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Conscience, Conscience

*Conscience, Conscience, go away.
Please don't bother me today.
While I take my fill of sin,
Let me have no guilt within.*

*Conscience, please leave me alone.
I don't need you, I'm all grown.
I can choose, I'm twenty-one.
Pack your bags, 'cause we're all done.*

*Conscience, Conscience, you're out-dated.
Purity is overrated.
There's no need for self-restraint —
After all, I'm not a "saint".*

*Conscience, Conscience, why'd you leave,
And let the wiles of sin deceive?
Now I've pains that pierce my soul!
— How I long to be made whole!*

*Conscience, Conscience, come back home
In sin no longer will I roam.
Dwell again within my heart
— Never more from me depart.*

*You're my shield and guard from harm,
I'll listen now for your alarm:
Warn me, lest I fall from grace
And wind up in that dreaded place.*

— Terry Easterly

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

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

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

AD 33

Question: “*Men and brethren, what shall we do [to be saved]?*” (Acts 2:37).

Answer: “***Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit***” (Acts 2:38).

Since humans are the sinners, none of us have the authority to give any answer to this question. God is the Savior. He alone has the authority to say what is required of us, to be forgiven of our sins and to be accepted into His family of the saved.

The answer God gave through Peter in Acts 2 was the one answer given throughout the book of Acts, instructing people in their obedience to God. Even today, that answer has not changed. If we want to be forgiven, we must repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of our sins, and He will add us to His church (Acts 2:47).

AD 1500 to 2000...

About 500 years ago, some religious leaders began to give a different answer to the question of salvation. It continues to be the stock answer in most denominations, though God never authorized such a remedy for sin.

Question: What must I do to be saved?

Answer given by most religious leaders: “Pray the Sinner’s Prayer”:

“Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be.”

Judgment Day

All of us will be judged on that great day. If we have been washed in the blood of Christ in baptism and have been faithful to Him (Revelation 2:10), all will be well. **HAVE YOU OBEYED CHRIST OR MAN?**

Have you ever taken a “church” check-up?

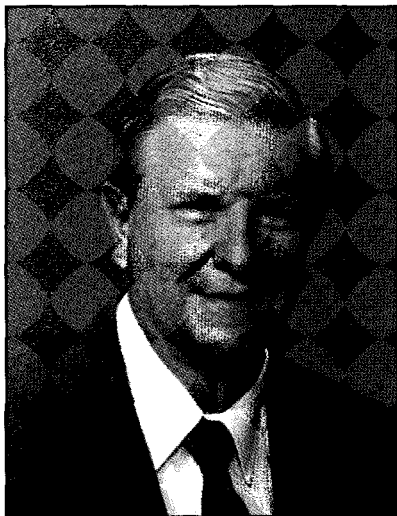
Try this one:

1. The name of my church is _____
_____.
2. My church was established (date) _____
_____.
3. My church began (where) _____
_____.
4. _____ was the founder of
my church.

Compare your answers with the New Testament:

1. In the New Testament, the church is called “the church”, “churches of Christ”, the “church of God”, etc. (Matthew 16:15; Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Revelation 21:2; 1 Timothy 5:16).
2. The church of Christ was established on the day of Pentecost, app. AD 33 (Acts 2).
3. The church of Christ was established in Jerusalem (Acts 2:5).
4. Jesus Christ was the founder of the church of Christ (Matthew 16:16-18).

**Which church did Jesus promise to save?
Ephesians 5:23-27**



CHRISTIANITY UNDER ATTACK

J. C. Choate
Editor-in-Chief

When the church had its beginning in Jerusalem, for a short time it had favor with both God and man (Acts 2:47). It was not long, however, until opposition arose. After Peter healed the lame man at the Beautiful Gate (Acts 3:1-8), he took advantage of the opportunity

to preach the gospel to those who had gathered, and many believed and obeyed the Lord. The number of Christians grew to 5,000 (Acts 4:4).

As a result, *“the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them. And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody, until the next day, for it was already evening”* (Acts 4:1-3). Then the rulers, elders, scribes, Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and family members of the high priest gathered in Jerusalem to hear the case. Challenging Peter and John, they asked by what power or by what name they had healed the lame man. The apostles replied that it was through Jesus of Nazareth, whom the Jewish leaders had crucified. Then they were ordered not to speak any more in the name of Jesus.

Later the apostles were found preaching again. They were arrested and beaten and warned once more not to continue, but they persisted in spite of the persecution. Finally they were put in jail, but the angel of the Lord released them.

From that day to this, the Lord’s people have faced opposition in one form or another. Paul made a statement that should warn anyone who follows Christ of what to expect. He said, *“Yea,*

and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12).

Today Christianity continues to be under attack throughout the world. There are countries that do not allow freedom of religion. Therefore, Christianity is not permitted to be practiced, legally. In other places that tolerate different religions, Christians are often persecuted and even imprisoned and threatened with death. Many have been killed, and continue to be killed, to this day. The world as a whole ignores this persecution because of the desire on the part of national leaders to keep friendly political relations with each other.

All over the world atheism, humanism, and the theory of evolution are being forced on the masses, often without their awareness of the indoctrination. School children are constantly being taught these philosophies and theories, even though they violate every true scientific law. These practices are another form of religious persecution for believers in God and His word.

Christianity is under attack in America. It seems that in America any religion may be highly spoken of but Christianity. A country that was founded on Bible principles now forbids the reading of the Bible and prayer for its children in its schools. And yet, conversely, as elsewhere in the world, atheistic beliefs are taught here every day under every pretext possible.

Christ and Christianity are often the brunt of jokes on TV programs. God’s laws concerning the home have been discarded, so that divorce and remarriage are running rampant, couples live together and have children outside of marriage, millions of babies are aborted, homosexuality is glorified, and pornography is on public display. Need I say more? Then we wonder why morals and character, honesty, and integrity have hit a new low, and why there is so much dishonesty and crime, and why so many are on drugs and why jails are full. What shame and degradation for a country that was so blessed through the acceptance and practice of the principles of Christianity! Now it is in moral and spiritual decline because of its rejection of those teachings of God and his Son, Jesus Christ.

Christianity is under attack by the religious world. There are religions that advance their cause through physical birth, lack of free-

dom of religion, and even by force and terrorism. These religions glorify men and/or idols, and oppose the purity of truth found in the Scriptures. Because Christ was and is the only begotten Son of God, and because He declared that He is the only way to the Father, He was crucified by those religious leaders who rejected Him. Today, true Christianity is rejected and warred against even by other religions because its truth exposes their error.

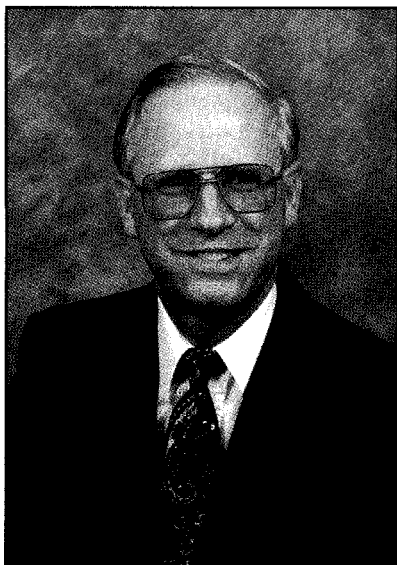
Christianity is under attack by believers in Christ. Though these people voice allegiance to Christ, and belief in Him, and — though they may be honest and sincere in what they are doing — they are members of hundreds and even thousands of different churches that we cannot read about in the Bible. They follow the doctrines of men, teach salvation by “The Sinner’s Prayer”, they wear the names of men, worship in different ways, teach that miracles are being performed today, and practice and teach many other things that are not according to the Scriptures. Tragically, while claiming to be “Christians”, their doctrines and practices are contrary to the Scriptures, which is a devastating type of persecution of truth.

Christianity is under attack by some of its own brethren. These are people within the church who have become liberal, who have decided to join the ranks of false teachers, saying that salvation is by grace only, that baptism is not necessary for remission of sins, that mechanical music is acceptable in worship, that women can teach a mixed audience, and many other false doctrines.

Where does this leave the church, Christianity, the Lord’s people? It leaves us in a fight, a struggle to survive — but survive, we will. There are many enemies of truth, but God has already promised the victory (Revelation 2:10).

Let us remember who our enemy is. It is Satan himself. Let us not give in to him, compromise with him, or join forces with him.

Let us remember who we are. Let us remember our mission in this world, and where we want to spend eternity. Let us remember the admonition of Paul, “*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*” (1 Corinthians 15:58). †



PRAYER — TO JESUS, TO GOD, TO EITHER, OR TO BOTH?

Byron Nichols

Over the past several years it has become increasingly more common to hear men leading public prayers directed to Jesus, rather than to God the Father. This practice has been most noticeable in prayers relative to the observance of the Lord's

Supper. Prayers are heard in which Jesus is the one being addressed, and yet those same prayers are offered in the name of Jesus. Is it possible to pray both to and through the same one? The purpose of this treatise is to give attention to whether it makes a difference as to whom we address our prayers.

Jesus was such a man of prayer that on at least one occasion He was requested to give instructions on the subject. *"And it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples'"* (Luke 11:1). The Lord's response, found in Luke 11:1-4 and Matthew 6:5-15, was what could well be called "The Model Prayer". He starts the lesson by telling His students to whom their prayers are to be addressed — *"Our Father in heaven...."* In this very first phrase Christ answers the question as to whom we should pray — *"Our Father"*. Since this was a lesson on acceptable prayer, would it not seem reasonable to think that Jesus would have included the names of others who could be appropriately addressed in prayer, if indeed that were acceptable? In Matthew 7:7-11 Jesus makes it very obvious that prayer is to be directed to the Father. He makes no mention of praying to Himself or to any other — only to the Father.

Paul had a clear understanding that God is the one to whom prayer

should be directed. He told the Christians of Rome, “*First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world*” (Romans 1:8). He wrote very similarly to the church at Colosse, “*We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you*” (Colossians 1:3). The apostle further instructed the Philippian Christians, “*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God*” (Philippians 4:6). Please note that Paul consistently instructs his readers to pray, not to Christ, not to Christ and God, not to Christ or God, but simply to God. I have to believe that Paul would have known and conveyed to his readers the information if indeed it were acceptable to pray to anyone other than God the Father. Surely it is significant that no such information is recorded.

Jesus definitely has a major role to play in the prayers of Christians, but it is as an advocate, mediator, and high priest. The apostle John wrote, “*My little children, these things I write to you that you not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world*” (1 John 2:1-2). Jesus taught, “*...that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you*” (John 15:16). In John 16:23,24 He also stated, “*And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask and you will receive, that your joy may be full.*” Thus, Jesus made it quite clear that we are to pray **to the Father, and in the name of Christ**. Paul advocated that we are to give our thanks **to the Father through Christ** (Colossians 3:17).

Let it be fully acknowledged that men leading public prayers are subject to nervousness and occasional memory lapses, resulting at times in their saying things that they did not really intend to say. Allowances need to be made for some of this. However, we still need to give advanced thought and preparation so that we do our best to say what is appropriate and scriptural.

Elders (especially), preachers, and teachers — surely it would be wise and fitting to provide teaching and training for men before they are asked to lead the congregation in praying. Some who are already regularly leading public prayers could profit from such learning, as well.

In conclusion, Jesus is highly important in our prayers, not as the one **to** whom we pray, but the one **through** whom we pray. We are to pray to the same being to whom Jesus prayed — the Father. Let us keep clearly in mind that Jesus is our **brother**, not our **Father**. Brethren, please think on these things. †

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For Thirty Pieces of Silver

David R. Pharr

Have you ever heard someone say that Judas betrayed Jesus for a *mere* thirty pieces of silver?

It is true that the chief priests paid Judas thirty silver pieces (Matthew 26:14-16). It is also true that this was the Old Testament price of a slave (Exodus 21:32).

What is it, however, that makes Judas' action so tragic? Is it that he *sold Jesus*? Or, is it that he sold Jesus for *such a small amount*?

It sometimes seems that what people find so shocking is that Judas betrayed the Lord for so *little*. Indeed, some might feel that Judas sinned in selling Jesus too cheaply.

But would his crime have been less heinous if the reward had been greater? Could we be more understanding if he had gotten a million dollars instead of a mere thirty pieces of silver?

Judas Iscariot was not the last

to betray the Lord for a certain price. Whether the value received seems more or less than the infamous thirty pieces matters not. The shameful and damnable crime is in selling Christ at all, no matter what one receives in return.

Many who have marveled over the enormity of Judas' crime perhaps have not considered that there are other ways to sell Christ. What of the youth who compromises principles to be accepted by friends? What of the woman who leaves the church to please her husband? What about the man who accepts dishonesty in business because there is money to be made? What about the one who returns to the world because it's easier than being faithful to the Lord?

We may have thought that Judas was a unique person. The sad truth is, however, that the evil that ruled in the heart of Judas rules in much of humanity. Judas, no doubt, had the same kind of yearnings, made the same excuses, and rationalized his actions just as do others who betray the Lord. The bottom line is not how much or what kind of payment one receives. What is significant is that Jesus is "sold" — at any price! †

David Pharr is the preacher for the Charlotte Avenue Church of Christ in Rock Hill, South Carolina, USA.

A Judge's Haunting Words

I went to Bible classes when I was small and learned all about God. After I was married I decided to go again and take my children. I couldn't persuade my husband to go, but the children and I went regularly for a year. Then I skipped a Sunday. And soon I skipped two or three. Then we went only on special days. Soon I joined a bowling team that competed on Sunday. I could go to worship and Bible classes, but I would have to give up my bowling. Bowling won the battle.

Not long ago in a courtroom I heard a judge say, "Twenty years!" He was pronouncing sentence on my 21 year-old son for a robbery which ended in the death of a man. The sentence might have been less, but my son took a sneering, defiant attitude all through the trial, ridiculing every officer and official in the courtroom.

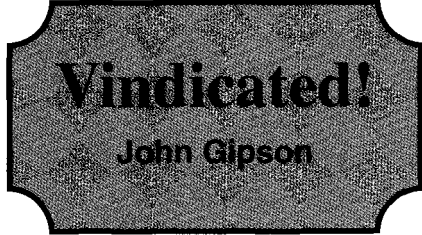
But the crowning, shocking climax came when the judge sternly asked, "Young man, don't you believe in God?"

My son laughed and said, "God? Who's that?" Every person in the courtroom turned to look at me. If only I had those years to live over! I would attend Bible classes and worship services faithfully and make sure my children attended as well.

— Anonymous

Doug Stanton, author of **In Harm's Way**, tells the story of the *USS Indianapolis*.

On July 30, 1945, after delivering components of the first atom bomb, the battle cruiser *USS Indianapolis* was torpedoed and sunk. Nearly 900 sailors were cast



into a savage shark-infested sea. By the time rescue arrived nearly five days later, all but 321 men had lost their lives. In the aftermath, Rear Admiral Charles Butler McVay III, became the first captain in U. S. history to be court-martialed for losing his ship as the result of an act of war.

McVay could have been acquitted had the defense known of a report labeled SECRET and sent to Admiral King by the navy inspector general. From the navy's point of view the ULTRA intelligence wasn't entered into testimony because it was so top secret that, in essence, it didn't exist. Thus the naval career of McVay was over. He would never command another ship.

Back at home through the Christmas season, McVay began receiving the hate mail — "Merry Christmas! Our family's holiday would be a lot merrier if you hadn't killed my son." This continued year

after year until finally McVay walked out the door of his house, lay down on the stone walk, with his head resting on the marble step, put the barrel of the gun to his head, and pulled the trigger.

Fifty-five years after the end of World War II, on October 12, 2000, Congress passed an amendment exonerating Rear Admiral Charles Butler McVay III. Vindicated at last!

My mind raced back to another innocent man. He was condemned and sentenced to death for crimes he did not commit. That man was Jesus. The innocent One died! But that is only part of the story. "*He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory*" (1 Timothy 3:16). The word "vindicated" means "justified" or "declared righteous and just." Jesus was not guilty. He was shown to be righteous by God's supreme act of raising Him from the dead (Romans 1:4).

And through His vindication, we are covered by His blood and declared to be righteous and just. †

John Gipson works with the Sixth and Izzard Church of Christ in Little Rock, Arkansas, USA.

Extraterrestrial Life?

Owen D. Olbricht

In the January 2000 issue of *National Geographic* appeared interesting statements relative to life outside Earth and on Earth. Because of the difficulty of life spontaneously developing on Earth, some have looked for other inhabitable locations as places where life could have developed. This has led them to speculate concerning the possibility of extraterrestrial life.

In the opening paragraph of an article, "Life Beyond Earth," in the above-mentioned magazine, Joel Achenbach wrote, "So far we've found nothing to prove that alien life exists" (p. 24). Such an admission does not eliminate speculation that life might exist on Jupiter's moon, Europa, or distant planets in other star systems.

Even if there is life on planets outside our solar system, travel to earth would be extremely difficult, to say the least. Achenbach wrote concerning the possibility of extraterrestrial beings coming to earth: "They'd have to be some fast, long-living ETs. Even at ten million miles an hour — about 250 times faster than our fastest spacecraft travels — a trip from the nearest star system would take 300 years" (p. 26).

He further admitted, "With instruments such as the Hubble Space Telescope, scientists have discovered a bewildering amount of cosmic turf, and yet they still know of only a single inhabited world" (p 28). Conviction of life anywhere but on earth must be based on *faith*, not on solid *scientific evidence*. An astronomer at UCLA, Ben Zuckerman, speculates that we are alone in this galaxy. Concerning this, Achenbach pointed out, "All the estimates are highly speculative. The fact is that there is no conclusive evidence of any life beyond Earth" (p. 29).

Efforts have been made to detect signals from outer space that might indicate that intelligent life exists out there. All of these have failed.

The improbability of life having come to earth from such distant places has caused some to look to our celestial neighbor, Mars, for life. Late in the 19th century, Lowell, looking through his telescope built near Flagstaff, Arizona, thought that he had discovered hundreds of canals on Mars which were evidence of water, an element essential to life as we know it. When more powerful telescopes revealed that these were not canals, some conclud-

EVIDENCES

ed the markings were prairies and forests. In 1965 the Mariner 4 probe took 22 pictures which proved that they were simply cratered wastelands like those of the moon.

In 1996 the famous Martian meteorite, ALH84001, found in the Antarctic, was proclaimed by NASA to contain a microfossil, proof of life existing on Mars in the ancient past. The assertion has since been discounted. "The NASA team saw its conclusions vigorously attacked. One damaging study showed that some of the microbe-like structures were merely flakes of the rock rendered more biological in appearance by the coating process used in the preparation of slides. Researchers also found contaminants from Earth inside the meteorite" (p. 41).

If life never existed on our nearest solar neighbors and life could not have arrived from other possible far-distant solar systems, then **is it possible that life spontaneously began on Earth?** Such an unfounded conclusion is not likely.

Even on Earth the origin of life is a stubbornly enduring mystery, from a scientific point of view. "How can a collection of chemicals form themselves into a living thing without any interference from outside?" asks Paul Davies, a physicist and writer. "On the face of it, life is an exceedingly unlikely event," he

argues. "There is no known principle of matter that says it has to organize itself into life. I'm very happy to believe in my head that we live in a biofriendly universe, because in my heart I find that very congenial. But we have not yet discovered the Life Principle" (p. 45).

If life did not originate on earth, or in our solar system, or on some other celestial body, is there another option?

The other option is that life did indeed come from an extraterrestrial source, but *not from inorganic matter*. The source of life most simply stated is found in the Bible. "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*" (Genesis 1:1). All other explanations violate too many scientific principles to be plausible and must be based on *faith without evidence*.

Davies correctly stated, "There is no known principle of matter that says it has to organize itself into life." In spite of this, he chooses to believe it in his heart, even though, as he stated, "...we have not yet discovered the Life Principle."

This is unfounded faith. In contrast, the faith of a Christian is based on a faith in *life* coming from *life*, and *intellect* coming from *intellect*. All present evidence points to such a conclusion. †

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EVIDENCES

Even though the majority of the scientific community claims there is much physical evidence to support the theory of evolution, they reluctantly admit evolution is just that: *a theory*. According to Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, a "theory" is defined as "an hypothesis assumed for the sake of argument or investigation. An unproved assumption: CONJECTURE." Unfortunately, in our colleges and universities, evolution is taught as fact, not as "an unproved assumption".

Not only is the theory of evolution unproven. It is also a very poor scientific theory. More than one aspect of this hypothesis demands the subversion of well established laws of nature. The **violation** of a law of science is **a miracle**. In fact, one might say that *the theory of evolution depends upon the frequent occurrences of miracles*.

For example, evolutionists proclaim that the universe began by a "big bang". This gigantic explosion supposedly resulted in the formation

of stars, planets, galaxies and ultimately complex life. What **force** caused this "big bang"? In order for an explosion of this magnitude to occur there must have been a powerful driving force which instigated

THE MIRACLES OF EVOLUTION

Brett Rutherford

this catastrophe. Who, or what, created the matter that exploded, and who, or what, lit the fuse? The evolutionists claim they don't know what caused such combustion to occur. Ultimately, they have to *hypothesize that the force that caused the "big bang" and the matter that exploded were eternal, or else they came from nothing*. However, *this theory violates the first two laws of Thermodynamics*.

The First Law of Thermodynamics says that **matter is unable to create itself**. In other words, it is impossible for matter to begin with-

EVIDENCES

out an adequate cause. It must have a creator. *If matter is eternal then the First Law of Thermodynamics has been violated.* We have already noted that a good definition of a “miracle” is “an act which subverts the laws of nature.” For one to suggest that matter is eternal would be defending a **miraculous event** which would constitute a miracle greater in its scope than that of a universe created by Divine Force.

ordered design. However, evolutionists claim that the very ordered universe in which we live *arose from chaos.* What are the chances of a cosmic explosion creating a universe operated by well established laws and supporting fully functioning intelligent life? It is impossible! Again, the evolutionists are supporting a **miracle** by suggesting **that matter is eternal and that order came from chaos.**

A “miracle” is “an act which subverts the laws of nature.”

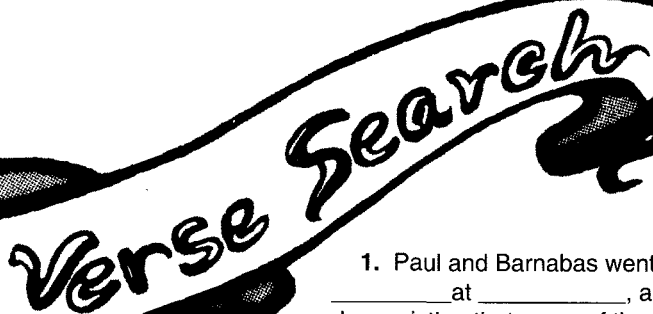
Secondly, if matter is eternal then the Second Law of Thermodynamics has also been violated. *This unalterable principle demands that the universe must have an ordered beginning.* Paul Davies, a professor of Natural Philosophy at the University of Adelaide, wrote in his book **Super Force** that “The second law [of Thermodynamics] governs the way in which energy and matter can be exchanged between systems in an ordered way, and effectively forbids us from using the same quantity of energy over and over again for a useful purpose such as to run a machine. In a nutshell, the second law states that **disorder can never spontaneously give rise to order...**”

It would, therefore, be a scientific impossibility for any element (matter) in the universe to be eternal. Matter must come from an

If they claim that matter is not eternal then they have to suggest that matter and the universe were created from nothing. To propose that something comes from nothing is equivalent to proclaiming that zero plus zero equals one. It is impossible!

It is far more reasonable to believe that an eternal, intelligent, all powerful Being (God) created the universe. This latter miracle is much less complicated than the many miracles that the evolutionists are proposing. **The Bible, which explains that matter is created, and that the universe did not emerge from chaos, is more consistent with the laws of Thermodynamics than modern “scientists” who accept the evolutionary pattern.** †

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Verse Search

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

1. Paul and Barnabas went to the _____ at _____, and spoke with such conviction that many of the _____ and _____ (V. 1).
2. What did the unbelieving Jews do? (V. 2).
3. What did the Lord do to confirm the truth of what Paul and Barnabas were preaching? (V. 3).
4. The antagonism of the Jews (and finally of the Gentiles and their rulers) was shown in what way? (V. 4,5).
5. Hearing of their intentions, Paul and Barnabas escaped to the cities of _____ and _____, where they continued to _____ (V. 6,7).
6. When Paul healed the lame man in Lystra, what did the people declare? (V. 8-11).
7. What name did they give to Paul? to Barnabas? (V. 12).
8. What did the priest of Zeus try to do? (V. 13).
9. How did Paul and Barnabas react to this attempt to worship them? How do religious leaders today usually react to people bowing to them? (V. 14,18).
10. What did Paul say that they had preached to them? (V. 15).
11. God has always allowed humans to exercise their "free will". How is this described in verse 16?
12. How did the people of Lystra react when the Jews came from Antioch and Iconium? (V. 19).
13. When the disciples gathered around, Paul "_____." The next day he _____. (Vs. 20).
14. In Derbe, they did what? Afterwards, what did they do? (V. 21,22).
15. Name four things they did to strengthen the brethren (V. 23).
16. What did they do when they returned to Antioch? (V. 26-28).

[See inside of back cover for answers.]



Set in Concrete

Hollis Miller

According to the promise Jesus made to His apostles, when the last of them laid aside his armor there remained no more spiritual truth to be revealed (John 16:12-15). Thus, the Lord's people are to forever believe and practice what divine inspiration led the apostles to write and teach. Truth for the church had been "set in concrete", and no alterations were (are) to be made.

Setting something in concrete is a strange idea in our modern world where all things are viewed as changeable. Nothing, claim many

modern thinkers, is so fixed that it cannot be moved. If necessary, everything about Christian faith is subject to rearrangement in order to meet the demands of the times. Jesus can be redefined, the resurrection can be reinterpreted, morals can be reviewed and moved about to suit pressing demand, and Scripture can be placed on the back seat when councils, synods, and conventions meet.

How surprised would the apostle Paul be were he to visit the world today and find things as they are! Actually, it is doubtful that he

THE WORD OF GOD

would be surprised at all. He wrote the following before he departed to be with the Lord: *"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons"* (1 Timothy 4:1). Also, *"The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables"* (2 Timothy 4:3f). Even during His personal ministry Jesus thought it necessary to warn His disciples to *"Beware of false prophets, who will come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves"* (Matthew 7:15).

All who believe the teaching of the New Testament are greatly saddened, but not overwhelmed, by the changes occurring in the general Christian world. Little by little, false teaching has inched its way into the

thinking of leaders who are controlling the direction of multitudes who profess faith in Jesus Christ.

"Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the traditions of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ" (Colossians 2:8). †

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

IT LIVES!

Generation follows generation — yet it lives.
Nations rise and fall — yet it lives.
Doubted, suspected, criticized — yet it lives.
Condemned by atheists — yet it lives.
Scoffed at by scorners — yet it lives.
Betrayed by fanatics — yet it lives.
Wrongfully accused, misquoted —
Yet it lives.

As a lamp to our feet.
As a light to our path.
As the guide to heaven.
As a guide for our youth.
As a comfort to the aged.
As food to the hungry.
As drink to the thirsty.
As rest to the weary.
As light for the ignorant.
As salvation for the sinner.
To know it is to love it.
To love it is to accept it.
To accept it is eternal life.

—selected

Understanding the Bible

George Akpabli

The Bible is an ancient book. In it God reveals His will to humans. The message of the Bible is God's communication with man, yet, like most communications, much of it is misunderstood. All can read and understand the Bible by following these simple rules:

1. *Believe that the Bible is inspired of God and is therefore the fundamental authority He has over us. God reveals the true meaning only to those who are willing to obey Him.*
2. *Before you begin reading, pray to God and ask for His wisdom.*
3. *Use your intelligence; seek to understand what God is trying to tell you. God gave us common sense to help us understand our fellow humans; use it also to understand God.*
4. *Do not fear the extra effort that is required in reading an ancient book.*
5. *Have an open spirit. Do not read the Bible to confirm your opinions, for in doing that you would not discover anything new. As for prejudice, it's a sure roadblock to understanding the Scriptures.*
6. *The greatest blessings come when you study with the desire to obey. The Word is like seed; allow it to germinate and grow in good soil, your heart.*

THE WORD OF GOD

7. *Spiritual purity is important. If sin is in your life, you will find the Bible rebuking these things. Do not be tempted to close the Book and put it aside. Correction of wrong is good, go ahead and make changes in your life according to the Scriptures. You would obey your physician if he told you that certain lifestyles would lead to incurable diseases. Listen to the Physician of your soul who warns you about the consequences of sin.*
8. *Seek help from good preachers and teachers of the Bible if some passages seem hard to understand. Their help will be useful.*
9. *Begin your study with the parts of the Bible which are easier to understand, such as the Gospel accounts and the book of Acts, before going into the epistles and other more difficult books.*
10. *Apply the truths you discover to your life and the lives of others. It would be a waste of time if you studied just for the mere acquisition of knowledge. Ask yourself the following questions during your study:*
 - *Is there a commandment here for me to obey?*
 - *Is there a sin or an error here for me to avoid?*
 - *Is there a promise for me to claim?*


Friends, we can understand the Bible, if that is our desire. †

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Baptism: The Dividing Line

Hugo McCord

Baptism is the dividing line between:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Sin-guilt and |  | remission of sins under the great commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:46-49). |
| 2. The unsaved and | | the saved (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21). |
| 3. Those whose sins have not been washed away and | | those whose sins have been washed away (Acts 22:16). |
| 4. Those without the gift of the Holy Spirit (the guarantor of heaven, Ephesians 1:14) and | | those with the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 5:32; Galatians 4:6). |
| 5. Those whose father is the devil (John 8:44) and | | those whose Father is the God of heaven (2 Corinthians 6:18). |
| 6. Those are not in Christ and | | those who are in Christ (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27). |
| 7. Those who are not in the kingdom of God and | | those who are in the kingdom of God (John 3:5; Colossians 1:13). |
| 8. Those who are not in the " <i>one body</i> " (" <i>the church</i> ," Ephesians 1:22,23) and | | those who have been " <i>bap-</i> |

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

9. Those for whom God **does not** work all things together for good and ➡➡➡
10. Those who **do not** have “*all spiritual blessings*” and ➡➡➡
11. Those who **do not** have “*life more abundantly*” and ➡➡➡
12. Those who **do not** have a “*never fading inheritance reserved in heaven*” and ➡➡➡



tized into the one body” (1 Corinthians 12:13).

◀◀◀ those for whom God **does** work all things together for good (Romans 8:28).

◀◀◀ those who **do** have “*all spiritual blessings*” (Ephesians 1:3).

◀◀◀ those who **do** have “*life more abundantly*” (John 10:10).

◀◀◀ those who **do** have a “*never fading inheritance reserved in heaven*” (1 Peter 1:4).

**“Be not foolish,
but understanding what is the Lord’s will” (Ephesians 5:17).** †

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

“Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is **born of water and the Spirit**, he cannot enter the kingdom of God’” (John 3:5).

“...having been **born again**, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever...” (1 Peter 1:23).

“Therefore we were **buried with Him through baptism into death**, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in **newness of life**” (Romans 6:4).



Adenugba D.A.

“Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us” (Romans 8:37).

Glory be to God for we are more than overcomers through Him who loves and lives in us! Our conquest of the world is not as a result of our own *human* strength, power and wisdom. Our victory is not achieved through the *weapons of war*, for our warfare is not carnal (Ephesians 6:12). However, we are victorious *through faith in Him* who is capable to make us an overcomer.

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:4,5).

When we turn to God completely through His Son Christ Jesus we are conquerors, but without Him, no one can overcome the world. You become an overcomer when you heartily believe in Christ and obey Him (Romans 10:9,10; 1 John 2:23). As Christians we live by faith (Hebrews 10:38), walk by faith (2 Corinthians:5:7) and stand by faith (2 Corinthians 1:24). Doing this, we are under the full protection of Almighty God. Hence, we do not require the assistance of any juju or charms for anything. We can say boldly with brother Paul that, *“The Lord is my helper and I will not fear what man shall do unto me”* (Hebrews 13:6).

“Ye are of God, little children,” Brother John wrote, *“and*

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4). For you to be an overcomer, you must be truly a child of God. God must dwell in you, and for God to abide in you, you must be obedient to his commandments: *“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous”*(1 John 5:3).

His commandments are that we repent of all sins (Acts 3:9; Luke 13:3,5); confess Christ as the Son of God (Philippians 2:11; Matthew 10:32,33), be baptized by immersion for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3,4) and continue to walk in newness of life till the end (Revelation 2:10). These are the steps one must take in order to be saved and to be an overcomer. Partial obedience is no obedience at all. Thus all these steps must be taken in sincere faith.

When we are baptized we automatically put on Christ (Galatians 3:26,27) and receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). We are not of the flesh but of the Spirit (Romans 8:9,10; 14). We are a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17). Christ dwells in us and we in Him. Consequently, we are conquerors, because He has overcome for us.

No one can be an overcomer by ignoring God’s commandments.

Neither can anyone be outside Christ and be a conqueror. But when we put on Christ in baptism, God is in us, and who can be against us? (Romans 8:31-34).

Brethren, we are more than conquerors when we *abide in the commandments of God*. We are overcomers when we put on the whole armour of God, that is, the word of God, by studying the Holy writ (Ephesians 6:10-14; 2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Timothy 4:13). Jesus triumphed over the devil with the words of God (Matthew 4:1-10).

We shall also be victorious if we are prayerful. Through prayers we shall *receive*, the *door shall be opened* and we shall *find* (Luke 11:9,10; 1 John 5:15).

Surrender all to God through Christ and you are an overcomer in every way. You can be an overcomer of wants because God can supply all your needs (2 Corinthians 9:12; Matthew 6:33,34). Christians are overcomers of errors and sins because we limit ourselves to the word of God and live according to His law. Hence, *“ye are clean through the word”* and holy as the One who has called you is holy (John 15:3; 1 Peter 1:15,16).

May the gracious and merciful God assist us to be overcomers. †

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DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

In the story of the rich man and Lazarus in the sixteenth chapter of the book of Luke we are told that the rich man, after his death, was in torment in Hades (Luke 16:23). Of course, his body was buried in a grave or tomb, but his spirit or soul was in Hades.

This is the place Christ, too, had entered, after His death. According to Acts 2:27,31, Jesus' soul did not ascend into Heaven upon His death but, instead, was in Hades, in the place of the righteous dead until His resurrection (Acts 1:9-11). During that time of His earthly stay on earth He had told Mary: "*I have not yet ascended to my Father*" (John 20:17). Christ had a very short stay in Hades, just for three days. Likewise, did His body remain in the tomb just for three days and three nights, as He had promised in Matthew 12:40.

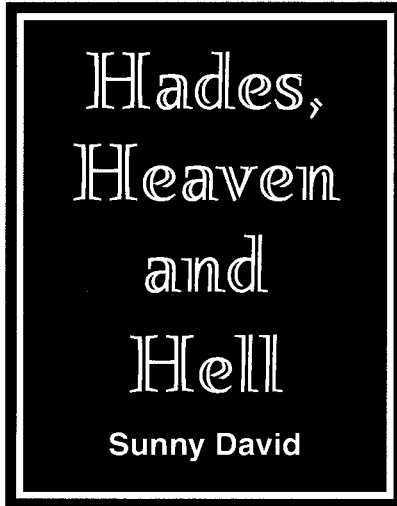
Now, since the rich man of Luke 16 went into Hades after His death, and Christ also went into Hades after His death, then they both went to the same place, that is, the place or the abode of the dead. But, the differ-

ence was that while the rich man was "*in torment in Hades,*" as Luke 16:23 says, Christ had gone to Paradise in Hades (Luke 23:43), which means a place or the state of Bliss. Hades, therefore, is the intermediate place or

state of the departed souls, and is separated into two parts by a great gulf which cannot be crossed. One of these areas is for the wicked, such as the rich man of Luke 16, (Also read 2 Peter 2:4 & Jude 6), and the other is for the righteous, such as Christ and those

who have been redeemed by His blood.

In Acts 2, addressing the Jews who had gathered together to observe the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, not only did Peter say that their prophet David had prophesied (about one thousand years prior to that time) concerning Christ, that His soul would not be left in Hades (Acts 2:31), but Peter also told them that David had not yet ascended into Heaven (Acts 2:34). So where was David, that is, where was his soul? He was in Hades, of course.



DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

Hades, like death, is temporary, and will exist as long as there is death. But on the last day, on the day of resurrection and judgment of all (John 5:28,29), both death and Hades will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:14), because there will be no need for them anymore.

In Matthew chapter 10, where Christ was teaching on the subject of fearing God, He said, *“And do not fear those who kill the soul, but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”* (Matthew 10:28). In hell, therefore, there will be both soul and body together, unlike in Hades where there are only souls. And the same will be true in heaven: soul and body will be there. This is one of the great differences between Hades, and Heaven and Hell.

On the day of judgment, when Christ will appear, all the dead will be raised (1Thessalonians 4:13-18). *“But someone will say, How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?”* quipped the apostle Paul in His resurrection chapter of 1 Corinthians 15:35. And then, replying himself, he said, *“Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body; so also is the resurrection of the dead.*

The body is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.” (1 Corinthians 15:36-44).

The inference from this explanation is that the bodies of all who have ever lived will be raised to a state of incorruption. In the process of resurrection the bodies will be changed from substance that decays into substance that does not decay, and therefore they will no longer be subject to death.

As Hades delivers up the souls that had been kept there since their physical deaths, (Revelation 20:13), all will stand before the judgment of Christ. Then His words concerning the wicked and the righteous, as He spoke in Matthew 25:46, will be fulfilled: *“And these will go away in everlasting punishment, but the righteous into everlasting life.”*

While Hades will last only until the day of judgment and then will be cast into Hell along with death, both Heaven and Hell are everlasting and eternal. Hades is the place for souls only. But in Heaven and in Hell there will be both souls and bodies. †

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Quick Commentary on Crucial Verses

2 Corinthians 7:10,11

For godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

In this letter Paul commends the Christians in the church at Corinth for their response to his letter of correction, known to us as First Corinthians. He contrasts the "sorrow of the world" with "godly sorrow." Sin inevitably brings pain and eventual death in this world. Turning away from sin, in repentance which results from godly sorrow, brings salvation.

The Corinthians had listened to Paul, and so their sorrow was of a godly type which transformed their lives. Notice the order of the effect in their behavior:

Godly sorrow produced *diligence* (careful, persistent effort). Through their careful efforts to obey what Paul had written, they *cleared themselves* of the sins they were committing. Clearing the sins from their own lives resulted in *indignation* (scornful anger toward sin); and this brought *fear* (alarm and dread) over the great spiritual danger their sins had brought to their lives and souls. The result of fear was a *vehement desire* (forceful and ardent longing) not only to turn back to God but to be continually obedient to Him. From this ardent desire came *zeal* (fervor; hearty and persistent endeavor). Certainly, Christians feel zeal toward their own spiritual needs, but zeal often carries with it a *concern for the needs of others in their lost condition*. Such zeal finally brings *vindication* — a clearing of one's own life, enabling him to *bear fruit unto God* (John 15:4-6; Romans 7:4), which is why we are left in this world.

The Restoration Plea

Cecil May, Jr.



Here is the restoration plea: "Hear, believe, and obey the Gospel of Christ. God will redeem you and add you to the church which Christ promised to build, died to purchase,

and rose to save. Follow the pattern of faith, mission, doctrine, life and work which is found in the New Testament. Be a Christian and a Christian only."

SALVATION

It is Biblical. The Bible invites us to come to Christ for salvation. It tells us God adds the redeemed to His church. It instructs us as to how the church is to live, work, and worship. There are biblical examples of restoration in the Old Testament. When God's people forgot Him, perverted His worship, and went after other gods, under both Josiah and Hezekiah they rediscovered God's book and restored worship and life as God had directed.

It is Essential. What other plea can we make that is acceptable to God? Follow and name yourselves after men as the carnal Corinthians did? Be "of" someone who did not die for you and in whose name you were not baptized? Plead for division, with everyone speaking different things and having a different mind? Ignore the teachings of Christ and His apostles and let every one do what is right in his own eyes?

It is Possible. When the apostles preached the Gospel as the Lord had commanded them, their converts became Christians and served the Lord faithfully by following the teachings of the apostles. We can do today as they did then.

It is Desirable. Come to Christ for salvation. Be just a Christian. Believe only what the Bible teaches. Do only what Christ and His apostles have instructed. Is that not an

attractive plea to anyone willing to accept Christ as Lord? All recent studies indicate denominational loyalties, like brand loyalties in retail commerce, are at *their lowest ebb*. That should not be alarming to us. It should be recognized as a grand opportunity to freshly and enthusiastically make the restoration plea.

It is Practical. Nothing could be simpler. People who are just Christians, and look only to Scripture for direction and authority, are free to believe and do whatever they see Scripture to say. If they learn some truth they have not known, or come to a different understanding from that which they previously had held, they accept Scripture. They do not have to leave one denomination and join another. They have merely become a more knowledgeable, more mature Christian.

The restoration plea is not a tired, failed plea. Some who have abandoned it show clearly they never understood it. Some who say they believe it obscure it with sectarian baggage. Too many of its adherents defend it too timidly.

Proclaim the Gospel joyfully. Plead for the restoration of New Testament Christianity unashamedly. †

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The Gift _____ David A. Sargent

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Ephesians 2:8,9 NKJV).

Salvation is the gift of God’s grace. Because of sin, man is separated from God (Isaiah 59:1,2). *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).* *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).* On the cross, Jesus paid the price for our sin (1 Peter 1:18-19). Through Christ, the gift of God’s grace, we may be saved. That’s God’s gift to us.

We cannot **earn our salvation**. It is *“not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Ephesians 2:9).* No man can ever do enough to earn his way to heaven. It is only **by God’s grace** that we are saved.

We must accept God’s gift of salvation **on His terms**. As we search the Scriptures we find that the kind of faith that God is seeking from us is an “active” faith. A splendid example is found in Acts 2. To those hearers who believed in

Jesus and were convicted of their sin of crucifying the Son of God, Peter instructed that they put their faith into action: *“Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).*

What was their response? *“Then those who gladly received his word [faith] were baptized [faith in action]; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them” (Acts 2:41).* **God saved by His grace those who responded to the message of Jesus with an obedient faith.**

God saves us by His grace when, in faith, we obey the conditions of acceptance. Meeting the conditions of God’s salvation by grace does not make His gift any less a gift. Faith, repentance, and baptism are the necessary responses to what God has done for us in Christ.

“Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” (2 Corinthians 9:15).

Thanks be to God also for the opportunity to accept God’s gift of salvation on His terms.

Will you accept? †

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Waiting Room Bible Study

A five-minute Bible Study
to spark your interest in God's word (NKJV)

Can You Find ... ?

Christ exhorted, "Search the scriptures..." (John 5:39). The Bereans were noble for, along with receiving the word with all readiness, they "searched the scriptures daily" (Acts 17:11). Today, we should heed the Lord's exhortation and emulate the example of the Bereans. Kind reader, as you "search the scriptures," can you find the following:

- ◆ **The name you wear in religion?** Remember, speaking of the name Christ, "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 3:12). In searching the scriptures, can you find,
- ◆ **The church of which you are a member?** If the Bible is our road map from earth to heaven, how can we expect to reach the desired destination being a member of some institution whose name does not even appear in its pages? Think it over! In searching the scriptures, can you find,
- ◆ **The worship you render?** Can you present divine authority and sanction for the burning of incense, washing of feet or using instrumental music in worship to God today? Where is the scripture? In searching the scriptures, can you find,
- ◆ **The confession you made?** What confession did you make before you were baptized? Did you confess, "I believe that God for Christ's sake has pardoned my sins?" Can you find it in the Bible? In searching the scriptures can you find,
- ◆ **The baptism to which you submitted?** Did you have water sprinkled or poured upon you when you were an infant — or maybe later? Can you find book, chapter and verse from the scripture for such a practice in the Christian age? Where can we read that sprinkling is baptism or that infants are proper subjects for such? Also, if you were baptized because you were already saved, where do you read of that in the Bible?

In conclusion, we ask, can you be satisfied rapidly and speedily marching toward eternity having patterned your life after matters which you cannot find in the scriptures? This is a serious matter! — Wendell Winkler

In ancient times, a prophet named Hosea prophesied concerning a future people of God, saying:

"And I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God" (Hosea 2:23).

Who are these who were not of God, but who then became God's people? According to the apostle Paul, they are believers in Jesus Christ, the Son of God:

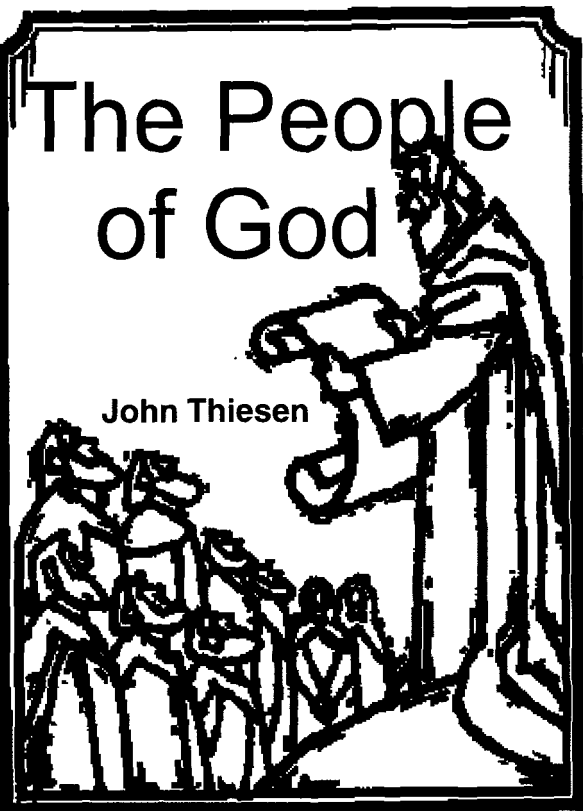
"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many

of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:26,27). All today who come to believe in Jesus and are baptized (immersed) into Him are counted by God as His children, fulfilling the prophecy of Hosea.

These people make up the Lord's church, which is the *"house of God"* and the *"pillar and ground of the truth"* (1 Timothy 3:15).

The People of God

John Thiesen



They have been born into God's family by the rebirth of *"water and of the Spirit"* (John 3:3-5; Mark 16:15,16). Redeemed by Christ's blood (1 Peter 1:18,19), they have become God's children, *"heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ"* (Romans 8:16,17).

In every age, God's people have possessed at least three distinct characteristics:

The Church

The Characteristic of Faith

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

God’s people are people of faith. Abel offered sacrifice to God through faith (Hebrews 11:4). By faith Enoch was translated rather than to see death (Hebrews 11:5). Through faith Noah built an ark (Hebrews 11:7). Abraham became a sojourner and offered up his son, Isaac (Hebrews 11:9, 17-19). By faith Moses led God’s people out of Egyptian bondage (Hebrews 11:24-29). Christians today believe Jesus died for their sins, was raised again, and is alive at God’s right hand in Heaven. Through faith they look for His second coming to raise the dead, judge the world, punish the wicked, and give eternal life to His followers.

Worshipfulness

“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24).

Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all offered sacrifices to God. The Israelites worshiped God at the Temple with sacrifices, tithes, feast days, Sabbaths, and prayer. Christians worship God through the Lord’s Supper, singing, prayers, giving, and the apostles’ teaching (Acts 2:42); Acts 20:7, Ephesians

5:19, 1 Corinthians 16:1,2). The blind man who was healed by Jesus spoke of this trait of acceptance with God when he said, *“Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth”* (John 9:31).

Righteousness

“As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith...” (Colossians 2:6,7).

Noah was a *“just man”* who *“walked with God”* (Genesis 6:9). Lot was a *“righteous man”* (2 Peter 2:7,8). Moses was *“very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth”* (Numbers 12:3). Christians, forgiven of their past sins, are then instructed to *“cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God”* (2 Corinthians 7:1).

Friend, are you one of God’s people? Are you a child of God? The Lord wants you to become one of His children through the rebirth of the water and of the Spirit. Then walk in faith, in the worship of God, and with a holy conduct befitting his child. †

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In One Accord

Glenn Colley

I have never believed that a man must know the Greek or Hebrew language in order to study the Word of God, obey it, and go to heaven. I am fully persuaded that we have reliable translations in English which we can confidently use as our standard for belief and practice.

Nevertheless, a Bible student can surely grow in understanding some impressive details of Scripture by sometimes pursuing a Greek word used in the New Testament. Let's enjoy one such word now.

The English word is "accord." Watch how the Holy Spirit carefully placed the word in these verses in the book of Acts:

*"These all continued **with one accord** in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren" (Acts 1:14). "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come,*

*they were all **with one accord** in one place" (Acts 2:1).*

*"And they, continuing daily **with one accord** in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts 2:46).*

*"And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people: and they were all **with one accord** in Solomon's porch" (Acts 5:12).*

*"It seemed good unto us, being assembled **with one accord**, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul" (Acts 15:25).*

The hard-to-pronounce Greek word is "homothumadon," and it is found twelve times in the New Testament. Eleven times it is translated "with one accord," and one time it is translated, "with one mind."

Of this word Strong's Lexicon of the Greek Language says this: "A

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unique Greek word, used 10 of its 12 New Testament occurrences in the Book of Acts, helps us understand the uniqueness of the Christian community. Homothum-adon is a compound of two words meaning to 'rush along' and 'in unison.' The image is almost musical; a number of notes are sounded which, while different, harmonize in pitch and tone. As the instruments of a great concert under the direction of a concert master, so the Holy Spirit blends together the lives of members of Christ's church."

Listen Christians. The Lord wants us to live and work in sweet harmony, in symphony, in one accord.

Observe that the apostle Paul commands such in Philippians 2:2 when he writes, "*Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*" To work in unison with my brethren is not, then, a mere matter of preference if I choose to follow Jesus faithfully. I **must** do this.

When the church meets for worship and Bible study during each week, are we **in one accord**? Do I fulfill my duty to be present and ready?

When the elders challenge the church with new programs of service, are we **in one accord**? Do they know they can count on me? "*Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they*

watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17).

Do we make a conscious effort to "*weep with those who weep, and rejoice with those who rejoice"* (Romans 12:15)?

There is a sense of security and hope which comes from working in symphony with other Christians, and it is reciprocal. That is, we derive the joy, while at the same time giving the joy. God made Christians to live **in one accord**. †

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What position in the church do you occupy?

A giver or a getter?

A wing or a weight?

A pillar or a sleeper?

A power of a problem?


A booster or a boaster?

A supporter or a provoker?

*An attendant or and
absentee?*

*A peacemaker or a trouble-
maker?*

— Selected



No Wonder the World Is Confused about Christianity

Maxie B. Boren

The Roman Catholic pope receives more publicity than any other world figure, except perhaps the President of the United States. For an example, on so-called "Easter" Sunday, there is worldwide TV coverage given to the gathering of tens of thousands of Roman Catholics for "Easter mass" at the Vatican in Rome. These ritualistic proceedings are depicted as the worship of "Christianity" and the news media refers to the throngs gathered there as "Christians" instead of Catholics.

Believe me, "Easter mass" of Catholicism is nothing akin to the worship of New Testament Scripture (see John 4:23,24)! In fact, it has no valid connection whatsoever to true Christianity! But the world doesn't know that! Viewers around the world undoubtedly think that what they see via telecast from Rome is indeed what "Christianity" is all about. What a distortion!

Adding to the confusion is that by satellite TV, the world also sees programs from so-called "Faith

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Healers” to “Snake Handlers”, all cast under the ever-enlarging umbrella of “Christianity”. On top of that, thousands of Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Pentecostals, Seventh Day Adventists, ad infinitum go forth as “missionaries” claiming identity with “Christianity”. **No wonder the world is perplexed concerning what “Christianity” is all about!**

And worse yet, having heard that America is a “Christian nation,” the world through movies and TV programming sees our country portrayed Hollywood-style, glamorizing nudity, fornication, adultery, homosexuality, drunkenness, gambling, drugs, and cursing. Thus, it equates such sinful behavior with the “moral values” of “Christian America.” Obviously, this gives people an absolutely warped and corrupted perception of what “Christianity” is all about!

Multiplied millions, based on these erroneous portrayals, think of “Christian worship” as an admixture of pomp and ceremony on the one hand, and run-away emotionalism on the other. And they perceive the moral ethic of “Christianity” as decadent. What an absolute shame! Satan has done a stupendous job of lying, distorting the truth, deceiving, confusing, and blinding the minds of the vast majority of people living today.

My soul cries out in prayer, “O God, my heart’s desire is for all mankind to be able to hear the truth about Jesus Christ and true Christianity, and to be saved from sin and its dreadful consequences!” (Please consider Romans 10:1-3, giving this passage a comprehensive application to include all men everywhere. The apostle wrote in 1 Timothy 2:4 that God “*would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth*”). Paul spoke of the “simplicity” which is in Christ (2 Corinthians 11:3). True Christianity is not “showy” and “glamorous”! It is not ritualistic! It doesn’t have a clergy all dressed in “priestly garb” desiring to be seen of men like the Pharisees of old (Matthew 23:1-10) and the Roman hierarchy, calling themselves “Reverend” and “Father”.

True Christianity is composed of honest-hearted people who have heard the gospel, believed it, and obeyed it, and are living humbly before God in their walk with Him (Micah 6:8; Ephesians 5:15-17).

The moral teachings of true Christianity are indeed the highest and most noble value-system the world has ever known! Oh that that the world could know the truth! †

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Holiness — The Heart of Worship

Clarence DeLoach



While there has been great emphasis upon the grace and love of God, somehow we have missed **the holiness of God**. “*Be holy for I am holy*” (1 Peter 1:16). This statement summarizes well the book of Leviticus. A failure to sanctify God in the eyes of Israel led to Nadab’s and Abihu’s disobedience (Leviticus 10:1,2). “*God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all those around Him*” (Psalm 89:7).

Recognizing God’s holiness means that we see Him as flawless, without error, without sin, and fully righteous. This is the heart of true worship. It is much more than singing some pretty songs, feeling good, and thinking positive thoughts. Our response to His holiness leads to a godly, healthy fear. When Isaiah saw the Lord, high and lifted up in His holiness, he was overwhelmed with his own sinfulness (Isaiah 6:1-6).

Any flippant, casual, buddy-buddy approach to God betrays a woeful misunderstanding of the holiness of God. True worship is inspired by a life of brokenness and confession of our sin.

When are we prepared to worship? Hebrews 10:22 gives an insight. “*Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*” Look at the essentials for “drawing near,” that is, worship to God.

FIRST is sincerity — “*With a true heart.*” Our worship must be with all our hearts. God will not receive a divided heart. Years ago,

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Stephen Charnock wrote, “Without the heart it is not worship, it is a stage play, an acting; an acting of a part without being that person really — a hypocrite. We may truly be said to worship God — though we lack **perfection**; but we cannot be said to worship Him if we lack **sincerity**.”

SECOND is fidelity — “*in full assurance of faith.*” We are justified by faith. To the Hebrews this meant letting go of the law, and fully receiving the New Covenant established upon better promises. We, therefore, come in worship, not only with sincerity of heart, but in full assurance of faith in Jesus and the truth revealed in the New Testament.

THIRD is humility — “*having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.*” We come, not in our own sufficiency, but totally on the merits of the blood of Jesus. This gives us a sense of unworthiness in the presence of God.

FOURTH is purity — “*and our bodies washed with pure water,*” the daily cleansing of the blood of Jesus that comes through daily confession of our sin. Not all of life is worship, but all of life relates to our worship. You cannot live every day for the Devil and worship God acceptably on the Lord’s Day or any other day.

Sincerity, fidelity, humility, and purity — these are prerequisites to worship. God is a living, eternal, glorious, and holy being worthy of our worship.

F. W. Faber expressed it well in this hymn —

My God, how wonderful Thou art, Thy majesty how bright!
How beautiful Thy mercy-seat in depths of burning light!
How dread are Thine eternal years, O everlasting Lord!
By prostrate spirits, day and night, incessantly adored!
How wonderful, how beautiful the sight of Thee must be,
Thine endless wisdom, boundless power and awful purity!
O how I fear Thee, loving God, with deepest, tenderest fears
And worship Thee with trembling hope and penitential tears.
Yet I may love Thee too, O Lord, Almighty as Thou art
For Thou hast stooped to ask of me the love of my poor heart.
No earthly father loves like Thee; no mother, e’er so mild,
Bears and forebears as Thou hast done with me,
Thy sinful child.



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WORSHIP

Failure to recognize the benefits of worship in the assembly of the saints may explain the delinquency of many. Frequently, when delinquent members of the church are asked about their unfaithfulness, they will reply by saying, "The church was not doing anything for me." To those who recognize the benefit of worship in the assembly, this is faulty thinking. Echoing the words of a former president of the United States, they should be asking what they can do for the church, rather than what the church can do for them.

Worship in the assembly is not an arbitrary requirement of

10:24,25. Worship in the assembly benefits the worshipper, not God. In fact, there is no other experience in life comparable to it. Let us note some of those benefits.

Fellowship

The word from which fellowship is translated means "communion, fellowship, or sharing in common." The church and faithful worship provide a

bond of fellowship not found anywhere else on earth (Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:7). This fellowship is a great blessing in time of great sorrow and calamity. A faithful member of the church knows that there are others in fellow-



Blessings of Worship in the Assembly of the Saints

W. Douglass Harris

God, but it has spiritual benefits, which God knew, and that is the reason for the injunction in Hebrews

ship with him who will come to his aid when he needs it. As John Faucett wrote in one of our beautiful

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hymns, “We share our mutual woes, Our mutual burdens bear; And often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.”

Exhortation

To those who love the worship in the public assembly, it offers strength for edification (Acts 9:31). As we march toward the fadeless day, we need encouragement and edification to keep keeping on in the narrow way that leads to life that is life indeed. Much of this comes from mutual edification in the assembly. We are exhorted to follow after things wherewith we may edify each other (Romans 14:19). By being with other saints as they assemble, we do most of this. By regular attendance we acknowledge the need of encouragement from others. “*Exhort one another day by day...lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin*” (Hebrews 3:13).

Joy of Worship

Another blessing enjoyed by those who assemble regularly with the saints is the joy of public worship (Acts 2:46;20:7). If we are to be prepared for the joy of worshipping God in heaven, this is a **must**. Being in the assembly of the saints, viewed properly, is a little foretaste and anticipation of the joy we will experience with that celestial throng around the throne of God. This is the picture that is portrayed in the

book of Revelation. As the Psalmist said: “*In thy presence is fullness of joy*” (Psalm 16:11).

Encouragement

There are two words in the Greek New Testament which are translated by four different English words, and encouragement is one of them. We are admonished to do this for each other (Hebrews 10:24,25). By being absent regularly without providential reasons, we are discouraging others in running the Christian race. One of the devil’s most effective weapons is *discouragement* — getting Christians to thinking they can’t live the Christian life or that it is not worth the cost.

Conclusion

The knowledgeable saint comes into the assembly (1) as a thirsty person goes to a spring of fresh water, seeking refreshment; (2) as a period of preparation for the joy he will experience when he crosses the great divide and joins those assembled around the heavenly throne; (3) because there we are taught the tragedy of sin and the reality of salvation therefrom; (4) as an oasis *in* a sinful world and a refuge *from* a sinful world. What greater prospects could we contemplate? †

W. Douglass Harris is the editor of the *Caribbean Messenger* and lives in Decatur, Alabama, USA.



How do you measure up?

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind,
and said:

"Who is this who darkens counsel
By words without knowledge?
Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you,
and you shall answer Me.

Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Tell Me, if you have understanding.

Who determined its measurements? Surely you know!
Or who stretched the line upon it?

To what were its foundations fastened?

Or who laid its cornerstone,

When the morning stars sang together,

And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

"Or who shut in the sea with doors,

When it burst forth and issued from the womb;

When I made the clouds its garment,

And thick darkness its swaddling band;

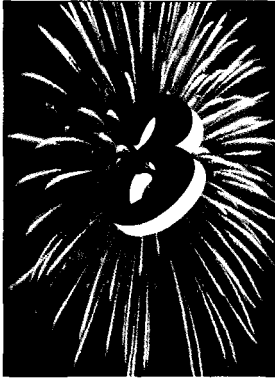
When I fixed My limit for it, And set bars and doors;

When I said, 'This far you may come, but no farther,

And here your proud waves must stop!'

Job 38:1-11

THE DEVIL'S DYNAMIC PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH GROWTH



Fenter D. Northern

Much emphasis has been placed on growing large churches in the past few years. Some congregations have met with phenomenal success while others seem to have great difficulty in maintaining their present memberships. A typical stressful question posed by many congregations to a prospective preacher is: "What can we do to keep them coming?"

Facing the beginning of His personal ministry after His baptism, Jesus went into a wilderness seclusion for forty days. Satan came to Him there and offered three sure-fire principles for Jesus' own "success", which, ironically, Satan is still offering to Christians who are looking for answers on how to grow "successful" church in this secular world. These principles on "The Dynamics of Church Growth" are guaranteed to sweep in crowds, and to keep them coming and contributing sufficiently to meet big budgets based on Satan's success principles. These principles of church growth are so subtle, so simple, so alluring, and so effective for building large churches that the Holy Spirit thought it necessary to warn us of their deceptiveness. What are these enticing proposals recorded in Matthew 4 that our Lord trashed as unworthy tools?



The Devil's first dynamic principle of church growth

offers people "bread first." Satan says that we should replace unpalatable aspects of the Scriptures, the church, worship, and the Christian life with things that will win approval. We must turn stones into bread by appealing to the physical and material desires

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of humans. Develop “diet teams for Jesus,” “aerobics,” “job counseling,” “softball teams,” “basketball gymnasiums,” “social programs,” and “clinics for self-image improvement”. Billboard these on flashing marquees. Since many in today’s world are “turned off” by Scripture and the faithful preaching of God’s word, we should attract people instead by turning the church into a friendly, social club.

We can increase the size of the congregation even further, drawing numbers from across denominational lines, by adopting generic names like Community Fellowship Church, etc. Appeal to the shallowness of people and their desire to “be given unto” rather than to give, their desire to “be served” rather than to serve, and their continual question, “What’s in it for me?” When filling these “needs” is top priority for a church, the crowds will flock in response. Satan urges that we turn stones into bread for the masses, but they will evaporate when we try to feed them the true bread of life (See John 6).



The Devil's second dynamic principle of church growth

would replace true worship with sensationalism. The scriptures say, *“If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone”* (Matthew 4). Show business is just about the greatest crowd attraction on earth, so add fanfare and the “unexpected” to dry and mundane services. Give worshippers a show-time religion. Turn pulpits into set decorations that will make Hollywood envious. Send for highly recognized, talented speakers, and have choral groups to perform. Arrange special music — solos, quartets, and have elaborate presentations for Easter and Christmas celebrations. Present testimonies from famous athletic stars. Open your pulpit for all popular speakers, regardless of gender or doctrinal belief. Turn the Lord’s Supper away from its simplicity into something more “graphic” and “impressive”. Mold services into a constant diet of “praise worship”, which will allow impenitents to “worship” without feeling “preached to”.

Churches tend to grow more rapidly when they are considered up-to-date, therefore be quick to adopt cultural fads and trends. Make your worship professional by discouraging the use of old-time hymns. Instead, sing peppy songs with lots of physical movement. “Gospel Rock” singing and accompanying exercises are extremely appealing. Make “sermons” brief but highly motivational for the group. Encourage the light-hearted audience

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to show its pleasure with unrestrained applause. Tell everybody their feeling of pleasure is evidence that the "Holy Ghost" is present.

Avoid using the word sin except when applied to a possible "world situation". Never use it to point out *personal* faults. Speak of sin as being dysfunctional, maladjusted or as a behavioral problem. Offer counselling sessions with an abundance of psychology but direct no one to the Scriptures and to God's demands for repentance; that would be preaching. Then, when everyone is feeling good, uplifted and psyched up, pass the contribution plate. People will pay to be entertained.



The Devil's third dynamic principle of church growth

asks that we fall down and worship him. We would openly disregard any scriptural references of New Testament law or worship, having concluded that these are not actually laws but that they are only principles. Satan would have us to believe that the Scriptures must bend to accommodate every culture and every age. Therefore, worship should have an abundance of religious trappings, but be fleshly centered. Tell everyone what they want to hear: that God loves to be worshiped in the way that people want to worship Him. Send worshippers away feeling that their obligations to God have been fulfilled if they have "enjoyed" a lively worship service.

Many big churches build on the idea that worship is a commodity for human consumption; that it is not adoration and praise of God, done in the right spirit and according to the Scriptures. Their policy is to make worshippers feel they have spent their time meaningfully, by their standards of what worship is supposed to be. Feeling self-satisfied, they will return in droves. Such people forget what Jesus warned, "*Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out 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*" Matthew 7:22,23)



Let us now consider: "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit sayeth unto the Churches*" (Revelation 2:17). These three principles were suggested in their original form to Jesus by Satan when our Lord first set out to build His group of disciples. He rejected each of them as a lie of Satan.

The Lord wanted His people to grow far more than any of us who are working with established congregations

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today. If these principles had been true, he would have used them himself. But he refused to build on the false premises of (1) bread first, (2) the use of sensationalism and entertainment and (3) a worship that is disassociated from the word of God. These principles may produce big numbers and enable members to meet the budget, but Jesus refused them as lies and unworthy tools for Himself and for His people.

Material bread has its place, but you cannot build a congregation of the church of Christ on bread — physical appeal — alone. It takes pulpits and Bible classes where every word proceeds out of the mouth of God and where the congregation is proclaiming, “amen” and “hallelujah, Thy will be done!” The church of Christ thrives when its members rely only on Christ’s principle of growth: *“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, all these things will be added to you”* (Matthew 6:33) We must place the importance of spiritual bread first, and then trust God that the needed physical bread will follow.

Jesus refused to play to the grandstand. *“God is a Spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth”* (John 4:24). But worshipping in spirit is not lifting people emotionally with a religious show. Like Abel, excel-

lent worship is an offering to God by faith: worship which is offered as it was divinely ordered. It is preaching the good news in its entirety, God’s “no” as well as His “yes”. It is observing the Lord’s Supper each First Day of the week in quiet and reverent simplicity. It is lifting our voices in singing, with self-examination of the heart. It is not Cain’s selfish style of “worship in your own way”. Singing “Amazing Grace” to gospel rock music may entertain applauding crowds, but for many it is out of order in true worship, lacking in reverence and the quiet spirit of meditation (1 Corinthians 14:40).

Many rapidly growing twentieth century churches graphically signify that they have rejected the muddy river of Jordan for the clear waters of Damascus (2 Kings 5; 1 Corinthians 1:21). To make such a choice is to choose Satan rather than Christ.

One thing we cannot afford to forget: Jesus loved the masses. They represented souls. He showed His concern when His large audiences began to dwindle away. He turned to the twelve and asked, *“Will ye also go away?”* Peter gave the only acceptable answer for Jesus’ followers in that day and for a congregation of the church of Christ today: *“To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal*

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life" (John 6:68,69). Let us first preach the Word, then leave it to God to give the increase — to "grow the church" (Acts 2:37-47). When we can say with Paul, "*I know whom I believed, and am persuaded....*"; When we can say, "*It is not I who live, but Christ liveth in me,*" and when we can say, "*...for me to live is Christ....*" then the evil forces of this age will have met their match, and the surge toward life in the church will be more powerful than the drift toward death. †

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My Part

God didn't put me on this earth
To have an easy time.

He put me here to fight a fight,
To hold a battle line.

He put me here to help the weak
And myself in growing strong.

He put me here to lend a hand
And help the world along.

He didn't put me here to whine,
Stick out my lips and pout;

He put me here to do His work
And Satan's evil rout.

He only asks that I do my best
To carry out His plans;

Forget rewards and starry crowns,
And leave all in His hands.

— Author unknown

What Are the Benefits of True Worship?

It:

Warms our hearts.

Opens our eyes.

Raises our hopes.

Satisfies our longings.

Heals our wounds.

Inspires our lives.

Pleases our God.

MY GOD IS NOT A GOD OF FAILURE

Clayton Pepper

The first few chapters of the book of Acts describe the growth of the first congregation of the Church. After some 3,000 converts the first day, there were additions daily (Acts 3:41,47). Soon there were 5,000 men, plus women and children (Acts 4:4). They sowed bountifully and reaped bountifully. *“The word of God increased and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly”* (Acts 6:7). There is a lot of difference in sowing a few seed on a small plot of ground and much seed on a large acreage. There is a vast difference in the harvest. There is the opportunity for a much larger catch of fish on a trot line with many hooks than a pole with just one hook. The early Church was sowing a lot of seed — they had a lot of hooks out! *“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ”* (Acts 5:42).

What God Controls Grows

I like the statement, “what God controls grows”! The life that God controls grows spiritually and becomes a winner of souls (cf 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Timothy 2:2; Hebrews 5:12). Also the Church that God controls grows numerically! The only exception that I know of to this would be where there are no people around, or communist rule. The question is, is God in control of some congregations? Many congregations have very few converts because there is little or no evangelistic thrust — no adequate leadership in evangelism and no trained soul winners. If God is in control, we must conclude that He is a God of failure. If He is not a God of failure, then we must conclude that He is not in control! Our God cannot fail!

Being sound in doctrine does not permit a congregation to be sound asleep! There is no such thing as being sound doctrinally, alive spiritually and dead evangelistically!

One may conclude that growth is not possible today. This may be true if we rely only on twentieth century traditional methods. In such cases apostolic methods have not failed. They simply have not been tried! My God is not a God of failure! Who is in control of your life and your congregation? †

Clayton Pepper, now deceased, was editor of *Church Growth* magazine.

Editor's Note:

We would like to continue with the account brother Grimm wrote concerning the existence of Christians in many places throughout the centuries following the establishment of the church in Jerusalem in AD 33. Because true Christians have always been in the minority, their history has often been ignored, even while many were dying martyrs' deaths as "heretics" at the hands of religious people. The story continues...



Christians: "Heretics" to be Killed

Dr. Hans Grimm

About the beginning of the ninth century the fire of persecution became again enkindled. In 813 the Christians in Cappadocia were exterminated through mass executions, those in Armenia fearfully decimated. When, at the attempt to seize a group of fleeing believers in the passes of the Taurus Mountains, two imperial commissioners were pushed into the precipice in the panic and perished, entire churches fled as one to the region of Mohammedan feudal lords in Aserbeidschan and Kurdistan. There they were sheltered by the Emir at Argaum, in the city Tephrika which was built close to the Byzantine boundary. The walls and battlements of this city, which the Byzantine persecutors of heretics themselves called "Christianopolis" (City of the Christians), became the protective castle of all the persecuted, no matter what their religion was. For besides the true Christians, there were fleeing to this stronghold on the border also adherents of false doctrines, corruptions of the teachings of the Scriptures: Manicheans, Jacobites, Nestorians, Messalians, Bardaisanites.

The persecution by the emperors and bishops of Anatolia raged fearfully against all who did not submit to the state church, for they were considered as allies of Islam which was knocking at the doors of the empire. According to estimates of Armenian and Byzantine chroniclers, up to the year 843 some

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100,000 *heretics* in Asia Minor and Northern Syria were executed or perished in flight.

The close coexistence of Christians and confused believers of all shades in the emirate of Malatia led necessarily also to apostasy, division, and weakening of the transmitted faith of the apostles. Antinomistic movements (that is, movements which declared that with the taking away of the Mosaic law the end of all law had come, and therefore that no true Christian

lies, from the suckling infant to the old man, there arose voices, even in the ranks of the members of the churches, who proposed that "liberating marches" be undertaken into the Byzantine Empire, to rescue these unfortunate ones by use of the sword.

With the agreement of the Mohammedan authorities these brethren set up a "Christian army," whose commander was one of the most beloved elders, Karbeas. Those in the church who did not believe in using violence had to state to the

The close coexistence of Christians and confused believers of all shades in the emirate of Malatia led necessarily also to *apostasy, division, and weakening of the transmitted faith of the apostles.*

could sin any longer) won adherents among even the elders of the churches; thus the surviving Galatian church had to withdraw from their last surviving elder, Baanes, for these reasons.

However, the opinions clashed together the hardest concerning the use of weapons. Up to that time it had been self-evident that one must not become violent toward evil men, even for self-protection, after their understanding of Matthew 5:38,39. But now, after the news from the adjoining imperial provinces of the horrible extermination of entire fami-

ly sword-bearing brethren that by this action they had placed themselves outside of the people of God, for "the Holy Spirit who (you know) only takes from him and shares with us what Christ in his testament has revealed to us, will never demand of us that we ever fight with others with any but spiritual weapons; and Christ forbids us to battle, not only for the kingdoms of this world, but also for the kingdom of God."

As always, when the decisions of the New Testament seem to contradict human understanding, it is only the minority that represents

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this consistent point of view of not resisting evil.

The great majority greeted with cheers the marching out of sword-bearing Christians, greeted with shouts of joy the report of the saving of a number of Galatian and Phrygian churches from complete annihilation, rejoiced when Karbeas' son-in-law had reached old

his political chessboard. And now began the chicaneries on the part of the Moslems.

The tax, which all non-Mohammedan subjects had to pay, was tripled for the churches of the Lord, herds were seized as security, lands and homes were expropriated, forest pastures were taken away from Christians.

As always, when the decisions of the New Testament seem to contradict human understanding, it is only the minority that represents this consistent point of view of not resisting evil.

Ephesus on the Aegean Sea with his Kurdish cavalry.

But this same majority was saddened to death when the message came that, as the victorious army was marching back home with several hundred fugitives in the passes of the Taurus Mountains in the year 871, it fell into an ambush and was annihilated to the last man. Those who had seized the sword, even if for the best and noblest purpose in the world, had perished by the sword.

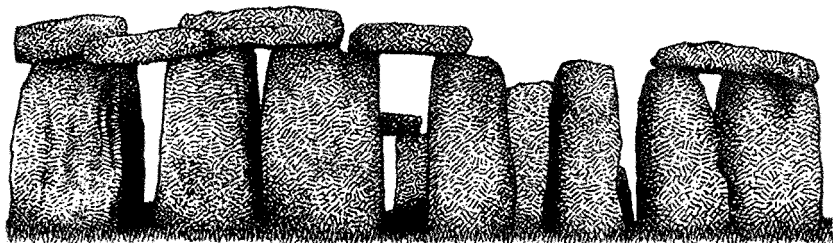
The church in the district of Malatia did penance, and many of the sword-devotees reconciled themselves again with God. But that did not please Kurdish the Emir at all, for he had wished to use these Christians as an important stone on

The persecution was announced. Soon the first martyrs fell under the swords of the Seldschukken.

Like a message from heaven the emigrants heard at this moment the report that the Byzantine emperor had authorized the return of all Christians to Asia Minor, provided they would solemnly renounce any use of violence. Within a few months, more than 80,000 Christians returned to Phrygia, Galatia, and Lycaonia. †

Excerpt from Tradition and History of the Early Churches of Christ in Central Europe by Dr. Hans Grimm, translated by Dr. H.L. Schug, and printed by Firm Foundation, P.O. Box 210876, Bedford, Texas, 76095-7876, USA.

Note: The Bibliography will be given at the conclusion of the series of articles. Editor.



Babel and Beyond

Keith Sisman

Neglected History, Part 2

From Genesis we realize that, after the flood, the entire world was finally re-populated by the descendants of Noah. Extant secular records show that most of the peoples of Europe were from the line of Japheth.

The inhabitants of Europe were known in Roman times as Gauls (Latin: Galli). They were divided into three or more large groups, made up of many smaller tribes: the Belgae, Aquitani and Galli (or in their language **Celtae**, from the Greek Keltoi). They were of at least three or more different ethnic backgrounds and we know from the writings of Gaius Julius Caesar that some were tall and fair skinned and others dark and short (the Aquitani).

They spoke different languages and had different customs. These tribes had petty kings (and sometimes queens) who were often elected by the people from royal families at times of dispute within the royal blood line.

The mightiest of these three main tribal groups were the Celtae (Celts). Despite their differing traditions and backgrounds, a vast trading network across Britain and Europe to the middle east had been established well before 600 BC. Marriage between royalty from different tribes was often arranged, cementing together neighboring tribes so that kingdoms could expand. At times of war these

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tribes could come together as a collective with a temporary king taking charge over the minor tribal kings/chiefs.

Around 390 BC these tribes were so powerful that even the existence of the Roman Republic was threatened by the invasion of the Celts under the British king Brennius, ending with the sacking of Rome. Even the famous Hannibal never succeeded in doing that! The **Galatians** to whom Paul wrote would have been **descendants of these fierce Celtic warriors**.

The Celts even minted their own coinage and had wheeled transport. They put in road systems which were improved by the Romans and still exist today. They could organise themselves into industrial and trading areas such as Grimes Graves, in Norfolkshire, where flint was mined and sold.

The Celts and their neighbours had a belief in the after-life, and prayed for their dead to their gods. Their priesthood, the Druids (Oak-priests) was strongest in Celtic Britain. The Druids came from the warrior aristocracy, they were arbitrators, priests, healers and divines. It was through the Druids that the Celts were unified, and for this reason the Romans sought to destroy the power of the Druids.

In northern Europe these pagan peoples with their many beliefs cel-

ebrated Yuletide, the feast of the winter solstice, welcoming the return of the sun. As in religions from the east, tree worship, or adoration, was practised, especially for its healing powers. Many eastern religions believed that deities or spirits lived inside various trees, and therefore could assist those who offered prayers to the tree.

The Celts held the oak tree and its mistletoe in high esteem, calling it "all-heal", cutting the mistletoe from the tree on the sixth day of the moon. It is from these peoples that Easter, Yuletide and mistletoe have found their way into modern "Christian" religious celebration via the Catholic church. They, like many of the Indo-Europeans (also descendants of Japheth) believed the egg, which they would paint, to be sacred.

They also practised human sacrifice to their gods and, like other peoples across the world, they had a great fascination with death and the terrible suffering of those who were being sacrificed. Their divines would closely watch the dying, believing they could prophesy from such suffering. Sometimes these sacrifices were even voluntary on the part of the victims.

Also amongst the religious beliefs of the Celts was "dualism" (somewhat modified, this later turned up in Christianity as Gnosticism) and "reincarnation"

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(which is an Indo-European belief found today in Hinduism).

In common with other religious beliefs from the east, the Druids set up megalithic stones in areas set aside as sacred for worship. Among the stone "Henges", the circles of Stonehenge and Avebury are two of the most famous. From these stone circles, alignment of the midsummer sunrise and midwinter sunset implies both the *understanding of the calendar* and *sun worship*.

The sun was adored under the name of Bel or Belenus, and human sacrifice was made when worshipping Bel. Normally the victims were prisoners of war or criminals.

Some of the stone blocks at Stonehenge are estimated to weigh over 50 tons. About 900 stone circles survive in Britain and Ireland, some being up to 1300 feet in diameter. What is known about the henges suggests Druid and, therefore, Celtic, worship areas and not earlier unknown peoples according to the popular modernistic view.

The Celts or Gauls were the descendants of Japheth, through the western Indo-European peoples. They brought with them a belief in the primitive pagan religions that had developed in the orient and east. From what we know of their religious beliefs we can clearly see the eastern influence, which is to be expected if mankind migrated from

Babel (Genesis 10,11).

Also the many points of similarity between ancient western (Druid), eastern, oriental and south American religious beliefs and practices suggest a recent migration of mankind, agreeing with the biblical account of nations.

In subsequent times, these nomadic peoples would cultivate the land and become settlers. In modern terms they are classed as stone and later iron age people. Marseille in south France (Gaul) was a Greek colony going back prior to 600 BC, originally being known as Massilia.

In England (known as Loegria) king Lud had expanded the city on the banks of the Thames, being originally called Troia Nova or Troynovant (New Troy) by its Greek founder, Brutus the Trojan. Later corrupted to Trinovantum, it was renamed Kaerlud (meaning the city of Lud) and in time this changed to Kaerlundein. Under Roman occupation it was renamed Londinium and is the London of today.

The only original Celtic-named city to have its name survive is Carlisle in northern England. Being a Kaer (city) it was in Celtic called Kaerleil after its founder king Leil.

Celtic history was handed down through the centuries mainly by oral tradition, although some tribes had

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scribes (Druids) who wrote down their histories and genealogies. It could take up to twenty years for a Druid to learn the oral tradition of his forefathers. Celtic scholars and philosophers repeated the stories and legends of the great flood that were an important part of their oral history.

Celtic royalty could follow their ancestry right back to Noah. Even to this day Queen Elizabeth 2 of Britain can trace her lineage back to Adam, via the line of Japheth.

Amongst Celtic stories which were passed from generation to generation were the accounts of battles with terrible dragons, flying serpents and sea monsters. What is interesting about such "legends" is that, through the detailed accounts given, we can recognise particular species of dinosaur such as the dreaded Tyrannosaurus Rex, flying Pterodactyl and the frightening water inhabitant, the Plesiosaurus!

Such stories may not be taken seriously today, but their remarkable agreement with the Biblical flood account and the similarity of dragons stories with known species of dinosaur make stunning reading. Maybe modern historians should take a look back into early histories, rather than totally ignoring them in preference to unproved evolutionary time-scales. Even today the Welsh flag still retains its dragon, a symbol of earlier times.

After the flood the conditions for life were not as amenable as they had been prior to the flood. Dinosaurs are reptiles and cold blooded, and would have continued to increase in size throughout their lives. It is unlikely that post-flood dinosaurs would have attained their huge pre-flood size, due to the fact that their life expectancy would have been far shorter — but they would still have had a nasty bite! †

To be continued.

Keith Sisman is a brother in Christ who is doing research on biblical and religious history in the ancient libraries of England.

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Who Am I?

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

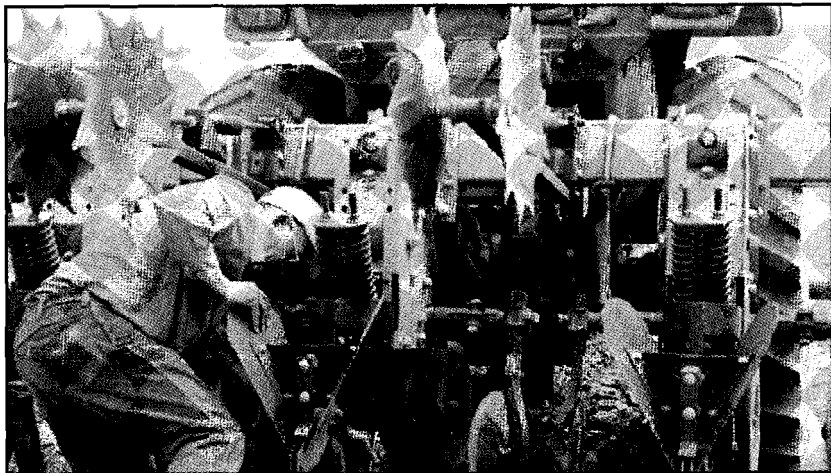
When you are sure of my identity, look up the passages of scripture following each clue to verify the facts from God's word.

1. **100** I was a Roman Centurion, with 100 soldiers under my authority (Acts 10:1).
2. **90** I lived in Caesarea, and secular inscriptions verify that my "Italian Regiment" was stationed there around 50 A.D. (10:1).
3. **80** Though obviously a Gentile, I was a devout believer in God, along with the other members of my family (10:2).
4. **70** Two evidences of my devotion were that I gave money to help the poor and I prayed always to God (10:2).
5. **60** Even though an angel appeared to me, he did not tell me how I could become a child of God (10:4-7).
6. **50** I obeyed the instructions given by the angel and gathered my family together to hear what the man of God would say (10:24).
7. **40** As we listened, believing the message of the Gospel, the Holy Spirit was poured out on us, evidence that God was accepting us to be His children (10:44-46).
8. **30** We were baptized for the forgiveness of our sins (10:47).
9. **20** Peter, explaining to the Jerusalem church, asked, "Who was I that I could withstand God?" (11:17).
10. **10** I, thus, became the first Gentile convert to Christ, fulfilling the promise in Isaiah 49:6 that God would include Gentiles — all nations of the world — as His people, not just the Jewish nation (11:18).



My Score _____

See answer on inside back cover.



Parable of the Farmer

L.V. Pfeifer

A certain farmer has a large farm, with a big, nice barn, having all the modern equipment therein. He goes to the barn regularly and constantly paints, cleans, and maintains it in top condition. A part of his modern equipment is a big combine with which to harvest his huge crop of grain. Regularly he cares for his machine, keeping it painted, greased, in top running condition, sparing no expense to see that it is in top shape for cutting grain.

Weekly he admires his barn and fine equipment. He is so pleased with it all. This continues, week in, week out, while all the time the grain is dying, falling onto the ground, to be forever lost! Why?

Why can not the farmer see that the very purpose of his barn and combine is to gather in the harvest? And so it is in too many congregations of the Lord's people.

Jesus said: *"Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting"* (John 4:35 NRSV)."

What about the congregation of which you are a member? Is it — are you — busily engaged in the harvest of souls? †

L.V. Pfeifer is retired from having taught Bible at Harding University for many years. He continues to preach for the Lord's church in McCrory, Arkansas, USA.

You Send Him

Loy Mitchell

“Then, father, he replied, will you send to my father’s house where I have five brothers, to warn them, so that they may not come to this place of torment” (Luke 16:27).

This request is made by a “*rich man.*” This was the man who “*dressed in purple and the finest linen.*” He feasted in great magnificence every day. This was the man who could not see the beggar, Lazarus, at his gate. He did not really see this body starving to death, a body covered with sores.

The rich man died and so did Lazarus. The beggar went to the place of comfort with Abraham. The rich man found himself in torment in “*this fire*”. He begged for water. None could be given. Then he begged that Abraham would send Lazarus to “*warn my five brothers*”. He did not want them to come to the place of agony. He wanted them to repent and to follow God.

This rich man made many a mistake, but he finally learned one critical fact — **men need to be warned.** His thought was that if one rose from the dead, his brothers would listen. But Abraham answered that those brothers have Moses and the prophets: “*Let them listen to them*” (verse 29). The rich man was wrong in thinking that the

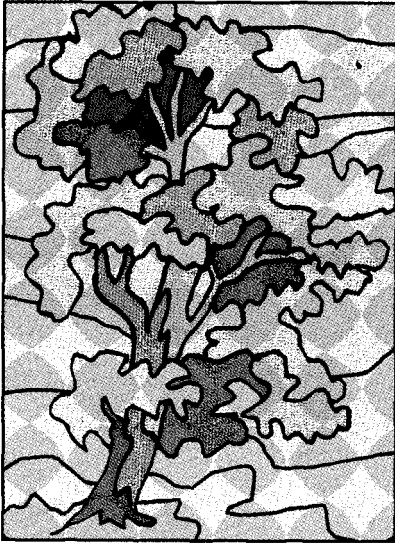
brothers would listen to one coming back from the dead. Abraham answered, “*If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets they will pay no heed even if someone should rise from the dead*” (verse 31).

“*Moses and the prophets.*” This phrase meant “the Scriptures” to the Jews. Abraham knew the brothers’ hearts were hardened, since they would not listen to God as He spoke through Scripture, so he knew they would not listen to a resurrected person.

What about today? Would you listen, or do you listen to God in Scripture? Are you interested in the lost people who know not Jesus Christ? Will you wait too late, like the rich man, to be converted to the idea that people must be taught and warned?

Let us go today with the Good News. *Let us thus send messengers with the message* of salvation. Delay means death, agony, and eternal torment! †

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

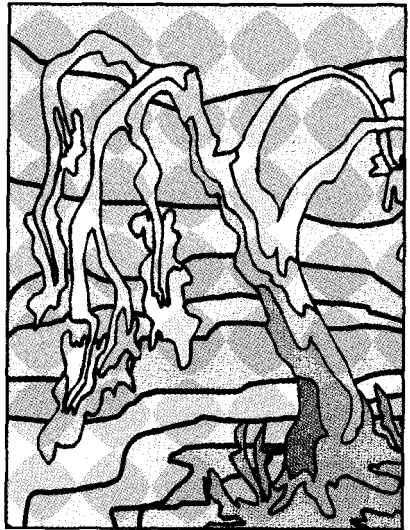


The Barren Fig Tree

T. Pierce Brown

Seventy years ago when I read the story of the barren fig tree in Mark 11:13-15, I was disturbed by two questions. First, if Jesus knew everything why did he not know while he was afar off that there were no figs on the tree? Second, verse 13 says, "*For the time of figs was not yet.*" I wondered why Jesus would pronounce a curse on a tree that was barren when it was not time for it to have figs.

I am not aware of any commentary that casts light on the first question, and I confess that even after 70 years I have no certain answer. There are two possibilities that we may suggest. First, it may be that the Greek expression "ei ara" translated "if haply" does not necessarily



mean that he did not know, but only suggests that the circumstances were such that one might expect to find figs on it. Second, it is certain that Christ, in his human form did

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not know everything, for he says in Mark 13:32, regarding when heaven and earth shall pass away, "*But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.*" So it may well be that the Holy Spirit empowered Him to know only those things that He needed to know to do the work God wanted him to do.

valid lesson in principle.

A prominent tree that could be seen from afar, and according to its promise should have been full of fruit, was a living lie. We could dwell at length on the lesson that should have been evident to the Jews. They had the oracles of God, were children of the covenant, with all the promises, privileges and hopes the covenant gave them. They

If you had a business partner and he did no more for the partnership than you do for your relationship in the family of God, would you want to dissolve the partnership?

The second problem may be a little easier. When Mark says, "*The time of figs was not yet,*" he may mean that it was not yet time to gather figs, rather than it was not time for figs to grow. If it was not time to gather figs, and if a fig tree had leaves on it, one could normally expect that it would have figs. Fig trees usually have figs before they have leaves, and this one had an appearance that was deceptive. In that case we do not have to wonder why Jesus did not know it was not the time for trees to produce figs, for it is not talking about *producing* figs, but the time for *gathering* them. If it was not the time for gathering, one had the right to expect that the figs would still be on a tree that gave the promise of having figs. So there is a

not only had the opportunity to do great things for God, but also made abundant profession. They gave much alms, for pretence made long prayers and did many other things to make it appear that they were very godly. But when we look for real fruit-bearing for God, we find none. Jesus discusses this exact point in Luke 13:6-9 and various other places, indicating that Israel would be rejected because they were not bearing fruit for God.

But why go back to Israel for an illustration? On every hand we find among professed Christians the same condition as John expressed about Sardis in Revelation 3:1, "*I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead.*" I heard of the preacher at the funeral

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service who said, "This corpse has been a member of the church for 25 years." It was perhaps a more fitting expression than he realized. The Bible speaks of "laborers together with God" (1 Corinthians 3:9). If you had a business partner and he did no more for the partnership than

Jesus said about the Pharisees in Matthew 23:3, "All things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe: but do not ye after their works; for they say and do not." It is very disturbing to me to go to a congregation where they are known for the soundest preaching in the broth-

There is not the remotest hint in the New Testament that Christians were primarily known for their church attendance!

you do for this one, would you want to dissolve the partnership?

There are those who have claimed membership in the Lord's church for more than 25 years who not only have **never taught a person about Christ**, nor led one to Him, but **they have no intention of ever trying**. They may even attend services three times a week, and are therefore reckoned among the most "faithful" members. Yet you may search in vain for any particular kind of fruit they have borne for Christ.

This profession without any fruit is a very serious situation. In the first place *it misrepresents Christianity*. There is not the remotest hint in the New Testament that Christians were primarily known for their church attendance! Christianity does not consist of merely teaching the *right doctrine*, as important as that is.

erhood and yet to see no evidence of any intensive efforts in personal evangelism or other individual acts of fruit-bearing. Sometimes actual negative preaching against worldwide efforts to carry out the Great Commission is found in what we call doctrinally sound congregations.

Not only does the lack of fruit-bearing misrepresent true Christianity, it is a definite hindrance to those who might seek Christ. There are many who have turned to skepticism because of the barren lives of those that profess and do not.

Perhaps the most serious part of the problem is what happens to those who are in the condition of the barren fig tree — **professing but not bearing fruit**. Not only did the fig tree wither, but also it bore no fruit forever. The withered, barren lives that we see in the church today

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are sad enough. **The eternal destiny of those who say and do not is even sadder.**

When one asks, "Why do we not bear more fruit for Christ today?" he can find many answers. **One** is that some who claim membership in the church were not actually "*planted together with Christ and raised up to walk in newness of life*" (Romans 6:3-5). They simply got covered in water. One cannot expect to find fruit on a tree that has never been properly planted.

We have taught for many years that no one can "join" the church of Christ. That is true in the sense the pioneer preachers meant it, for they knew "*the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved*" (Acts 2:47). But there are many today who have merely "joined" the local church [religious club] so their names were added to the directory, but they have given no evidence that they are walking in newness of life, or that they have become partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4) or that the life of Christ is being manifest in their mortal flesh (2 Corinthians 4:11).

Second, some trees may fail to bear fruit because they get little nourishment from the soil in which they were planted. Most of the nourishment many church members get is from the "worship service" which may be little worship and no service at all.

Third, some trees not only do not produce fruit, but they die because of the environment. When we lived in Niagara Falls, there were many trees between where we lived and the Falls. The sulfur dioxide or other chemicals spewing out of the factories killed all of them in a few years. What kind of environment do you live in? Is it a constant barrage of vulgar television or similar worldly events?

Fourth, many trees and vines do not bear properly because no pruning is done. We need persons who have learned how to cut off a lot of useless activity so they may be more productive for Christ. If one half the time spent looking at television were spent in doing things that would glorify God, the church could double in membership in one year. Also, some churches need to prune some of the branches that do not bear fruit, or that bear only rotten fruit. While some churches seem to want to withdraw fellowship from all congregations with whom they disagree on one point or another [which is not a scriptural practice], many more seem unwilling to withdraw fellowship from their own members who are living in sin. Have we forgotten our Lord's instructions in Matthew 18:15-20? †

T. Pierce Brown works with the Lord's church in Cookeville, Tennessee, USA.

Walking by Faith



Sekuru Rapoz

*"And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books."
(Revelation 20:12)*

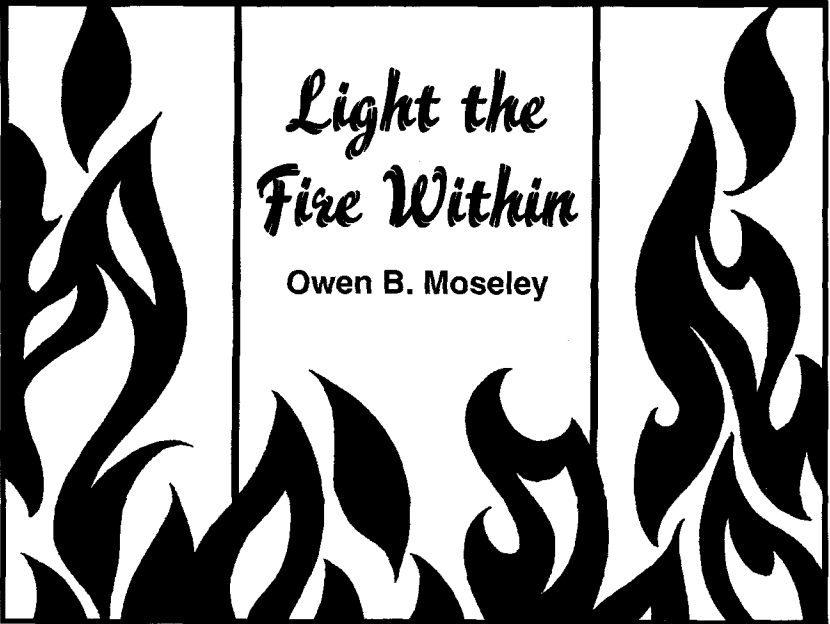
His hair was salty gray, and his handshake as dry as old parchment. He wore a tattered charcoal sports jacket, a bow tie, and a battered felt hat. His eyes were crinkled with laugh lines, and he must have weighed at least ninety-eight pounds. He was known around the mission reverently as Sekuru (grandfather) Rapoz.

He did not know how old he was, but he must have been well into his eighties. But he always made time to greet a foolish and rambunctious missionary's son, gravely taking off his hat in greeting. Every Sunday he hitched a trouser leg up with a garter so as not to get it entangled in the chain, and rode a bicycle that was little more than scrap metal ten miles or more to village churches. I can still see him, weaving unsteadily the first few feet, then gathering speed along the sandy track. A man of great wisdom and dignity would draw from the even greater wisdom of God's word, and proclaim a loving savior. Before him in a crescent would sit village people, warmed by the sun and the son's love.

I wish I knew how he came to know of Jesus, his Lord. But that didn't matter to me. Even a little boy can tell greatness. Though he never wrote a Christian best seller or spoke at a college lecture-ship, he exuded the joy and holiness of the true servant of God. The church was young, but here was a man with the maturity and clout of an elder statesman. He made no one's hall of fame. He is, unquestionably, in Someone's book of life.

I hope you can meet Sekuru Rapoz. If you do, it will be because you found your way home, to his home, where his bicycle lays on the ground, and the dust of the road has been brushed, gently, from his trousers.

— Stan Mitchell



Light the Fire Within

Owen B. Moseley

The theme for the 2002 Winter Olympics was “Light the Fire Within.” Perhaps this should also be the theme of the life of every Christian. If there is no fire within, then an individual is, at best, merely going through the motions. In most cases, when this occurs, less than what is possible is usually the result. When we do less than that of which we are capable, God is not pleased.

As we examine “light the fire within,” note that the fire (in this article fire = being motivated to be a faithful servant of God and being a light to others) *must be lit*. Obviously, if the materials for a fire are merely gathered, put into the

proper place for the intended purpose, but are never lit, all efforts relating to the fire are futile.

Likewise, if we equip our lives to do things required to live a Christian life and be a light to others, but never take action, our efforts will prove to be futile. In James 4:17 we read: “*Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.*” Knowing what needs to be done and being equipped to do good does us *no good* unless we *do* what needs to be done. We must *know*, we must *be prepared*, and we must *do*. To **do** requires “that the fire be lit.”

Not only must the fire be lit,

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but the fire, in a very real sense, must be lit from *within* the individual. Motivation, the urge to do something, must come from within.

Therefore, each of us needs to honestly ask, Do I really believe that I can be a faithful child of God and be effective in being a light to lead others to Christ? The degree to which we answer yes to this question is the major determinate of the success we will have in being the light we should be. When we truly believe in ourselves, there is very little that we cannot accomplish. When we truly believe in ourselves, we will focus our minds on developing and executing a plan of action for doing the best we can to be a faithful servant of God.

Sometimes even when we honestly believe that we can be faithful children of God and when we focus our attention on developing and executing a plan for doing our best, we fail. At these times it is very important that we maintain a proper attitude. With a correct attitude we will see the failures as a challenge and as learning experiences upon which to build; and then we will rekindle the fire to achieve our objectives and goals.

Attitude determines success. We need to choose to have a good and positive attitude. When we believe in ourselves, when we focus our minds on doing what God

would have us to do, when we develop and execute a good plan, when we maintain a good attitude, we will be successful in lighting the fire and keeping it burning.

The first few lines of the 2002 Winter Olympic theme song are:

Light the fire within;
There's a dream calling out
To be the best you can be.
Let the journey begin
From wherever you are.
Let your heart run free,
Like a beacon inside,
To remind you
Where you're going.

Do you have the inner urge that causes you to dream of being the best that you can be for Christ?

Do those dreams materialize into positive actions that make you a better servant of God?

Do you view your life as being a journey that requires that you light the way for others?

Do you have a light within your life that reminds you of where you are going?

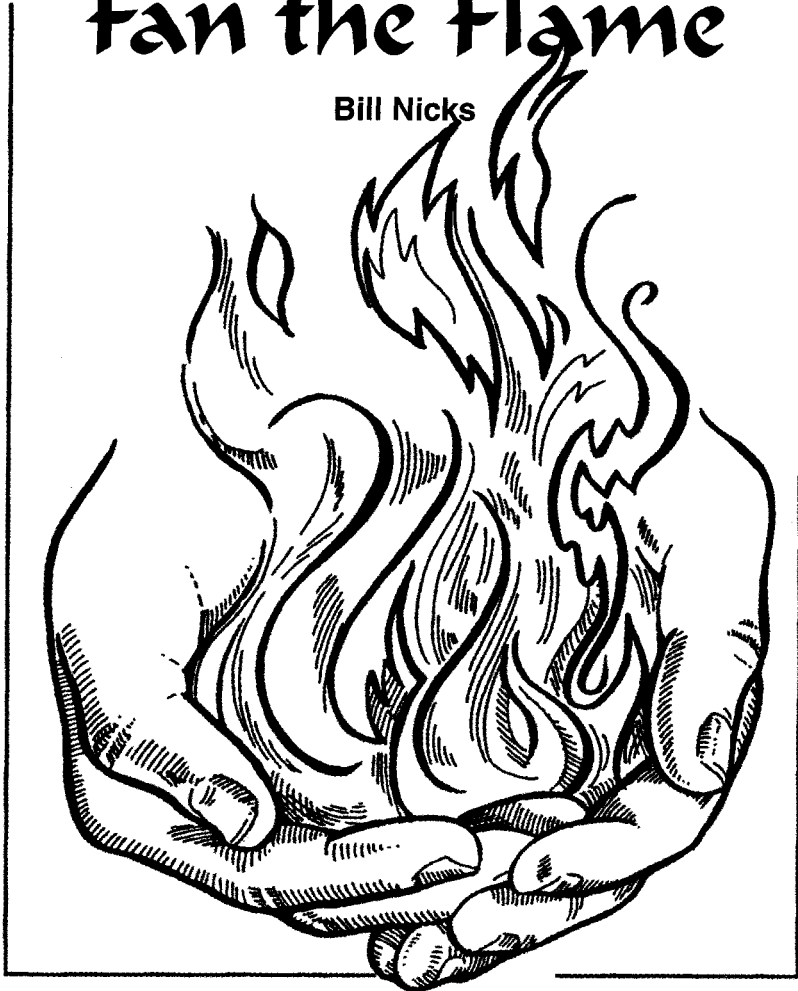
Do you believe that God is pleased with the fire that is in your life?

Can you say that "light the fire within" is a theme for your Christian life? †

Owen B. Moseley serves as an elder in the Nettleton congregation in Jonesboro, Arkansas, USA.

Fan the Flame

Bill Nicks



Paul was Timothy's mentor, his "father" in the Gospel. In 2 Timothy 2:3-7, he encouraged the young Timothy to come to him in prison. This was Paul's second imprisonment, and he had been forsaken by

all at his first defense, a disappointment to him. Timothy was in Ephesus. Paul instructed him to bring some books and parchments, and a coat left with Carpus in Troas. He urged him to "*come before win-*

ter.” This indicates to us that Paul felt he would be executed soon by Nero in Rome. If Timothy missed the first boat, the chilling winds and ice of winter would prevent him from getting to Rome in time.

Even while in prison, Paul thought of others and of how he could encourage them, particularly this young man whose tears he had seen and whose genuine faith he had observed. He tells him to “*stir up the gift of God which was given you by the laying on of my hands.*” The word from which “*stir up*” implies a kindling of a fire, as though one is trying to fan the almost-dead embers into a flame. Though Timothy had a supernatural gift, its use to the glory of God still depended on his initiative and free will to use it to the glory of God.

With the completion of God’s message to man in the form of the New Testament, and the cessation of the miraculous age (Mark 16:20; 1 Corinthians 13:10), today, we don’t have miraculous gifts as a permanent part of the structure of the church. We do have, however, talents which must be fanned into a flame. God expects us to do “*according to the power that works in us*” (Ephesians 3:20). The power is in the Gospel, but we must exercise our faith and love to use that power to the maximum.

Paul appealed to Timothy, as a

trusted friend, to stand for Christian values. If we express confidence in brethren, they will be more likely to respond than if we magnify their faults. We parents know that if we continually tell children they are bad, they will probably live up to our expectations. Timothy would respond to Paul because he knew this godly man loved him and appreciated his good qualities.

Also, the appeal was based on Timothy’s parental training. His grandmother Lois and mother Eunice had brought him up from a babe in the Sacred Scriptures. What a blessing to have godly grandparents and parents! Paul was persuaded that their faith had been passed on to Timothy, not by inheritance but by a sacred environment of love and respect for God’s Word.

As a dedicated servant who had talents to be fanned into a flame, Paul encouraged Timothy to remember that God gave him this gift, and that it was not a spirit of cowardice, but of power, love, and a sound mind (discipline — ASV). We, too, need encouragement from brethren and from parents, and above all, **we need to be reminded that whatever talents we have are gifts from God** to be used to His glory. †

Bill Nicks lives in Hobe Sound, Florida, USA, and he works at promoting the cause of Christ on the island of Trinidad in the West Indies.

In Romans 12:2, Paul

Peer Pressure

examining anything new.

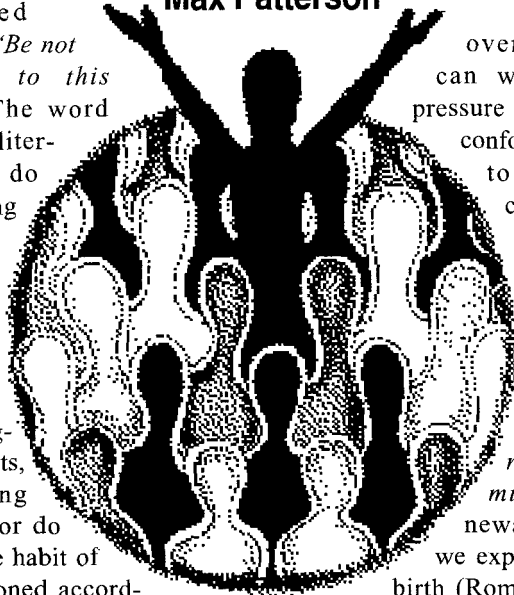
commanded Christians, “*Be not conformed to this world.*” The word “conform” literally has to do with molding oneself to another’s pattern. The particular form used here with the negative suggests, “stop being fashioned, or do not have the habit of being fashioned according to this world.”

“Peer pressure” is one group exerting pressure on another to conform to their way of acting. If that way of acting is wrong, then the temptation is to *conform* to a pattern of living which is opposed to God.

For many young people, the pressure is on to conform to a lifestyle involving drugs (including the devastating drug, alcohol), cursing, dancing, and — in general — bad habits and sinful conduct.

For many older people, the peer pressure is to keep on in the same old way — never changing, never

Max Patterson



How can we overcome? How can we escape the pressure of the world to conform? There has to be a radical change in the inner man for one to live right in this evil age. Romans 12:2 tells us this comes “*by the renewing of your mind.*” This renewal begins when

we experience the new birth (Romans 6:1-5), and continues as we develop the new mind, or the new man.

The new mind of the Christian can be developed by studying the mind of Christ, by concentrating on the Word of God, and by meditating on righteousness. Then *by doing* righteousness we *become* righteous (1 John 3:7).

Let us not be conformed to the thinking and acting of the men and women of this world, but let us think as Christ thought, and act as He acted. †

Max Patterson is a gospel preacher living in Neosho, Missouri, USA.

*“...Love Life and See
Good Days...”*

Don L. Norwood

I suppose that everyone would like to love life and see good days. In 1 Peter 3:10-12, the apostle Peter explained, *“He who would love life and see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil.”*

In the text mentioned above, Christians are told how to have a life filled with good days. He must keep himself from speaking evil and he must do good while seeking peace. Remember, Jesus explained that what is spoken is first conjured up in one's mind or heart (Matthew 12:34-37). Therefore, one must not harbor evil in his mind.

Not only must one turn from evil; he must also do what is good. Paul wrote, *“Abstain from every form of evil”* (1 Thessalonians 5:22). He also wrote, *“...work out your own salvation with fear and*

trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12,13). Thus we need to learn what God's will is, and then strive to do as His Word teaches in all things.

A Christian becomes strong in the faith by studying the Lord's Word (Romans 10:17) and faithfully obeying it (Romans 16:25,26).

When one does as Peter explained, then God hears his prayers and makes it possible for him to see good days. He can enjoy life, and with God's help, overcome any and all of life's problems. *“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.*

“Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (John 5:3,4). †

Don L. Norwood is involved in mission work in India.



Over the last few days I have gotten to attend three weddings. In each case the bride was beautiful and the groom glowing. Each promised to remain faithful

Marriage!

Gary C. Hampton

during good and bad times,
an appropriate commitment
when one considers the

clear teaching which is found in the Word of God.

*“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).
“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7).*

“And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

“And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

“And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

“And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:18-24).

“Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life...

“she riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens...she perceiveth that her merchandise is good;

The Christian Home

her candle goeth not out by night...she stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household; for all her household are clothed with scarlet...her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land...strength and honor are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

"She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She doeth well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, he praiseth her...favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised" (Proverbs 31:10-30).

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22). "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church" (Ephesians 5:25,28,29).

God helped man to see how alone he was in the world. Then, He created woman. He intended for one man to be joined to one woman

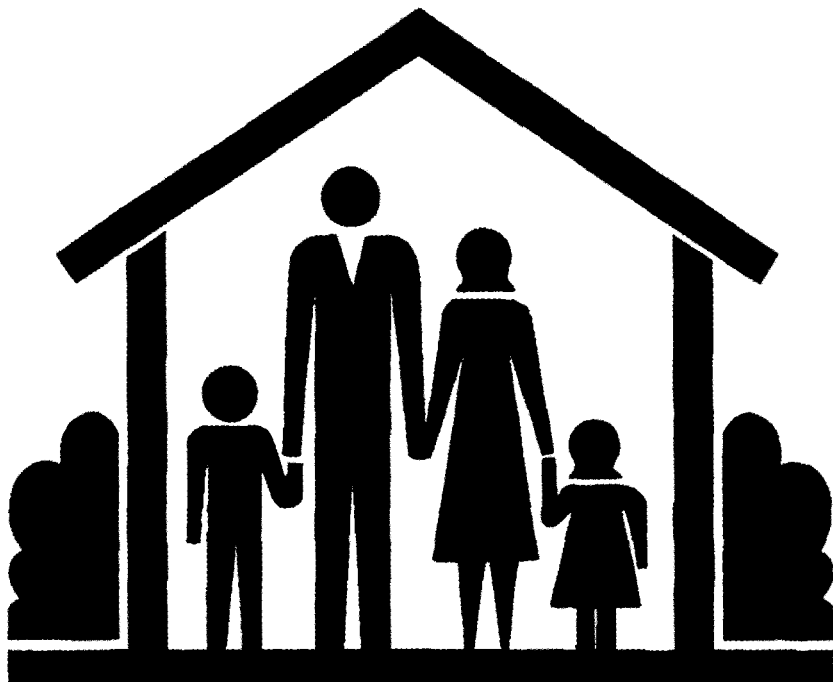
for life. He insisted that a man should leave his parents and cleave to the woman he married.

Each woman who marries a man should strive to be that virtuous woman who provides for her family's needs. She should submit to her husband, as the head of the household, not because he is superior, but because God has designated him as the head.

Each man who takes a wife should love her as his own body. He should be as dedicated to her as Christ was, and is, to the church. In the case of our Lord, that meant dying for the sake of His bride. A husband's goal should be to provide for his wife's every need. He should be committed to forsaking all others and cleaving to her alone.

We live in a disposable age. Things are purchased to be used up and thrown away. That type of thinking has made many of us become self-centered. We will remain married as long as we are getting everything we want out of the marriage. Then we throw that relationship away and look for another. However, Jesus said, *"Wherefore they are now no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder"* (Matthew 19:6).✠

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Harmony in the Home

Francis Parr

There are many passages in the Bible which speak of harmonious living. It is doubtful that anyone would deliberately choose chaos in life as opposed to peace. This is especially true in a Christian home.

The dictionary defines harmony as a pleasing combination of elements in a whole. This may not

mean total agreement by all members of the family; however, to live in one accord (or in harmony) indicates a settlement or understanding between them all.

In his letters, Paul gives instructions to each member of the family, beginning with the head of the household, the husband. In

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

Ephesians 5:24, he tells husbands to love their wives, as Christ loved the church. In Colossians 3:19, he warns husbands not to be bitter against their wives. Peter strengthens this command in 1 Peter 3:7, by saying a husband's prayers may be hindered if he does not honor his wife.

provoke the children to anger. In other words, whenever possible, this instruction should be given through gentle teaching and example.

All of this advice can be summed up in 1 Peter 8-11: "*Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as broth-*

Better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, Than in a house shared with a contentious woman. ... Better to dwell in the wilderness, Than with a contentious and angry woman.
(Proverbs 21:9,19)

Wives, also, are included in Paul's advice. They are to be subject to their husbands in everything and submit to them (Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18). However, in each case Paul compares this subjection and submission with the behavior of the church toward Christ. It is understood that the husband will conduct himself in such a manner that is pleasing to the Lord. Ephesians 5:22 bears this out.

Children are also given directions for living in harmony at home. They are to honor their fathers and mothers. In so doing, it may be well with them and they may have a long earthly life. Paul indicates in Galatians 6:4 that parents should teach their children about God's principles, but not in such a way that they

ers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. For 'He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.'"

If these principles are observed at home, they will naturally spread into the community, city, country, and world. Imagine how the entire world would be if everyone practiced the "Golden Rule" as explained in Matthew 7:12, showing care and consideration for others! †

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Pathway of Pain

If my days were untroubled and my heart always light,
Would I seek that fair land where there is no night?

If I never grew weary with the weight of my load,
Would I seek for God's peace at the end of the road?

If I never knew sickness and never felt pain,
Would I search for a hand to help and sustain?

If I walked not with sorrow and lived without loss,
Would my soul seek sweet solace at the foot of the cross?

If all I desired was mine day by day,
Would I kneel before God and earnestly pray?

If God sent no winter to freeze me with fear,
Would I yearn for the warmth of spring every year?

I ask myself this, and the
answer is plain —

If my life were all pleasure
and I never knew pain —
I'd seek God less often and
need him much less.

For God is sought more in
times of distress.

And no one knows God or
sees Him as plain,
As those who have met Him
on the "Pathway of Pain."

— Unknown



The God of All Comfort

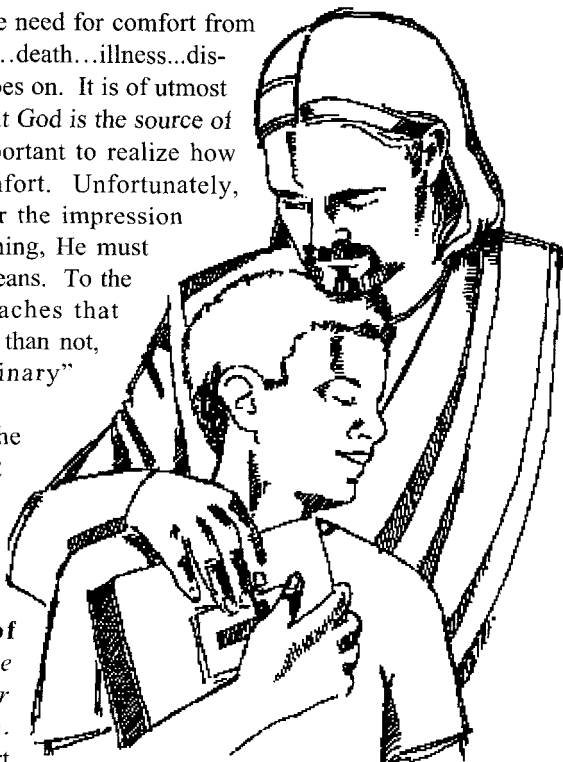
David Deffenbaugh

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God” (2 Corinthians 1:3-14).

Who has not felt the need for comfort from God? Heartache...pain...death...illness...disappointment...the list goes on. It is of utmost importance to realize that God is the source of comfort. It is also important to realize how God provides that comfort. Unfortunately, many people live under the impression that if God does something, He must do it by extraordinary means. To the contrary, Scripture teaches that God’s work, more often than not, is done by very “ordinary” means.

The remainder of the first chapter of 2 Corinthians gives us several insights into ways God is able to provide comfort.

The afflictions of others. *“But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort...” (verse 6).* There is indeed a comfort



Comfort and Reassurance

to be felt where we know for certain the truthfulness of one who says, "I know just how you feel." No doubt, the affliction of shared persecution was one of the great forces helping to bind the early church together.

The prayers of others. *"And He will yet deliver us, you also joining in helping us through your prayers"* (verses 10b-11a). Knowing *"The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much"* (James 5:16), it is indeed comforting to realize that righteous men are offering petitions to God on behalf of one's suffering.

The promises of God. *"For as many as may be the promises of God, in Him they are yes"* (verse 20). Jesus is the affirmation, the "Amen," of the promises of God, promises such as that our *"Momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison"* (2 Corinthians 4:17).

Suffering and affliction of the heart, body, and soul are quite real. The realization of the need for comfort is most acute in the midst of suffering. May we remember not only from whom our comfort comes, but the means by which the God of all comfort provides it. †

David Deffenbaugh is the preacher for the College Street Church of Christ in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, USA.

This God Can Do...

If God can hang the stars on high,
Can paint the clouds that drift on by,
Can swing the sun across the sky,
What can He do for you?

If He can send a storm through space,
And dot with trees the mountain's face,
If He the sparrow's course can trace,
What can He do for you?

If God can send us sunny days,
And nature from her slumber raise,
Till song birds lift their notes of praise,
What can He do for you?

If God can do all these things,
Can count each little bird that sings,
Control the universe that swings,
What can He do for you?

If God can bring sweet peace to me,
By Christ, Who hung upon a tree,
And to my soul bring liberty,
This He can do for you!

— Glenn E. Wagoner

But, Is It for **ME?**

Stan Mitchell

He was a righteous man, and a priest. No doubt, he had read many times the story of the aged Abraham, and God's promise of a son. He must have thrilled at the angel's question, "*Is anything too hard for the Lord?*" (Genesis 18:14). He may have wept silently at the ancient account of Isaac's birth, for he understood only too well Abraham's deepest longing.

Abraham had wanted a son more than life itself, and the God of heaven, who loves His people and keeps His promises, gave him a son.

No doubt, the priest had also read the story of Hannah's prayer for a son. She had cried the tears of the desperately lonely, and had promised that, if given a son, she would dedicate him to God. He may have smiled when he read that Eli had told her, "*Go in peace; the God of Israel grant you the petition you have made to him*" (1 Samuel 1:17).

Of course Hannah's prayer was granted, for God is a God who kept His promises, and loves His chil-

dren. In those long ago days He led and loved and blessed His people.

But perhaps the priest wondered: Does God guide and love His people still? Does He still answer prayer? Might the Lord of heaven, even on that day, answer His deepest longing for a son?

"*Do not be afraid,*" the angel had said, "*Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John*" (Luke 1:13).

Zechariah believed that God had answered Abraham's prayer, and Hannah's, too. *But he just could not believe that God wished to bless him with a child.* Could God's blessings be for him, too?

Zechariah had nine months to think the matter over. God struck him dumb for his lack of faith. Which brings up an important question. If every Christian who failed to believe God's promises today were struck dumb...how many of us could say "hello" this morning? †

Stan Mitchell is a preacher of the Gospel in Bogor, Texas, USA.

PROVERBS 17:22



After a meal in some restaurants you feel a special need for an after-dinner mint...like the one in Denver.



A young husband who had agreed to buy a vacuum sweeper was disturbed when he found that his wife had gotten the deluxe model instead of the standard.

“But dear,” his wife explained, “it won’t cost any more. All we have to do is pay a little longer.”



An elderly man was sitting on a park bench in tears. A police officer came up and asked him what was wrong. “I am 75 years old. I have a 25-year-old wife at home. She is beautiful, charming, and is

madly in love with me.”

“So what’s the problem?” asked the officer.

“I can’t remember where I live.”



One day a man called the church office and said, “Can I speak to the head hog at the trough?” The secretary thought she heard what he said, but said, “I’m sorry, who?” The caller repeated, “Can I speak to the head hog at the trough?” She said, “Well, if you mean the preacher, then you may refer to him as ‘Preacher,’ but I prefer that you not refer to him as the ‘head hog at the trough!’”

To this the man replied, “Well, I was planning on giving \$100,000 to the building fund....” The secretary quickly responded, “Hang on, I think the big fat pig just walked in!”



A man went into a restaurant to eat lunch. He found a table and sat down. Several minutes later a waitress handed him a menu and then left to care for other customers. He noticed that she chatted with some folks, but she paid no attention to him.

After about half an hour, she

PROVERBS 17:22

finally came back to take the man's order, but he was gone. She found a note propped against a glass. It read: "Out to lunch."



"Surely," insisted the marriage counselor, "you must have said something to start the terrible argument."

"Not really," the husband replied. "My wife had tried a new recipe for dinner. When she asked how I liked it, all I said was, 'It's okay, but it will never take the place of food.'"



There's this bumper sticker for women which reads: "If you want breakfast in bed, you'll need to sleep in the kitchen."



A preacher told his congregation, "Next week I plan to preach about the sin of lying. To help you understand my sermon, I want you all to read Mark 17."

The following Sunday, as he prepared to deliver his sermon, the preacher asked for a show of hands of all who had read Mark 17. Every hand went up. He smiled and said,

"Mark has only 16 chapters. I will now proceed with my sermon on the sin of lying."



Did you hear about the new groom who asked his wife, "And what has my bride been doing all day?"

Bride: "I filled the salt shaker."

Groom: "And that took all day?"

Bride: "It certainly did. It isn't easy getting the salt through those little holes."



The bride came down the aisle, and when she reached the front where the groom was, she saw that he had his golf bag and clubs by his side. She said, "What are your golf clubs doing here?" He looked her right in the eye and said, "This isn't going to take all day, is it?"



Doctors certainly can be frustrating at times. You wait three months for an appointment, you go in, and he says, "I wish you had come to me sooner."

A Simple Sermon for the Multitudes

Wayne Barrier

“Great multitudes followed him — from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan. And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to him” (Matthew 4:25-5:1).

Jesus stopped His journey and taught the multitudes who followed Him through the countryside on numerous occasions and often revealed some of the most basic and fundamental new concepts of His teaching in these settings. Consider Matthew 4:25 and Matthew 5:1 where the Bible says, *“Great multitudes followed him — from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan. And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:*

‘Blessed are those that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake.

Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

TEXTUAL STUDIES

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven.”

This teaching is contrary to the thinking of most people. The way to glorify our Father in heaven is illuminated by the good works of the persecuted, the peacemakers, the pure in heart, the merciful, those hungering and thirsting for righteousness, the meek, those who mourn, the poor in spirit. What about the powerful, prominent, and self-sufficient? Jesus' teaching often contradicted prominent teaching and man's wisdom. We need to be especially careful today, lest we mistakenly believe that the greatest and most beneficial teaching is from the teacher with credentials, determined by the world's measures of strength, value, and success. †

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



Acts 16:30-33

Kevin L. Moore

“And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”

“Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized” (Acts 16:30-33).

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved . . .”?

When the Philippian jailer asked what he needed to do to be saved, he was simply told, *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household”* (Acts 16:30,31). Why were repentance, confession, and baptism not included in this salvation formula?

Although there is only one gospel plan of salvation (cf. Ephesians 4:4-6), we find that different people were told to do different things *depending on where they were in the salvation process*. Bear in mind that the jailer at Philippi was a pagan who did not believe in Jesus and in all probability had never even heard of Jesus. Without the initial step of simple faith he could not go any further in the process of salvation. Thus Paul and

Silas *“spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house”* (v. 32). After this family had heard the gospel and obviously believed, what was the next step they needed to take? Having exhibited repentance by washing the wounds of his ex-prisoners, *“immediately [the jailer] and all his family were baptized”* (v. 33). It was not necessary for Paul and Silas to give more information in v. 31 until this man and his family had heard and believed the gospel.

In Acts 2:37,38, when the Jews had asked the apostles the same question, they were given a different answer — not because there was a different formula they were to follow but because they had already heard about and believed in Jesus. In other words, they were further along in the salvation process than the Philippian jailer initially was,

and so they were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. In the end, they all followed the same pattern: **hearing, believing, repentance, and baptism.** To be saved, what must *unbelievers* do? They must *hear the gospel and believe it* (Acts 16:31). Once they become believers, what must they do? They must *repent* (Acts 2:38; 3:19). Once they are *penitent believers*, what must they do? They must **confess Jesus and be baptized** (Acts 2:38; 8:12, 35-39; 22:16). And once they are penitent baptized believers, what must they do? They must continue in the faith (Acts 2:42; 14:22).

It is interesting to note that in Acts 2:44 the disciples are simply described as "*all who believed*", even though they had just been baptized (v. 41). The Philippian jailer is merely described as one "*having believed in God with all his household*" (Acts 16:34), even though he and his household had just been baptized (v. 33). Obviously it is not necessary for the all the words, "belief," "repentance," "confession," and "baptism", to be mentioned in every verse that talks about salvation since the overall context of Scripture clearly includes each step in the process. †

Kevin L. Moore works with the church in Wanganui, New Zealand.

Followers and Believers

THE OTHER DAY I read, "not all followers believe and not all believers follow." I had to think about that one. But it's true; some people do the *correct* things for the *wrong* reasons. For example, in John, chapter six, we find a lot of people *following* Jesus but they weren't *believers*. Paul even talks about *preachers who preach the Gospel but out of envy and rivalry* (Philippians 1:15). **Followers but not believers.** Motives do make a difference.

It is also possible to *believe* but *not follow*. James says demons believe and tremble. But they do not obey. So not all believers follow. James says that kind of faith is dead.

What is needed is to be a **believer who follows!** "Trust and obey, there is no other way." Our doctrines must be correct. What we believe is important. Our actions must reflect the truth as well. Someone said our "walk" and our "talk" must be the same.

Jesus condemned those who honor with their lips while their hearts are far from Him. Make sure your heart is **full of faith** and your life is **full of obedience.**

**Be a believer who follows.
Be a follower who believes.**

— Paul Shero

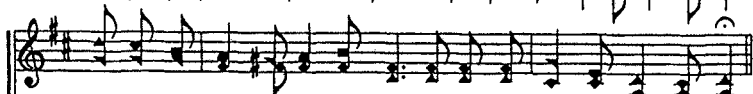
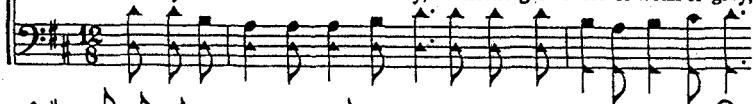
But Until Then

Mike Norwood

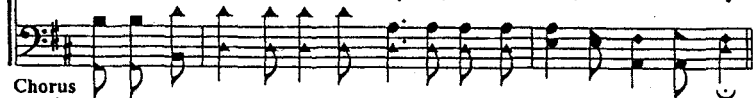
Lanier Stevens



1. Some day I'll run and shout and sing, for - ev - er praise to Christ my King.
2. Some day my cheek no tear will stain, no wearied sigh or in-ward pain.
3. Some day I know I'll see the day, no friend grows old or weak or grey,



With Him I'll walk, yes hand in hand, to man-sions in the prom-ised land.
no name-less dread or anx-ious heart, or eve-er from a loved one part.
Our bod-ies nev-er see de-cay oh, Je-sus come, with-out de-lay.



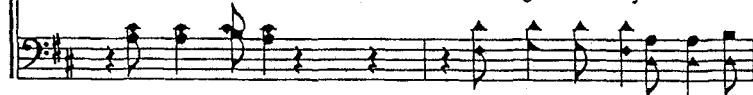
Chorus



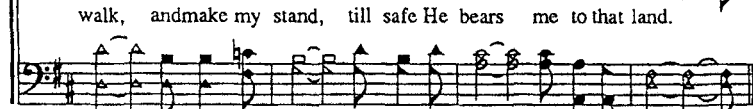
But un-til then I'll rise each day. I'll look to
yes, un-til then I'll rise each day



Him who lights the way. By faith I'll
I'll look to Him who lights the way.



walk, and make my stand, till safe He bears me to that land.



A Life of Full Service to God

HEART — Emotional Service!

Must Be Pure — Mt. 5:8; Jas. 4:8; Heb. 4:12
 How Purified? — Rom. 10:10; 6:17-18

Speaks — Mt. 12:34-35

Serves — Eph. 6:5-6

2 Tim. 2:22

2 Cor. 9:7

Advice — Prov. 4:23

1 Tim. 1:5

MARK 12:30-31

STRENGTH —

Physical Service!

Must Be Pure —

Rom. 7:18, 24

Rom. 8:13

How Purified? — Rom. 8:10; Gal. 3:27; 2:20

Serves — 2 Cor. 4:10; Gal. 6:17; Phil. 1:20

To Be Raised — Phil. 3:21; Jno. 5:28-29

1 Cor. 15:35-44

SOUL — Spiritual Service!

Must Be Pure — 1 Tim. 5:22; Ezek. 4:20

How Purified? — Psa. 19:7; Jas. 1:21;

1 Pet. 1:22; 1 Jno. 3:3

Serves — Matt. 4:10; 22:27; Mark 12:30-31;

Importance — Mark 8:36-37; Matt. 10:28

1 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 2:25

Completeness — Col. 2:10

End of Faith — 1 Pet. 1:9

MIND — Mental Service!

Must Be Pure — Rom. 1:28; 8:5-6; Phil. 2:5

How Purified? — Acts 17:11; Eph. 4:23;

Serves — Acts 20:19;

1 Pet. 5:2

Rom. 7:25

2 Cor. 8:12

Protected — Phil. 4:7

2 Cor. 10:4-5

MARK 12: 32-33

NEIGHBOR —

Social Service!

Must Be Pure — Lk. 12:1

1 Cor. 5:6-7

Matt. 5:14-16

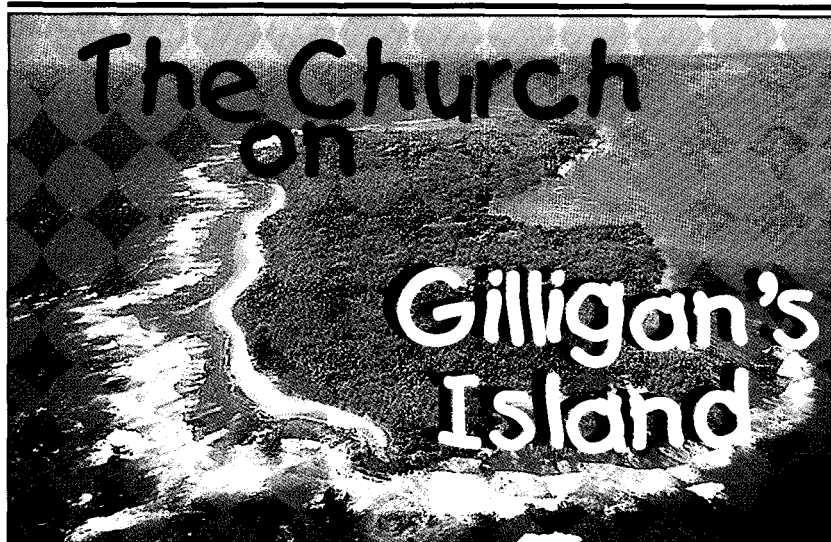
A Pure Example — 1 Tim. 4:12; 1 Pet. 2:11

Social Service — Matt. 10:42; 25:35-44

Good Samaritan — Luke 10:25-37; Gal. 6:10

Our Care for Others — 1 Cor. 12:25

Dillard Thurman



Introduction:

1. Remember Gilligan's Island?
2. Imagine that we were shipwrecked on Gilligan's Island or some island like it.
 - a. We are not the only ones there for in our group is also represented every religious group in this community.
 - b. After settling down, we attempt to worship together but because of our differences, there is chaos.
 - c. A community meeting is called to iron out the differences.
 - d. We finally agree the only way to agree is to use the Bible only. After all, religion must be based upon the Word of God. (If you want to have it, show us Scripture.)
3. So with an open mind, a search for truth begins.
4. Right away there is a problem.
 - a. In the Old Testament we read of circumcision, feast days requiring trips to Jerusalem, sacrifices, etc.
 - b. In the New Testament we do not find these things.
 - c. We are confused but someone discovers these passages;
 - i. Ephesians 2:14-16
 - ii. Colossians 2:14-17

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

5. So with this behind us the real search begins.

Body:

I. Name?

A. As with any group whether it is a business or social club, we want to establish what we will be called. We need an identity.

1. Isaiah 62:1,2
2. Acts 11:26
3. The New Testament makes Christians; therefore we will call ourselves "Christians."
 - a. But someone in our newly established community says, "but at home I was a Methodist... Lutheran..."
 - b. So for the sake of unity, since we have decided to follow only the Bible, let us search the New Testament for these names.
 - c. They are no where to be found. We agree that we cannot use those names - for we have agreed to "do Bible things by Bible ways and to call Bible things by Bible names."

B. What about the sign over our new bamboo meeting house?
What will we call our church?

1. Acts 20:28 - "purchased with His own blood."
2. 1 Corinthians 12:27 - "body of Christ."
3. Ephesians 5:32 - "bride of Christ."
 - a. Therefore Jesus is the bridegroom and what does the bridegroom expect? He expects the bride to wear his name.
 - b. But someone says that Baptist is found in the Bible and they like that name.
 - c. Yes, Baptist is in the Bible, but John the Baptist was not the groom but the friend of the groom or "best man."
 - d. The church is married to Christ, not John.
 - e. We all agree we have never seen a wedding where the bride takes the best man's name.
 - f. What a dishonor it would be for us to carry another name other than the name of Christ (John 3:28,29)
4. 1 Corinthians 1:10-13

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

5. Colossians 3:17
6. Acts 4:12
7. Romans 16:16

II. Leadership?

- A. Problems arise again — who will govern and lead the church?
 1. Acts 14:23
 2. Titus 1:5
 3. Titus 1:6-9
- B. We must be governed by Elders with Christ as our only head.
- C. "But back home we were governed by the preacher or pastor — by a pope.
- D. But once again, we have agreed for the sake of unity to do only that which is found in the New Testament — nothing more, nothing less.

III. Worship?

- A. This is where the problem began, a problem that must be solved because worship to God are acts of reverence paid to God. It must be done right.
- B. The Bible tells us there are only two kinds of worshippers;
 1. Vain worshippers (Matthew 15:8,9).
 2. True worshippers (John 4:23 — Notice "must")
- C. The new community therefore, decides that we will only worship in ways that are;
 1. Directly commanded.
 2. Have approved apostolic example (How the apostles carried out the Lord's commands).
 3. Or what would be the necessary way to carry out the command (necessary inference).
- D. So we begin our search again and discover there are only 5 ways to worship.
 1. The Lord's Supper- Luke. 22:19; Acts 20:7 (command and example)
 - a. Every week
 - b. This is the way they did it in the New Testament.
 2. Preaching — 2 Timothy 4:1,2; Acts 20:7
 3. Giving — 1 Corinthians 16:2
 4. Prayer — Philippians 4:6
 5. Singing — (command)
 - a. Colossians 3:16

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

- b. Ephesians 5:19
- c. Hebrews 13:15
- d. Therefore "acapella" — Someone mentions that it literally means — "in the manner of the church."
- e. But someone says, "I will miss the instrument, I need it, it is only an aid."
 - i. Freed-Hardeman walkathon — professor had a bad leg and wanted to use a wheelchair, but that is rolling not walking; but crutches would be an aid.
 - ii. Song books, song leaders, pitch pipes are aids to singing.
 - iii. But playing an instrument is "playing, not singing."
 - iv. N.B. Hardeman — The difference between a piano and pitch pipe is the pitch pipe knows when to shut up!
 - v. God commands singing.

IV. Who can be a member of this church on Gilligan's Island?

- A. Romans 10:17
- B. John 3:16
- C. Luke 13:3
- D. Romans 10:10
- E. Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27; I Peter 3:20,21
- F. I John 1:7 and 9

Conclusion:

- 1. Although imaginary, why should not all of us do the same today?
 - a. John 17:20-21
 - b. This will be achieved only when we all accept the Bible as the sole authority in all religious matters.
- 2. (As kind as I can be) The world must discover that there is no possible way that one can take the Bible and the Bible only and become an Adventist, Lutheran, Jehovah's Witness, Methodist, Episcopalian or any other man-made named church.
- 3. The Bible makes Christians only and only Christians — members of the one church we read of in the Scriptures! To be anything else has to come from somewhere else!
- 4. Would you like to be just a Christian? †

— Central Church of Christ, Cleveland, Tennessee, USA.



She Devil!

Betty Tucker

Jezebel! The very word conjures up thoughts of treachery and evil, shame and deceit. Mothers do not name their pretty little girls Jezebel, lest they grow up to be like her.

She was a Phoenician princess. Her father was a king and a priest of Baal worshippers. She married Ahab, king of Israel, and she continued to worship Baal. Ahab installed 450 Baal priests in the temple in

BIBLE CHARACTERS

Samaria. Jezebel fed another 400 priests at her table (1 Kings 18:19).

Ahab sinned against his Hebrew faith by taking this idolatrous woman as his wife. He further sinned by serving Baal, the fertility god of her people (1 Kings 16:31).

Jezebel would have been a “serpent without fangs,” had she been denied Ahab’s authority. We see the puppet king’s weakness in his dealing with Naboth, who owned a small vineyard. The king offered to buy the vineyard, but Naboth declined. It was an inheritance from his forefathers, and it was all that he had. His little vineyard was not for sale.

Ahab took to his bed and refused to eat. He turned away his face (1 Kings 21:4) and pouted, like a small child....all because he could not have Naboth’s small vineyard.

The corrupt queen consoled her husband with these words, “*I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite*” (21:7). She used her evil authority, and issued letters in Ahab’s name, proclaiming a fast.

The occasion was used to bring suit against Naboth. He was tried and condemned by false witnesses. They accused him of blasphemy against God. He was stoned to death (21:10). So, Ahab gained possession of the little vineyard that he so desperately wanted.

Ahab was killed in battle. The

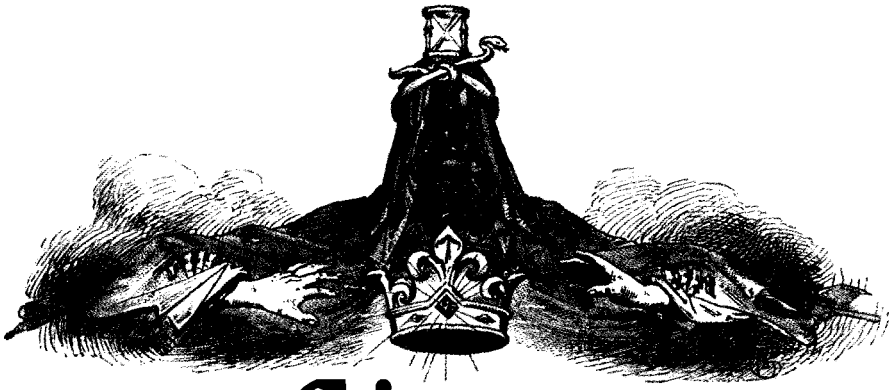
prophet Elijah had said, “*In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick your blood*” (1 Kings 21:19). The prophecy was fulfilled.

Jezebel’s son and grandson also died in battle. When the proud queen realized that her life soon would end, she determined to die in grandeur. So, she painted her face and arranged her hair. This action gave rise to the foul-label, “like a painted Jezebel,” which is sometimes uttered even today. Then, she sat by the window to await news of the war.

Jehu, the victorious enemy, entered the gate, and Jezebel called down a hateful slur. Jehu looked up to the window and saw the wife of the slain king. He ordered eunuchs standing near the window to throw the queen down. They complied, and the wicked queen plunged to her death. Her body was trampled by the horses of the soldiers. Dogs came and ate her flesh, leaving nothing but her skull, her feet, and the palms of her hands (2 Kings 9:30-36).

So ended the life of the heartless queen Jezebel. This daughter of the devil wrought death and destruction. Her life reminds that “*the wages of sin is death*” (Romans 6:23). †

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



Simon the Sorcerer

Royce Frederick

A man named Simon had been receiving great attention from the people of Samaria. After the Gospel came, they turned their attention to God. But the Bible then gives some special attention to Simon.

Simon's Sorcery

"But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, 'This man is the great power of God.' And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries (magical arts) for a long

time" (Acts 8:9-11).

The Bible does not tell us the source of his "sorcery," or what kind of "magical arts" he performed. To entertain, magicians today perform many kinds of tricks which deceive the eyes. But Simon deceived hearts. Jesus warns us: *"For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand" (Matthew 24:24,25).*

Simon's "Sermon"

Simon had been *"...claiming that he was someone great" (8:9).* Even in our own time, I have heard

that same sermon — preachers proclaiming their own greatness instead of the greatness of Christ. Paul wrote, “*But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ...*” (Galatians 6:14; see 2:20).

Simon’s sorcery amazed, but did not help the people. And he did not try to teach them how to follow God. He only wanted them to follow him.

What is your message? Do you talk more about yourself than about God, Jesus, and His Word?

Simon’s sermon succeeded: “*to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, ‘This man is the great power of God’*” (8:10). Almost any doctrine can gain a following. Even today, cult leaders arise and lead people into error, and sometimes death.

Simon’s Salvation

A notable “turnabout” came in Simon’s life. “*Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done*” (8:13). Simon had been their cult leader, but he obeyed the Gospel and became their brother in Christ!

Because of his experience with magical arts, Simon probably would have been able to detect many forms of trickery. But when he saw Philip performing miracles, he was

amazed! He stayed close to Philip and found no trickery. This is evidence that the healings were not trickery at all, but real miracles!

Simon’s Sin

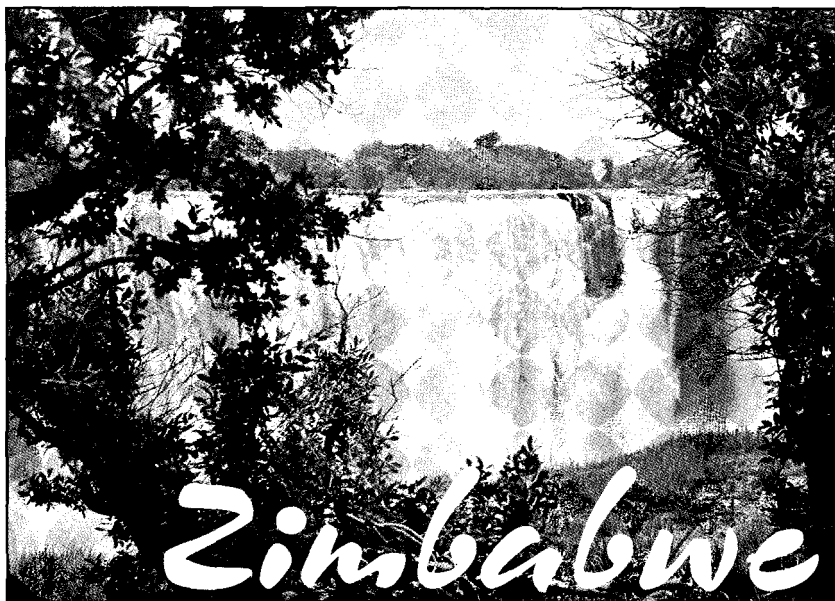
The apostles could lay hands on disciples and give them miraculous abilities. Only the apostles had that power. When two apostles, Peter and John, came to Samaria, Simon saw them lay hands on the disciples and give them miraculous abilities. Simon wanted the power to do the same, and he offered them money. But Peter rebuked him for trying to buy a gift of God, and he told Simon to repent and pray (8:14-23).

Simon’s Supplication

Simon regretted his sinful request, and he asked Peter to pray for him (8:24). Even after we have obeyed the Gospel, all of us sin sometimes (1 John 1:8-10). We must confess our sins to God and to each other, and pray for each other (1 John 1:9; James 5:16).

When we continue trying to obey God, He will continue forgiving us: “*But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin*” (1 John 1:7). †

Royce Frederick is the editor of *International Gospel Teacher* and lives in Lufkin, Texas, USA.



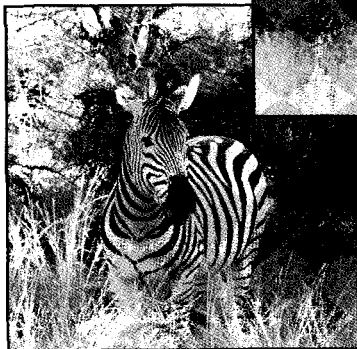
Rudyard Kipling described Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, as “great spaces washed with sun.” T.V. Bulpin, in *“To the Banks of the Zambezi”* wrote: “In the whole continent of Africa there is not a more picturesque part than the wild garden of trees and aloes and flowering plants that lies between the Limpopo and Zambezi rivers, wilderness to perfection; spacious, sun-drenched; a jumble of trees and hillocks, rivers and mountains and wonderfully decorative rocks, stretched out from one far horizon to the other beneath a heaven bluer than even the deepest ocean.”

A Brief Secular History

In 1897 the British South Africa Co., under the leadership of Cecil Rhodes, conquered the part of Africa that came to be called Rhodesia. The British government took control of the area in 1923, granting internal self-government. In 1965, Ian D. Smith, the current Prime Minister, declared independence. International sanctions, a trade embargo, negotiations, and guerilla warfare resulted. Finally, in 1979, the country’s first elections were held, in which both black and white citizens were allowed to vote, and a black-dominated Parliament was elected.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

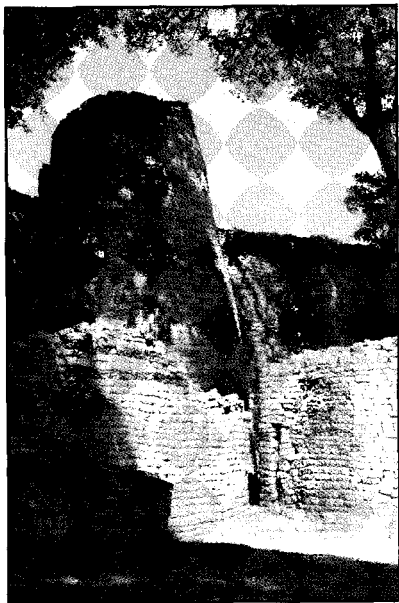
On December 5, 1980, a cease-fire was accepted by all parties, and the new country of "Zimbabwe" was formed. Robert Mugabe became the first Prime Minister and has controlled the country's political situation since independence. Drought, new land reforms and an economic adjustment program have caused wide-



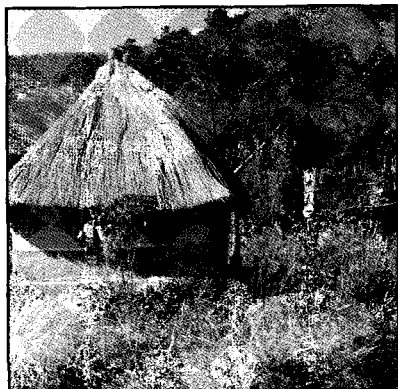
Zimbabwe wildlife. spread hardship since 1992. Deforestation, resulting in soil erosion and land degradation, has contributed to drought conditions.

Poor mining practices have caused a build-up of toxic waste and heavy metal pollution, in air and water.

It is feared that perhaps half of Zimbabwe's population will die of starvation unless immediate changes are made. Another scourge sweeping the country is the HIV virus,



The Great Zimbabwe — ruins from more than 1000 years ago.



Typical village home.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

which causes AIDS. More than 25% of the adults are carriers of HIV/AIDS. The annual death toll from this disease alone is horrendous, leaving a growing population of orphans.

The Breaking of a Great Light **Loy and Donna Mitchell**

In July of 1898, John Sheriff boarded the Zeederberg coach and rattled his way to Bulawayo, where, arriving late at night, he paid a black policeman about 25 cents to find him lodging for the night. At last he had found his niche! Sheriff had come first to South Africa from his home-land of New Zealand but had stayed in South Africa about two years.

Alan Hadfield, whose grandfather came from New Zealand to join Sheriff in 1902 in order to help with teaching, wrote of John Sheriff, "Though earning his living with a hammer and chisel, his aim was to establish the church of Christ in Rhodesia, making converts according to the New Testament pattern; and though I would now differ with him on some points, he was the first in Rhodesia, and possibly in Africa, to uphold the principle of the New Testament church, and the authority of the Scriptures. In his early efforts lie the roots of the Lord's church in that country.

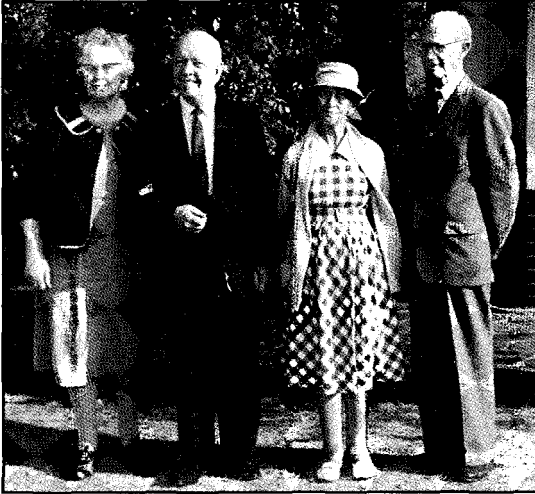
"Accordingly, one night he went strolling through the 'Location' (the black township on the western edge of town) and, peering through a crack in a shanty wall, saw within it a small group of African men trying to learn to read by the light of a guttering candle. Going inside, he offered to teach them, and thereafter used to hold night classes at his stone-yard on the corner of Main Street and 1st Avenue, where he lived and worked; it wasn't very long before he had over ninety pupils. His primary motive, of course, was to convert his pupils, and this he did so effectively that within a few years the demands of the church and schoolwork had grown to where he needed help. It is also true that much of the spread of the church into Mashonaland, Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi) came as a result of Brother Sheriff and his Bible students."



Donna (deceased) and Loy Mitchell

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

John Sheriff settled on Forest Vale Farm, near Bulawayo, a place of some 300 acres, and established schools in order to teach Bible and "letters" to his workers and others who would come. When one of his young men showed promise as a Christian teacher he would give him support and send him back to his own country to preach. One went to South Africa, another to Nyasaland and another to Northern Rhodesia. Jack Muzirwa, who walked 400 miles to Bulawayo for training and work, was one of Mr. Sheriff's workers. He returned to his home at Wuyuwuyu and began to



Delia and Will Short, Gladys and Jimmy Classen



Jaxie and Roy Palmer

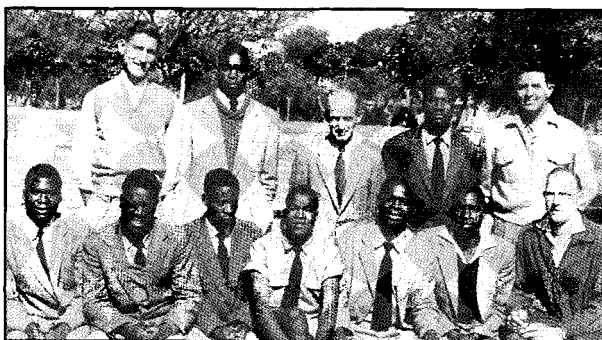
teach his friends and family. Frank Mukunde said that the first church he knew about began in about 1912, not far from Wuyuwuyu and the present Nhowe Mission. In the 1920's a school was started at Wuyu Wuyu and operated by John Sheriff, W.N. Short and S.D. Garrett. Some of the teachers and workers during that time were Zuma Banga, Godi Karimanzira, Samson Mhlanga and Murimi Mukunde.

In 1940 a mission station was established by W.L. Brown at Nhowe, in the Macheke area and a few miles from Wuyuwuyu.

With the arrival in Rhodesia in the late 50's of Roy Palmer, Dick Clark, Loy Mitchell and Alex Claas-

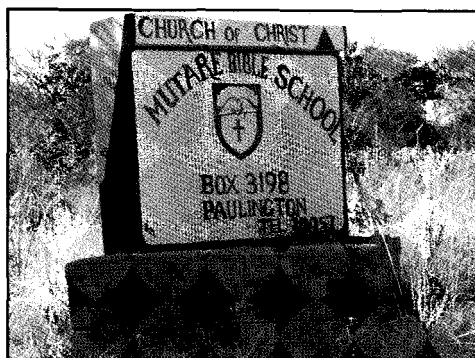
FROM THE HEART OF . . .

sen, Nhowe Bible School was established to train preachers. Later the school was moved to Umtali (Mutare) and still exists today, mainly supported by the Hillcrest Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas, and Zimbabwean brethren.



**Students in the Nhowe Bible School,
with the missionaries who served as teachers.**

Mutare Bible School, recently renamed Mutare School of Preaching, remains strong and has had a great influence throughout the land. In addition to their three-year courses at the school for men and their wives, they send all students out for a field program each year. This practical experience is invaluable in preparing the students for local and evangelistic work.



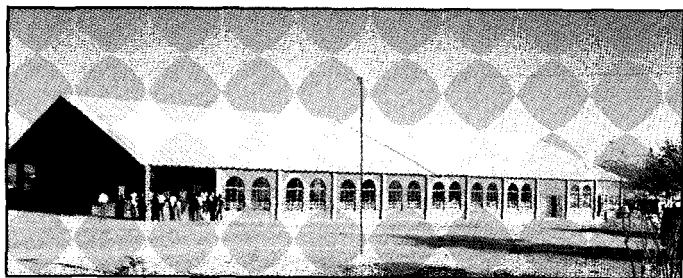
Sign for the Mutare Bible School.

Edmond Gwazaza is the school's principal. Gwazaza is a graduate of the school and worked for years in full-time preaching. Brethren throughout the country help se-



Students in the Mutare School of Preaching.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .



Nhowe church building.



Mutare church building.



Bricks being burned for a church building at Chitakatira.

lect an advisory board for the school. This board works with Hillcrest mission leaders to plan the school's

curriculum and work program. An annual refresher course is held each year just before graduation.

Since its inception in 1958, MBC has impressively maintained the ideals of founder members. Doctrinally the school has not wavered to the right or left but remained steadfast to the doctrine of Christ.

About 85% of evangelists are faithful to Christ and about 26 preachers are now deceased. 300 to 350 congregations have been established within the country and ten of these have the

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

scriptural leadership of elders.

Some of our preachers have gone to countries like Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique and Democratic Republic of Congo, establishing congregations.

Today Nhowe Mission has a large secondary school taking pupils through A Level. Pendukai Mukunde, the school's headmaster, grew up next door to the mission and went to school there when he was a boy. His father was one of the early Christian leaders.



**Chikanga church building,
with Mclean Chena and Loy Mitchell.**



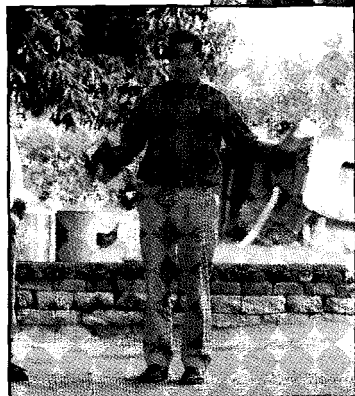
The Mambondiani church, when it was meeting on a rock!

The Brian Lemons Hospital is now in operation at Nhowe and will be a great way of serving the people, especially during this time when Zimbabwe is enduring an AIDS pandemic. Dr. Steve Lemons of Wichita, Kansas, has spear-headed the fundraising and plans for the hospital, with help from Washington Mhlanga and many other indigenous Christians.

Nhowe holds an annual lectureship or national gospel meeting for all. In August, Christian women gather from all over the land for a Ladies' Lectureship. In 2000 more than 500 women attended the lectureship and heard prominent African Christian women speak. It is traditional for people to have great respect for the elderly, and older women feature as speakers each year.

R. Chris Wheat
(grandson of the
Loy Mitchells),
directing singing
in Mutare Bible
School.

Below: Loy
Mitchell preach-
ing in a village.
Loy and Donna
spent most of
their adult lives
working in
Zimbabwe.



It is estimated that there are 400 churches and 40,000 Christians in Zimbabwe, whose population now stands at around 12 ½ million.

Nhowe Mission **Rhinard C. Troup**

When my wife, Betty, our infant son, Rhinard Ellis, and I arrived at Nhowe Mission in August 1963, the preacher training school started by Roy Palmer, Loy Mitchell and Dick Clark had been in existence for some years. The workers then on the mission were Roy and Jaxie Palmer, Lloyd and Gen Gifford, Mark and Rose Marie Legg, Clayton Waller and Monica Steiniger.

The major thrust of the missionaries' work revolved around teaching and training at the Preacher Training School. Roy Palmer also served as Mission Manager

and Lloyd Gifford was manager of our "out-schools" program. Mark Legg was "Head" of the Preacher Training School. Clayton Waller also served as "chief mechanic" and I had the responsibility for bookkeeping and bill paying. There was a secular boarding school on the mission which was staffed by African teachers and we had a farm which provided some of the food for the students. Betty Troup and Monica Steiniger operated the mission clinic.

Besides teaching daily classes in the Preacher Training School, preaching on the mission, conducting daily chapel and various devotionals, along with the above special responsibilities for operation of the mission and schools, much activity took place in surrounding towns and villages.

Nhowe Mission was also responsible for activities at Rukunguhwe, Morris, Magunje and Wuyu Wuyu primary schools. There were a number of farm schools in the area where the farmers allowed the ladies to hold

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

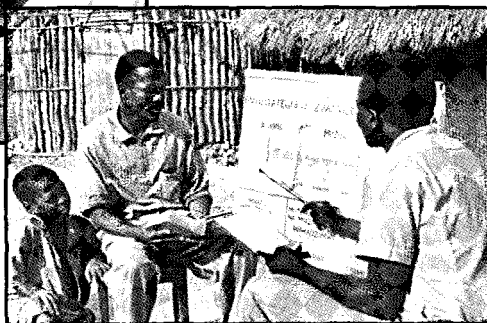
Bible classes and allowed us to provide preaching. The missionary women would go out to these schools and other congregations in the area to conduct special training classes for the African women. Besides Bible classes, Betty Troup helped in training of basic health practices and first aid, Rose Marie Legg gave training in new uses and techniques of using the indigenous foods which were commonly available and Gen Gifford gave training in special crafts.

Each weekend one missionary family would stay on the mission to help with Sunday worship and classes. The others would go to surrounding congregations to preach and worship with the African churches. Many times

these trips would involve staying overnight on location and returning to the mission on Sunday afternoon or evening. These preaching visits also served



Above: Mark Legg, Head of the Nhowe Preacher Training School presenting a set of Clark's Commentaries to outstanding student, Austine Vimba (who currently is preaching in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe)



Right: Maxwell Gama, a student from Malawi, teaching Job Choruma (also a preacher training student) using a Shona version of Tisdell's charts.

as training for preacher students who accompanied the missionaries and served as interpreters.

About three months of the year the preacher students, along with the missionaries, would spend that quarter in on-site training where the students would put into practice what they had learned in the classroom. They lived in tents on location during that time and the missionaries alternated time camping with them and making certain that the students' needs were met.

Our goal as missionaries was to educate and win souls to Christ through

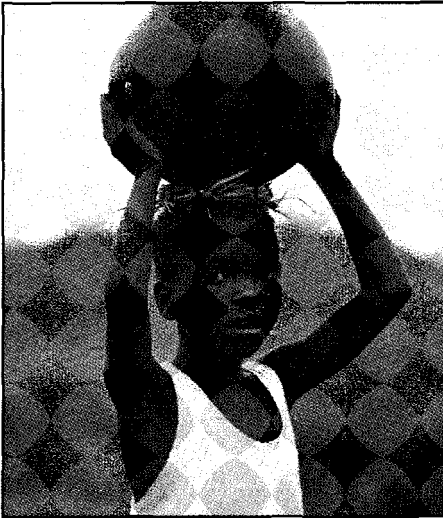
FROM THE HEART OF . . .

the secular schools, to train native Africans to preach and lead the churches, and to help in developing the area churches. We believed that those trained to preach would be able to reach their own people in a way the missionaries never could, due to the difference in language and customs. Our desire was to Christianize and not to Americanize. Today the preacher training and work of preaching is done nearly 100% by highly qualified and effective African brethren.

After a four-year stay at Nhowe Mission, my family and I moved to Umtali (now known as Mutare) where I took over responsibility for the Bible Correspondence Program which had been developed by Loy Mitchell. This freed Loy's time for other efforts and allowed him to better concentrate on moving the Preacher Training School from Nhowe Mission to Mutare where it is currently located.

The Long Arm of Evangelism Stan Mitchell

When the war for independence ended in 1980, the new nation of Zimbabwe emerged. To my knowledge, only one brother was killed in those years, a Matabele preacher, who refused to drink the local beer enforced on him by guerrillas, because "I am a Christian". Peace returned to the country-side, and it was again safe to travel to village churches. The new government allows



freedom of worship. The gospel is being spread in an unhindered manner, and the people are receptive to the gospel as never before.

The church has grown. In greater Harare, a city of a million souls, there are over twenty congregations and more than two thousand Christians. In the Eastern Highlands there are about twenty-five congregations, with the same number of Christians. The Mutare Bible School in that area trains men to preach and provide leadership for the church. It has proved essential to the work in Zimbabwe.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

Much work is still needed, though. At the turn of the century there were about half a million people. Today's population is over twelve million. As in most third world countries, children are a staggering mission field all on their own! The church is stronger in the northeast than the southwest. Several major towns and regions have yet to have a church established. Yet the church's growth in the last thirty years must compare favorably with any on the mission field among our brethren. We owe a great deal to the old missionaries who braved a dark continent, and persisted, often, for longer periods than most of us have lived! (Brother Short worked in Africa for sixty years!) The world "was not worthy" of such men, and it was our privilege to build on the solid foundation they laid.

Today, if you drive east of Harare, the highway will take you to the town of Murehwa. From here you can turn down a rough dirt road into the Mangwende tribal area. The scenes are typical of Africa. Mud and dagga huts. Cattle, herded by small boys. Old men sitting by the roadside in the warm sun. Rocky kopjies (hills) abound. Presently you may round a corner and see an amazing sight. In the midst of these traditional thatched huts there is a large building. It is the Wuyu Wuyu church building, and it is built of native stone. Several hundred Christians meet there. Godly elders shepherd this flock. If you approach the corner of this building, you can see the large corner stone. It reads: "This stone was laid by John Sheriff, Jack Muzirwa and W.N. Short."

Know this for certain. These men built more than granite meeting houses. I know, for I am a part of what they built.

Conversions in Bulawayo

Ray Cox

Velaphi Mlangeni, director of operations at the World Bible School office in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, reports 27 baptisms in July! 21 of these were in the small but populous suburb named Pelandaba. The process took several hours because only 4 people could be transported to the water at a time in Velaphi's small automobile. The other baptisms came mostly from WBS teaching and contacts.

Velaphi and his team in Bulawayo distributed 2,100 Introduction Lesson in July! 332 of these students have returned their answers already. Stella, Velaphi's wife, helps him in the WBS office and she has printed and assembled hundreds of the second lesson to be sent to students.



World Bible School Office in Bulawayo.

Velaphi laments the fact that he did not have much time to preach in the rural areas this month because he has been so busy in the office. He says he has a love of preaching in the bush because of his work with Leonard Bailey. "We used to go with Leonard and preach in the rural areas for ten days or more at a time and camp out there. Sometimes we would go on foot at night for miles from village to village carrying our gas lamps and the spiritual Lamp. 100's of villagers would come to these meetings to hear the gospel. Sometimes we would go to areas where people spoke languages which neither of us could understand, so we would ask one of them who understood English to interpret for us. Results were fantastic!"

Things are really going well as the work of this office grows. God has given us a tremendous individual in Velaphi Mlangeni. He is equipped with all the tools to make this work one of the most productive for the Lord. God is good!

"YES" for ZIMBABWE

**God's Impact in Southern Africa Through World Bible School
John Reese**

Zimbabwe is the land of my birth. Most of my life has been lived in Africa. So I still consider myself an African, though at present I reside in Austin, Texas.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

In a sense, coming to the USA has brought me full circle because my parents were Americans. My grandparents, A.B. and Margaret Reese, moved to Africa in 1929 as missionaries. Those were hard times, both in America and in Africa. My grandparents were sent by churches of Christ, but their promised support amounted to only \$10 per month. Even that amount often failed to arrive, especially during America's Great Depression. While spreading the Gospel mainly through mission schools, they supported themselves by woodworking, gardening and trading in cattle.



John Reese

When my grandparents arrived in Africa, my father was about 13. He grew up as an African and later became a Zimbabwean citizen. He spoke Tonga and Shona with perfect fluency, and also spoke other languages such as Shangaan and Sindebele. My mother came as a single missionary lady from Arkansas. After they married, they moved to Nhowe Mission near Macheke in Zimbabwe where I was born, three years after my brother Robert. Later my father became a game warden with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife. I was schooled in Harare, but my father's various game department posts introduced me to many different parts of Zimbabwe. This was where I grew up, leaving only when the time came to get a university education.

I relate this early background so that you can understand my feelings about Zimbabwe. My roots are deep in her red soil. Much of my heart has remained there even when I have lived in other countries. This love for the people of Zimbabwe explains why, when my wife, Beth, and I finished studies at Harding University in 1976, we moved to Zimbabwe to work with the church in Harare. But through trying circumstances, including an on-going civil war, we had to move to the country of South Africa in 1978. This move broke our hearts because we had fully intended to devote our lives to serving Zimbabwe. The fact that we had to move tested our faith to the breaking point for we had been praying ardently that God would end the war

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

and let us stay. The power to do both was certainly in His hands, and we believed that fact firmly. Nevertheless the answer, at least in the worsening circumstances, was a definite "no."

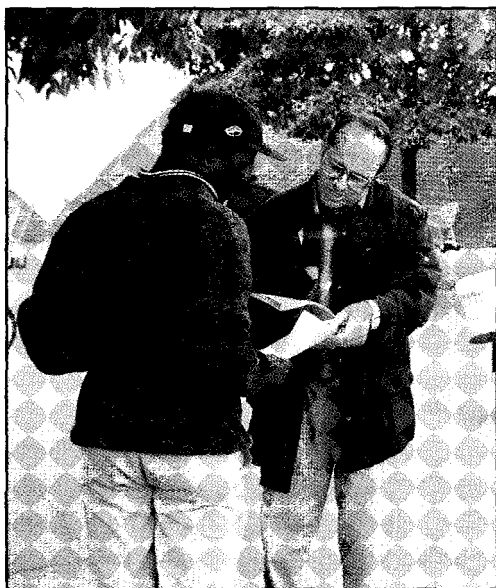
Yet we trusted Jesus when He promised, "*Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours*" (Mark 11:24). And sure enough, as always, we found God to be faithful to His promises and powerful beyond our ability to understand.

Our new work in South Africa turned out to be an education that would end up blessing Zimbabwe in marvelous ways. We moved to the region of Johannesburg where the urban populations alone equaled or exceeded the entire population of Zimbabwe at that time. This forced us to think in terms of mass evangelism, which in turn led us to the method called World Bible School.

WBS is a great team-work that encompasses the globe. It connects volunteer correspondence teachers in the United States with anyone anywhere who wants to learn the Bible. Working alone, I might teach the Gospel to dozens or even hundreds in a year. But cor-

respondence teachers could teach tens of thousands, then pass the course completers to me by the thousands. During a five-year period US teachers sent us so many students that 5000 were registered in our computers, and what a wonderful harvest they yielded as we did the follow-up!

At the end of that phase of our work, we moved to the United States to assist the further development of WBS. The Lord has been gracious enough to let me write many new WBS courses. When a special need arose, my wife and I, with our young children, made a year-long visit to Southern Africa.



John Reese with a World Bible School student.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

We traveled broadly from South Africa to Tanzania. Naturally much of our focus was on Zimbabwe, and in that year the Lord gave WBS about 100,000 new students from that country alone. On average, each active student signed up six others from among their relatives and friends. Faithful follow-up workers in Zimbabwe reached many thousands of responsive students. But the follow-up demands were so great that, though we had to continue developing WBS in the USA, we felt the need to take campaigns to help lift the follow-up load with our brethren in Africa.

Over the years since 1996, many American campaigners have come with us. They have teamed up with hundreds of Zimbabweans to teach literally thousands face to face. Probably 1000 baptisms have resulted from the campaigns themselves, representing just a fraction of the on-going results enjoyed during other seasons of each year. WBS has contributed significantly to the dramatic upswing in new congregations. Students who come to Christ have become a major source of new applicants to the Mutare School of Preaching.

The WBS impact in Zimbabwe is so great that new reports constantly surprise us and fill us with admiration for our God. WBS has become a household name in many

areas of Zimbabwe. The active WBS student body studying by correspondence must be well over 500,000 by now. And they are studying lessons prepared by a child of Zimbabwe. (Most do not realize this fact since authors' names are not shown in WBS lessons. Our interest is not in crediting particular persons or nationalities, but in focusing the student's heart on God and His inspired word.)

Thus, while much of our time must be spent away from Zimbabwe, God works in such powerful ways to grant us a continuing impact there. All credit goes to Him. He has fulfilled His word of assurance: "*For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'YES' in Christ*" (2 Corinthians 1:20). The "no" that we seemed to hear in 1978 distressed us, but God was really saying "yes" in His own way and in His own time. His much larger "YES" has completely swallowed up the apparent "no", for we have been empowered to serve Zimbabwe in ways we could not have begun to imagine.

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen" (Ephesians 3:20,21) †

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

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ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

Verse Search — 36 (from page 18)

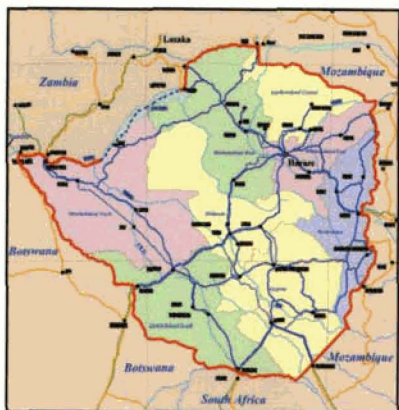
1. Synagogue; Iconium; Jews; Greeks; believed.
2. They stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren.
3. He granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.
4. By their violent attempt to kill Paul and Barnabas, planning to abuse and stone them.
5. Lystra; Derbe; preach the gospel.
- 6 "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!"
7. They thought Paul was Hermes because he was the "chief" speaker; they thought Barnabas was Zeus.
8. He brought oxen and garlands, intending to sacrifice them to Paul and Barnabas, with the multitude.
9. They tore their clothes and ran among them, insisting that they should not do that because they also were men; even with these words, they could scarcely constrain them.
10. That they should turn from idols to serve God, who made the heaven and the earth, and who gives us all things.
11. He allowed all nations to walk in their own ways.
12. They persuaded the multitudes so that those who would have worshiped him earlier now turned on him and tried to stone him to death.
13. They did not know Christ nor the voices of the prophets which were read every Sabbath.
14. Preached and made many disciples. They returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples.
15. They appointed elders in the congregations, they fasted with them, prayed with them, and commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.
16. They gathered the church together and rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.



Cornelius

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Zimbabwe



Government: Republic

Head of Government:
President Robert Mugabe

Secular Facts:

Location: In southern Africa, bordered by Zambia on the North, Botswana on the West, South Africa on the South, and Mozambique on the east.

Land Mass: 150,803 square miles; high plateau country, just larger than Montana.

Population: 11,400,000; under 15 years, 40%; over 65 years, 3.7%.

Major Cities: Harare, Mutare, Bulawayo

Language: English, Shona, Sindebele.

Literacy: 85%.

Religion: Syncretic (Christian-indigenous mix), 50%; believers in Christ, 25%.

Ethnic Groups: Shona, Ndebele.

Economy: *Agriculture:* tobacco, sugar, cotton, wheat, corn; *Livestock:* chickens, pigs, cattle; *Natural resources:* chromium, gold, nickel; *Communications:* Television Sets: 12 per 1000, Radios: 113 per 1000; *Telephones:* 1 per 71 persons; *Transportation:* 250,000 private cars; *Health:* Life expectancy, male, 39.1; female, 39.2; infant mortality: 62 per 1000 live births; Physicians, 1 per 6,900.

Monetary Unit: Zimbabwe Dollar.

The Church:

Congregations: More than 400, with perhaps 40,000 Christians in the country.

History: John Sheriff of New Zealand first brought the Gospel to what was then called Rhodesia in 1898. Jack Muzirwa, from Bulawayo, was one of the early converts and fellow-workers. W.N. Short and S.D. Garrett began a school in Wuyu Wuyu in the 1920's. A mission station was established in Nhowe in 1940 by W.L. Brown. Roy Palmer, Loy Mitchell and the Classens were added to the work force in the late 50's.

Most of these families, and others who joined them in the following years, spent their entire adult lives working in Zimbabwe, developing churches, training teachers and preachers through the Bible schools, and providing Christian and secular education for many children in the secondary schools operated by Christians. Numerous congregations throughout the country now have elders.

The Brian Lemons Hospital has been established at Nhowe and will provide critical help to the country as it undergoes the scourges of an AIDS pandemic.

World Bible School has been a highly effective tool in Zimbabwe, as American and local teachers have worked with follow-up men on the field. John Reese coordinates much of this work.

Front Cover: The largest Baobab tree in Zimbabwe.