen them so that they would be "blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones" (3:13).

But what of those who died before Christ's return? Would they miss the coming of that glorious kingdom? To those whose pagan background obscured any tangible hope of life after death, Paul penned the eminently comforting verses of 4:13-18. Those who have fallen "asleep" in death will be raised to life even as Christ has been raised to life, and this will happen at His return (vv. 14,15). That day will "come like a thief in the night" (5:2), but it will not take Christians by surprise (5:4-8).

(Continued on next page)

A Prophecy

(Continued)

"Our Being Gathered to Him"

An erroneous perception of death, however, was not the only misinformation in the Thessalonian church. More alarming was the fact that the church had become unsettled by some false report (supposedly from the Apostles) that the day of the Lord had already come. It is in response to that error that Paul penned these words: "Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion [apostasia] occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction" (2 Thess. 2:1-3).

It is noteworthy, first of all, that Paul coupled the "coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" with "our being gathered to him," an event which he had described in detail in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17: the "rapture" or "catching up" of the Church to be with Christ. Paul does not seem to posit a three-

"Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come . . . until the man of lawlessness is revealed"

and-a-half or seven-year period between those two events. This observation is strengthened by the previous chapter: according to 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10, the saints can expect to suffer persecution right up to the time "when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire

with his powerful angels" (v. 7b). At that time, Paul wrote, we will find "relief" from our suffering (v. 7a) and the ungodly will be punished (vv. 8, 9).

Paul goes on to say that this twofold event—the return of Jesus and our being gathered to Him—will be preceded by two things: widespread rebellion and "the man of lawlessness" (2:3). This "man" is known to Bible students as the "Antichrist," a world leader who will promise peace but who will instigate persecution instead.

"The Lawless One"

Paul had previously informed the Thessalonians (2:5) that this "lawless one" "will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God" (2:4). Paul's choice of words naturally drives us back to the eleventh chapter of Daniel, which the Apostle seems to have had in mind.

Daniel 11:21-45 describes the activities of a terrible king prior to the return of Christ, implied in the description of the general resurrection in 12:2, 3. This king is described as "a contemptible person" (11:21) who "will achieve what neither his fathers nor his forefathers did" (11:24) in the extent of his political successes and military campaigns. He is "the king of the North," a ruthless Middle Eastern dictator driven by his contempt of the God of the Bible.

The verse which Paul seems to have had in mind is 11:36, which states that the "king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has

been determined must take place" (cp. 7:8, 11, 20, 24-26; 8:9-13, 23-25).

The armed forces of this northern king, according to the prophet Daniel, will "set up the abomination that causes desola-

The saints can expect to suffer persecution right up to the time "when the Lord Jesus is revealed in blazing fire with his powerful angels"

tion" in the Jerusalem temple (11:31; cp. 8:11, 13; 9:27; 12:11). Jesus explicitly directs us to these verses in His Olivet prophecy (Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21) when explaining what will happen in the temple. Paul's affirmation in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 fits in handsomely with this outline of events.

Interestingly, Daniel's prophecies may also afford us an understanding of the "rebellion" of which Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 2:3. We read about rebellion in such verses as Daniel 8:12, 13, as well as in Daniel 11. Significantly, the abomination in the temple described in verse 31 is sandwiched between two verses which describe rebellion (vv. 30, 32).

In the light of these observations, it seems that Paul had Daniel's prophecies in mind when he penned 2 Thessalonians 2:4. The strong verbal parallels with Daniel 11 suggest that Paul regarded "the king of the North," a Middle Eastern personage, as "the lawless one."

This hypothesis is strengthened by Paul's equally strong verbal allusion to Isaiah 11 in 2 Thessalonians 2:8. There he writes that "the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with

etic Outline

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the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming." Isaiah 11:4, the verse to which Paul alludes, tells us that at the time of His return, our Messiah will "strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked." Though this fact is obscured by the New International Version of the Bible, the word for "wicked" here is singular, not plural, suggesting that Jesus will slay "the wicked one." This interpretation is strengthened by the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, as well as by Jewish tradition: one of the ancient Jewish Targums inserts the name "Armillus" here. "Armillus," in Jewish tradition, was the Messiah's arch-enemy; in Christian terms, the "Antichrist."

Who is this wicked one? A cursory reading of Isaiah 10 and 11 reveals that he is "the Assyrian," a military tyrant who advances on Jerusalem from the north (10:28-32). Significantly, Sennacherib, the historical Assyrian king who invaded Israel, never approached Jerusalem from the north; rather, he sent his army from the southwest, from Lachish (Isaiah 36:2).

Whereas Isaiah 10 focuses on the Assyrian tyrant, Isaiah 11 focuses on the Messiah who destroys him (cp. Mic. 5:5, which mentions both the Messiah and the Assyrian). If there is any doubt that Isaiah 11:4 describes the defeat of Assyria, we may turn to a parallel verse, Isaiah 30:31, which states that the "voice of the LORD will shatter Assyria; with his scepter he will strike them down." Also significant is the fact that Isaiah describes the destruction of the Assyrian king in the valley of Topheth: "Topheth has long been prepared; it has been made ready for the king. Its fire pit has been made deep and wide,

with an abundance of fire and wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of burning sulfur, sets it ablaze" (30:33). Topheth was a valley outside Jerusalem used for human sacrifices (cf. 2 Kings 23:10), and later it became a burning garbage dump known as gehenna. Jesus used gehenna as an illustration of the lake of fire described in Revelation, a "fiery lake of burning sulfur" into which the Antichrist is to be thrown (Rev. 19:20). Unlike the Assyrian king of Isaiah 30:33 whose fate is

Topheth was a valley outside Jerusalem used for human sacrifices, and later it became a burning garbage dump known as gehenna

to be thrown into the lake of fire, the historical Sennacherib was murdered by the sword in Nineveh (Isa. 37:38).

The evidence seems compelling; when Paul described the Antichrist, he felt constrained to turn to Daniel and Isaiah, prophets who described an end-time Middle Eastern tyrant known as "the king of the North" and "the Assyrian."

"The One Who Now Holds It Back"

A more ambiguous character in 2 Thessalonians 2 is the one currently restraining "the secret power of lawlessness" (v. 7). Paul had previously identified this restrainer to the Thessalonians, and did not feel compelled to identify it—or him—in his letter (2:5, 6). Our problem is compounded by the fact that verse six describes the restrainer in neuter terms,

verse seven in masculine terms.

This is certainly one more area where the Bible's ambiguity precludes our dogmatism. We are simply not given enough information to identify this force which currently restrains the full force of the power of evil. My own inclination is to regard it as the Holy Spirit, which is alternately described by the Bible in both neuter and masculine terms. But this is entirely a matter of conjecture.

Conclusion

In the Thessalonian letters Paul comforts Christians with information about the return of Christ and our being gathered to Him at that time. Those who have died will be resurrected to join those of us who are living as we are given immortality. We will not experience God's wrath of the last days (1 Thess. 1:10); that is reserved for the ungodly (2:16; 2 Thess. 1:9, 10), and we will be protected from that (cf. Rev. 9:4). However, we will continue to experience tribulation and suffering inflicted by those hostile to Christ, and this persecution will be multiplied when the "restrainer" is removed and the full force of lawlessness is unleashed. The Middle Eastern Antichrist who desecrates God's temple and initiates this unparalleled tribulation will be destroyed, however, when Jesus returns and imparts immortality to His Church.

This is of course my interpretation of Paul's meaning; other interpretations exist, but the many arguments in favor of this reading seem remarkably compelling to me personally. May we all unite in our continued searching of the Scriptures and our devotion to the Lord whose return from heaven we eagerly await. R44

Clarifying a Prophecy

A REMARKABLE PROPHECY WAS given to Daniel in Daniel 9:26, 27. Its purpose is to throw light on the extraordinary struggle between good and evil destined to convulse the world before the return of Christ to rule in His Kingdom. Daniel 9:26 speaks of the Messiah being cut off—a reference which has been generally taken to mean Jesus' death for the sins of the world. Isaiah 53:8 likewise speaks of the suffering Messiah being cut off from the land of life. The meaning is apparently that Jesus was put to death and thus deprived of life in the land of promise—Israel. By being cut off Jesus did not receive His Kingdom, the inheritance of the Messiah. The prophecy reads that He will "have nothing" (NASV). Keil (*Commentary*, p. 362) understands this to mean that as a result of Jesus' death He did not immediately possess what belonged to the Messiah—the Kingdom.

There is a change of subject in the second statement made in Daniel 9:26. "A prince who is to come" is introduced in connection with the overthrow (cp. the same Hebrew word used of the destruction of Sodom, Genesis 19:13ff.) of the city and the sanctuary. The order of the words in Hebrew is important: "The city and the sanctuary will be destroyed by the prince who is to come."

Keil (*Commentary*, p. 362) points out that the word "coming" is associated in Daniel with a hostile invasion. In Daniel 1:1 Nebuchadnezzar comes to besiege Jerusalem. In 11:10, 13, 15, forces of the king of the North "keep on coming" (NASV) and "cast up a siege mound and capture a well-fortified city." In the case of the "prince who is to come," however, the idea is that he is a personage whose arrival to destroy the city is well known. Such a hostile invader has already appeared in Daniel, chapters 7 and 8. As Keil says, it is natural that we should think of the Antichrist.

The NASV translates the next phrase: "Its end will come with a flood." The sense would be that the city will be overwhelmed. A more natural translation, however, is supplied by the NASV margin and persuasively argued by Keil: "In the following clause, 'and his end [will come] with the flood,' the suffix [his] refers simply to the hostile prince, whose end is here emphatically described in

contrast to his coming" (*Commentary*, p. 363).

Why is this an important point of interpretation? Those who find here a reference to Titus destroying Jerusalem in A.D. 70 cannot apply the suffix "his" to the hostile invader. The fact is that Titus did not come to his end in the war on Jerusalem. There are compelling reasons to agree with Keil's translation. The word order of the preceding sentence ("the city and the sanctuary will be destroyed by the prince who is destined to come") leaves the prince as the last idea. In the words immediately

following, "his" or "its" end refers most naturally to the prince just mentioned. The evil prince in this prophecy comes to "his end" (cp. 11:45 where the Antichrist, the king of the North, "comes to his end"). The prince's end is in "the flood." What events are described here? Not the invasion by Titus in A.D. 70, because Titus did not come to his end at the time of that invasion. Since interpreters have wished to find Titus and the events of A.D. 70 here they have avoided the translation "his end."

As Keil says, "preconceived views as to the historical interpretation of the prophecy lie at the foundation of all other [translations than 'his end']." A reference to the end of the city or the sanctuary is forced because city is feminine in Hebrew, and a different ending would be needed for "end." A reference to the sanctuary only is awkward because city and sanctuary are mentioned together. Keil concludes: "There remains nothing else than to apply the suffix ['his'] to the prince. 'End' can accordingly only denote the destruction of the prince" (*Commentary*, p. 363). Titus, in A.D. 70, therefore cannot be meant.

The "Flood"

What is "the flood" in which the invader comes to his end? The definite article indicates that a well known "overflowing" is in mind. "Flood" is elsewhere used as the symbol of an overwhelming divine judgement. For example, in Isaiah 8:8 the invasion of Judah by the king of Assyria will sweep on into Judah; "it will overflow and pass through." In Nahum 1:8, the Lord "with an overflowing flood" will make a complete end of Nineveh's site and "pursue His enemies into darkness." Daniel informs us that Antichrist's end will come in "the flood" of God's



By
Anthony
Buzzard

of the End-time



end-time judgement. We are presented in this prophecy with a "prince who is to come who will find his destruction in the flood." Daniel 11:45 describes the destruction of the final king of the North who will "come to his end" just before the resurrection (Daniel 12:2).

Verse 26 contains yet another piece of information: "And until the end there will be war." The end referred to here is simply the end of the "period in progress" (Keil). The meaning is that war will continue to the end of

There is coming a decisive annihilation of Satan's final tool to destroy Israel

the seventieth "week." Trouble is to be expected until the completion of the final "week."

Our verse ends with an additional comment on the nature of the judgement. "Desolation is divinely decreed" as punishment. A comparison with three other passages is illuminating. In Daniel 11:36 the end of the career of the final king of the North is inevitable: "What is decreed will take place." Further light on the decreed punishment of the invader of Israel at the end of the age is supplied by Isaiah 10:23. "For a complete destruction, one that is decreed, the Lord God of hosts will execute in the midst of the whole land." For this reason (Isaiah 10:24) Israel should not fear "the Assyrian who strikes you with the rod." "In a very little while, My indignation against you [Israel] will be spent, and My anger will be directed to their [Assyria's] destruction" (Isaiah 10:25).

There is another reference to the decreed punishment of God's (and Israel's) enemy of the end-time. In Isaiah 28:17b and following, "the hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters [cp. flood] will overflow the secret place, and your [Israel's] covenant with death will be canceled." Then in verses 21 and 22, "the Lord will rise up . . . to perform . . . His unusual task and to work His work, His extraordinary work. . . . For I have heard from the Lord God of hosts of a decisive destruction on all the earth."

Again the words are reminiscent of Daniel 9:26. There is coming a decisive annihilation of Satan's final tool to destroy Israel. The city and sanctuary will indeed be overthrown by the coming invader. War will be a feature of the last "week." Yet the peace of God's Kingdom will follow when Christ returns to destroy the Antichrist, resurrect the dead, and grant the Kingdom to the faithful (Luke 22:28-30; Matt. 19:28; I Cor. 6:2; II Tim. 2:12; Rev. 2:26, 3:21, 5:10, 20:4-6). Just before that time, "desolations are irrevocably determined by God" (Keil, *Commentary*, p. 365).

We can summarize the announcement provided by Daniel 9:26 with the following translation based on the Hebrew and in conjunction with Keil's exegesis (*Commentary*, p. 373):

After the sixty-two "weeks" the Messiah will be cut off, so that He does not have the Kingdom which belongs to Him, and the city, together with the sanctuary, will be destroyed by the people of a prince who will come, who shall come to his

end in the flood. War will continue to the end [of the seventieth "week"], since destruction is irrevocably decreed.

Verse 27

We proceed to verse 27, which completes the prophecy, supplying further detail about the events of the seventieth "week." Verse 27 opens with a statement about the prince just mentioned. He will confirm a covenant. The compelling reason for making the prince of verse 26 the subject of the sentence is given by Keil:

The connection indicates that the prince is the subject of "will confirm," since the prince who was to come is named last and is also the subject in the suffix of "his end," the last clause of verse 26 having only the significance of an explanatory subordinate clause (*Commentary*, p. 366).

Keil makes three other points: 1) "The taking away of the daily sacrifice combines itself in a natural way with the destruction (verse 26) of the city and the temple brought about by the coming prince." 2) The one represented as "causing the sacrifice and oblation to cease" is obviously identical with him who changes (7:25) the times and usages of worship. 3) "The reference of 'he shall confirm' to the ungodly leader of an army is therefore according to the context and the parallel passages of this book which have been mentioned, as well as in harmony with natural grammatical

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Clarifying a Prophecy of the End-time

(Continued From Page 9)

arrangement of the passage. But, by 'prince,' [v. 26] Titus cannot naturally be understood."

The prince imposes a covenant on the great mass of the people, in contrast with the few who remain faithful. The contract forced on the majority by the evil prince reminds us of Matthew 24:12: "The love of the many grows cold."

The next clause gives us information about the second half of the final "week." Keil argues that the proper translation is: "He will cause the sacrifice and grain offering (bloody and unbloody sacrifice) to cease for half the week." Associated with this interruption of the temple service, the prince "comes desolating on the wings of abomination." Just as the true God "bowed the heavens and came down with thick darkness under His feet, and He rode on a cherub and flew on the wings of the wind" (Ps. 18:9), so here the wicked prince is seen "desolating, borne upon the wings of abominable things." Keil cites the interpretation of another German commentator: "The powerful heathen enemy of God is here conceived of as carried upon the wings of the idol abomination, just as the God of the Theocracy is borne on the wings of the clouds and on cherubim, who are His servants (cp. Psalm 18:9, 10; 104:3)."

The picture suggests a counterfeit Parousia (i.e., coming) staged by the power of Satan. Paul reflects the same idea in II Thes. 2:9, where Antichrist's Parousia is in accordance with the energy of Satan. The final sentence of Daniel's prophecy tells us that this desolating rule of the wicked prince will continue "until the end, and the *decreed judgement* of God will pour down on the desolator." The verb "pour down" once again suggests the flood of verse 26, in which the wicked prince comes to his end. Since no flood of judge-

ment fell on Titus in A.D. 70, the reference of this whole passage is to the future Antichrist and his temporary reign at the end of this age.

Summary

It will be appropriate to state again the message of Daniel 9:26, 27 with reference to Keil's most helpful translation:

After the sixty-two "weeks" the Messiah will be cut off, so that He

The wicked prince is seen "desolating, borne upon the wings of abominable things"

does not have the Kingdom which belongs to Him, and the city, together with the sanctuary, will be destroyed by the people of a prince who will come, who shall come to his end in the flood. War will continue to the end [of the seventieth "week"], since desolation is irrevocably decreed. And he [the prince] will impose a covenant on the many for one "week," and during half of the "week" he will cause the service of sacrifice to stop and, borne on the wings of idol abominations, he will carry on a desolating rule; and this will go on until the end when the firmly decreed judgement will be poured out on him as one desolated (*Commentary*, p. 373).

Jesus' Interest in This Prophecy

Jesus was most interested in this prophecy of Daniel. He referred to the "abomination of desolation" as a key feature of the time just prior to His return. In Matthew 24:15 the appearance of the

abomination of desolation in the temple is the cue for believers in Judea to flee to the mountains (Jesus did not expect them to be removed from the earth).

The expression used by Jesus corresponds most closely to Daniel's other references to the abomination of desolation in 11:31 and 12:11. The first passage tells us that the final king of the North will send forces against the sanctuary fortress, do away with the regular sacrifice and set up the desolating abomination. The connection with Daniel 9:27 is clear. The evil prince comes desolating on the wings of an idol-abomination and in Daniel 11:31 a desolating abomination is placed in the temple. This could be the Antichrist himself. Mark uses a masculine participle to describe the abomination in Mark 13:14, suggesting a human person in the temple.

The abomination of desolation will trigger the time of suffering which Jesus calls the great tribulation (Matt. 24:15, 21). *Immediately* after that tribulation Jesus will appear in glory (Matt. 24:29). It is important to note that these are not events already past. Jesus obviously did not reappear immediately after the tribulation of A.D. 70.

Daniel 12:11 completes the network of prophetic information about the abomination. From the moment when the abomination of desolation is set up in the temple, a period of 1290 days will elapse. This appears to be slightly longer than the "time, times and half a time" of chapter seven. This period takes us to the end of these "amazing wonders" (verse 12:6). All the prophetic events will be complete 1290 days after the appearance of the abomination and the cessation of sacrifice. The time for the resurrection and the Kingdom of God on earth will have arrived. R44

God at Work Behind the Scenes

By Larry Jaffrey

"BEHOLD, HE WHO KEEPS Israel will neither slumber nor sleep" (Psalm 121:4, NASB).

Jewish people around the world will be celebrating Purim (Poor-im), or the Feast of Esther. One of the traditions of this holiday is to read the book of Esther in the synagogue.

Every time Haman's name is read, it is drowned out by noise-makers, yelling and stomping of feet. It is a celebration of how the evil Haman's plans to destroy the Jewish people were foiled by Esther and Mordecai.

Even through a celebration of a biblically recorded defeat of anti-Semitism, the people often neglect to see the working of God in the story. Interestingly, the book of Esther does not mention the name of God, nor is prayer or sacrifice mentioned.

Hatred of Jewish People Brings Tragic Consequences

While God is not mentioned in the book of Esther, His work is very evident. God promised Abraham that the enemies of his descendants would be "cursed" (Gen. 12:3). Haman, along with his 10 sons, was hanged as a result of his hatred of the Jewish people.

Another promise of God made evident in the story of Esther is that the Jewish people could not be destroyed by man. Jeremiah prophesied that if the fixed order of the sun, moon and the stars changed, "then the offspring

of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever" (Jeremiah 31:36, NASB).

Haman failed in his attempt to annihilate the Jewish people because God's designed order for the sun and the stars remained intact. If Haman had wanted to be successful in his plans, he first needed to do the impossible task of destroying the order of the heavens.

The Rise of Anti-Semitism Warns of a Spiritual Battle

Knowing the promises of God enables us to understand the spiritual battle that was going on in the story of Esther. Hatred of the Jewish people is not a sociological problem, rather it is evidence of a hatred that has a spiritual origin.

The existence of the Jewish people continually reminds Satan that God is still in charge. The evil one will try anything to destroy the Jewish people, including irrational hatred, religious bigotry and international conflicts.

In a day when we are seeing reports of anti-Semitism and ever increasing turmoil in the world, the Feast of Esther should be a source of encouragement. Though we may not see a great sign from God that He is in charge, we can rest assured that He is still working behind the scenes and will keep His promises. Remember, "He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep." ❧

—The Chosen People, pp. 1, 2.

Old Enemies, New Friends?

By Clyde Haberman

Jerusalem—Formally recognizing each other after decades of diplomatic aloofness and centuries of frequent Jewish-Catholic rancor, Israel and the Vatican signed an agreement [recently] to establish diplomatic relations.

But even as it recognized Israel, the Vatican sought to defend its position in the Arab world and to register its demand for international guarantees of Jerusalem's status as a holy place for Christians, Jews and Muslims alike.

"Behind the agreement there are thousands of years of history, full of hatred, fear and ignorance, with a few islands of understanding, of cooperation and of dialogue," said Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin, who signed for Israel.

"Do we have the right to reconcile?" he asked. "It is not for us to say. Can we ignore the memories of so many years? No. It is wrong to ignore memories, much as it is wrong to let memories tie our hands and determine our fates."

Beilin's Vatican counterpart at the ceremony, Monsignor Claudio Celli, did not utter the word "reconciliation" or say anything that could remotely be construed as contrition, as some Israelis had demanded. ❧

—"Israel, Vatican Begin Diplomatic Ties: But Animosity Aren't All Buried," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

“Evangelism—It’s Not My Spiritual Gift”

Maybe evangelism isn’t one of your spiritual gifts. If not, please read on . . .

BROTHER TIMOTHY’S SPIRITUAL GIFT also wasn’t to be an evangelist. He was a pastor, but as we read in II Tim. 4:5 the Apostle Paul tells him to *do the work of an evangelist*.

It seems to me that one of Paul’s spiritual gifts was evangelism, and like many evangelists he wanted others to possess the same qualities he had. (Doesn’t it bother you when someone with the gift of evangelism wants or expects you to evangelize also—if it’s not your gift?) Let’s look closer at Paul’s words to Timothy and at the definition of who is an evangelist.

Paul was not trying to force his gift on Timothy. In fact, throughout the letter he was encouraging Timothy in his gift of pastoring. Here he also told Timothy to endure hardship. This doesn’t indicate that Paul was forcing him to be a martyr. Paul’s words to Timothy were to “do the work of an evangelist,” not to “be an evangelist.”

Whether or not one of our gifts is evangelism, we all need to be doing the work of evangelists. But what is an evangelist? I think if we understood what the word means, we would better understand Paul’s words to Timothy as well as our own responsibility to fulfill those words. *Random House Dictionary* gives several definitions of “evangelist.” First, it says “preaching the gospel” (under “evangelism” we see “converting people”). This I see as a reference to an actual evangelist—one with that gift. But the definition that struck me and gave me a deeper insight into the responsibility of those not called to be evangelists in those terms, was that an evangelist is “a person marked by zealous enthusiasm for the support of any cause.” This is what Paul meant when he told Timothy to do the work of an evangelist, and this is how those who do not possess the spiritual gift of evangelism need to be.

Whether or not evangelism is your spiritual gift, we all need to be evangelists—zealously enthusiastic and supportive of the cause of Christ. Not all have the gift of evangelism, but, in the same breath, not all have been blessed with the gift of faith either. Does that mean that those without the gift of faith have none whatsoever? By no means!

How many Christians do you know who are zealously enthusiastic about the same things as Jesus was? For example, the coming Kingdom of God, or feeding the hungry, clothing the poor, loving the lepers and prostitutes, or even honoring God? We need to look to Jesus’ example and light our fire from His. All of Christ’s followers (Christians) need to possess faith and all need to be doing the work of evangelists.

Our enthusiasm and support for the most worthy cause—for the Almighty God and His Son and Kingdom coming to this very earth—need to be zealous. We need to not only support with our time and money, but also with our hearts, minds, and souls. That is when we become zealous.

Maybe one of your gifts isn’t evangelism, but if you are called as a son of God and have chosen to enlist under the command of Jesus Christ you are responsible for, and called to do, the work of an evangelist. You are called to be a “person marked by zealous enthusiasm for the support of” not just any cause, but the salvation of the world and the inauguration of the chosen Messiah—Jesus—when God’s government and reign cover the face of the earth.

We need not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ (as Paul also told Timothy), but we need to possess zealous enthusiasm and not hide our lights under a bushel. We all need to be doing the work of evangelists. **RH**



By
Tracy Savage

(Continued From Back Page)

these truths and make them known through classes, tracts, evangelistic magazines, songs of truth, and youth publications. Oregon Bible College trains leaders to teach and preach these truths through established churches and to evangelize in undeveloped fields. Evangelism and missions programs seek to take these truths into new or growing fields where others may be reached with the saving knowledge of Christ through

the Word of God.

The needs of the local church, the state conference, and the General Conference hence become spiritual needs. The question becomes, Do we love the truth enough to work for it? To sacrifice for it? And even to die for it? To serve for it? To give for it? To use time and energy in its teaching and preaching? **RH**

—Progress Journal, Dec. 7, 1959, Vol. 2 No. 3

CHURCH OF GOD GENERAL CONFERENCE HISTORY NEWSLETTER



Volume 6

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Number 5

ADVENTIST CONTACT

3702 Stilson, Janet, et al. **A Brief History of the Formation of the Church of God General Conference.** JRR, 1991, 1(1):44-49. Much about the formation of the Church of God, Age-to-Come movement in America prior to the 1840s is still unknown. Outlines the development of the Church of God, emphasizing its relationships with other movements and disclosing some of the struggles which led to its final reorganization in 1921. WSS

— Taken from *Religious and Theological Abstracts*,
Vol. 36:3. Fall, 1993

Dear Janet,

I ran across this article you helped write on the Church of God (Abrahamic Faith). However, I cannot find an address for the publisher. We want to order this issue so we can have your article in our files.

Yes, we do collect materials on the Church of God (Abrahamic Faith). We have *Historical Waymarks of the Church of God*, 1976, Alva Huffer's *Systematic Theology*, and a rather thick file of pamphlets, etc. on doctrinal beliefs.

I was born and grew up in a little farming community in Dade County, SW Missouri—Lockwood. One of my high school classmates back in the late 50's was James Fife, now a minister for the Church of God. There is a small Church of God church maybe 10 miles or so north of Lockwood.

Can you send me information about Atlanta Bible College? Is it Church of God owned? I know about Oregon College.

Thanks for your help.

Sincerely,
Gary W. Shearer
Special Collections Librarian
(Millerite/Seventh-day Adventist history)
Pacific Union College

Dear Gary,

Your letter of January 28th is very interesting. My husband, Gene, and I went to Oregon Bible College with Jim and Marlyn

Fyfe. They now reside in Grand Rapids, MI. It's a small world after all.

The *Journal from the Radical Reformation* has been published since late 1991 out of Atlanta, where Oregon Bible College has relocated as Atlanta Bible College. The price per annum is \$20.00.

There is an extensive archives of Age-to-Come materials which is open by appointment to Adventist researchers. I helped to organize this archives while it was still in Oregon, with the help of student library workers. The work of organizing it, and gathering documents for it, is still on going in the new location.

In addition to the *Journal*, the Church of God has been sponsoring a theological conference the past few years. This has drawn scholars of unitarian/Age-to-Come persuasion from all over the globe.

Write to David Krogh, president, or Kent Ross, academic dean, at Atlanta Bible College/Church of God General Conference, 5823 Trammell Road, Morrow, GA. 30260-7000 from where the *Journal* is published. Or, call 404-362-0052 for subscription information.

I am sending you a copy of our HISTORY NEWSLETTER which I edit. These are tear sheets, and you will note editing comments. The HN has been published since the mid-80's. You may subscribe to it for 1994-95 for \$15.00. Such a deal!

Also, David Graham authors a history column in *Wisdom and Power*, a good Church of God magazine. It is free. Contact *Wisdom and Power* at Southlawn Church of God, 3880 Jefferson SE, Wyoming, MI 49548.

David Graham is a real contact to nurture. He is a knowledgeable person and can help you locate historical documents on the Age-to-Come. He may be reached at 4827 N. Sawyer, Chicago, IL. 60625. Phone number: 312-539-5452.

Thank you for your inquiry. It's nice to know something I've written has been indexed. If I do not hear otherwise from you, I would like to publish your letter in the June/July issue of the HISTORY NEWSLETTER, and this response to it.

I would be interested in seeing a bibliography of materials you have in your library, especially historical documents which are Age-to-Come. None of our history scholars have been to California to research the various collections; it could be an incentive to them to have a list of delectable morsels available for their perusal. Such a list would be of interest to the NEWSLETTER readers. Thanks again.

Sincerely,
Jan Stilson, MLS
Editor, CHURCH OF GOD HISTORY NEWSLETTER

Dear Miss Stilson,

Mr. F. R. has given me your name as someone who can help me in my research.

He has sent me a photocopy of an advertisement for a hymn book entitled *The Christian Psalmodist* compiled by Thomas Wilson, editor of *The Restitution*. This book was published in 1876.

I am enclosing a list of first lines of hymns and anthems. These are ones that I cannot find authors for. I do not know whether *The Christian Psalmodist* has an index or whether it gives the authors' names. If it does, I shall be most grateful if you will identify the authors of some of the hymns whose first lines are listed alphabetically. I have tried very hard to obtain the loan of this hymn book through our national library service. No success. The names I have typed down the right-hand margin have not been confirmed. Another problem is that the wording of the original may have been altered or the first verse omitted. I think that some of the hymns in my list were first used by Adventists but our British Library does not have any of these 19th C. hymn books. I have been through my own copy of *Sankey's Sacred Songs and Solos* without success. My other 19th C. books do not give the names of authors. I have been through Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology* and the more recent *Dictionary of Diehl*.

Any help that you can give me will be gratefully received.

Yours sincerely,
S. J. Cowlshaw

FIRST LINES OF
ANONYMOUS HYMNS AND ANTHEMS
List compiled by S. J. Cowlshaw

Hymns

All-powerful, self-existent God	Anon B. William's Coll. 1778.	O God of Israel, unto Thee	Pre-1965.
As Jacob wrestled with the Lord	Pre-1870.	O God of love, Thy Name we bless	Pre-1904.
Behold He comes! the glorious King	Pre-1870. J. Tritton (1819-	O God that madest earth and sky	Pre-1870. R. Heber (1783-1827)
Come Jesus, Israel's King	Pre-1865.	O God, the fathers unto Thee	Pre-1933.
Eternal God, Thou only just	? John Quarles, (1624-65)	O house of Jacob! come	Pre-1870.
Exalt, O God, Thy glorious Son,	Pre-1870.	Oh, how is Zion's glory gone!	? W. H. Bathurst (1796-1877)
Father, let Thy sanction rest	Pre-1904.	Oh! mourn ye for Zion, her beauty is gone	Pre-1870.
Father of faithful Abra'm hear	Pre-1870. C. Wesley (1707-88)	O send Thy servants forth,	Pre-1865.
Father, Thy sovereign grace we bless	Pre-1904.	O Thou fount of ev'ry blessing!	Pre-1865.
From sea to sea the King of kings	Pre-1865.	Oh! why should Israel's sons once blest	? James Joyce (1781-1850)
From Zion shall Thy rod proceed	Pre-1875.	Oh Yahweh, listen while we dare	Pre-1870.
God's servants who once bore the light	Pre-1933.	On God our feeble race depends,	? Isaac Watts (1674-1748)
Great God, we own Thy sentence just;	Pre-1870.	Our Lord remembers we are dust,	Pre-1904.
Hark! the cry, "Behold He cometh"	? Albert Midlane (1825-1909)	Our Lord, what time His last He breathed	Pre-1933.
Hark! 'tis the watchman's cry,	Anon <i>New Advent Hymnal</i> 1859.	Short is the measure of our days	Pre-1875.
Hear! hear! O earth—		Sing praise! the tomb is void	Anon Sewall's Coll. 1845.
the watchmen cry—	Anon <i>The Millennial Harp</i> 1851.	Son of God, our Saviour	Pre-1933.
How shall I praise th' eternal God,	? Isaac Watts	Son of God, Thy people's shield,	Anon <i>The Advent Harp</i> 1849.
Jehovah, full of grace,	Pre-1865.	Soon righteousness shall come,	Pre-1865.
Let him that heareth say	Pre-1870.	Teach us the measure of our days	? J. Leon tr. J. C. Jacobi
Let saints with one accord	Pre-1904.	That Thou, O Lord, art ever nigh	? H. Auber (1773-1862)
Lord, in Christ's name		"The first begotten from the dead"	Pre-1870.
Thy servants plead	Pre-1933. J. Keble (1792-1866)	The Gentile nations have beheld	Pre-1865.
Lord, pity us; behold the grief	Pre-1870.	The Lord of life went up on high	Pre-1933.
Lord, Thou didst arise	Pre-1870.	The right hand of the mighty Lord	Pre-1865.
Lov'd of God in sorrow mourning,	Pre-1865.	The Saviour comes again	Pre-1875.
Most glorious things are spoken,	Pre-1865.	The sons of God did rejoice at creation	Pre-1933.
Oh! blessed are the eyes	Pre-1875.	The water and the blood, O Lord,	Pre-1875.
O God in highest heaven	Pre-1933.	There is an hour, when I must part	? Andrew Reed (1787-1862)
		There's a light that is shining	Pre-1904.

Errata The last issue of the HN erroneously spelled genealogy. It's mistakes like this that keep us humble. Thanks for pointing it out.

The HISTORY NEWSLETTER is published concurrently with *The Restitution Herald* by the Church of God General Conference at Morrow, Georgia. Janet Stilson, Editor; Daniel Smead, Technical Director of Publishing; Jason Catlin, Layout and Design Coordinator; Amy Berry, Typesetter. Annual subscription, \$12 (Price increasing in October 1994 to \$15). Church of God General Conference, Box 100,000, Morrow, GA 30260. Letters of inquiry, manuscripts to editor, 607 S. 4th St., Oregon, IL 61061.

stand by my comments, not having a copy of the 1921 *Restitution* before me. I would invite your additional comments regarding that year of the *Restitution* as you are a bit vague.

My editorial comment in that issue corrected statements I had made regarding the incorporation of your churches as a denomination sometime during the mid-1980s. Is your group incorporated as a general conference, or denomination?

I refer you to the HISTORY NEWSLETTER, 5:4, April/May, 1993 regarding my thoughts on the use of the phrase "Abrahamic Faith." This article was a response to some journalism I had discovered in some Christadelphian writings regarding our history. While I respect the authors of the articles in question, I believed then, and still believe, that poorly written history is poor scholarship and irresponsible journalism.

I try to be accurate in my research and the office staff tries to be perfectly accurate

in style to avoid printing errors, but sometimes errors slip through. I believe by acknowledging questions, concerns, errors, etc., true history is best served and real details best uncovered.

I might add, good readers/scholars will pick up on incorrect details and by drawing them to a writer/editor's attention, pay him/her a compliment—i.e. *the material is being read which is what every writer wants!* In fact, there is an Erratum in this issue regarding a misspelled word. Perhaps I should start an "Errata Column."

This issue of the HISTORY NEWSLETTER may be ordered. Order the April/May issue of the HISTORY NEWSLETTER from Atlanta Bible College, Box 100,000, Morrow, GA 30260. It is part of the *Restitution Herald*, 82:4, 1993.

I was pleased with the documentation you sent me regarding your concerns.

Regarding other matters: it would not seem feasible to me at this point to redo our

microfilm project of the *Restitution*. However, if a significant number of additional unfiled copies exist, an addendum reel of microfilm could be filmed and distributed to interested buyers. Please send me a list of the copies of the *Restitution* which you own.

I am more interested at this point in seeing our combined copies of the *Gospel Banner* microfilmed. I have talked with M. D. about this, and he has not gotten back to me. I have tried to call him but get his answering machine. Between us we could film all the *Gospel Banner* and divide the cost as we did before.

I hope to hear from you again.

In Christ,
Jan Stilson,
Editor

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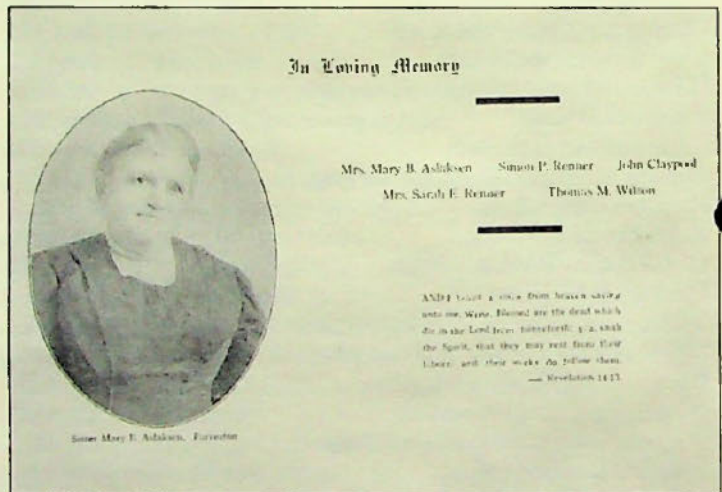
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Authors: Prepared manuscripts needed; call Jan Stilson at 815-732-7439 after 7 p. m. CDT. Or submit, 607 S. 4th St., Oregon, IL 61061



HISTORICAL LINKS

Dear Janet:

Just a note this time. I ran across something that may be of interest to you. It is a page from the 1921 Prospectus of the Illinois conference and Bible school. You will notice that among the names mentioned is that of John Claypool. He and the others were prominent workers in the churches and conference.

Love,
Harry and Thelma

Editor's Note The Renners were a second-generation pioneer family who resided near Forrester in Ogle Co., Illinois. Thomas Wilson was editor of the *Herald of the Coming Kingdom*, Chicago, 1868-1870; Mary Aslaksen was kin to our Pastor Bill Wachtel, Wenatchee, Washington.

God's Word Is Valid, and Jesus Is Still Our Savior

By George W. Westlake Jr.

The front page of the *Star* recently cried out with the accusation that God's Word is not valid: "Scholars redefine Jesus as a sage, not a savior."

The attack on the Bible and particularly Jesus Christ is nothing new. The so-called scholarship to which the article referred has been going on all during this century. (One of the quotes was from 1906.) Scholars continue to presume to decide what is valid about the eyewitness accounts of the Bible almost 2,000 years after.

The viewpoint of the scholars was clearly revealed in the article: "The quest is to redefine Jesus minus the supernatural."

The basic assumptions upon which are built all of the pseudo scholarly arguments are: that if there is a God He does not intervene in history, there is no such thing as miracles, that Jesus Christ was not what the Bible shows Him to be.

Why the attack on Jesus Christ and the Bible? Why do men refuse to accept the fact that God is not only capable of giving us a book to tell us what He expects from His creation, but that He has actually done so?

There are two basic reasons.

First, Jesus Christ and the Bible present a moral standard, grounded in the character of God, that people do not choose to accept. The prophet Isaiah said, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have all turned to our own way."

My Way! God, leave me alone! I have a right to do what I wish!

The rejection of the moral standards of God's Word and the substitution of "if it feels good, do it," and "I have a right to be fulfilled" (even if it means leaving a wife and children to take care of themselves), have led our nation into a nightmare of violence, murder of unborn children, drug addiction, and sexual immorality with its resulting AIDS and teen pregnancies. All of this since our Supreme Court said, "take the Bible out of schools!"

The second reason is that the Bible states over and over that Jesus Christ is the only way to God. "There is one name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved."

So Satan continues to hiss that God has not really spoken! He hates the name of Jesus Christ. (You do not see front-page attacks on Buddha, Mohammed, etc. — they are powerless to change lives.)

When the lame man was healed at the gate of the temple, Peter said: "Through faith in His name [Jesus] this man stands before you whole." Faith in Jesus Christ is still making people whole.

Yes, Satan will continue to hiss. But Jesus Christ will still go on changing lives, until that hour when the true historical Jesus will "come in clouds, and every eye shall see Him," and "every knee will bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

—*The Kansas City Star*, March 5, 1994.

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WHAT THIS NATION LACKS IS OLD-FASHIONED VIRTUE

By Mona Charen

George Orwell, writing in 1944, notes that England was renowned for "gentleness." But "it is not much more than a hundred years since the distinguishing mark of English life was its brutality."

What changed an entire nation's national character? Sunday school, suggests Mr. Davies. Attendance at Sunday schools rose steadily throughout the later half of the 19th century. When attendance fell off in the 20th century, crime and disorder increased dramatically.

Our great-grandparents understood that you cannot expect virtue if you don't teach it. They didn't attempt to instill self-esteem, they instilled fortitude and self-control. We've fallen so far that we do not even agree on what virtue is.

RAISING CHRISTIAN CHILDREN IN A PAGAN CULTURE

By Ellen T. Charry

Parents need to ask some hard questions about their own faith and their relationship with their children. Some may hope that their children will be instructed in the faith during 45 minutes a week of church school, but this scant instruction cannot compete with the powerful influences that bombard the child the rest of the week. Furthermore, church school teachers are often untrained and poorly educated in the faith. And though church may provide an important social milieu for youngsters, the content of faith may never be clearly articulated there.

Parents need to talk to one another, other parents and church staff, and plan how to raise their children. Christian education should be the province of men as well as women. Children need fathers who can talk to them about God, about humility as honor, about Jesus' self-sacrifice on the cross, and about dignity as servanthood. Fathers may be eager to get their sons onto the ballfield or artillery range, but they must learn to be even more eager to get down on their knees with children and teach them to pray.

—*The Christian Century*, February 16, 1994, p. 167.

MOST PEOPLE WANT TO SEE BASIC VALUES TAUGHT IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The majority of people in this country think it is possible to reach agreement at the local community level about basic values that should be taught in the public schools. Surprisingly high agreement is found for a number of values that people consider fundamental principles for the nation's youth to follow, including such key tenets as the "golden rule" and religious tolerance.

Two adults in three (69 percent) think it would be possible to secure community agreement on basic values to be taught in the local schools. The feeling is slightly greater among those who now have children in the schools.

Teach Values in the Schools?

Do you think it would be possible, or not possible, to get people in your community to agree on a set of basic values, such as honesty and patriotism, that would be taught in the local public schools?

	National totals	Public school parents
Yes, possible	69%	73%
No, not possible	27%	25%
Not sure	4%	2%

While some might be skeptical that agreement could ever be reached on what values should be taught, a follow-up question on the survey demonstrated there are a number of "bedrock" values, supported by nine adults in 10 or more. Nearly everyone (97 percent) believes honesty should be taught. Teaching belief in democracy is supported by 93 percent of the population, and patriotism and love of country by 91 percent. Caring for family and friends is supported by 91 percent of adults, and 90 percent endorse teaching the "golden rule."

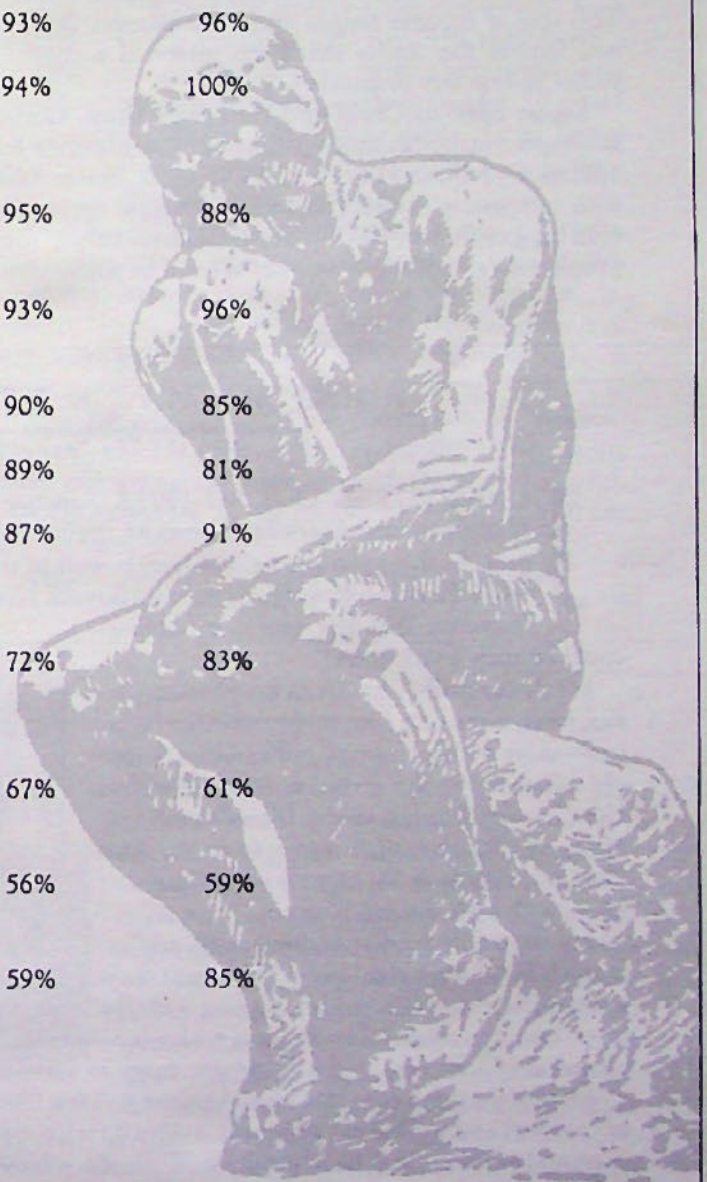
Acceptance of people of different races and ethnic backgrounds should be taught in the schools, in the opinion of 93 percent of the people interviewed. The teaching of religious tolerance is endorsed by 87 percent. Nearly three persons in four (73 percent) believe schools should teach acceptance of people holding unpopular political or social views.

Values

I am going to read a list of different values that might be taught in the public schools. For each one, please tell me whether you think it should be taught, or should not be taught, to all students in the public schools of your community.

	National	Protestant	Catholic	Jewish*
Honesty	97%	98%	98%	96%
Democracy	93%	95%	93%	96%
Acceptance of people of different races and ethnic backgrounds	93%	93%	94%	100%
Patriotism: love of one's country	91%	94%	95%	88%
Caring for friends and family members	91%	91%	93%	96%
Moral courage	91%	93%	90%	85%
The golden rule	90%	92%	89%	81%
Acceptance of people who hold different religious beliefs	87%	87%	87%	91%
Acceptance of people who hold unpopular or controversial political or social views	73%	73%	72%	83%
Sexual abstinence outside of marriage	66%	69%	67%	61%
Acceptance of the right of a woman to choose abortion	56%	56%	56%	59%
Acceptance of people with different sexual orientations; that is, homosexuals or bisexuals	51%	45%	59%	85%

*Very few cases, presented for purposes of comparison.
—PRRC *Emerging Trends*, December 1993, pp. 1, 3.



AQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME (AIDS) is the dreaded incurable epidemic of our time, just as leprosy was in the time Christ lived on earth. At this time a diagnosis of AIDS is a death sentence. Unfortunately, the disease has spread so quickly and so globally that eventually even the most sheltered will know someone with the disease. AIDS makes Christians uncomfortable because it can be contracted, among other ways, through activities that are sinful—drug use, homosexual activities, and non-marital heterosexual activity. Sometimes Christians think that persons who suffer from AIDS basically received what they deserved because of their sinful conduct. This line of thought forgets about compassion and ignores the reality that each person is a sinner in one way or another.

Lepers came to Christ and He healed them. Christ's healing of a man with leprosy is chronicled in Matthew 8:1-4, Mark 1:40-44, and Luke 5:12-14. In Mark Jesus is "filled with compassion" (1:41, NIV) when the leper approaches Him begging for help. If Christ was not afraid to help these people, why should Christians be? What if by volunteering



By
Andrea
Anders

to help people with AIDS we could share with them the truth of our doctrine and the principles of Christianity? What if some of these people, because of their interaction with us, could spend the rest of their lives as Christians with a chance for eternal life? Churches have different types of mission projects; why not an AIDS mission group? Most cities have some type of volunteer AIDS organization. These groups need volunteers desperately—to answer phones, to pass out pamphlets explaining how the disease is contracted, to help cook meals in shelters for people with the disease, and just to support people who have the disease.

Leprosy was a lonely disease; AIDS is a lonely disease. AIDS sufferers are the lepers of the late twentieth century. Christ felt compassion for the lepers. Christianity can give these people peace. Christ devoted His life to leaving His own kind to walk among persons considered undesirable by His society. He healed them and His message gave them hope. Although we can't heal as Christ did, we can bring a message of hope. Shouldn't we try to follow Christ's compassionate example?

FROM MY KITCHEN WINDOW

JUNE IS BUSTIN' OUT ALL OVER. Summer is finally here after a series of false starts. Spring rains brought the green grasses, the leafy bowers in the trees, the rich colors of early summer flowers. I had forgotten that the greens of summer could be such a rich color!

My flower garden has given me peonies, daisies, roses, irises, blue flax, tulips and other favorites—some without names, old varieties. I simply call them by the givers' names—Grandma Hazel's purple flowers, or Mrs. Moser's pink rose. Many of my perennials came from my own Grandma's gardens. My flowers are my memory book, with love in each blossom.

My vegetable garden is doing well and requires a lot of work right now. The weeds show a steely determination to thrive along with the crops I want to raise. I shower them with a pre-emergence chemical which helps, but still some manage to survive.

Most of the fields crops are up and growing. A few fields are too wet and will have to wait till it dries up a bit. Silo corn and soybeans will be sown there. With the weather

cooperating and God's blessing, we will get a fair crop.

The baby Hereford calves have all arrived and are such a sight to watch. They lead their mothers in such a merry chase. They play together like children, occasionally irritating their elders. I guess all mothers have a few problems with their offspring! My baby chicks (just boiler chicks) are half grown and nearly ready for the frying pan. Some time between being "babies" and now they have become food items. Maybe I should feel like a cannibal but I don't! The turkeys and geese have brought forth broods of babies too. The proud parents allow us to gaze upon them but regard touching as a violation of their rights. The guinea hens have hidden nests someplace but are extremely secretive. We won't know where until they lead a little cluster of chicks across the yard.



By
Joyce
Houseman

Spring was kind to our family life too. We added two new grandchildren to our roster of God's blessings. A baby boy and a baby girl have made a new total of ten for us. What an amazing adventure life is! How good God is!

The Sustaining Hand

"THE LORD DELIGHTS IN THE WAY OF the man whose steps he has made firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand."

Psalm 37:23, 24

I love the words, "though he stumble." God anticipates that even those whose steps He has made firm may stumble. God knows our frame and remembers we are dust. He's aware that we are not all spiritual Supermen. We get tripped up. We have our times of weakness.

This world is full of things that would entangle us and trip us up. Temptation is everywhere. There is a world out there calling us to conform to its image. Even those whose steps God has made firm may succumb to this temptation.

There is a devil who is ever busy trying to trip up the saints. He employs all kinds of devices in an effort to get Christians off the narrow way. He's been at it a long time. His skills as tempter have been sharpened over many millennia. Some people he attempts to inflate with pride and arrogance. Others, he works to drag down with feelings of worthlessness. He uses different baits to trap different Christians.

Then we have an enemy within, the infirmity of the flesh. We have an inner pull toward gratifying self. Even the strongest saints fight this battle. The most seasoned veterans in the faith can relate to the famous Pogo quote:

"We have seen the enemy and he is us."

We earnestly desire to pray more, read the Bible more, conquer sinful habits. But the flesh drags us down. We procrastinate, choose lazy habits and give in to wrong impulses. The enemy within trips us up and we start to fall.

With all of this working against us, it seems near-miraculous that we don't stumble and fall every minute of every day. But God is able to sustain us. He makes our steps firm. He girds us with strength.

When we stumble, He prevents us from falling headlong into ruin. His right hand is always there, keeping us from hitting the pavement. That's because He is faithful. "If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself" (2 Tim. 2:13). He's faithful even when we stumble.

That should inspire faith. It should infuse us with love. The God who is our Father is not sitting in heaven with a ball-bat, ready to dash us in pieces when we stumble. Instead, He reaches down and sustains us. He prevents us from making a shipwreck of ourselves, even when we seem bent on doing that very thing.

The Psalmist says, "I have never seen the righteous forsaken" (37:25). We never will see that. That loving hand will always be there to catch the tottering saint. "Though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand."

Thank God for His mercy and His faithfulness.



By
Steve Jones

OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

RECENTLY I WAS ASKED BY OUR Sunday School superintendent to fill a teaching vacancy. Since I know teaching is not one of my spiritual gifts, I really was hesitant to subject nine-year-olds to my less than stimulating teaching personality. I prayed about this challenging opportunity for several days and explained to our superintendent that I would try it, but that if parents or children complained, she was not to hesitate to replace me.

About the same time our congregation began to participate in the "Daring to Dream Again" 50-day adventure series. Discipline #3 in this ad-

venture is a personal challenge to venture outside your spiritual "comfort zone." Once again the Lord has gotten my attention! This was an opportunity to grow, to "spread my spiritual wings." I know the Lord is with me on this. I believe that if you ask Him for help, you will receive it. I was very nervous the first couple of weeks. But one of my students is my youngest daughter. To quote Alisa after my second week, "You did a good job, Mom. You made the lesson fun and interesting." The Lord provides no better critic than one's own child! May He continue to guide me in this adventure. I am having a great time!



By
Janice Hart

The Editor's Scrapbook

Lacking just three miles off the coast of Key Largo, reports the Florida ACLU, is another alarming threat to our liberties: a statue of Christ known as Christ of the Deep, placed there as a memorial to those lost at sea. To be sure, the memorial is a good swim from shore and 20 feet under water, the group conceded, but it sits on federal property and is therefore no less intolerable an infringement of the church-state separation.

"National Review, June 11, 1993,"
Perhaps Today, March/April 1994.

And Divorce Is . . . ?

Marriage, as defined by *Webster's Dictionary*, has taken some interesting shifts over the years:

Webster's, 1828: "A civil and religious contract, instituted by God, binding a man and woman in marital fidelity until death. It is honorable and the bed undefiled (Hebrews 13)."

Webster's, 1975: "The state of being married."

"According To Webster," *Eternal Perspectives* newsletter,
February/March 1993.

IS HAPPINESS JUST AROUND THE CORNER?

by Nancy Branagh

If I can't enjoy the tasks of daily living, I don't find much joy or contentment in my life. If my only measure of happiness lies in obtaining what I want—a new job, more money, a better marriage, miracles, houses or answers—I don't find much happiness.

However, when I embrace the simple pleasures—a visit with a friend, tending my roses, reading a good book, learning a new truth—then happiness is never just around the corner. It is right in front of me.

ABSTINENCE BASED SEX-ED PROGRAM BANNED

A sex education curriculum that stresses abstinence was thrown out of the Modesto, California, schools because Planned Parenthood considers it biased and based on shame and fear.

Trustees voted recently to get rid of the booklet and video called "Sex Respect," even though most of the people in the audience backed the program and the administration recommended using it at least another year.

Planned Parenthood charged that the curriculum "substitutes biased opinion for facts . . . and reinforces sex stereotypes."

—*Associated Press*, 8/11/93
ACTS, January 1994, p. 19.

UNMARRIED AMERICA

By the year 2000 half of all American adults will be unmarried. . . . Six out of ten unmarried American adults have never been married. . . . Never-marrieds are the least churched part of Unmarried America. In no other subgroup is participation in organized religion such a distant experience. Never-marrieds pray less, talk about their faith less, go to church less, and read the Bible less than do other unmarrieds. They perceive churches as catering to the needs of married people and their children. . . . Unmarried America is a vast mission field in the Church's midst.

Ministry Currents, Jan.-Mar. 1993.

YOU SAY YOU WANT A REVOLUTION?

by John Whitehead

The nineties may soon be the new sixties. However, whereas those who were part of the sixties generation had the older traditional values as an anchor (even while they rejected them), those of the nineties have no such value system to which they can retreat.

The only thing left is hedonism. But it's not a hedonism anchored in "secular humanism" or secularism. It is a hedonism anchored in a new form of paganism.

Rutherford, January 1993.

TOLERANCE VS. TRUTH

by Charles Colson

We live in a Donahue-ized culture in which we sit and watch, hour by hour, the banality that passes for knowledge on television, and we rarely think about issues in terms of Judeo-Christian truth. We hear carolers singing "Silent Night" or an invocation at a public ceremony and we are filled with trepidation; we are worried that we are infringing upon the rights of nonbelievers. We see the symbol of the cross and we feel compelled to paint it out because it might violate the principle of separation between church and state. We exalt tolerance, not truth, as the ultimate virtue. What we fail to realize, however,

Promises Prom

I'M SURE WE HAVE ALL HEARD THESE words used by someone as a way of saying that all they ever get are promises which most often don't materialize. Looking strictly from a secular view we realize this is true for many of us. In other words, I know the feeling. However, to avoid a negative outlook we won't bemoan these days in which we live when we can't depend upon what a person tells us and a man's word is no longer "his bond." We must simply accept the fact that for various reasons we can have no guarantee of a fulfillment of all promises made by our fellowman. This failure to keep promises could come from outright dishonesty by a person who had no intention of keeping his promise when he made it, or it could be an honest inability on the part of a person who made a promise in all good faith but due to extenuating circumstances was not able to keep it. We would like to be able to give the benefit of the doubt and not live in distrust of others, but we must still be realistic; if we are to enter into any agreement with another person where money is involved, it is only good business that we do so by way of a written and signed contract. For instance, we suggest that you do this if you plan to have your driveway paved.

Let us stop at this point and just think about how much our lives depend on promises.

We accept employment maybe with nothing established in writing, with no guarantee, but with the understanding that we will perform certain duties, and the

I think we are more tolerant of others than we are of God

employer promises to pay a certain wage. No doubt there are other benefits in addition to the wages, but this is all subject to change over a period of time. We understand that social security taxes will be deducted from our wages with a promise that we will receive a monthly check in our retirement years, so we work a lifetime depending on this. But again, there is no absolute guarantee, because after all, retirement is still thirty years away and who knows what the situation will be by then. Then we meet the person we want for a lifetime partner and we enter into

a marriage agreement based upon promises. These promises are made to each other and even before God and witnesses, yet they are not always kept.

During our lifetime we are involved in many transactions that depend upon promises. Even in lesser matters of everyday life, promises are a great part of our relationships with one another.

We say all this in order to show the uncertainty of the things of this life and the fallibility of men. Now if every person were to stop to contemplate his situation, let's say as Solomon did, he would perhaps come to the conclusion that there is very little security in this life, or as Solomon put it, all is vanity. So in our search for something more certain and more enduring we turn to God and His Word, the Holy Bible, and what do we find? Promises, promises, promises. The difference, though, is that God's promises are sure. God is faithful and will perform that which He has said, or as 2 Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise . . ."

In our everyday dealing with others we need to exercise patience in waiting for their promises, and perhaps even more so in waiting on God because He is not governed by time and does not count time as we do. But I think we are more tolerant of others than we are of God and we make the mistake of expecting things on our time schedule. There is a message that has become popular in our day because it promotes this kind of thinking, and if we are not careful we can even come to expect things that God hasn't promised. We need to familiarize ourselves with God's Word and the promises found there rather than following the crowd just because it seems that they got something we missed.

Just as I mentioned before how much we depend on promises in our dealing with others, I am amazed as I begin to realize how much our relationship with God depends on promises. My first thoughts on promises turned my attention to Abraham, and it occurred to me that Abraham lived his entire life on promises. When God called him he went out on a promise, not knowing where he was going. God promised the land as an everlasting inheritance to him and his seed, promising that in his seed (or descendants) all nations of the earth would be blessed, when he didn't even have seed or descendants. Then he was prom-



By
Ralph Baxter

ises, Promises,

ised a son and waited until he was 100 years old before getting one. Hebrews chapter 11 tells us that Abraham (along with many other faithful) died

It is through His resurrection that we have the greatest promise of all

without receiving the promise, but that he received a good report through faith.

I have heard many attempts at defining the word faith but Galatians 3:6 says that Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness, so we might say that faith is simply believing God. Then that would show the important link between our faith and God's promises. I also see faith being linked with patience. Hebrews 6:12 reads: "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Hebrews 10:36: "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." This should help our outlook on faith. If we were given everything here and now then there would be no need for faith to wait on the promises (or things not seen). But if this is what Abraham, the father of the faithful, got and what he has in store for him, what more could I ask? If I can live and die in the faith, I need only to receive a good report, then I can hope to be a partaker with those faithful of Hebrews 11 when they receive the promise, and with them be made perfect (v. 40).

Perhaps I started in the middle by looking at God's promises to man-

kind, so let us go back to the beginning. Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the garden of Eden and sin entered into the world. They lost access to the tree of life and were lost and without hope except for a promise from God. I think we would all interpret the reference made in Genesis 3:15 to the seed of the woman who would bruise the serpent's head as being the first promise of a redeemer, Savior, Messiah. This promise was repeated throughout the Old Testament and was held in high regard and cherished by the Israelite people. The promises made to Abraham were repeated to Isaac and Jacob, so it is little wonder that so much emphasis was placed on the ancestry and lineage of Jesus as the promised Messiah.

In the New Testament we find these Messianic promises fulfilled in the birth of Christ. His birth came to pass according to God's promise and Old Testament prophecies. He met all the requirements of the promised Messiah. His ministry upon the earth, too, fulfilled all the requirements. In the Lord's prayer of John 17 Jesus prayed to His heavenly Father: "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Unlike the first Adam, Jesus was obedient to His heavenly Father in all things, even to His death on the cross. Of course, Christ's death on the cross accomplished man's redemption from sin as promised and it is only through His death that we can have forgiveness of sin. Then it is through His resurrection that we have the greatest promise of all: that of resurrection to immortality (1 Cor. 15:23—Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming). Romans 10:9

is probably one of the plainest Scriptures I know which tells us how we can avail ourselves of this great salvation. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Lest we make it appear that all promises are either past and fulfilled or yet to come in the future, let us take notice of some promises that benefit us here and now. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come to His disciples, and that promise is still valid today on the same basis that it was given to the hearers of Peter's message—"repent and be baptized and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." We live each day by such promises of our Lord as Matthew 28:20: "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." And Hebrews 13:5, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

We could go on with promises too numerous to mention, but each day that we look to His Word we find

Let us take notice of some promises that benefit us here and now

promises to sustain us. His mercies are new every morning.

Let us exercise faith and patience as we look for "that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" and anticipate the fulfillment of other great and precious promises to accompany that event. Equally important might be that that we not build our hopes on things not promised in God's holy Word. **PH**

CHANNEL-SURFING

Now that he's retired, Johnny Carson has some time to check out daytime TV. And he doesn't much like what he sees.

"Everybody has a talk show now," he says. "On daytime, anybody. And most of 'em aren't any good. Daytime has become just one big gab bag of dysfunctional people talking to dysfunctional hosts about their miserable lives."

—*The Kansas City Star*, December 17, 1993.

DISTRICT TO RETURN GAY-THEMED BOOKS

By Laurie J. Scott

The Shawnee Mission School District Thursday removed from school libraries two books donated by gay-rights activists.

The district will return the books to Project 21, which donated the novels to 42 area high schools. The books were removed two days after a hearing before a district committee in which parents and patrons angrily denounced the novels.

The books were removed on the recommendation of the 11-member committee. It concluded that the volumes should be returned because "they were presented by a special-interest group advocating its own agenda," according to a statement released Thursday.

—*The Kansas City Star*, December 17, 1993.

WORKING MOMS

Percentage of women—with children under age six—who are in the work force:

1975	39%
1980	46%
1985	53%
1990	58%
1992	58%

—*Marriage Partnership*, Spring 1994.

THE DATING GAME

By Skip Heitzig

When considering this concept of "missionary dating," let's put it in a literal context and see if it makes sense. Suppose a young Christian woman goes out to the mission field in, say, the jungles of Brazil. Two months later the missions committee receives a letter stating,

Greetings from the Amazon jungle. All is well here at the mission outpost. I'm adjusting to the food and the consistently rainy weather. Oh, by the way, I'm dating the tribal chief's son. He's a headhunter and a cannibal but he seems like a really nice guy. Although he offers sacrifices to the monkey god, I had a chance to sort-of share the gospel with him once and he seemed interested. We plan to be married in June and he said I could keep my Bible in the hut if he could keep his idols and shrunken heads.

Does this sound like it has any chance at all of working out? Of course not, but why? Because they are as spiritually different as night and day. Although the outward differences in the unbelievers around us here in the U.S. may not be as obvious as in this example, the principle is just as valid. Why else would Paul write, "For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God."

You may be thinking this sounds a bit legalistic but we counsel people in our offices all day long who are on the verge of spiritual shipwreck because of a lack of prayer and lack of obedience to God in this area. Don't become a casualty. Wait on the Lord and let Him bring you His best.

- Keep a spiritual checklist.
- Begin by dating in a group.
- All physical beauty is fleeting and subject to change but a beautiful spirit in tune with the living God will last forever.
- Be wary of the person who is overly dependent upon you.
- Pray with your boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Minister together.

—*The Connection*, October 1991, pp. 3, 4.

POPULAR IMAGE OF JESUS IS SPIRITUAL, NOT HISTORIC

By George Plagenz

What did Jesus look like?

We don't know, of course. Nor do we even have many word pictures of Jesus that would let us draw him with any accuracy.

Of the scant references to Jesus' physical appearance in the ancient writings, few stand out.

One letter attributed to a Roman named Publius Lentulus says this of Jesus: "He is a tall man (this, of course, would be by 1st century standards, when the average Palestinian stood 5-foot-3 inches) and well-proportioned.

"There is a severity in his countenance that attracts love and reverence. His hair is the color of new wine. His beard is thick and the color of his hair. He is never seen to laugh, but has been observed to weep. He talks little but with great quality."

Another description is found in a letter said to have been written by Pontius Pilate (before he had met Jesus during his trial) to Tiberius Caesar:

"One day in passing the palace of Siloe, I observed in the midst of a great concourse of people a young man who was leaning against a tree, calmly addressing a multitude. I was told it was Jesus. His hair and beard were golden-colored."

If there is any credibility to these documents, they may be the closest thing we have to eyewitness descriptions of Jesus.

—*Capper's*, March 29, 1994.

AN ANALOGY

Someone once asked a noted philanthropist and relief worker, "Why do you include the rich among the oppressed and enslaved?"

She responded, "You in America live in greater poverty than these poorest of the poor in Calcutta, because you suffer from poverty of the spirit."

—*American Missionary Fellowship NEWS*.

THE KEN CONTROVERSY

By Joyce E. Smith

He has an earring, faux-leather vest, lavender mesh shirt, black pants and a two-tone hairdo. It's Mattel's new Earring Magic Ken.

"The doll is intended to be a wholesome product for girls between the ages of three and 11, and that's how we designed it," said Lisa McKendall, a Mattel spokeswoman in Los Angeles. Ken often wears pink and purple because those are girls' favorite colors.

Some gay activists, however, chuckle at the notion that Ken might be coming out of the closet.

"I don't see anything so terrible about the possibility that a child playing with Barbie may discover that her friend Ken might be gay," said David Weeda, executive director of the Human Rights Project, a Kansas City advocacy group for gays and lesbians.

—*The Kansas City Star*, December 12, 1993.

**NEW AGE ISN'T GONE;
NEW AGE IS EVERYWHERE**

By Terry Mattingly

A few years ago most generic bookstores had a "New Age" section. Today this is rare. But this doesn't mean the wave of religious trends that crested in the 1980s simply vanished. It soaked in.

Americans like to change channels. Most say they believe in God, truth, justice and eternal standards. At the same time, it's comforting to think that people can trust their feelings and emotions — or even their own private angels — to tell them what is right and wrong.

"The goal is to redefine spirituality . . . to change our culture's dominant world view — which is still Christian, more or less," [Russell] Chandler [an award-winning religion writer] said. "This all seems so tolerant. It seems like it combines the best of all the religions. Everyone is right. . . . It doesn't matter if you're praying to your inner light, to Sophia, to the Trinity or whoever. Whatever works for you is fine. After all, there are no standards."

—*The Kansas City Star*, March 19, 1994.

Thoughts in Passing

From Where I Sit

Distinctive Doctrine

The Church of God holds certain distinctive doctrines of the Bible which have been neglected, ignored, or perverted by most other religious groups. It is these distinctive doctrines which are the reason for the separate existence of the Church of God. These truths of God's Word, which are believed and taught by the Church of God, set the Church apart from the world and from others who do not hold to these truths.

Such distinctive truths as the literal second coming of Jesus Christ, the bodily resurrection of the dead, the unity of God, the natural mortality of man and hope of immortality only in Christ, the Kingdom of God on the earth, and the necessity of adult immersion for the remission of sins make the Church of God a peculiar people, separated unto God. These distinctive doctrines make necessary the separate local Churches of God and their growth and maintenance. These distinctive doctrines are the reason for banding together into state and district conferences to conserve the church and evangelize with the message of truth.



By
Harold Doan

These distinctive doctrines are the reason for the formation of the General Conference to print these truths, train ministers and teachers to evangelize with these truths, and to help organize new churches and district conferences where these truths will be upheld.

If these doctrines are not important then there is no reason for separate existence. It would be easier and much more efficient to merge with a larger group and eliminate the struggle for growth and recognition. If these distinctive doctrines are important then they demand the uttermost from us in service, sacrifice, and faithfulness. If these distinctive doctrines are essential, then it is important that we preserve them and make them known through literature of truth, through songs of truth, through training of workers in the truth, through youth activities which emphasize the truth, through Sunday school and vacation Bible school lessons of truth, and through evangelism and missions based on these truths.

In each succeeding generation there is the need to reemphasize the distinctive doctrines. Each succeeding generation must catch the vision of the importance of these Bible truths and become rekindled with the fires of enthusiasm to make them known throughout the world. Paul wrote, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in thee" (2 Tim. 1:13, 14). We have the promise that the power of God will help us to hold fast to the truth, but hold fast we must. We cannot let slip the sound doctrine traditionally held by the Church of God simply because they are minority opinions, or because it is easier to fellowship with the world if we do not hold fast to Bible doctrine.

With its constitutional purpose being to uphold and spread abroad the truths of God's Word held by the Church of God, the General Conference is seeking every means to fulfill this function. It was formed to enable us to do together what we cannot do alone. Each department of the General Conference work is established and maintained for the specific purpose of promoting Bible truth, which includes the distinctive doctrines of the Word of God held almost alone by the Church of God. Literature is printed to teach

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(Continued on Page 12)

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Maranatha 1994

ATLANTA BIBLE COLLEGE

"I want to know
Christ and the power
of his resurrection and
the fellowship of
sharing in his
sufferings, becoming
like him in his death,
and so, somehow, to
attain to the
resurrection from the
dead."

Philippians 3:10, 11 (NIV)

PROGRESS JOURNAL
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Reflections on the 1994 School Year

"The memory of the righteous will be a blessing."

—Proverbs 10:7 (NIV)

As a school year comes to a close, it is difficult for a student *not* to reflect on the events of the year. I find bittersweet feelings as I reflect upon the events of the 1993-94 school year at Atlanta Bible College. God has certainly blessed the Bible college with ministry opportunities; participating in prison ministries, nursing home visitations, leading worshipful lifestyles, feeding and clothing the homeless, and other ministries have been instrumental in changing lives—both for those serving, and for those receiving.

It is always with great joy that I am able to see a change from where I've been to where I am, knowing that the Lord has a promising future in store for my life. Ministry has played a vital role in shaping my life and developing spiritual maturity. Being a naturally introverted person, I can remember fearing outreach-type ministry when I came in the fall. My time spent at ABC pushed me out of my "comfort zone." I find ministry one of the most rewarding things in life; there's a certain joy that comes when I can meet a person's need or put a smile on someone's face. Because the world is fraught with people tearing one another down, what a challenge it is to build another up! I have challenged myself with this—putting aside people's flaws and emphasizing their positive qualities. "What would Jesus do?," a question often emphasized at the college, has become a motivational tool to get me to think of things

from above, and not to be concerned with my own problems.

The Christian life is not life on easy-street. It isn't some cushy life, replete with pleasure. But it is a dynamic lifestyle, full of challenges. I can see no other lifestyle for me, nothing more rewarding. God has used ABC as an instrument to touch my life during the past year.

—Jason Catlin

This past year has been full of growth and change for all of the students. We have learned countless things in the classrooms, but the more memorable lessons have come from our experiences. We have gone to a women's shelter and delivered diapers, food, and clothing. We have also helped to lead two worship services for the women at the shelter. A very moving experience for some of us was going to the Clayton County Prison to a worship service, there we saw seventy-five men who had lost almost everything—including their freedom—worshipping and praising God with songs and testimonies. At Thanksgiving and Christmas time we delivered food baskets to needy families in the area. I took a food basket and a load of diapers to a woman who lives in southwest Atlanta who was unemployed and had six children

living at home. Some of the students got a group together to go to downtown Atlanta on Friday nights and have a meal for the homeless people. Some students gave away their own personal Bibles, and in one instance a student gave away the jacket he was wearing, to a homeless person who needed it.

The students and the staff did calling in the area of the college for our local church and a group also went to Columbia, South Carolina to do calling for the new church that was started there. We took a group of seven people to the first service in Beloit, Wisconsin and later a group of six went to the first service in Columbia. It is always a blessing to see a new church being born.

This summer some of the students are actively involved in the leadership for starting a daughter church of New Friends Bible Church south of where we are. We are looking forward to our first service on October 16. Others are planning a trip to California to start some home Bible studies in Pomona and Simi Valley for the churches in those areas. They plan to be gone for a month, starting at the end of July. Looking back, God has blessed us richly over the past year. We have seen some students come and some leave. I pray that they have received a blessing while they were here. We are eagerly looking forward to next year, and to continuing some of the ministries that were started this past year, and also new ones.

—Clayton Isham

1994 Graduates

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."

—II Timothy 2:15 (NIV)

Timothy Driskill

I, Tim Driskill, will the following:

TO JEREMY SMITH (*who we all know likes comics, and wants to be a comic character creator*)—I will my chicken-scratch handwritten class notes. Maybe they will give him ideas for his first comic episode—perhaps "The Deciphering of the San Diego Chicken's Secret Code" would be the title.

TO MARK TSCHAENN (*who lost his wedding ring recently while working outside*)—I will a bottle of Elmer's glue to make sure it doesn't fall off again.



TO SHERRI BRASWELL (*who was recently chosen as apartment manager*)—Dan Kennedy willed her the bat, and I will supply her with the badge to show who's in charge (and a water gun in case the bat doesn't work).

TO DALE MARTENS—I give my subscriptions for books 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 of the 2:7 Study Course series. Maybe he can get all of the lessons done now (I had trouble).

TO TIM SPICKLER (*who was in my 2:7 class*)—I will my handy-dandy Bible verse holder. Use it in good health.

TO LISA IKNER AND LISA ZIMMERMAN, the "twins" on campus (*always together*)—I will these Gideon Bibles. They were Julie's . . . she didn't want to throw them away.

TO CAROLYN SWARTZ (*who got married a week after the deliverance of this will*)—I will my plastic name tag, since she'll be changing her last name in a week. People need a reminder.

TO JOHN NELSON—I will my trusty briefcase (a converted Primo's Pizza box) to ensure organization while running from work at Pizza Hut to class.

1994 Graduates

"Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'"

—Matthew 9:37, 38 (NIV)

Daniel Kennedy

I, Dan Kennedy, will the following:

TO SHERRI BRASWELL—I will my Patrol Buddy (baseball bat) to help Sherri keep law and order in the apartment building.

TO DANIEL SMEAD (*who married Carolyn Swartz a week after this will was announced*)—I will the book *What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew About Them*.

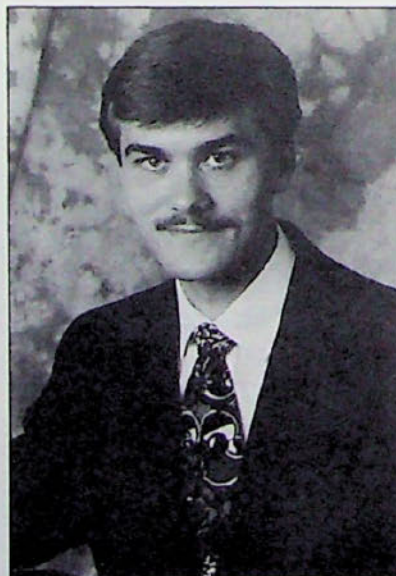
TO DAVE RILEY AND DALE RAMSEY (*who were beaten in a basketball match by Dan and Mark Tschaenn*)—I will my high-top tennies . . . "It's all in the shoes, guys!"

Prophecies

TIM AND SHELLY SPICKLER—I predict that by the year 2020, Tim and Shelly Spickler will be considered the most successful church planters in the United States, with 13 churches in and around the Atlanta and Chicago areas. Strangely enough, the pastors of these 13 churches will all have the same last name of "Spickler," starting with (1) Ashley Spickler, (2) Lindsey Spickler, (3) Zedekiah Spickler, (4) Hezekiah Spickler, (5) Mephibosheth Spickler, (6) Tiglath-Pileser Spickler, (7) Shalmaneser Spickler, (8) etc. . .

MARK TSCHAENN—In the year 2007, Mark will be the author of the best-selling book, *How to Be a Great Youth Leader While Dodging Bullets*.

MIKE CISLER AND MELINDA NELSON—By the year 2013, Mike and Melinda will be famous for their extraordinary collections of Disney classics and Mickey Mouse apparel. Needless to say, their children will love them.



1994 Graduates

"Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: 'If anyone comes after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me...'"

—Mark 8:34 (NIV)

Stephen Zimbelman

I, Steve Zimbelman, will the following:

TO STEVE BOLHOUS—I will a secretary to interpret and produce his lost writing on "Difficult Texts."

TO ANTHONY BUZZARD—I will a radio station of a 1,000,000 watts that would reach all over the world and deliver the Gospel of the Kingdom.



TO DAVID RILEY—I will a box of confectionery for you to taste and savor the pieces. You are to eat of:

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| (1) peace | (4) compassion |
| (2) love | (5) helps |
| (3) patience | (6) leadership. |

TO AARON WELLS—I will a touch of God's Spirit to enable you to free those special words that are bound up in you, allowing you to touch people with God's Word.

TO KENT ROSS—I will to you a small, gift-wrapped box. It contains within it:

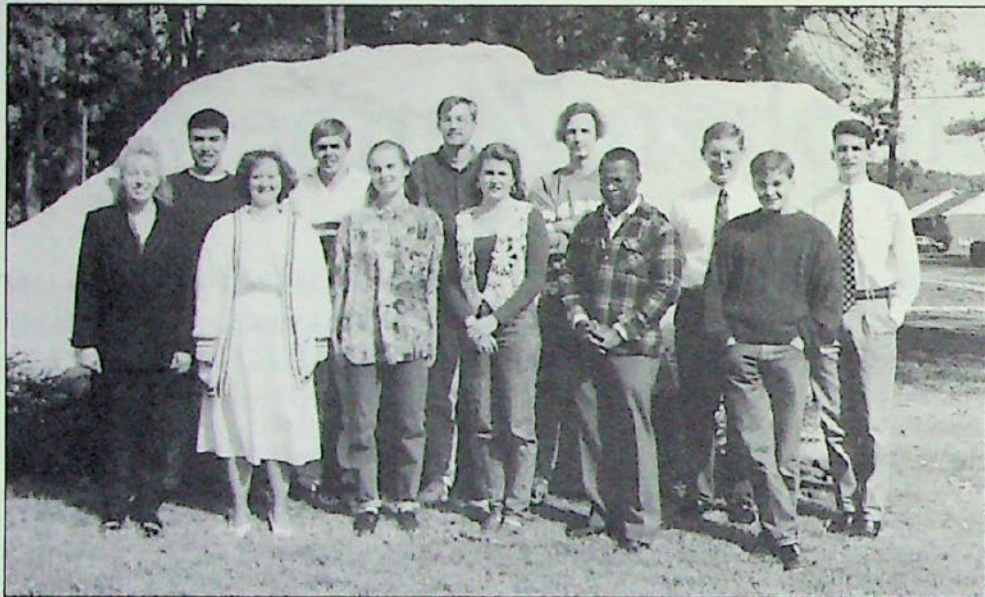
- (1) the time to see a revival within the General Conference of churches, with the truths you love on everyone's lips,
- (2) a container of "will power," which will enable you to achieve your goals, and
- (3) a capsule which, when taken, will give you a long, healthy life.

TO TIM DRISKILL—I will a "plan from God" that will use you to serve God and Jesus.

TO JOE MARTIN—I will that as a teacher you can "specially equip" all your students in knowledge about God and His Son Jesus.

The Rest of the Best

"Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." —Matthew 22:37-40 (NIV)



Returning students—(back row, l to r) Andy Cisneros, Mark Tschaenn, Jeremy Smith, Brent Bengtson, Chris Seiders, Dale Harshman; (front row, l to r) Julie Vance, Carolyn Swartz, Melinda Nelson, Amy Berry, Lonnie Bennett, Jeff Zimbelman. Not pictured: David Holmes, Greg Landry, Mark Louderback, John Nelson, Susan Savage, Brent Simon, Ryan Smith.



First-year students—(top row, l to r) Chris Olson, Erin Riley, Chad Bormes, Joseph Partain, Jeff Osborn; (middle row, l to r) Rod Heaton, Jason Catlin, Clayton Isham, Mike Cisler, Shelly Spickler, Dale Martens; (front row, l to r) Sherrl Braswell, Jeremy Martin, Lisa Zimmerman, Lelgh Farrell, Ronda Small, Tim Spickler. Not pictured: Kristi Barker, Juanda Frazer, Raquel Kalmar, Wendy Morrison.

Perspective

By Bob Benson

*God and I raised a flower bed.
He really did the most*

I guess.

We used

His soil,

His air,

His water,

His life,

His sun.

My part seemed so trivial that

I said,

*"Lord, You take those bulbs
and make them*

*grow right there in the box
out in the garage.*

You don't need me, Lord,

You can do it Yourself."

"Oh, no," He said—

"I want to do My part;

I'm waiting to begin,

But you must do yours, too.

You'll have to

dig the bed,

bury the bulbs,

pull the weeds."

So I did my feeble part.

And God took that bulb—

burst it with life,

fed it with soil,

showered it with rain,

grew it with sunshine

until we had a beautiful flower.

And He seemed to say,

*"Your life is like a garden
and if you'd like, we'll make it
a beautiful thing.*

"I'll furnish," He said—

"The soil of grace,

the sunshine of love,

the rains of blessing,

the wonder of life.

But you must do the digging."

"Lord," I said, "You just go

ahead,

*make me what You want me to
be;*

make me a saint,

give me great faith,

fill me with compassion."

*"Oh, no," He said. "You've
got to keep your heart tilled,*

hoe the weeds of evil,

chop away the second best.

I'll make you anything—

Pure,

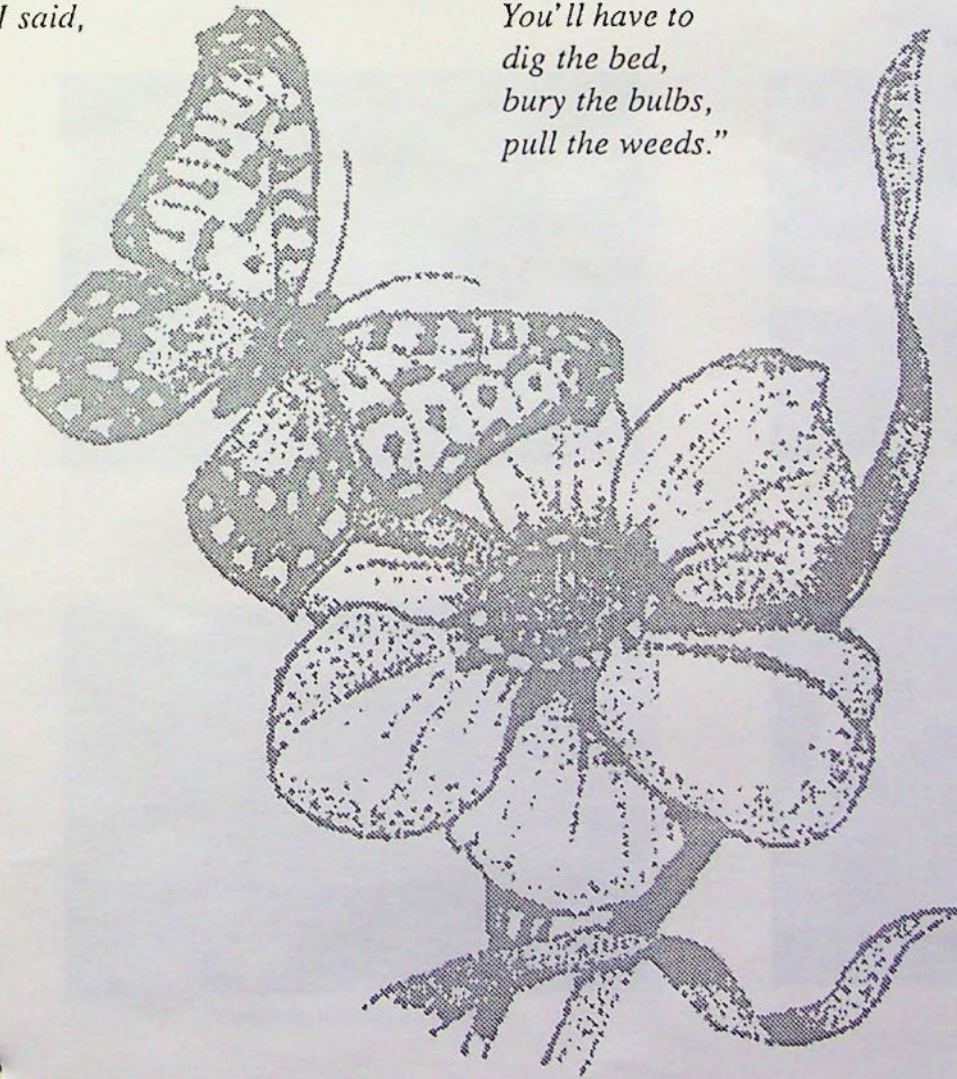
Clean,

Noble,

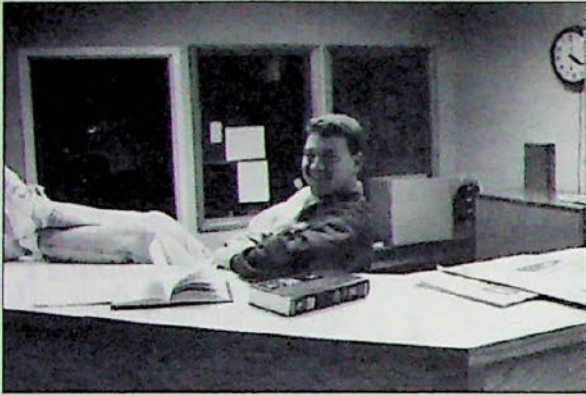
Useful,

Anything—

but only if you dig."



Things That Make



Working hard or hardly working?



The "in" crowd.



No Dan, the hammer goes the other way!



"Ain't we cute?"



Nice threads, Chris!



"Mmm . . . What's cooking?"

You Go, "Humm..."



Students studying hard for final exams.



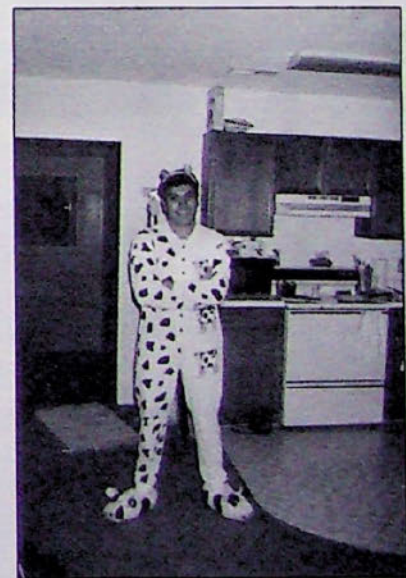
Sleeping Beauty.



"Eat your heart out!"



Latest fashion?



Milk does the body good!

Memories . . .



ABC Staff, 1994

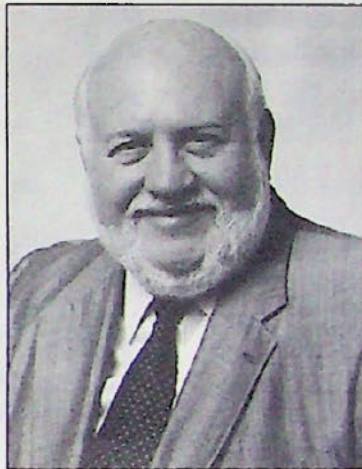
"Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge."

—Proverbs 23:12 (NIV)



David Krogh

PRESIDENT
INSTRUCTOR



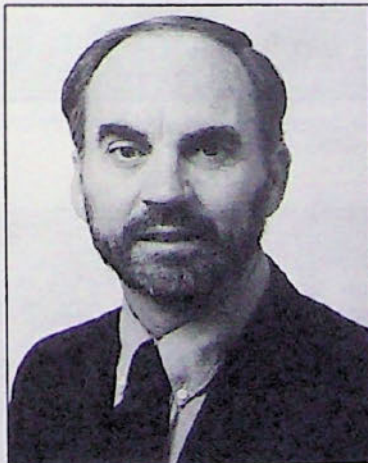
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VICE-PRESIDENT
ACADEMIC DEAN
INSTRUCTOR



Dale Ramsey

DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES
INSTRUCTOR



Joe Martin

INSTRUCTOR



Anthony Buzzard

INSTRUCTOR



Terri Tschaenn

CONTROLLER

Chorale '94

"Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs."

—Psalm 100:2 (NIV)

1993-94 proved to be a dynamic year for the Atlanta Bible College Chorale, which went on tour in the latter half of March, and continued to perform into early April. This was Dale Ramsey's 23rd year as director of the college Chorale.

The 1993-94 Chorale made its debut on December 11th, performing a Christmas concert at New Friends Bible Church in Morrow, Georgia. Those participating in the concert were: Sherri Braswell, Jason Catlin, Mike Cisler, Leigh Farrell, Julie Isham, Peter Krogh, John Nelson, Melinda Nelson, Cheryl Ross, Seth Ross, Chris Seiders, Ronda Small, Carolyn Swartz, Mark Tschaenn, and Lisa Zimmerman.

The first concert of the spring tour was performed on March 22 at Front Royal, Virginia. Continuing on their tour, they held concerts at Columbia Station, Ohio; Fonthill, Ontario; Grand Rapids, Michigan; Kokomo, Indiana; Urbana, Ohio; and Morrow, Georgia. In April, they performed at Lenoir and Monroe, North Carolina and Pelzer, South Carolina. Amy Berry, Sherri Braswell, Jason Catlin, Lisa Ikner, Jeremy Martin, John Nelson, Melinda Nelson, Chris Seiders, Ronda Small, Carolyn Swartz, Mark Tschaenn, and Lisa Zimmerman participated in this tour.

The college Chorale is extremely grateful to those families who housed its members during its spring tour.



The ABC Chorale, performing a Christmas concert at New Friends Bible Church.



The Chorale on tour.



"Aye, matey. Sing 'em the Good News!"



Chorale members strike a pose on the Canadian side of the Niagara Falls.

College Invitational

"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins"

—I Peter 4:8 (NIV)



Dale Ramsey acquaints prospective students with Atlanta Bible College programs.

Eighty-two students and twenty sponsors visited the campus of Atlanta Bible College during the weekend of March 4-6. This was the largest Invitational the college has ever sponsored. Among the highlights of the Invitational were a concert Friday evening, a trip to Sci-Trek (a science museum), a picnic, and a mock "Saturday Night Live" presentation performed by ABC students. We are grateful to pastors, youth leaders, and others who encouraged participation in this event.



Students and sponsors enjoying pizza at the new shelter on the Atlanta Bible College campus.



"And you are . . .?"—Joseph Partain diverts a befuddled Erin Riley during a mock "Saturday Night Live" skit.



Picnic at Grant Park.



Dale Harshman, Wendy Morrison, and Jeremy Martin jam during the Friday evening concert.

Ministry Groups

*"Show me your faith without deeds,
and I will show you my faith by what I do."*

—James 2:18b (NIV)

Ministry continues to be a valuable tool to shape students at Atlanta Bible College, and a vital aspect of the college's curriculum. This year there were several service opportunities available at the college: Calling and visitation, community outreach, children's ministry, prison and nursing home ministry, Fast Forward youth ministry, and the national youth ministry team. Ministry continues to bless the community around the Bible college.



The ABC Children's Ministry group has contributed much to the growing number of kids at New Friends.

National Day of Prayer

*"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition,
with thanksgiving, present your requests to God"*

—Philippians 4:6 (NIV)

May 5th was designated as the National Day of Prayer. A ceremony was held at the Georgia state capitol building to commemorate this event. Several representatives of the Atlanta Bible College staff and student body were at the ceremony. Joe Martin and some ABC students aided this ceremony by serving as ushers. It was an excellent illustration of unity in the body of Christ.



A crowd gathers at the Georgia state capitol building for the National Day of Prayer.

Annual Steak Fry

"...Man does not live by bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."

—Deuteronomy 8:3b (NIV)

Staff and students held the annual Steak Fry on May 6th at the newly constructed shelter, located next to the college apartment building. This was a great time for staff and students to enter into stimulating conversation, joke around, and—of course—chow down on steak! This event was hosted by the Atlanta Bible College Student Government Association (SGA).



Chow time! Students get their fill of food at the annual Steak Fry.

Outdoor Chapel

"Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary..."

—Psalm 150:1 (NIV)

Steve Zimbelman, ABC graduate and former member of the maintenance staff, constructed an outdoor chapel on the campus of Atlanta Bible College during the fall. This chapel has become a welcomed asset to the college and has been used for outdoor chapel services for students. Campfires, personal devotions, and prayer groups have also been located at this site during the 1993-94 school year.



Students hold a chapel service at the outside chapel.

Atlanta Bible College

"It's More Than an Education . . . It's a Way of Life!"



Atlanta Bible College Students—Fall Quarter, 1993

WE'RE GROWING! And we want you to share in the excitement! Atlanta Bible College prepares warriors for Christ to fulfill the Great Commission. This is an excellent place for those who are serious about becoming students of the Bible and furthering the preparation for the coming Kingdom of God. For curriculum information, registration details and consultation, please contact Mr. Kent Ross at 1-800-FISHCO1 or mail a request for an information packet to P.O. Box 100,000, Morrow, GA 30260.

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The
RESTITUTION
HERALD August-September, 1994

- Looking to Our Future
- Final History Newsletter in RH
- Commemoration of Minnesota Conference Anniversary

Theme for This Issue Is the Future

We asked several writers from the Church of God to try and focus on what the future will bring to us. Of course, God's Great Plan of the Ages is the overall plan for the future, but how will the church, the conference and your family change?

Just Amazing, Isn't It . . .

A good friend, Don Snedeker, sent me the article on "trinity" from *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, edited by Bruce M. Metzger and Michael Coogan. The article itself, written by Daniel Schowalter, is amazing to us who have held to biblical unitarianism. Let me quote some of it:



Because the trinity is such an important part of later Christian doctrine, it is striking that the term does not appear in the New Testament. Likewise, the developed concept of three coequal partners in the Godhead found in later creedal formulations cannot be detected within the confines of the canon. . . . Since the Christians "have come to worship Jesus as a god" (Pliny, *Epistles* 96.7), how can they claim to be continuing the monotheistic tradition of the God of Israel? . . . While the New Testament writers say a great deal about God, Jesus and the Spirit of each, no New Testament writer expounds on the relationship among the three in the detail that later Christian writers do . . . While there are are other New Testament texts where God, Jesus and the Spirit are referred to in the same passage, it is important to avoid reading the trinity into places where it does not appear.

Though they would undoubtedly still proclaim themselves Trinitarians, their academic integrity prevents them from forcing that doctrine back into the text of the canon. Don't ever be ashamed of our honest approach to Scripture!

Strength Is Needed

Championship athletic teams often are said to "dig down deep within themselves" for something extra for the last minutes of a competition . . . Michael Jordan in the fourth quarter of a Bulls' game . . . or Joe

Montana executing the two-minute drill. They were superstars because of that quality—but they also inspired their team-mates to rise higher and perform more strongly.

I see that need among us today. It appears we are nearing the end of time . . . moral conditions seem such that they cannot decline any more . . . Israel and the Vatican are coming to a working agreement . . . Israel and the Palestinians are trying to work to develop a time of peace and safety . . . rules and regulations announced by government agencies convince many that there is an officially hostile stance against Christianity emerging . . .

We all need to dig down and ask God for inner strength to remain faithful. We need to encourage one another and all the more as we see those days approaching. The time of tribulation could very well be dawning. You need to strengthen yourself and firmly ground your children and grandchildren in the faith of the Bible. We need strong leaders who will rise up and lead their team-mates to victory in the strength that God gives. It is deeply saddening when reports come in of children of leaders leaving the faith, but thank God we can receive "great joy in finding some of your children walking in the truth." Keep teaching them and loving them into full maturity in Christ.

Subscribers

Thanks for continuing to send in your own renewals and for subscribing for your family and friends. That's one way of encouraging the faith of those you care about. At Minnesota's June conference meeting there were eighteen subscriptions sent. That would be great to see from all of our conferences. I'd like to solicit articles about your state conference meetings — Indiana, Illinois, Virginia, Michigan, Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, our Northeast Conference, our Southeast Conference, or others. We have a rich heritage that can encourage us today.

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.

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

A Peculiar People

I Peter 2:9, 10

IN HIS BOOK *God Came Near*, Max Lucado tells of almost losing his two-year-old daughter when she fell into a swimming pool. He reflects on the effect this near-tragedy had on him:

We almost lost her. The thought was numbing and convicting. It was a divine slap, a gracious knock-on-the-head of severe mercy. Because of it, I came face-to-face with one of Satan's slyest agents, the agent of familiarity. His commission from the black room is clear and it is fatal: *take nothing from your victim, cause him only to take everything for granted!* He'd been on my trail for years and I never knew it, but I knew it now. I've come to recognize his tactics and detect his presence and I'm doing my best to keep him out. His aim is deadly; his goal is *nothing less than to take what is most precious to us and make it appear as most common.* To say that this agent of familiarity breeds contempt is to let him off easy. Contempt is just one of his offspring. He also sires broken hearts, wasted hours and an insatiable desire for more. He is an expert in robbing the sparkle and replacing it with the drab. He invented the yawn, he put the hum in humdrum and his strategy is deceptive. *He won't steal your salvation; he'll just make you forget what it's like to be lost.*

It is our Christian faith, and our passion for it, that makes us peculiar,



By
Jeff Bull

different from the rest of mankind. Yet Satan robs our passion with the tool of familiarity. He takes advantage of our busyness, our laziness and our lack of discipline to turn the precious gifts of God into the ordinary, and we become spiritually numb — “zombies for the Lord.” We can only be shaken out of our catatonia by reminding ourselves of who we are, what Christ has done for us and who God tells us we are in His Word.

In I Peter 2:9, 10 God tells us who we are when we're in Christ. In verse nine we learn that we're a chosen people. How wonderful to be chosen! I've been overweight all my life; fat kids don't get chosen as team captains for sports and they don't get chosen first. They get taken as a last resort. You don't get picked because you're fast, can hit home runs or are a good pitcher. You get taken because all the good players have already been chosen and

they've reached the bottom of the barrel and you're all that's left. I still remember standing on the grass, looking eagerly from one team captain to the other, my arm in the air as high as I could reach, begging, “pick me, pick me, please pick me.” God picks me, not because I'm fast, can hit home runs or am a good pitcher. He doesn't even pick me because He feels sorry for me. God picks me because He wants me! How wonderful to be chosen!

In Hebrew temple worship, only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place, and then only once a year on the Day of Atonement to make sacrifices for the sins of the people. With Christ's death, we all now have access to God. We need no priest to sacrifice for us for we *are* a royal priesthood (v. 9). Any time we want, anywhere we are, we can go directly to God. We don't have to wait for a special time once a year. We don't have to have a priest do our confessing, our pleading, or our praising for us. Like the boss who is more than just an employer to his employees, God always has His door open to us.

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water (Heb. 10:19-22).

Third, we are a holy nation. Holy literally means “set apart.” As God's chosen people and royal priesthood, we are also set apart. Like the beautiful china or sparkling crystal that is stored in that corner cabinet in Mom's dining room, on display for all to see and admire, we have a special purpose. Paper plates and plastic cups may be fine for everyday use, but the china and crystal are “set aside” for special occasions like Christmas, weddings and other celebrations. We, too, have been set aside for God's use. We are no longer part of the paper plate, disposable world. We now belong to God; we

serve Him, not our selfish desires or the mad rush of the world's masses. We are holy.

In Hosea 1:10, God promises,

Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, "You are not my people," they will be called "sons of the living God."

To a people who were not His, God promises that someday they will be His children. Like unwanted children in an orphanage who long ago gave up any hope of being wanted, being loved, being a part of a family, we are ushered into the Father's arms and told that we belong; we are a people belonging to God (1 Peter 2:9). Finally we fit in; we have a home.

As if it isn't enough to know that we are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and a people belonging to God, Peter goes on to stoke our passion in verse 10. Like an ad for a weight loss clinic he draws a before and after picture for us. "Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not mercy, but now you have received mercy." It's your spiritual photo album: once you were weighed down with 300 pounds of sin; now you're lightened because of the mercy of God and Christ's sacrifice. Before and after. Remembering what we were helps us to appreciate who we've become, who God has made us and where He's brought us.



But it is much easier said than done.

As peculiar people we ought to act peculiarly. We are called (in verse nine) to "declare the praises of Him who called us." Why is it, though, that it is so much easier to defend our favorite pro football team, or scream for the local girls' basketball team as they shoot their way to victory, or share why

we admire Uncle Stuart for the way he made a success of himself? It would be peculiar to as boldly declare God's praises. Just as it would be peculiar to live up to the standards of 1 Peter 2:11. "Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul." Peter doesn't just tell us to stay away from *doing* evil, but he tells us it is our calling to *stay away from evil desires*, to not even let those thoughts, ideas or temptations roost in our minds and hearts. The world agrees that evil should be avoided, but it flirts with the desire, with the idea of evil. God calls us to be odd, to be peculiar. Do something really different. When was the last time you were at a movie theater and someone walked out because the show was flirting with "sinful desire"? Now that's peculiar. In verse 12, Peter takes it even a step further and would have us live

such good lives that the pagans see it, respect us and even praise God because of it! Talk about abnormal; that is the life God has given us and to which He has called us.

But here's the problem: we don't want to be peculiar! We want to fit in, be accepted. We don't want the rest of the world shaking its head at us, mocking us and even hating us. Yet that is our row to hoe. We in the Church of God even have



it harder. If Christians are peculiar, we're oddballs! While the world hates all followers of Jesus, it, and "orthodox Christianity," hate us even more. Because of the distinctive truths that we believe the Bible teaches, we are outcasts from the Christian world as well as the world at large. Yet Jesus challenges us to live up to our calling, to our identity. In John 6:53-65, Jesus told His listeners that unless they ate His flesh and drank His blood they could have no part in the kingdom. Many left Him at that time, yet Jesus didn't reconsider His theology, reevaluate His philosophy or chase after those who left Him, begging them to reconsider. He knew who He was and He was true to it. We are God's peculiar people: a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and a people belonging to God. That is fact; it is written in the eternal stone of God's Word and it will not change. The only question remaining is this: Will we be peculiar and act as the children our Father has made us? Regain your passion. Don't let familiarity steal the joy and pleasure of being all God wants you to be.

This sermon was delivered by Pastor Jeff Bull at the 120th anniversary conference of the Minnesota Churches of God.

A Long-Lived Conference

THIS PAST JUNE, THE Minnesota Conference of the Churches of God met for their 120th consecutive conference. The conference was first organized on December 18, 1874 at Dassel, Minnesota. It took root from a controversy in the Minnesota Advent Christian Church over the proper name for the Church. From 1885 to 1889 several attempts were made to reunite the two bodies, but "the majority of the Church of God ministers believed that the only biblical name for the Church is the Church of God, and that to deny the name would be denying the proper honor to God and His Word."¹ The two bodies maintained close fellowship for several years, but gradually other differences began to emerge which widened the gap, such as differing views on the preexistence of Christ, the restoration of Israel, and the millennial reign of Christ. Churches included in the first conference were Silver Lake, Swan Lake, Ellsworth, Forest Prairie, Steelville, and Otter Creek. The officers were Elder William Parson, president; Elder E.E. Thoms, secretary; and Elder William Matheny, treasurer.

For some 32 years the Minnesota Conference labored in isolation, not realizing that other conferences of like mind existed. It was a simple act of God that made the conference aware of other organizations:



By
Vivian Kirkpatrick

About the turn of the century J.M. Dorn, Indiana, went to Minnesota for his health, settling near Sebeka. In the year 1906, he and his wife left their home in a covered wagon for Texas, intent on spreading the message of the Kingdom of God by distributing tracts. The second night out, they stopped near Paynesville at a farm home. At the supper table discussion centered on the purpose of their trip and the distinctive doctrines of the Church of God. The people where they were staying said, "There are some church folks at Eden Valley that believe like you do." The next morning the Dorns drove to Eden Valley and found some members of the church. They told them about the Church of God conferences in Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, and other states.²

The next year two of the Minnesota ministers traveled to the Iowa Conference and the group became part of the

larger Church of God.

In 1898 the Minnesota Conference began publishing a magazine called *The Day Dawn and Harvest Messenger* under the leadership of editor E.D. Thoms and assistant editor James Patrick. In June of 1922 Elder F.L. Austin met with the Minnesota State Conference and they voted to fully endorse the General Conference organization. In order to facilitate that organization the magazine was turned over to the General Conference and merged with *The Restitution Herald*. During the years it was published, E.D. Thoms, James A. Patrick, A.E. Hatch, and J.J. Schaumburg served as editors.

Like all religious organizations at times, the Minnesota Conference has struggled with financial needs. The following is recorded in the *History of the Minnesota Church of God Conference*:

In 1883 a plan was adopted to raise money to support the field work (i.e. the state evangelist). This plan was a request that each male member who was the head of a home pay into the conference twenty-five cents on every one hundred dollars worth of property he had, yearly; that all young men pay two dollars per annum; and that the sisters in the church pay one dollar yearly. Though for a little while this plan may have brought additional money into the Conference it seems that it was most impossible to enforce the rule and soon other methods had to be resorted to in raising funds.³

It seems like some things never change.

The faithfulness and dedication of the early work might be attested to by the example of Elder E.E. Thoms, a charter member of the conference, who served as its first secretary. Brother Thoms was born on January 15, 1838, ordained in 1877, and during the next 47 years, until his death in January of 1924, he baptized over 800 people. In *Historical Waymarks of the Church of God*, Brother Randall, who himself had been president of the Minnesota Conference (both of his grandfathers having been early workers in the conference), tells how Elder W.L. Crowe, when conducting meetings south of

Mora, would visit daily in the neighborhood. To get from where he was staying to that neighborhood he had to cross where the Snake and Groundhouse Rivers met. It was springtime and the ice was just breaking up. Brother Crowe would undress from the waist down and wade for more than a block through waist-deep water filled with floating ice, and then re-dress to carry the gospel message of the kingdom to the area. The early history of the Minnesota Conference was one of pioneers willing to go to any lengths to spread the gospel of the kingdom.

Over the years there have been some 41 congregations and 13 church buildings which have belonged to the conference. Deaths, people moving, and congregations merging have led to where we are today. At the present time there are five churches in the Minnesota Conference. The oldest organized church in the conference is the St. Cloud Church of God. It began in a home in 1886 and purchased the present site in 1891. The Eden Valley Church was organized in 1899 and erected its first building in 1900. When an older church, Eden Lake, lost its building to a fire in 1905, its members transferred to Eden Valley. The present church was built in 1963. The church in Hector was begun when a former New York shipbuilder foreman moved to Hector in 1879. Finally, after 18 years, his first convert was Charles Johnson. Charles often visited with Frank and Anna Johnson and they accepted the truth in 1901. Hector was a home church until the early 1940s when lots were purchased, and a former schoolhouse was obtained and moved to serve as a place of worship. The present church was finished in January 1962. The Pine Grove Bible Church began as a home Bible study in the John Denchfield home in 1944. Regular services were started in 1951 at a downtown YMCA. A constitution was adopted in 1954 and services were first conducted in a church building on October 18, 1964. The present church building was dedicated in September of 1990. The Litchfield Church of God was a daughter church of the Eden Valley church. In 1947 11 members

began building their own building. The present church building was purchased in 1975.

Due to the dedication and foresight of the leadership of the Minnesota State Conference, in 1954 14 acres of land were purchased on Long Lake, north of Eden Valley, for the establishment of a camp and conference grounds. About half of that land is on an island. A causeway to that island was completed in 1955, the first buildings were completed in 1957, and the chapel, sitting on the highest point of the island, was completed in 1970. The campground today is host to our two annual conferences, a large youth camp, several church and youth retreats, and many family reunions. Since we own our campground, the cost of our yearly youth camp is minimal compared with many camps. This factor helps us draw many youth from outside the Church of God, sometimes up to 50% of the campers. Thus our camps serve as an evangelistic arm of our conference.

The Minnesota Conference has also played a large role in missions. It began in June of 1912 when Charles R. Bedantachari of Madras, India attended a conference and was ordained by the Minnesota Conference. After returning to India, he and other ministers were supported by Bible Faith Missions. This organization was a joint effort of the Advent Christian Church and the Church of God. It was established by Dr. and Mrs. Taylor of Maine. In 1914 Sarah K. Taylor attended our conference to encourage participation in Bible Faith Missions. She was also ordained that year by the Minnesota Conference of the Churches of God. This began what has been a continually stressed emphasis in our conference. The first Mission Director of the Church of God was Elder S.O. Ross, many of our young people have participated in short-term mission trips,

and last year it was the Minnesota Conference that proposed the motion that gave the General Conference a sending agency, "The Lord's Harvest International."

Over the years Minnesota has given the Church of God many of its spiritual leaders: James A. Patrick, Sydney Magaw, Clyde Randall, V.E. Kirkpatrick, and S.O. Ross, just to name a few. Today, I count at least six of our licensed ministers who owe their theological heritage to Minnesota. Three of the above-mentioned men have served as head of the Church of God General Conference. In the Minnesota Conference, as we look back, we are justifiably proud of our heritage. We also know we cannot be content with the past, but using it as our foundation we must push on, sharing the gospel of the Kingdom of God until Jesus returns.

¹ Sydney Magaw, ed., *History of the Minnesota Church of God Conference*, 1931, p. 17.

² Clyde Randall, *Historical Waymarks of the Church of God*, 1976, p. 91.

³ *History of the Minnesota Church of God Conference*, p. 14.



The Effectiveness of Today's Sunday Schools

While visiting my in-laws' church in Weiser, Idaho, I found an old tract from the National Sunday School Association and The Greater Chicago Sunday School Association. I idly picked it up from the dust-covered tract rack and looked it over.

As I did, it set me thinking about Sunday School in general, about our own Sunday Schools and, inevitably, about the state of our churches. I sadly concluded that many of us attend churches that experience little, if any, numerical success, and may not be having any other kind of success either.

Not so many years ago our Sunday Schools were vibrant, happy, thriving parts of our churches. They were often the key avenue for individuals to enter our churches. There boys and girls, but also teens, and even adults, came to know and understand the Bible stories that were the base for their faith.

But in recent years something has happened; now Sunday Schools are thought to be anachronistic in the new market-driven, church growth mentality. It is said that they don't meet needs and have little or no place in today's church.

While I am a strong proponent of "church growth" thinking, and am convinced it is necessary if our churches are going to reach others for Christ's Kingdom, I am unconvinced that Sunday Schools should be placed with old tracts and flannel boards to gather dust. In both new church plants and existing churches, there is a place for lively, relevant small group meetings called Sunday Schools.

Sunday Schools, rightly focused and directed, can be a part of our church's strategy to do what God called us to do—"reach His lost people, and with them grow up into Christ." That old tract was not wrong in its "Ten Reasons for Attending Sunday School." Read them over. They do make sense. We just need to see their importance and to figure out how to apply them.

Ten Reasons for Attending Sunday School

1. It teaches the Bible, which is the basis for our faith in God, and leads us to Christ as our personal Savior and Lord.
2. It trains our mind and heart along the lines of eternal concerns.
3. It enables us to enjoy the friendship and fellowship of genuine, searching Christians.
4. It helps to develop the Christian character necessary to victoriously face life's problems.
5. It is the chief aim of Sunday School to teach us to be examples of the believer in word and deed.
6. It presents interesting programs for you and your family's delight.
7. It has classes for every age so that the entire family can go and profit from learning God's Plan, but at each one's own level.
8. It affords ample opportunity to serve God and the church in activities that are not offered elsewhere, and it directs toward areas of service beyond the church.
9. It turns our eyes upward to heaven from which we expect to see Jesus returning to establish God's Kingdom.
10. That hour or so spent in Sunday School each Sunday could not be and would not be spent more profitably elsewhere.

LOOKING AHEAD:

In the next five issues I will develop themes I mentioned here. The changes advocated are not new, they are old. They have been tried, and tested and found to be successful.

Issue # 2 *The Purposes of Sunday School*

What do we hope to accomplish through Sunday School? Are we using a shotgun approach, aimlessly trying to hit something, when what is needed is a rifle, aimed at a clearly defined target?

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 an older member who "has always been the superintendent." These faithful ones may achieve 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" to revive and resurge both attendance and, more importantly, conversions of people to Christ.

When I Am Weak, Then I Am Strong

2 Corinthians 12:10

“IT TAKES THREE times as long to climb out of the Grand Canyon as it does to go down,” the park ranger was saying. This was our first night of camping on the south rim of one of nature’s supreme spectacles, and we had come to see firsthand what a canyon a mile in depth really looked like. The vacationer next to us in the amphitheater was from Houston and through casual conversation I discovered that he was very interested in going down into the canyon. We both decided to hike down part-way into the canyon in the morning.

By six I had slipped quietly out of the sleeping bag, dressed, and eaten a scanty breakfast. At seven I donned my pith helmet, shouldered a small canteen (the only one I could rent held only a pint), and waited at the head of Bright Angel Trail which leads down through a series of switchbacks into the other-world of the Grand Canyon. There was a cool breeze, considering that it was August, and the shadows of the buttes were still long.

When my hiking companion did not show up, I made the first of several near-fatal errors in judgment. I chose to hike alone. The family was still asleep, and I was ready for a hike, so I began the descent to Indian Gardens, following the narrow dusty trail.



By
Tim Pearson

There are two drinking fountains on this trail to relieve the parched thirst of the explorer, but they were well guarded by angry bees. The last very steep part of the outer rim is notched by Jacob’s Ladder. This series of steep switchbacks led into a narrow valley still deep in early morning shadows.

No longer did the angle of the descent push at my legs from behind, making foot and leg muscles ache. Now I could walk more erect and relaxed, enjoying the greenery of Indian Gardens as this oasis appeared around the bend.

This garden spot serves as the source of water for the village of Grand Canyon. There is an old shed nestled among the trees and a few outbuildings. One of these is the pumphouse, and on this particular day two men were laboring feverishly over the pump, which had developed trouble. The only other

source of water for those living on the rim is at Williams, Arizona, an hour away.

It was still early morning, and it seemed a shame to walk all that way and to return not having seen the Colorado River. There were two choices: I could go out onto the Tonto Platform and look down into the inner gorge to see the river, or I could follow the little stream into the very bottom of the canyon. I chose the latter and thus made a second mistake. I overestimated my ability to travel so great a distance and to return over that same steep trail.

The narrow ledge on which the trail was built caused me some concern, especially where the path had washed away and had been repaired by embedding flat stones into the side of the cliff and packing dirt on top of them. The trail finally wended its way down into the narrow steep-walled crevasse that, in turn, led to the Colorado River. Here I examined the muddy water and waded in it to cool my feet. Now I could say that I had walked in this famous canyon river.

By this time it was ten-thirty in the morning, and the air was becoming quite warm. Before coming to visit Arizona I had read about the suspension bridge that is slung from wall to wall on the inner gorge in the Grand Canyon, and I wanted very much to see it. Since it was just a mile or so upstream I determined to follow the trail in that direction instead of turning back. Thus the third mistake was made and the “point of no return” was reached. It would now be too far back to the rim for me to hike even though I had most of the day left in which to do it.

At one point the trail left the river and crossed a stretch of sand for a few hundred feet. As I trudged through the sand I realized for the first time that my legs were getting tired. A little farther on I could look down upon the river and see the buildings of Phantom Ranch on the north bank. This overnight stop is popular with those adventuresome

souls who ride the mules down into the canyon, stay overnight, and return on the following day.

Finally, there was the bridge anchored into the solid rock and guyed to keep the span from swaying dangerously in those tricky air currents. It is wide enough for a fully laden mule to cross, and it is the only bridge across the Colorado River for more than two hundred miles.

By now it was eleven o'clock and getting extremely hot. The buttes towered above like mountains, and the rims of the canyon looked like dark streaks far in the distance.

As I stood assessing what I had done and how I was to get out, the wooden trail marker pointing back read: "South Rim 10 Miles," and pointing ahead: "South Rim 6 1/2 Miles." I had already traveled the ten miles and had no wish to return by the same route. Besides this, it seemed that the shorter trail could be traversed in shorter time. This latter, the Kaibab Trail, is much steeper, and there is no drinking water on it. It is also little traveled, not like the popular Bright Angel Trail. True to form, I made another dangerous decision which I was soon to regret.

The trail suddenly became extremely steep and progress was painfully slow. In a few minutes I met a ranger on muleback who suggested that I eat my lunch in the shade of a large rock just up the trail. Little did he know that my lunch consisted of some vanilla wafers which I had to throw away when I found that my throat was too dry to swallow them.

By noon I could hear the water sloshing dangerously low in the canteen. It was about then that I emerged from the inner gorge and took a long and wilting look at the sand of the platform again. It seemed much too far to the sheer cliffs on the outer rim. Step after weary step I followed the obscure trail across as hot and forbidding a desert as the Southwest can boast. Cactuses grew everywhere, but trees and grass were far above in another

world. The temperature, I have been told, often reaches 120 degrees and there is very little shade.

A man can become confused and lost, as three men did a short time later. Two of them did not survive, and the third was found just short of dehydration and death.

Eventually the rocks seemed to come closer and the inevitable steep switchbacks began again. In time every curve looked like every other one, and I seemed to be standing still although my feet were moving.

As fatigue and the heat took their toll it became difficult to think of anything but water. I could see myself lying in a tub of cool water drinking iced tea, and the thought would not leave my mind.

The trail is marked by mile stakes, so when the next marker read "2 Miles" to the rim an inspiration hit me. Why not drink half of the remaining water now and the other half at the "1 Mile" mark? This would ration the supply and get me to the rim where there was sure to be water.

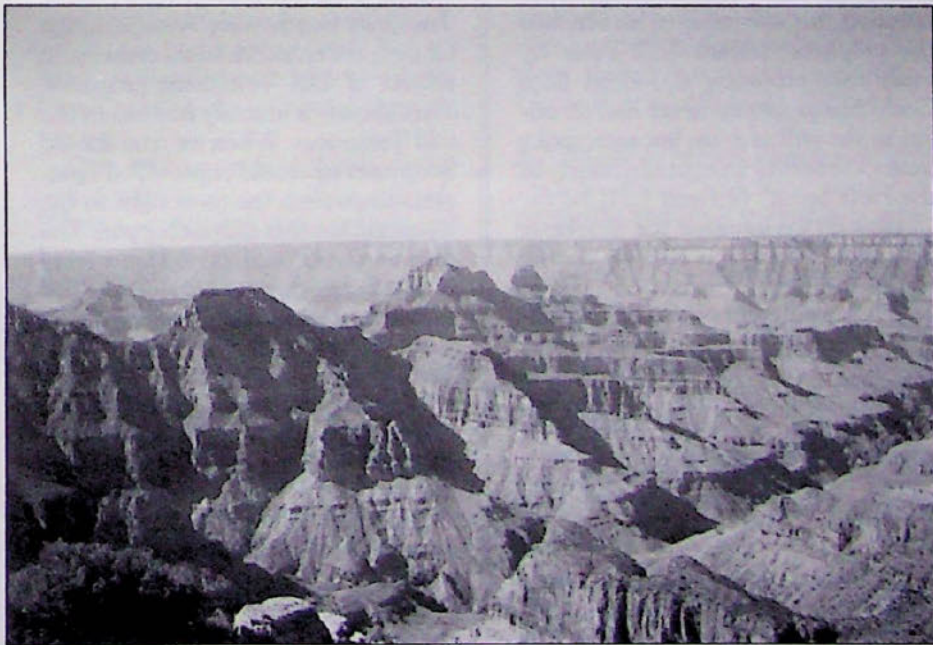
After a long time I began to have to sit down and rest on the rocks fre-

quently. I realized the gravity of the situation for the first time when I sank down to rest on a flat stone, only to look back down the trail and see the last place where I had rested. It was scarcely a hundred feet away!

My legs were getting weak by the time I could see the next white post, but I spurred ahead so I could drink the last few drops of the tepid water. To my horror the marker read "1 1/2 Miles" to the south rim instead of "1 Mile." Immediately I bolted down the last of the water and pushed on, knowing that I might not make it. After what seemed like hours I came to an emergency telephone. Undoubtedly this was there for people like me who over-extended themselves and had to be helped out of the canyon. Foolishly I made another wrong decision and pushed on.

In the first place, it was humiliating to be rescued after dark and to have everyone telling about the "drag-out case" as often happens at the canyon. Also, I was sure that the cost would be prohibitive and that my family would panic if they heard that I was in danger.

(Continued on Page 23)



Guidelines to Prophetic Interpretations

GOD'S WORD HOLDS the key to unlocking the future—history not yet lived. God has much to say about the future of Israel and the nations, as well as the Church.

It is clear that God wants us to know the future. "The secret things belong to the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deut. 29:29). "Surely the LORD God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secrets unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). Peter reveals that prophecy is indeed from God: "For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21, NIV).

How do we interpret the prophetic Scriptures? Well, just like we do the rest of the Bible. There is no need to switch to a different system of interpretation. Indeed to do so leads to bad exegesis. After all, the conclusion reached is determined by the system of interpretation one uses. These are some guidelines that have been personally helpful in interpreting the prophetic Scriptures.

1. Recognize three groups of mankind. The Bible divides all mankind into three groups—the Jews, the Gentiles and the Church of God (1 Cor.



By
Hollis Partlowe

10:32). God has a program for each. The Jews began with Abraham; the Church at Pentecost. Israel is the main subject of Old Testament prophecy. The Church is scarcely noticed in the Old Testament. When we read the old Scriptures we would expect God's program to go from the cross right to the kingdom, but that did not happen. The Jews to whom Jesus came (John 1:11) rejected His messiahship, and God turned to the nations to take out of them a people for His name (Acts 15:14).

The Jews worshiped at the Temple in Jerusalem; the Church worships wherever two or three are gathered in the name of Christ. Israel served God under the Law; the Church has a new covenant with God which could not come into force until Jesus died (Heb. 9:15-17, NASB). The Church rallies around the cross and the empty tomb. Israel knows nothing about either.

All Scripture is written for us but not all of it is written to us. All Scripture has one interpretation but many applications. Moreover, Scripture recognizes two conditions—life and death. There is no in-between. Life exists in two places— heaven and earth. All life in heaven is perfect and immortal. Jesus taught us to pray: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10, NASB). Yes, someday God's holy will, will be done on earth as it is being done in heaven today. In the meantime, all life on earth is both sinful and mortal. That's why Jesus was born here, died here and is coming back to earth to establish His eternal kingdom "under the whole heaven" (Dan. 7:27). "There will be no more curse" (Rev. 22:3). Scripture says nothing about sin being anywhere except on earth. Furthermore, the Bible adamantly teaches that there was no sin or death before Adam (Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:21-22).

2. Recognize the clear distinction between Israel and the Church. When the Bible writers speak of Israel they are referring to the physical descendants of Abraham through his grandson Jacob whose name was changed to Israel. The Church (*ekklesia*) is made up of the called-out ones, called out from among the Jews and Gentiles and baptized by the Spirit into one body (1 Cor. 12:13).

Gentile believers coming into the early Church caused quite a stir. While the Judaizers and Pharisees believed in the death and resurrection of Christ, they insisted that that was not enough. The Gentile believers must be circumcised and become Jews (Acts 15:1-6). The first church conference was called "to consider this matter." The Apostles and elders concluded: "To whom we gave no such commandment" (v. 24b).

To the Church Paul wrote: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). One loses his old nationality when he comes into Christ, "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3:11).

3. Recognize the distinct character of the Church. The Church is unique. It is a New Testament entity. As late in His earthly ministry as Matthew 16:18, Jesus said: "I will build my Church." The Church was still future then. Without the death and resurrection of Christ there could be no Church. That was certainly the central message of the Apostles (Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Peter 1:3). In a very real sense the Church was born on the day of Pentecost when God baptized that little company of struggling believers into one body by His Spirit. Then with new hope and conviction they went up and down the highways and byways of the Roman Empire, proclaiming in the power of the Holy Spirit a crucified, risen and coming Savior.

Covenant theologians like George Ladd who see the Church in the Old Testament and the New Testament as a further development of it, are astray from the biblical track. Israel is God's wife (Isa. 54:5; Jer. 3:14). The Church is both the bride and the body of Christ (Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:21-33). God's people in the Old Testament were called the household of Israel. The Church is the elect of the New Testament. Israel is the elect of the Old Testament. Elect means divinely chosen. The Church is called "a mystery," that is, a new revelation, something not revealed in the Old Testament (Eph. 3:3-9; Col. 1:24-26; Rom. 16:25). The Church is separate and distinct from Israel in position, privilege and prospect. Distinction is maintained between the two, although their destiny is the same — the coming kingdom of God. They will have different roles under the rulership of the King of Kings.

4. A consistently literal interpretation. Literal interpretation means explaining the original sense of the Bible according to the normal and customary usage of its language. This approach allows for figures of speech such as parables, metaphors, similes, personification, hyperboles, irony, allegories, riddles, poetic descriptions, taunts, etc.

When some come to prophecy they witch methods of interpretation from

the literal method (which I prefer to call normal or plain) to a spiritualized method. Such expositors usually apply the prophecies concerning the future restoration and conversion of Israel and the millennial kingdom to the Church today. They deny any future for Israel and any literal reign of Christ on earth. This is the basic difference between fundamentalists and evangelicals. Most fundamentalists are consistent in their literal method of interpretation, while some evangelicals switch to a spiritualizing method when they come to some prophetic passages.

There has never been a fulfillment of Bible prophecy that has not been literal. The passages concerning Christ's first coming were fulfilled in minute detail. How should we interpret the prophecies about Jesus' second coming? The same way, of course.

5. Recognize the dispensational aspect of Scripture. Dispensation means stewardship, economy, administration, management of a household. It has to do with how God has managed His program through the ages. God's program was administered differently before the flood than after the flood. His plan is managed differently today than during the Mosaic Age, etc. We don't offer sacrifices today, but trust in the "one sacrifice for sins for ever" which Jesus made on our behalf (Heb. 10:12). God has required man to respond differently to His administration through the ages.

One might compare all this to the way a man manages his household. When a couple gets married each one has some changes to make. Then the first child arrives and changes must be made; then a second child joins the family — more changes. Then the children go off to school; they finish school and get married. The couple is back to the empty nest. Dispensation refers to the way the couple manages their affairs through the different stages. Likewise God has managed mankind differently at different times in history.

6. Premillennialism. The one thousand year reign of Jesus Christ is from David's throne in Jerusalem. Many

prophecies won't fit in any other place. The millennium is necessary for many Old Testament prophecies to be fulfilled since the Church is certainly not fulfilling them in any literal sense.

Revelation 20 reveals the duration of Jesus' reign. It will be one thousand years. Christ will reign for 1000 years on this earth and forever on the new earth (Rev. 21-22).

7. Daniel 2 — The ABC's of Bible prophecy. This vision sweeps the whole course of Gentile world history from Daniel's day until the kingdom of God is established on earth. Nebuchadnezzar's dream is recorded in verses 1-30. In verses 31-45 Daniel gives the interpretation of this strange revelation. He reveals that four world kingdoms would come upon the stage of world history. Almost all literal expositors interpret them as Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, in that order, beginning in 605 B.C. The fifth kingdom is to be the kingdom from heaven which shall stand forever.

Daniel 7 reveals the same outline of the four world powers pictured by four beasts out of the sea. In both chapters Daniel gives major attention to the fourth kingdom, then concludes "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom on earth" (Dan. 7:23). The fourth kingdom is Rome, which will be revived in its final form and suffer complete destruction at the coming of Christ (Dan. 2:35, 44-45; 7:27).*

8. "Do not go beyond what is written" (1 Cor. 4:6, NIV). One danger of prophetic teaching is undue dogmatism. Some points of eschatology are not clear to us. Let's stop where Scripture stops.

As believers we live in constant expectation of Jesus' return. Listen to Him: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is" (Mark 13:32-33). ❖

*For a study of the book of Daniel see the booklet, *Daniel's Prophetic Outline of World History*, Box 100,000, Morrow, GA 30260 — \$0.95 (plus postage).

Acceptable Bigotry

Our forefathers came to this country seeking religious freedom. Today, the only politically correct bigotry is bigotry against religious people. Given that fact, why is anyone surprised that the nation is crime-ridden and morally bankrupt?

J. Stewart, in a letter to the editors of *The Kansas City Star*, April 8, 1994

Self-Absorption

Garrison Keillor, the "Prairie Home Companion" humorist who's been turning serious lately, in the *Washington Monthly*:

My generation strikes me as self-absorbed. You hear them at the grocery store deliberating the balsamic vinegar and olive oils, the cold pressed virgin olive oil vs. the warm pressed olive oil, and you think, "These people probably subscribe to an olive oil magazine, called *New Dimension*, people with too much money and very little character, people who are all sensibility and no sense, all nostalgia and no history, the people my Aunt Eleanor used to call 'a \$10 haircut on a 59-cent head.'" Whitewater is their kind of scandal. It's carbonated, it's less about what's real than it is about perceptions. It's all surface. But people of my generation are into surface. That's why they are so easily disillusioned by politics. It doesn't look pretty.

—quoted by the *Atlanta Constitution*

Ten Commandments for Today

Douglas Taylor-Weiss, rector of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Dayton, Ohio, sardonically proposes a version of the Ten Commandments based on today's culture:

1. Have a good day.
2. Shop.
3. Eliminate pain.
4. Be up-to-date.
5. Relax.
6. Express yourself.
7. Have a happy family.
8. Be entertaining.
9. Be entertained.
10. Buy entertainment.

—*Context*, February 1, 1992

Let's Talk about Religion!

Respondents to a poll in *Glamour*, a magazine for women, indicated strong support for including religion as part of public life. Eighty-two percent said that public displays — nativity scenes, menorahs — should be permitted.

—*Discipleship Journal*, July/August, 1992.

Praying in a Busy World

In a society that seems to be filled with urgencies and emergencies, prayer appears to be an unnatural form of behavior.

Without fully realizing it, we have accepted the idea that "doing things" is more important than prayer and have come to think of prayer as something for times when there is nothing urgent to do. While we might agree verbally, or even intellectually, with someone who stresses the importance of prayer, we have become children of an impatient world to such an extent that our behavior often expresses the view that prayer is a waste of time.

—Henri Nouwen, *Seeds of Hope*

Keep Scripture out of Court

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court has reversed a death sentence because the prosecutor quoted the Bible when he asked that convicted killer Karl Chambers be executed. District Attorney H. Stanley Rebert told the jurors, "Karl Chambers has taken a life. As the Bible says, 'And the murderer shall be put to death.'" Justice Nicholas P. Papadakos, writing for the court, warned that prosecutors could face disciplinary action if they use the Bible or any other religious work in requesting the death penalty.

—*The Christian Century*, December 11, 1991

Church and State Too Separate?

What is too often missing from all the talk of religious and secular rights is any mention of mutual respect. When people claim the right to pray or not to pray, to worship or not to worship, as they choose, they must also respect the right of others to choose differently . . . For God to be kept out of the classroom or out of America's public debate by nervous school administrators or overcautious politicians serves no one's interests. That restriction prevents people from drawing on the country's rich and diverse religious heritage for guidance, and it degrades the nation's moral discourse by placing a whole realm of theological reasoning out of bounds.

—*Time*, December 9, 1991

Bring Back Morality

In our desire to maintain separation of church and state we have moved increasingly toward a position of removing religion and morality from the public arena. Now that we are experiencing a moral decline in our nation, we are demanding that our legislative bodies take the actions needed to restore civility and morality to our society.

Historical revisionists would have us believe that our Founding Fathers functioned without a religious compass. The words of one of the founders refute such a claim. "And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion . . . reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

Perhaps we as a society would do well to heed and apply these words delivered by George Washington in his Farewell Address delivered on Sept. 19, 1796.

—Leonard Wiehe

CHURCH OF GOD GENERAL CONFERENCE HISTORY NEWSLETTER



Volume 6

August, September 1994

Number 6

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Thanks to all who wrote

To Gordon Allen:
Bromley, Kent, England

Glad to hear from you. Trust you received the back issues of the HISTORY NEWSLETTER. Please write again.

To Harry and Thelma Goekler:
Harlingen, Texas

Congratulations on your 50th anniversary July 20, 1994. Wish I could have been there. Keep in touch.

To Betty Ackels:
Raymore, Missouri

Always good to hear from you, Betty. Thanks for the music. Cokesbury is always a good source for the older hymns. Enjoyed the info on Harry Truman too.

Quoting from Carol Smith
Chappell, Nebraska

I am writing to identify the enclosed picture. [HN Oct./Nov. 1993] This is a picture of Verna [Thayer] and me on the piano bench. It was taken during Bible School . . . about the middle



50's . . . At the time, Jim McLain was serving the Western Nebraska Conference as an evangelist. We had small groups of members in Chappell, Alliance, and Wray, CO . . .

Editor's note: It took a long time, but thanks for noticing, and thanks for responding!! I remember Sr. Thayer fondly, and probably met you when the Gospelettes toured the U.S. of A. in 1961 and stopped in Chappell for a service. — JS

To Byron Williams:
Cleveland, Ohio

Enjoyed your comments regarding the last HN. Thanks for donating a copy of your book to our archives. Will you write a poem for the Church of God?

To Evelyn Fisher:
Niles, Michigan

I really enjoyed hearing from you. Readers: See her letter elsewhere in this issue. The obit of Bro. Burch is also included.

To Gary Shearer:
Pacific Union College

The bibliographies you sent are outstanding. I am sending them on to Kent Ross for addition to our archives in Atlanta. Thanks for the names.

To Jim Mattison:
Pelzer, South Carolina

Hi, Jim; Nice to hear from you, a former Oregonian as you are. We share a common history and interest in Maurertown and Fort Valley ministries as well. I'm printing your letter mainly as sent. Thanks for the copies of *The Trumpet Messenger*. I always enjoy reading about history of the Southwest Conference.

To All Who Wrote or are thinking about it:

I have not had the space to include the full text of each of your letters. I will try to do so from time to time. Keep writing. Exchange of ideas is good. If I don't see you soon, we'll meet in the Kingdom.

In Christ, Jan

Memories of Texas

Dear Jan,

Harry Goekler has been sending me many clippings and I'll send some on to you.

While I was answering his question about whether or not I had attended church at Ater, out from Gatesville, it brought back old memories, which I might share with you, since it is in the history line.

I had resigned from Happy Woods in the spring of 1948, and Mary Helen and I and our two children, Mike and Ruth, went over to the Texas Conference, held near Gatesville at a community called Ater (I think it was about 12 miles from Gatesville). I think we stayed with Ernest and Erna McCorkle. I know Ernest took some videos of our little children, which we viewed many years later. Emory and Mid Macy lived in a house at Ater near the community church, which by that time was where the Church of God people met. I remember that a scorpion got inside Mid's dress front and stung her several times while we were there. Quite exciting for her. Later, a scorpion stung me at Harlingen. Kinda like a severe bee sting.

The speakers I remember there were Vernis [Wolfe], and maybe Bro. [Melville] Lyon. Vernis gave up one of his sermon times to me so that the Texas people could meet me.

I'm not sure if it was that year, or later, that Bro. A.S. Bradley's son-in-law, Tolly Roberts, spoke one Sunday afternoon at Ater at the Texas Conference. The benches were on 3 sides of the pulpit. I was sitting on his right side while he faced the middle benches. He was preaching with a lot of vim and vigor. Suddenly his teeth shot out of his mouth, he caught them in mid-air and slapped them back in. I think I was the only one who saw it. From then on his sermon was more subdued.

It was there in 1948 Sr. Carrie Robbins encouraged us to come to Texas, down near the valley, to where she lived at Riviera. She wanted to get some Church of God work started there. She told us we could live in a little house behind her house, by the orange and grapefruit orchard.

I had been wanting to be a missionary to the Mexican people and had even gone to the Mexican consul in New Orleans to see how I might get into Mexico. He was a Catholic and felt if Mexico needed any

preaching the priests would do it. He told me that I would have to have proof of support, written, so that I would not become a burden on the state there. So that appeared to close the door to Mexico.

However, the National Bereans voted to send me \$50 a month to do missionary work with the Mexicans. With these things in mind, and wanting to go somewhere and work for the Lord, along with further correspondence from Sr. Robbins, we finally decided this is what God wanted us to do.

However, at this time we needed to leave Happy Woods, we had not yet reached this point, so I moved our goods back to my home in Oregon, Illinois, then later moved them from there to Riviera, Texas, Ivan Magaw helping me. Then I went back for my family.

At Riviera, Sr. Robbins was instrumental in getting me lined up to preach in the local Methodist church to the Methodist people and to the Church of God people. The Methodists had no minister at that time. At that time I was good at leading children's choruses, and in the next year and three months the number of children attending increased. Also there was a good adult attendance. I remember well the sweet mother of the Williams boys (Marvin, Leonard, Buryl, and Burton) and girl (Eulane), Mrs. Maudie Williams. After such a sweet association for those 8 years, we felt we were getting into a rut and also that I had taught the church all I knew and they needed to hear someone else, so I resigned. As I read the resignation, all the women started to cry. Mrs. Maudie couldn't hear well, and didn't understand why the women were crying, but she felt the same way when she understood. And so did we. It was like leaving home. Our hearts have always since then been with those dear folks.

It was there at Harlingen I compiled the subject concordance and encouraged the Texas/Louisiana youth rallies. Bro.

Macy, Bro. Harry Goekler (at Happy Woods), Bro. Gordon Landry (Baton Rouge) and I worked together on these. There were three of them, with about 40 young people attending. The first year several of us slept in tents. I remember it was hot those two weeks, getting up to 115 for two days. John Hayse was our chief cook, with help from many others. He cooked on a large wood stove. Good times, those. Cheryl Macy was about 8 then. Joyce was a little older. She was one of those I took to national camp when the kids were about 16. Joyce, Allan Hayse, Deanna Crawford, Evelyn Garner, and Don Wolfe, from Gatesville. 1500 miles. But distance meant little to a Texan. Bro. Macy traveled from one end of the state to the other in his work, having Bible classes many places. It was 800 miles from his home in Gatesville to El Paso, but he made the trip many times. He kept the state united with a monthly Texas Conference bulletin, giving all the news of the state. We worked together those 8 years. He was Texas evangelist 10 years, one year before we came, and one year after we left for Blood River. We felt we had done a good work.

In the process of time various ministers ministered at Harlingen, but the young people lost interest (and moved away) as they grew up (most of them) and it seemed difficult to convert new ones. Also, the ministers had to work out, and could not give full time to the church work. Several ministers I remember who were there were Billie Kennedy, Larry Townsend, Leon Driskill, Harry Goekler, and Austin Railton.

So now in 1994, the church building was sold, a necessary thing to do. Buryl had been keeping it up these last many years. Another church group bought it, one from Mexico. Avondale has many Mexicans living there. Perhaps they can do more good there than we were able to do.

We have so many lovely memories of that work, and the people there. May God

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continue to bless them and us in our old age as we look forward to Christ's coming and a place in the wonderful Kingdom of God.

—By James Mattison

Adventist Bibliographies Available

Dear Jan:

I received your letter of 8 March 1994. Thanks for the subscription information on the *Journal From the Radical Reformation* and for the *Restitution Herald* (HISTORY NEWSLETTER). I have several issues of the *RH* from the 70's in my personal files.

The title of the *Journal* intrigued me because of my strong interest in the Anabaptists of the 16th Century. I have been working with the History and Religion Depts. in building a very fine collection of primary and secondary sources on the Anabaptists. As Seventh-day Adventists, we believe our "theological roots" lie in the Anabaptist movement much more than with Luther, Calvin and Zwingli.

By the way, I noticed I mis-spelled James' name. It is "Fyfe." He graduated from Lockwood (MO) High School in 1958. I graduated in 1959. I went on to Seventh-day Adventist colleges and graduated with two majors—History and Religion. My M. L. degree in Library Science is from Emporia State University (Kansas). As a librarian, I have chosen to specialize in Millerite/Seventh-day Adventist history and theology. I am in charge of such a collection at Pacific Union College library. The best Seventh-day Adventist collection on Age-to-Come materials is at Andrews University. You may want to contact the librarian in charge of the Millerite/SDA history collection: Jim Ford, Adventist Heritage Center, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI 49104-1400. Phone (616) 471-3274. I assume you

know of the Jenks Collection at Aurora University?

Our collection on Marsh, Age-to-Come, etc. is pretty standard—*Review and Herald* church paper, a few booklets, and the Millerite collection on microfilm from UMI, and scattered references in books, dissertations, and theses. The other SDA library on the west coast that may have quite a bit is at Loma Linda University. You may want to contact Merlin Bert, Ellen G. White Estate, Loma Linda Branch, Loma Linda University Library, Loma Linda, CA 92350. Phone (909) 824-4942.

I noticed in my files from home that I have an article: "Who Are the 'Age-to-Come' Theologians?" by David Graham, *RH* 72 (July-August 1983): 16-17. So, at least, I do know of David Graham and will try to get in touch with him.

I have no problem with your publishing our correspondence, just change "Fife" to "Fyfe."

Thank you for the various information sources and addresses you sent me.

—Gary W. Shearer
Special Collection Librarian

Editor's Comment: I should have changed the spelling to Fyfe before submitting it. I knew better.

Enjoys Reading the *Herald*

Dear Jan,

I want to let you know how much I enjoy your HISTORY NEWSLETTER in the *Herald*. The first time I ever read the *Herald* was in about 1930. I think I went up to my step-grandma and grandpa's house to stay a week. Their names were Philip and Martha Senff, in Bremen, In. They raised their granddaughter Wilma Senff. She is my age. Grandpa was blind, many people who attended Bible school at North Salem church on 31 near Plymouth, IN would remember him as the blind man. Martha Senff did all the food ordering for the meals. What I really want to tell you is grandpa asked me to read the *Herald* to him.

I rode to Oregon to Bible School in 1934. Floyd and Lula Stilson drove. Mrs. Thompson rode with us. Floyd married Harvey and I. It was the year Harvey and Mary Krogh announced their engagement. Maude Stilson sang our wedding songs. Lottie Pickeral played the piano. She is now 103 years.

As you can see I lost my dad and I thought this may be of some interest to you.

—Evelyn Fisher

P.S. Stanley Lawrence did the service.

Obit

Lawrence I. Bush
May 10, 1895 - Jan. 27, 1994

PLYMOUTH—Lawrence I. "Larry" Burch, 98, of 1687 N. Michigan St., died at 1:26 a.m. Thursday in St. Joseph Hospital of Marshall County. Mr. Burch had been employed in shipping and receiving at Oliver Tractor Plant II. He was born May 10, 1895 in Tyner. In 1919, he married Cuba Stanton. She died in 1921. On Oct. 31, 1921, he married Mary E. Senff. She died in 1960. Surviving are three daughters, Evelyn Fisher of Niles, Lois Fritz of Plymouth, and Martha Ulrey of St. Petersburg, FL; three sons, Roy L. of Allen, TX, Larry P. of Rochester, and Ernest D. of Deland, FL; 32 grandchildren; 74 great-grandchildren; and three great-great-grandchildren. A daughter, Velma E. Parish, three sons, Warren P., Norman L. and Vernon L., and three grandchildren preceded him in death. He was a member of North Salem Church of God.

Services will be at 2 p.m. Monday in Van Gilder Funeral Home. Burial will be in Tyner Cemetery. Friends may call from 4 to 8 p.m. Sunday in the funeral home. Memorial contributions may be made to the church.

For Genealogists

Excerpts from a work by Byron Williams

REBECCA JOHNSON

Died May 17, 1877, age 52 years, 7 mo. in Story (?) County, IA. Leaves family (no names). Submitter J. T. PRIME of

Nevada, IA. 6
Published August 22, 1877, Volume
XXVI # 30.

PARMELA TIBBITTS

Died March 6, 1877, age 77 at Cleveland,
OH submitter NEWELL BOND.
Published August 22, 1877, Volume
XXVI # 30.

Mrs. EBENEZER HELMS

Born July 14, 1830. Died August 18,
1877, age 47 yrs, 1 mo., 4 days. Husband
EBENEZER HELMS. Parents JOHN
W. and MARY BRADSHAW.
Submitter J.S. HATCH.
Published September 19, 1877, Volume
XXVI # 32.

HATTIE SKEELS

Died August 29, 1877, age 28 yrs, of

consumption, at Jamestown, Ottawa
County, MI. Eldest child and only daugh-
ter of Mr. and Mrs. JAMES SKEELS.
Had one brother. Submitter E. HOYT.
Published September 26, 1877, Volume
XXVI # 33.

KEZIAH HELM

Died at age 41 at Ravanna, MO. Leaves
husband JAMES HELM; three children,
IDA (21 yrs), MARY (17 yrs.), Two
deceased children in OR. Removed from
OR 1875. Lived in AR prior to that.
Submitter JOHN A. HOBART.
Published September 26, 1877, Volume
XXVI # 33.

ELIJAH FLEMING

Died September 13, 1877, age 77 years,
of consumption, at Warren County, IN.
Leaves wife, two daughters, one son (no

names). Raised as
an infant in the
family WAR-
BRITTON.

Published Septem-
ber 26, 1877, Vol-
ume XXVI # 33.

**ELIJAU
BACKUS**

Died September 22,
1877, age 56 yrs,
near Prairieville,
MI. Buried at Prair-
ieville. Leaves wife
and two adult chil-
dren (no names).
Submitter A.M.
SMITH.

Published October
3, 1877, Volume
XXVI # 34.

LEVY H. CHASE

Born March 29,
1806 Providence,
Saratoga County,
NY. Died October
5, 1877, age 71 yrs,
6 mo., 7 days, of pa-
ralysis, at Raison
Township, Le-
nawee County, MI.
Leaves wife and

children (no names). Moved from NY to
MI 1832. Member of Society of Friends
until 1840. Ordained Baptist minister.
Submitter JAMES WATKINS of Clay-
ton, MI.

Published October 24, 1877, Volume
XXVI # 37.

JEMIMA PALMER

Born 1787 Cayuga County, NY. Died
October 14, 1877, age 89 yrs, 11 mo., 18
days at Plymouth, IN. Leaves son CHAR-
LES PALMER of Plymouth. Moved
from NY with husband and family in
1836.

Published October 24, 1877, Volume
XXVI # 37.

CYRUS TABER

Born June 26, 1833 at Marshall County,
IN. Died December 27, 1877, of con-
sumption, at Plymouth, IN. Leaves
mother, one brother, one sister of family
of nine. Also wife and five children (no
names).

Published January 9, 1978 Volume
XXVII # 2.

GEORGE K. McLARAN

Born Westmoreland County, PA. Mar-
ried November 14, 1847 to MARY
BIRD. Died February 28, 1878, age 54
yrs, 1 mo., 4 days at Pierceton, IN. Leaves
wife Mary and five children. Moved from
PA at ten years to Holmes County, OH,
thence, in 1845 to Kosciusko County, IN.
Published March 13, 1878, Volume
XXVII # 10.

NEIHOFF

Died August 26, 1878, of heart disease, at
Plum River, IL. Leaves wife and grand-
children (no names). Lived previous
eleven years in Dakota Territory.
Submitter P. RENNER.

Published October 23, 1878, Volume
XXVII # 39.

Mrs. BEADLE

Died September 25, 1878, of congestive
chill, in Perry County, MO. Leaves
husband H. BEADLE, M.D. and daugh-
ter.

Published October 23, 1878, Volume
XXVII # 39.

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Oregon, IL 61061*

A Weekend at the Mom Mall

This column is dedicated to my youngest heart throb, my daughter Alisa.

I have to share a really special experience I had recently. My 10-year-old daughter Alisa had requested a weekend trip alone with me as her birthday present. "Just you and me, Mom" were her heartfelt words. When I asked her where she wanted to go on this "girls only weekend," she chose "the mall in Pennsylvania that has the hotel attached." She was referring to the "Mom Mall" with the Holiday Inn "attached"—some four hours from home.

After we checked in, Alisa had to check out all of its amenities. Our room overlooked the lobby, not my choice but she thought it was neat. She immediately unpacked and was ready to hit the mall.

We inhaled some fast food, called it dinner, and investigated the mall. We had only an hour before the mall closed. We returned to our room and proceeded to prepare for bed. We slipped into our matching flannel boxer shorts and T-shirts and Alisa invited me to join her in a cucumber facial mask! As our faces dried and cracked like road maps when we laughed, we lay in our beds and read. Alisa told me what a great time she was having—"just the two of us, Mom." Alisa and I have very little time alone, something I hadn't really thought about until she began to celebrate the fact.

I learned so much about my daughter that weekend. I learned how to apply cucumber face mask, and how big a



By
Janice Hart

jawbreaker she could get in her mouth, braces and all! Music to my ears all weekend were such tunes as "I'm having a great time, Mom," "It's fun just the two of us, Mom," and "It's great to be alone with you." When turned loose in a Christian bookstore she chose *How to Share My Faith and Keep My Friends*. I just listened as she related her school stories and happenings in her life the past few days. We discussed how she had wanted to give up on a tough reading project but how great she felt when she received an A- for her efforts. And we talked about her "boyfriend"! I was impressed at how she took time in making decisions, how she weighed all the aspects of the purchase. We bought outfits for our matching teddy bears and it took longer to choose those than two bathing suits for her! We ate junk food for breakfast and lay in bed until late morning. I enjoyed her reaction to my trust in her to go through the hotel halls to the snack machines alone.

Our weekend was an investment in our relationship. I thank God daily for my two beautiful daughters. Each differs from the other and challenges different parenting skills in me. Being alone with Alisa helped me to be aware of her special needs and where I need to be more patient and tolerant with her. Alisa has already decided where she wants to go for her next birthday. "But the place really isn't as important as being alone together, is it Mom?" What a special blessing I have been given. Thank you Lord. **RH**

Green Beans, Goslings and God

It's the middle of summer but the signs point to fall. Our county fair is always the middle of August; after that we know school is the next order of business. We no longer have 4-H children rushing to finish fair projects, and no one looks forward to school except for this Grandma. I still do Title I teaching in the upper elementary and I do enjoy it.

The pressure canner sits in the sewing room close to the kitchen. The green beans are really producing. When asked what they want for supper, the grandchildren always shout, "Green beans!" So I can enough to last till next bean season. The rest of my garden is doing well too. We soon will enjoy winter squash and pumpkin pies. It gives me a lot of satisfaction to have my cool-room full of canned vegetables and the freezer full of frozen food.

My flowers are lovely. The phlox, lilies, dahlias and gladiolus make spectacular basket arrangements for church. The annuals in the vegetable garden give me strength to keep on hoeing. The flowers are at their peak toward the end of summer and each variety seems to try and outclass its brothers. I wish I could keep the fragrance and color for the rest of the year. To every season God sends some glory, but He sends more during the summer.



By
Joyce
Housman

The summer animal babies are growing up. The rollicking beef calves have become very leggy pre-adolescents. The goslings are nearly as tall as their parents, but all feather and bone. The turkey poults are half-grown, but mother is busy incubating a new family. The guineas are everywhere—we obviously have too many adults. Sometimes they lay a few eggs in a turkey's nest and mother turkey finds a few non-relatives in her new family. At times it is reversed and the guinea hatches a few turkey babies. Whatever their kids look like, both species take great pride in them and ferociously protect them. I just hope old brother coyote stays away from our buildings. The coyotes have been especially vicious with the geese who wander down to the creek to feed and bathe. Sometimes it's the Lord that gives and the coyote who takes away.

I must remember to store up all these pleasant memories so that I may pull them out one by one when cold weather comes. I must remember, too, to bury deep the thoughts of mosquitoes, cabbage butterflies, gnats, extremely hot days and sweat. Summer is a mixed bag, but God gives us more of the loveliness to enjoy. **RH**

Why Are the Denominations Disintegrating?

IT HAS BEEN observed that the pre-World War II generation was as committed to its church denomination as it was to the Lord Jesus. For some, or even many, the two were virtually synonymous. One's personal identity was partially rooted in and defined by denominational affiliation. The idea of changing denominational loyalty was intolerable to most persons. You were born into a specific denomination, you unquestioningly kept that affiliation throughout your life, and you died in the fellowship of that same denomination.

In recent decades there has been a marked decline in denominational commitment and loyalty. It is no longer a "given" that an individual will remain true and loyal to his/her denomination of origin.

Why Is Commitment to Organizations Declining?

- A change in the way we think; a focal shift from self as part of a group working for the good of the whole to self working for the good of



By
Pastor Stephen Bolhous
Chairman of Board of Directors

self. Individualism advocates the individual and his/her concerns as distinct (and superior to) the concerns, causes, and goals of the society (or denomination) to which the individual belongs. This phenomenon is sometimes called "me generation" thinking. It is well illustrated by the distinct lack in recent decades of bipartisan politics in both the American Congress and the Canadian Parliament; special interests take precedence over the needs of all.

- The problem of the baby boom generation. This generation of humanity, born between 1946 and 1964, is the primary promoter of individualism. This generation grew to adulthood in an era of unprecedented affluence and freedom; they have not

experienced widespread hardship, sacrifice or commitment to a cause, and consequently have never learned to think very far beyond their own personal world.

- The breakdown of the family unit. Denominations relied on families to foster faith and institutional ties. Weakened families meant this job was no longer being effectively accomplished.
- Marriage across denominational lines. When such a union occurs, denominational identity is blurred, and denominational loyalty is diluted and often completely lost.
- Distrust of organizations.

Denominations have had a tendency to add layer upon layer of bureaucracy to their organizational structure which inevitably took power from the local congregations and placed it in a more centralized administrative structure somewhat removed from the people it served. This has had a tendency to diminish spontaneity, energy and enthusiasm for programs and mission (John P. Dever, *New Concepts of Church*, p. 508).

Many are fed up with organizations and institutions that they perceive as cumbersome bureaucracies that are slow, expensive, legalistic, and unresponsive. They are just too much hassle (Leith Anderson, *A Church for the 21st Century*, p. 48).

What Are the New Concepts of Church?

- The New Age movement with its holistic concept of body and spirit, self and community, society and nature, has great appeal for affluent baby boomers. The secular spirituality of this "religion" appears more relevant to life, more relevant to our world, and more personally satisfying to its adherents than traditional

denominational churches.

- **Para-church organizations** — Christian institutions with a high-visibility ministry and a broad base of support — have become a focus of spiritual activity. For some the TV church has replaced the local church in their lives. These institutions are perceived as accomplishing significant ministry/service; denominations are often not so perceived.

- **Mega-churches** — congregations with a minimum active membership of 1,000 which have the resources to provide multifaceted programs meeting a wide variety of needs. These large churches appeal to persons who seek specialized programs/services, and want all the advantages of "big"; they also have appeal for persons who desire to maintain anonymity. These churches downplay any denominational affiliation and often become a mini-denomination unto themselves.

- **Emphasis on experience vs. content.** The new mindset looks for a church that provides a personally satisfying worship experience; doctrinal position and content are not regarded with the same importance they received in previous decades.

These new "looks" for the church have each had notable impact on the decline of denominational loyalty.

How Can OUR Denomination Survive and Flourish?

- Remember that the biblical message does not change, but the mission of the denomination and how we accomplish it must be re-determined and clearly articulated at the local level. Does the church understand why it's in business? Is the total

church family characterized by loyalty to the mission (vs. loyalty to the institution) and committed to being Christ's Church, making His "business" flourish?

- **Realize that truth seekers will readily embrace our unique biblical message — but they must be sought and found.** Effective personal evangelism — evangelism that is process focused, not event focused — must be practiced in each church by the entire membership and not relegated to the pastor and the missionary society.

- **Recognize and attempt to satisfy the needs of the present culture regarding meaningful personal worship and the challenge of service.** Exercise creativity! Be seeker sensitive! This means adapting the worship format so that people experience God. We must use drama; we must make the Bible-based sermon or Sunday School lesson relevant to modern living; we must use the new forms of music that simply but directly speak to the heart. These are vehicles which satisfy the worship hungers of the baby boomers and aid in worshipping God in Spirit and in truth. We must use the best technology we can afford; inferior equipment in a world that expects excellence communicates a lack of caring and importance.

The Church of God will survive! Jesus said, "I will build My Church,

and the powers of death shall not overpower it" (Matthew 16:18, NASB, margin). It will not survive by human strength; it will not survive because we so will it; the Church of God will survive when we make ourselves fully available to God as His fellow workers (I Corinthians 3:9). RET



The Changing Role of the Pastor

FOUR OUT OF EVERY ten United States pastors have considered leaving their current pastorates in the past three months! (2, 25). Why? The average tenure of senior pastors (including pastors of both multi-staff and single-staff churches) has declined in the past two decades from seven to four years (1, 36). Again . . . why?

Pastors Have a Tough Job

Pastors have a tough job? What an understatement!

Although many lay members idealize the work of the clergy, the harsh reality is that despite the best efforts of these learned individuals and regardless of the high and holy nature of the calling, pastoring a church is more burdensome than most people realize (1, 63).

This may be especially true of Church of God pastors who are almost exclusively single-staff pastors. They are "generalists" rather than "specialists." His (I'll use the male pronoun throughout — 90% of U.S. pastors are male; the C.O.G. figure is even higher) work usually includes preaching/teaching, counseling, pastoral calling, administration, secretarial; and may include youth ministry, music and a myriad of other roles.



By
Pastor Gary Burnham, Moderator
Ministerial Assoc. Leadership Team

Most pastors are extremely committed to their work. They really do view their ministry as a calling from God. Yet they often feel they are working harder and harder, with a ministry plate full and overflowing . . . but are seeing less response and fewer results. No wonder during any given three month period up to two of every five pastors think about giving up their pastorate!

The pressure on the pastor is enormous. It may be a privilege to lead God's people into a deeper relationship with Him. But, all too often, the privilege fits like a noose around the pastor's neck. By God's grace, he reasons, the slack in the rope has not been tightened (1, 52).

Additionally, a pastor often struggles in his efforts to develop a good working relationship with the congregation he

serves. Diverse and/or unrealistic expectations, power struggles and competition for the time of volunteer workers are among those concerns that bring pastors to the cliff of discouragement. In such a time of disillusionment one exasperated pastor wrote in his personal journal:

If I wanted to drive a manager up the wall, I would make him responsible for the success of an organization and give him no authority. I would provide him with unclear goals, not commonly agreed upon by the organization. I would ask him to provide a service of an ill-defined nature, apply a body of knowledge having few absolutes, and staff his organization with only volunteers. I would expect him to work ten to twelve hours per day and have his work evaluated by a committee of 300 to 500 amateurs. I would call him a minister and make him accountable to God (2, 54).

No pastor enters ministry wanting to feel this way. But sometimes those feelings do arise — from his own failings, from the congregation's failings, or from both. The pastor of the 1990's must also face a growing number of bewildering changes in the church and in the culture which further complicate the pastoral role. In this light, the feelings of that exasperated pastor are not so surprising.

Perplexing Changes Confront Today's Pastors

The existence and use of technology proliferate. TV, radio, video, computers, etc., well used by experts in their field, have dramatically raised expectations. A pastor, especially a single-staff C.O.G. pastor, can't possibly compete.

For much of the church population, the church is not at the center of social life as it often was in previous generations. Their involvement with the church is only one of scores of options. Rare is the pastor not discouraged by this apparent competition for attention.

Scandals involving high-profile religious leaders have clearly taken their toll on both the self-esteem of pastors and on the public's level of trust in and respect of clergy.

Extraordinary counseling demands are often placed upon today's pastors, covering a plethora of issues almost inconceivable a generation or two ago — severe eating disorders, sexual abuse, any number of addictions, etc. Most pastors feel ill-equipped to give appropriate counsel. Further, many have carried their own issues of dysfunction into their pastorates.

Due to financial pressure and the changing role of women, 60% of pastors' wives hold full-time jobs (2, 136). As a result, pastors often feel additional pressure falling upon their shoulders.

In a society which is increasingly secular — one that is discarding the standards and absolutes of previous generations — a pastor often feels he is fighting a losing battle. Even members of his congregation appear to be less concerned about discovering and maintaining God's precepts.

Society's consumer mentality has so entered that church believers less often ask, "What can I do for the church?" Instead, they ask, "What can the church do for me?" In this atmosphere, a pastor struggles to develop commitment to ministry, feeling too many are more interested in being "takers" than "givers." For three of every ten pastors, their greatest frustration is a perceived lack of commitment from congregation members (1, 66). No other frustration comes close.

This consumer mentality has led many Christians to a rather shallow loyalty to a specific congregation. As a result, about 80% of all church growth reported comes from transfers from one congregation to another — most often from a smaller to a larger church (2, 36).

All of these cultural congregational shifts, and others, cause 90% of pastors to say they feel inadequately trained to cope with ministry demands! (2, 22).

Cultural Changes Won't Go Away

"I don't like these changes," you say. Neither do I. "But they are wrong and unfair," you respond. Maybe so. But they are today's reality; and additional undesirable changes are likely.

The challenges to and the demands upon pastoral ministry have never been greater. How can pastors respond? How can you respond in support of your pastor?

The Challenge of Pastoral Ministry

Pastor, your greatest responsibility is to develop and nurture your personal relationship with God. Why? First, you can't lead others to build a relationship you've never known yourself. Second, without the strength of personally knowing God, you will quickly wither in the face of today's ministry challenges. Third, only out of a vital relationship with God can you develop an appropriate, godly vision for your personal ministry or for your congregation's ministry.

Being a student of God's Word has always been a high priority for pastors. That must never change. In addition, today as never before, you must also be a student of society in general and of your community and congregation specifically. The pastor who fails to become an expert on the culture in which he ministers is a pastor likely doomed to failure and frustration.

A pastor should not . . . must not . . . cannot do everything. God didn't create any pastor to do it all. Realizing that, you must build a leadership team in the church to share the burden of ministry. You must also settle for nothing less than the church being a body — as God intended — each member serving according to their God-given gifts.

A key area of ministry for most pastors and churches will be small groups, both for spiritual growth and

for ministry. Adult participation in small groups increased by one-third between 1987 and 1992 (1, 81). Developing leadership for small groups must be a high priority.

The Challenge of Supporting Your Pastor

With rare exceptions, your pastor is wholly dedicated — often too dedicated — to serving both God and you. But remember he is human; perhaps gifted, hopefully spiritually mature, but still human. Don't expect perfection from him in all, or any, of his many areas of responsibility.

Your pastor probably longs for an opportunity to do ministry hand in hand with you. If you offer your time, he'll probably jump (or faint!) at the chance to help train you in some area(s) of ministry. He desires to encourage you and help prepare you for effective and enjoyable service.

Cultivate a supportive relationship with your pastor. Develop sensitivity to his and his family's needs — financial, emotional and otherwise. He will greatly benefit. You will too!

A Concluding Note of Encouragement

While it may be true that pastoral ministry has never been tougher, it is also true that God's resources have never been any more equal to the task!

RET

Some thoughts, and all statistics, gleaned from:

1. George Barna, *Today's Pastors*, Regal Books, 1993.
2. H.B. London, Jr. & Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors At Risk*, Victor Books, 1993.

Additional recommended reading:
Leith Anderson, *A Church for the 21st Century*, Bethany House Publishers, 1992.

The Church, the Future, and Diminishing Resources

As we look to the future, the Church of God must continue to teach the Bible truths that have been a part of our heritage from the very beginning. However, the method of presenting the message must be adapted to meet the changing times in which we live. If the Lord tarries, many sociologists are predicting that there will be diminishing resources available to carry on Christian work. Rather than throwing up our hands in alarm, we must adapt our work so that we are good stewards of the resources that we have available.

To be good stewards, I encourage Church of God congregations to give consideration to the following suggestions:

1. Church Buildings

As we plant new churches, we are encouraging congregations to be cautious about acquiring property and buildings. At a recent seminar, it was proposed that a new church should not even consider having its own building until Sunday attendance is over 200. Prematurely constructing a building, tends to limit growth. Since a new church has limited resources, the ten-



By
David Krogh
President, Church of God GC

dency is to build a relatively small building. The small building fosters a small mindset and the small facilities restrict growth.

Furthermore, a church building tends to become a financial burden to the church. New people are reluctant to become members of a church that has a huge debt. They believe that they are being invited to help pay the bills rather than to find salvation. And church buildings consume a lot of time and energy in repairs and maintenance that might be better spent on ministry.

One author has speculated that by the year 2001 there will be no preferential tax treatment for churches. If that happens, there will be an even greater operating cost for those that own buildings if they have to pick up a sizable property tax bill.

Some of our new churches have found it convenient to meet in schools. The Supreme Court has ruled that public schools must make facilities available to religious groups if they make them available for rent to other groups. A school provides a good setting for Sunday services, and homes work well for home Bible studies that may meet at many different times during the week.

2. Multi-Use of Buildings

If you already own a church building, every effort should be made to use the building as much as possible. It is poor stewardship for a church facility to stand empty 160 hours per week. Some churches have found it to be a valid ministry to house a nursery school or day care center. This performs a service to the community, provides potential prospects for the church, and in some cases produces revenue for the church. Some day care facilities are providing day care for senior citizens. The children and older people interact well together.

Other churches have found it reasonable to use their facilities for Christian schools. As Christians become more aware of the Goals 2,000 law which was recently passed by Congress, there may be a mass exodus from public schools. It appears that the federal government is attempting to take over control of local public schools. For Bible-believing Christians, there is cause for alarm at some of the provisions of this new law. This may open the door for a Christian school ministry.

3. Use of Volunteers

The Scriptures clearly teach the need for every believer to be involved in ministry in the church and outside the church. On the basis of spiritual gifts, there are multitudes of ministries that can be performed by each individual

member. In recent years, there has been a trend toward paying for office work, cleaning, maintenance, and yard care. Perhaps we need to see these as ministries that could also be performed by unpaid volunteers.

4. Bi-Vocational Pastors

It has become increasingly difficult for our smaller churches to pay their pastor a living wage. This has made it necessary for more than a third of Church of God pastors to seek outside employment. The program at Atlanta Bible College, in conjunction with Clayton State, makes it more feasible for future graduates to prepare themselves for bi-vocational ministry. This type of ministry also fits well with item #3 above by having part-time paid professionals and more lay members involved in shared ministry duties.

Pastors who have been bi-vocational have found their outside employment to be helpful in building contacts with unchurched people and becoming better known in the community.

In Conclusion

Even though in the future we may have diminishing resources to carry on the Lord's work, we must continue to stress giving as a Bible truth. The Bible clearly teaches tithes and offerings as the way to support God's work. National statistics indicate that those who attend church weekly give an average of 3.8% of their income to the Lord's work. Though many give more than that, many give a tiny fraction of their income. Not only is faithful giving needed to carry on the Lord's work, but generous giving provides tremendous spiritual and material blessing.

Through generous giving and wise stewardship, the church of the future will thrive even in the face of diminishing resources. RH

When I Am Weak, Then I Am Strong

(Continued From Page 9)

But I had not reckoned with the awesomeness of the cliffs and my own weakness.

Before long I had to lean forward as I walked to keep from fainting. I found that I could help my legs to move by pushing down on them with my hands. Once I sat down on some rocks that were piled along the edge of the trail, and when one tilted, I nearly fell into the canyon depths.

In time I became so weak that I gave up, lay down in the dust of the trail, and looked up at the blazing hot sun. But the will to survive is strong, and as a child I had been taught to rely upon God when I needed help. So I bowed my head and prayed.

I confessed that I had been very foolish in getting into this predicament and could not expect the Lord to come to my aid. But I appealed for help even when it was not deserved, and it came!

The sky had been clear, but I heard thunder; a cloud had drifted unnoticed over the rim. It rained. Not a downpour but it sprinkled enough to cool me off, even though I could not collect any water in my perforated pith helmet. I was thrilled; my prayer was answered. It was then that I remembered the words of the Apostle Paul, "When I am weak, then I am strong." On the strength of this truth and the assurance of answered prayer I arose from where I lay, stood up out of the thick dust and the annoying flies, and some-

where within found added strength.

Another half hour and I could hear voices on the rim. Then the last few agonizing steps and the ground leveled off, and I could stand upright!

It took a little searching before I found a cottage and could get a drink. The young boy who let me in was surprised when I insisted on filling my canteen after drinking two tumblers of water. A park ranger drove me back to the village, and I made straight for a drugstore. The clerk seemed startled when I ordered a large glass of iced tea and a malt, then drank them both down rapidly. Another glass of water helped quench my thirst, and I had but to drag myself over to the camping area and lie down.

The roof of my mouth was blistered from breathing the hot air, and the heels were worn off my shoes. I had been in the canyon ten and a half hours and as near death as I ever want to come.

This experience was a turning point in my life. I have not been the same since. For days I felt the urge to carry a canteen of water in the car when traveling from my home fifteen miles to work. Never again will I doubt the protecting hand of the Lord nor the power of prayer. I learned that when we are weak then we are strong because of our faith in Him. RH

Alternatives in Christian Education

IT'S THE NINETIES! In a few short years we will not only turn over a new year, but a new decade, a new century, a new millennium!

Those of us who are interested in Christian education are constantly plagued with concerns about how we can most effectively communicate the gospel message to our world, in our time. There are a multitude of alternatives available to us. How can we make the right choice?

When Is the Best Time to Teach?

Traditionally, we have offered classes for all ages on Sunday mornings — either before, after, or during the worship service. This arrangement is beneficial for your regular attendees, offering them the opportunity for small group interaction with God's Word, as well as a time of corporate worship.

A Wednesday night gathering, also somewhat traditional, generally focuses upon Bible study and prayer. Some churches have come to view this time as a time to focus upon the spiritual growth of the body of believers. This enables them to devote the Sunday service to inviting guests. This is sometimes called a "seeker's service."

A time for concentrated teaching, primarily for children, is Vacation Bible School. This can be held for five to ten consecutive weekdays or may be spread



By
Gayle Guthrie
Chairperson, Christian Ed. Comm.

over a longer period of time by scheduling one day a week for five to ten weeks.

A weekend retreat can be a lot of fun and still allow for concentrated times of learning from God's Word. Along with the lessons that are prepared in advance, many lessons are "caught" rather than "taught" through the experience of living together for a few days. This is reminiscent of the way Jesus would often take His disciples out into the countryside where He would spend time with them (John 3:22).

In order to reach a different audience, your church may wish to try some different options. Since we live in a time when many children are classified as "latchkey kids," an after school program might be just the thing. It might include a combination of the following: a time of gathering and greeting, recreation, a snack, tutoring with their

schoolwork, music, and/or a devotional lesson.

Home Bible studies provide a great opportunity for adults to gather for the purpose of learning and discussing God's Word. This casual setting often encourages fellowship and a greater freedom to participate in the discussions.

Neighborhood groups or clubs allow you to reach out to the children near your home. These can be planned for the summer or as an after school program. This approach gives you a good opportunity to reach out to the children and meet the parents as well.

What Materials Should You Use?

In selecting the materials you will use, you will discover that there are also a lot of alternatives here. It will be helpful for you to determine in advance what criteria you will use to evaluate the options and make your selection.

There is presently a company that advertises a "radically different" Hands-On Bible Curriculum that will revolutionize your teaching. It employs active learning where children enjoy spirited educational experiences that stimulate all five senses. A Learning Lab supplies unique learning supplies needed for any size class. There are no student books, but take-home handouts may be reproduced, providing daily Bible readings and discussion questions for families to share during the week.

They also advertise an "active Bible curriculum" for youth. It emphasizes contemporary topics and teaching methods that "involve the students in the learning process, challenging them to discover for themselves the Bible's answers to their personal needs."

Doesn't that sound wonderful? Seeing the descriptions "radically different," "revolutionize," and "challenging" would appeal to every teacher who sincerely desires to share God's Word. Certainly, these materials deserve your consideration . . . but not on the basis of their advertising. You need to examine them in light of your criteria. What might be included in the criteria

you could use to select your materials? Here are some things to consider:

Theology

- Does the material set forth the foundational truths of Scripture accepted by your church?
- Does it provide a faithful and thorough record of the Scriptures?
- Does it cover an appropriate amount and selection of Bible content for the age level?
- Does it encourage memorization and development of independent Bible study skills?

Structure

- Are the objectives clearly stated, building toward consistent, sequential growth?
- Are the learning objectives well suited to the age level?
- Can the lesson objectives be met through the lesson content and teaching methods?
- Do the lessons regularly review important concepts and gradually increase in difficulty?

Student Interest and Involvement

- Is the lesson design relevant to the needs, interests and abilities of your class?
- Are the learning activities varied and stimulating?
- Do the activities clearly reinforce the learning objectives?
- Do the lessons account for differences in learning styles and abilities among students?
- Is the appearance of the material colorful, attractive and appealing to the students?

Teacher Helps

- Is the teacher's manual well organized for ease of preparation?
- Are the guidelines genuinely helpful to teachers — both new and experienced?
- Does it include teaching aids that are plentiful, appealing and well integrated into the lesson plan?

- Is teacher growth material included to assist the teacher in improving his/her teaching?
- Is the material reasonably priced?

Why Change?

There are some people who think that change should be the only constant. To these people change means excitement, progress and relevance. At the other end of the spectrum are those who resist change. They are concerned that change will mean the loss of certain values and reason that change will not necessarily guarantee success. How do you determine what approach you will use for your Christian education efforts? Here are a few Do's and Don'ts for you to consider as you grapple with this issue.

Do

- Be honest in evaluating your present program. If there are obvious problems, be willing to initiate changes that will address them.
- Consider the nature of your group. Know them well enough to recognize how they might best be taught.
- Consider the strengths, weaknesses, and personality of the individual who will be the teacher. The class, material and facilities should complement the teacher.
- Seek up-to-date information. Attend workshops, subscribe to relevant magazines, and visit other classes to observe and gather ideas.

Don't

- Don't over-react to the word "traditional." While using traditions as a reason to resist change is not healthy, neither is the belief that all traditions are old and out-dated. Many sociologists recognize traditions as having merit in terms of fostering loyalty, creating lasting memories, and developing a sense of unity.
- Don't change because you have heard of the success of a certain approach at another church. What works in one situation may not work

in another.

- Don't just look at one set of materials. Evaluate several before you make your final decision.

Who Makes the Final Decision?

What input should come from the individual teacher? Should there be a Christian Education Committee or a superintendent of Christian education? Does the church board need to be consulted? These are all questions that you must answer; but most importantly, you must always remember that your church is God's church. Your Christian education needs should be presented to Our Heavenly Father for His direction and guidance in every decision that will be made. "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask of God, who gives generously to all But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt" (James 1:5-6). If we remain faithful to our Creator and Sustainer in this task, He will surely bless.

RESOURCE LIST

Augsburg Fortress (available through your local Christian bookstore) or 1-800-848-2738

Church of God General Conference 1-800-347-4261

David C. Cook Publishing Co. (available through your local Christian bookstore) or 1-800-782-0536

Gospel Light Publications (available through your local Christian bookstore) or 1-800-446-7735

GROUP (available through your local Christian bookstore) or 1-800-447-1070

Light and Life Press (Christian Life Club midweek program) 1-800-348-2513

Scripture Press (available through your local Christian bookstore) or 1-800-323-9409

Standard Publishing (available through your local Christian bookstore) or 1-800-543-1353

Magazines

Children's Ministry (Published by GROUP) 1-800-447-1070

Teach Magazine (Published by David C. Cook) 1-800-782-0536

Church Teachers 1-800-328-5125

Today's Christian Teacher (Free subscriptions) 1-800-677-0211

Worship That Is Different

CONGRATULATIONS! You have just begun reading an article on one of the most discussed, most controversial, most important subjects in our vocabulary today as Christians — WORSHIP! I always enjoy discussing this subject, but nearly every time run into many differing opinions. Put two Christians in the same room together and add the topic of worship on the agenda and you certainly are going to get two differing opinions. Most of the time, both may be correct. Being asked to address THE RESTITUTION HERALD's readership with an article entitled "Worship That Is Different" has been challenging, and most certainly there will be differing opinions. Please keep that in mind as you allow this article to stretch you.

Today there seems to be a school of thought that says, "If you don't worship like 'WE' worship . . . you're not really worshipping." In fact, I believe that "worship style" has caused more division and "ruffled feathers" over the years than we'd care to admit. The point is that God is certainly not pleased when it comes to prideful attitudes regarding worship, nor is He pleased when most energy and discussion are spent on criticisms regarding worship. James 4:6 makes it clear to us, "God opposes the proud but gives grace



By
Pastor David Riley, Treasurer
Ministerial Assoc. Leadership Team

to the humble." I submit that it's time to stop talking about worship, stop arguing about worship, and simply do what we're supposed to be doing — worshipping!

I often find myself thinking about what things I can do to enhance the worship experience of our congregation. Though I'm not musically gifted, I consider the musical arrangements of our songs, our use of musical instruments, worship leaders and participants, the number, length, and tempo of songs, and even prayers and exhortations between songs. However, after I've considered all these things, I am still drawn to one startling and disturbing question: "Have we really come into a closer, more worshipful relationship with our Creator?" I remember sitting recently in a couple of different seminars, listening to the presenters discuss worship "techniques" or things

that "new people" are looking for, and thinking to myself, "Is this what it's all about? If we do these things will our worship be more God-honoring? Will our worship be what God desires?" Certainly there's more to worship than meets the eye.

I often say to those involved in worship leading here at New Friends Bible Church, "Keep changing, keep trying new things, fight to stay out of a 'rut.'" I believe that helps keep our hearts and minds "fresh" and focused on the reason we gather week after week and worship as the body of Christ. I like the concept of "Worship That Is Different," if for no other reason than to ask the question, "Where in the Bible can you show me that it always has to be done the same way?" Worship that is different may include new styles of music, drama, meditation, clapping, dancing, congregational readings, well rehearsed special music, spontaneous hymn singing and a host of other items. The important thing is where exactly is all this praise going — to our neighbor or to God? I especially like what Richard Foster says in his book *The Celebration of Discipline* about how we worship:

The Bible describes worship in physical terms. The root meaning for the Hebrew word we translate *worship* is "to prostrate." The word *bless* literally means "to kneel." *Thanksgiving* refers to "an extension of the heart." Throughout Scripture we find a variety of physical postures in connection with worship: lying prostrate, standing, kneeling, lifting the hands, clapping the hands, lifting the head, bowing the head, dancing, and wearing sackcloth and ashes. The point is that we are to offer our bodies as well as all the rest of our being. . . . To sit still, looking dour is simply not appropriate for praise.

Nowhere do I hear Foster implying that quietness and meditation are wrong, but the balance has to be there. How's our balance when it comes to worship in our respective bodies today? I'll leave you to answer that individually.

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Worship That Is Different

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My little daughter, Brianna, is at a point now where she likes to have "Daddy" come home from work. I look forward to driving into the driveway, parking the car in the garage and walking into the house because I know that there's a little girl just inside the door who'll come running into my arms with the words echoing into the air, "Daddy's home." Now if I were to come home from a long day of work and find her ignoring me and not really caring whether I'm home or not, that would be less appealing. Or even worse, listening to her talk about how great it will be when Daddy comes home and then when Daddy does get home, nothing happens. I often wonder if that's what God feels from us. God arrives ready for us to show His "worth" to Him, ready to hear the praises of His people, ready to have His children put their arms around Him, but all too often, nothing happens. I believe we need to be more aware that we have a Father in heaven, our "Abba Father," who wants more worship from His people. Not merely "lip service." Robert Webber

has written a book called *Worship Is a Verb* and the title says it all.

We're certainly seeing a change in the way we view worship today. Some of the change is good, other parts of the changes I'm not so sure about. But if someone were to ask what would be good to try different than what we're doing now, I'd probably encourage them to adopt the following elements in their worship. First I believe it's crucial to cultivate your personal worship. We need to keep focusing on vertical worship, that is, worship that is focused on God who is "our audience of one," as opposed to focusing on horizontal worship, the rest of the body and congregation. An appropriate balance is essential here. Secondly, worship that is necessary and may be somewhat different is visitor sensitive. This may mean changing the songs that are sung because of the archaic language or even adding gospel music because of the location of your church. It also may mean putting personal tastes aside for the purpose of reaching those outside of the

family of God, but it must be done.

Another important aspect to consider when it comes to our worship would be a worship team. Certainly all churches are not able to have a worship team right away, but many could be in the process of developing this area. I really believe we're missing out in using what God has equipped us with if we limit ourselves to the paid staff members doing all the worship leading. Certainly for many churches this would be a change in their worship philosophy, but consider it and maybe you'll be surprised how well it goes. Going along with this idea is the importance of having a regular worship rehearsal time. I can only speak from experience in this area, but I would tend to say that rehearsal helps work out the bugs, makes the worship service more comfortable, and allows for better spontaneity. Finally I believe "Worship That Is Different" (and more effective) has to do with the element of celebration we have in our services. All too often this element is just plain missing. Clearly we're admonished to "Rejoice in the Lord," to "Sing a New Song," to "Enter His Gates with Thanksgiving in Our Hearts," but I see a danger of losing some of this celebration. Unless I'm reminded to "Rejoice!" I tend to slip into a state somewhere between barely breathing and a corpse. I pray that God will continue to give me an overwhelming joy that never allows stones to cry out in my place.

Worship . . . It's a priority of God and we need to do more than talk about it — we need to be doing it. In a time when change is frequent, we as the Church of God must be concerned with not changing our message, but we should certainly take a close look at our methods, including our methods of worship. The Bible is full of statements reminding us that our purpose for existence is to bring maximum glory to our God. In fact God's Word virtually *pulsates* with the mandate for us to "Glorify God!" May we never sleep through those reminders. Remember as you worship this week with the body that God is there, He is the audience and we are to bring our praise to Him. "Worship That Is Different" may be what we have been examining here, but the real concern for us today is "Worship That Is God-Glorifying." May God be praised forever! R-1

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