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## *A Message in the Dust*

"Mama, may we go outside  
for awhile?  
There's a redbird on the  
window sill.  
Oh, look! She's got tiny babies  
... see!  
There's a nest in the tree up on  
the hill."

"Aha, I must clean the  
house today;  
The dust is really bad,  
you see ...

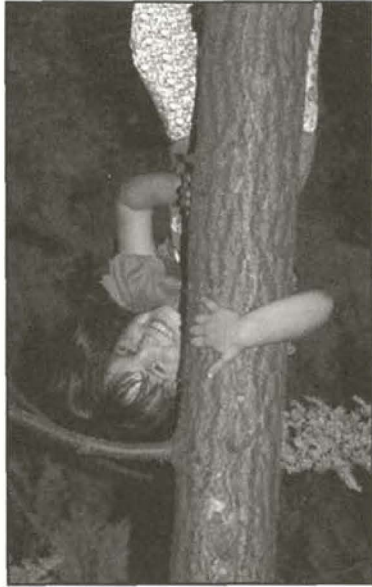
Oh, well, the birds might fly away,  
and I know the dust will wait for me."

"Mama, may we go down to the creek?  
Look! The butterflies are out to play!  
There are pretty flowers everywhere —  
Till the dust wait for one more day?"

The child grew happily as time passed,  
and the house — well, Mama let it wait.  
The years fell away, college time came;  
Aha waved goodbye at the garden gate.

A letter arrived in a few short days;  
It read: "Mama, you miss me, I trust.  
I miss you too — just look at the tables;  
'I love you' is written in the dust."

*Barbara Eagle Ray*



# THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

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

# Let's think about salvation....

In Gethsemane Jesus struggled with the terrible price He was about to pay for the sins of mankind. In Matthew 26:42 we read of His final **COMMITMENT**, *submitting to God's will*.

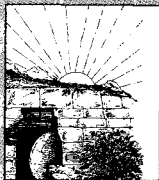


But, suppose the story had stopped there? What if there had been **no CROSS** and **no RESURRECTION**? Could anyone have been saved by His mental acceptance alone?



## Certain things were necessary in order for salvation to be possible:

1. The **way of salvation** was developed by God in the beginning (Revelation 13:8).
2. Jesus **accepted** God's will as His own (Matthew 26:42).
3. He **died** in our stead, for our sins (Romans 5:8).
4. He was **resurrected** from the tomb, guarantor to us of a new life (Romans 8:11).



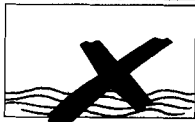
God's grace provided salvation for every soul. But we must *individually accept* salvation. There is a parallel between Christ and ourselves:

With faith in Christ and God's plan (Hebrews 11:6), we must make a **total commitment** of *submission to God's will*. At this point, of **mentally accepting** Jesus as one's personal savior, most people feel "saved".



But where is the death???

Romans 6:3,4 says we are baptized into the death of Christ, where His blood cleanses us from sin (Acts 22:16) Without the **CROSS** there is *no atoning blood*; without **BAPTISM** we have not been washed in His blood!

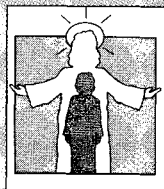


What if Christ had not died?

What if you are not baptized?

## Certain things are necessary in order for one to *accept* salvation:

1. We must **understand** and **believe** the **way of salvation**, developed by God in the beginning (Hebrews 11:6).
2. We must **repent** (turn away from sin) and **submit our will** to God (Matthew 7:21).
3. We **die** to sin, being **buried in baptism** into Christ's death (Romans 6:2-4; Galatians 3:26,27).
4. We are **resurrected** to new life in **Christ** and in His **church** (Rom. 6:5-13; Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 12:13).



*TYPICALLY, when people read about "THE CHURCH" in the New Testament, they think of the denomination of which they are members as being a part of that one big spiritual church.*

### **ARE YOU A MEMBER OF A DENOMINATION?**

*Do you follow this line of reasoning to justify the thousands of denominations in the world, yours included?*

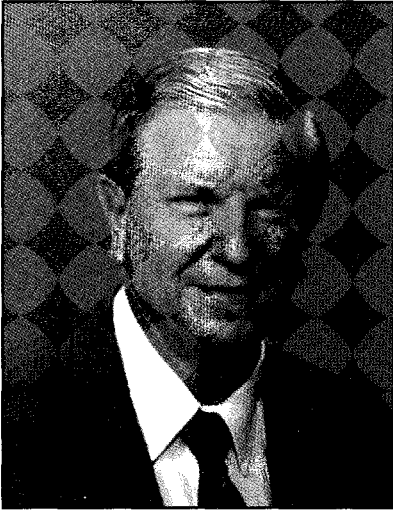
*Apples and oranges can't be compared – they don't fit. Do these two blocks – and the information inside them – fit?*

- **The church** (body) of **Christ** (Colossians 1:18)
- Wore **His name** (Acts 4:12) — **churches of Christ** (Romans 16:16) and **Christians** (Acts 11:26).
- **Founded** by Christ (Matthew 16:18)
- Begun **in Jerusalem** (Acts 2)
- Birth date was the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection, **AD 33** (Acts 1,2)
- Membership required **Believing** in Jesus (Acts 2:37)s, **Repentance** of sins (2:38) and burial in water (**Baptism**) *in order to be forgiven of sins and accepted as God's child* (2:38).
- God added the obedient believers **to the church** (2:47).

- Denominational name** for church and members.
- Begun by **Luther, Smith, Armstrong, Calvin, Wesley or some other man.**
- Most had their beginning in **Europe or America.**
- They were founded **since the 1500's.**
- Membership usually requires **belief only**, followed by "the sinner's prayer". Baptism (may be "sprinkling") is **not considered necessary** for salvation.
- Other members** may vote on acceptance.

## OPEN DOORS

J. C. Choate  
Editor-in-Chief



The work of **the church** is to evangelize the world. If we are members of the church then that is **our work**. We often hear excuses for not doing that work. We are too busy.... or those we are in contact with are too busy.... we don't have the money available to do the work that needs to be done.... and why go to the rest of the world when we are needed

at home? It is said that people are not interested, that it is a waste of money to use literature, radio, and TV. No wonder the church is not growing as it should, and the work the Lord has given us to do is not being done!

Elders and members of the church need to be constantly thinking of what can be done to reach more souls with the gospel. The people are there, with the population growing every day, and the need is great. It comes down to us then: Are we saved? Do we want to see others saved? Are we willing to do what the Lord has asked us to do?

Doors of opportunity are everywhere. We just need to open our eyes and see them. Even if no opportunities seem to be there, we can **make** opportunities. How do we do that? By **trying** something. If one thing does not work, try something else. Just don't give up. If we keep working at it, a door will open to us, and once we go through that door, other doors will open. Soon we will have so much to do that we will need help to take advantage of all of it.

I am a great believer in making plans and setting goals. When you don't, you don't **expect** to do anything — and usually you don't

do anything! Having worked in India for many years, I observed that the government of India set up its programs on the basis of five-year plans. They took notice of their most pressing needs, sought help from other countries to enable them to carry out those plans and reach their goals. When one plan was finished and those goals reached, they would proceed with developing another five-year plan.

Show me a business that doesn't plan and set goals and I will show you a business that is doomed to failure. Throughout India I have noticed many small businesses, fruit stands, etc. Those who own and operate those shops are satisfied with what they are doing. As long as they earn enough to take care of their needs for the day, week, month, and year, they are happy. But others are not satisfied with that. They want to see their business grow, and eventually they set up a shop in another part of the city, and still another, and another. They may have a number of shops or businesses in that one city. But that is not enough. They move on to another city and eventually to cities throughout their country. Their vision includes possibilities for expanding to other countries. All of us are familiar with names of fast food businesses, soft drink companies, cars, planes, and well-known name products that are to be found all over the world. That world-wide exposure did not happen by accident. It happened because leaders had vision, made plans, and set goals to reach the world. It took a lot of hard work, from the owner on down to those who partnered with him to make it successful, but their efforts were finally rewarded with goals achieved.

We, as the Lord's people, have the finest product in the world: the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ and the salvation that He offers. We have the truth. All we need now are workers who believe in this product and who are willing to invest whatever it takes to get it out to others. What about the person selling some secular product? He has to produce to make a living. What about us and the product we are offering to mankind? We must also produce if we want to be saved and go to heaven.

Pardon the personal experience, but my family and I wanted to go to India a number of years ago. We tried and tried to get visas but could not. We could have given up, but we didn't. Instead, we went

to Pakistan for several years. Again we tried to go to India but we were detoured by way of Sri Lanka. Finally, we did move to India but after less than two years we had to leave because of the continuing visa problem. About that time radio was opening up in Sri Lanka. We seized on the opportunity of putting programs on that station in several languages for India and Asia. We also began a massive effort to print and distribute literature (Bible courses, magazines, tracts, and books) in numerous languages. Then that led us on to help with the work in Nepal, Singapore, East Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Myanmar, and other countries in Asia and Africa and around the world through radio and literature — and now the door has been opened for spreading the gospel through TV programs which are actually telecast in India itself! In other words, God opened doors and we went through them only to find other doors to go through — and who knows what doors will yet be opened to us, and to you, *if you are looking for doors to go through to expand the Lord's work?*

Again, my family and I have entered cities of millions of people to preach the gospel and to establish the Lord's church. When we went we didn't know a soul, but we were there, and we knew the Lord was with us, and so we got to work. The very first Sunday we would have worship in our hotel room, in a rented house, or wherever we were. Usually by that first Sunday we had found someone to worship with us, and as we continued, we found more and more to study with us, and soon there were converts. I visited the religious book stores, the Bible Societies, even religious meetings (not to compromise but to make contacts and to let people know we were there), printed up tracts and invitation cards that could be given to those in shops, at the market, or whoever we met, to invite them to attend our meetings and to study God's word. I advertised our Bible correspondence course in the paper and, where possible, I ran teaching ads in the local newspapers. As a result we got acquainted with people, invited them to our meetings, had Bible studies with them in their homes, converted many of them, taught and trained some to teach and preach, and today we have Elders and preachers who are proclaiming the gospel on radio programs and TV stations in India and other countries in Asia. This is but a bare glimpse of what we —

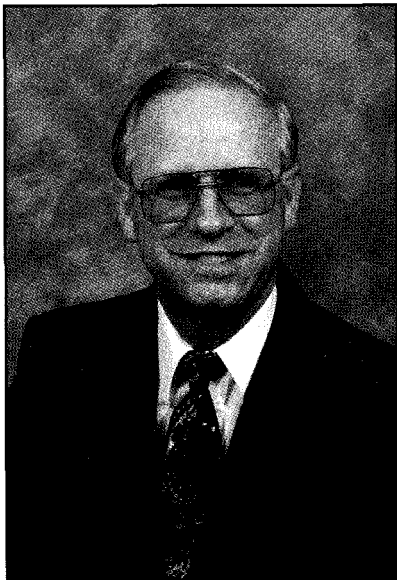


along with others who were willing to go through open doors — have been able to do. Though none of us have reached our ultimate goals, since there is yet so much to do, we have certainly been convinced that when we love the Lord, and want to spread His cause, He will bless us to be able to do that.

Christ said, *“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned”* (Mark 16:15,16). Again, He said, *“Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest”* (John 4:35). On another occasion He said, *“The harvest truly is great but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest”* (Luke 10:2).

Jesus also urged, *“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened”* (Matthew 7:7,8). Please notice concerning all of these promises that the individual must put forth some effort for these things to happen to him. But remember that **with God all things are possible** (Matthew 19:26) and that **if God be for us, who can be against us?** (Romans 8:31). Again, Christ said that if we would seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all of our needs would be supplied (Matthew 6:33), and that the Lord has promised to be with us always even unto the end of the world (Matthew 28:20). Paul declared that he could do all things through Christ who strengthened him (Philippians 4:13).

My brethren, just think about it. When we lift up our eyes with the vision to see the world, we become helpers together: with God to enable us, Christ to lead us, the gospel to preach (which is the power of God unto salvation), and we have the Lord’s people to help us and to encourage us. Not only that, but every convert should become another worker, bringing more financial support for the spreading of the gospel. We can take Christ to the world anytime we are ready to do so. We just need to get up and begin to knock on doors and to go through those that open to us. It is a promise that the doors beyond those doors will lead to greater things for the Lord and His cause. Let us all join together and say, *“Here am I, Lord, send me.”* †



# IN DEFENSE OF THOMAS

**Byron Nichols**  
*Managing Editor*

Ask most people who are familiar at all with the New Testament character named Thomas what they remember about him, and the answer will quite likely be that he was a doubter — he was “Doubting Thomas”. Writers of both the past and present have been highly critical and accusative regarding this apostle of Jesus. Not only has he been classified as a doubter, he has been characterized as having been rather dull of

mind and as being noted for his persistent pessimism and gloominess. Notice these two samples of published assessments of this man:

- “If ever a dismal, somber note was to be struck, you could depend on Thomas to strike it.”
- “Thomas is very much to be blamed for his unbelief, in that he compares very unfavorably with the rest of the Upper Room.”

One of the most highly treasured tenets of the American judicial system is that a person is presumed to be innocent until proven guilty. The jury is still out as to whether Thomas has been given the benefit of any doubt regarding his being guilty of being a “doubter”.

Hmmm. Is doubting all this man ever did? Did he always see the clouds and never the sunshine? Do the Scriptures not record anything else about Thomas? Does the Bible itself refer to him by this name?

This little essay is not an effort to prove that Thomas’ faith never wavered, but it is an effort to show that in spite of whatever weaknesses he had, Thomas was still a man of outstanding faith and courage, a man who at times exhibited more commitment than any of the other apostles. I believe that “Doubting Thomas” is hardly a fair assessment of his life as revealed in the Bible.

More than any other, the event that has resulted in the widespread critical assessment of Thomas is found in John 20:19-25. The setting is this: Jesus had been raised from the tomb on Sunday morning. That evening the disciples (apostles) were together, and Jesus unexpectedly joined them. He showed them His wounded hands and side. However, Thomas was not there — he was missing. When the other apostles told him later that they had seen Jesus, he responded: *“Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe”* (verse 25). This does sound rather incriminating, doesn’t it? However, why should he immediately accept their statement as absolute proof? They had been mistaken about the appearance of Jesus when He walked upon the water of the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 14:22-33). Thomas might well think that they could be mistaken again.

Why had Thomas missed the meeting? The others were there. Why wasn’t Thomas there? This is a fair question. Here is the only available biblical answer: *The Bible doesn’t tell us. Nothing at all is recorded as to Thomas’ whereabouts while the others were with Jesus. Is it necessary to assume the worst possible reason for Thomas’ absence? Yes, it is entirely possible that his faith was severely shaken, but it is also surely within the realm of possibility that he was engaged in a quite legitimate endeavor. We have no information at all as to what Thomas was doing at the time, why he was doing it, or where he was doing it. In spite of this total lack of information, countless writers and others have felt quite at liberty to speculate with considerable assertiveness as to why Thomas was missing from that assembly. Here are just a couple of the many critical claims that have been made as to why Thomas was not present:*

- *“If he had even dreamed that Jesus would be there, of course he would not have missed it; but he expected the meeting to be a very dull affair.”*

- *“He was missing because he had lost hope.”*

Isn’t it sad that such severe statements are made based solely upon vivid imagination and groundless speculation?

It is noteworthy that the other apostles doubted before being presented with the same kind of evidence for the resurrection of Jesus that Thomas demanded. Before Thomas saw Jesus in the flesh on the following Sunday, they saw the wounds in His body. That is why they believed. Before they saw Him they were meeting behind doors that were closed because of their fear of the Jews (John 20:19). They were both fearful and unbelieving, yet only Thomas has come to be known almost exclusively as a doubter. They

believed only after they saw the same evidence that Thomas demanded to see (20:20).

This same Thomas was apparently the only one of the twelve who voiced the courage and conviction to go with Jesus back to the area of Bethany and Jerusalem after the death of Lazarus, expressing a readiness and willingness to die an anticipated death with and for the Lord (John 11:1-16). I wonder why it wouldn't be at least as appropriate to call this man "Courageous Thomas."

Perhaps it would be more nearly correct to label Thomas as a *questioner* rather than a *doubter*. He deserves some consideration for his willingness to express his concerns and ask his questions while the others hid theirs in their silence. He wasn't too proud to admit his lack of knowledge and understanding. He has been criticized for his words to Jesus in John 14:5, where he admitted his confusion about what Jesus was saying, but please notice the words of Philip in verse 8, "*Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.*" Philip certainly displayed a lack of perception after having been so closely associated with Jesus for nearly three years, yet he has not been "labeled" in a derogatory manner because of it, and that is as it should be.

Thomas appears to have been an independent thinker, one who possessed a searching mind. He seems to have been ready and willing to accept new information and new evidence. He was one who pursued further knowledge upon which to base his beliefs and his actions.

Thomas did not refuse to believe — he refused to accept as fact the resurrected Jesus without seeing the evidence for himself (John 20:25). Is that all bad? Should we not base our faith on the evidence rather than putting all of our trust in someone else's beliefs? Thomas was honest; his faith was indeed *his faith*, the result of personal thinking and examining. Reasonable doubt can result in greatly deepened faith.

Upon seeing the evidence, this man of God was not the least bit slow to acknowledge the reality of Jesus' resurrection. In fact, his immediate response upon seeing the resurrected wounded body of the Lord is surely the most memorable single declaration of faith in the deity of Christ found in the entire Bible — "***My Lord and my God!***" (verse 28). How remarkable that this matchless exclamation came from the heart and lips of one who has been maligned for centuries as a weak and despondent doubter!

Thomas was, without a doubt, less than the Lord preferred him to be at times, just as were the other apostles, but he deserves to be remembered more for his heroic service and readiness to lay down his life for his Savior than for any temporary doubts that he may have had.

If only the church today were filled with servants of the caliber of this godly man!



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# Our Savior Jesus Christ

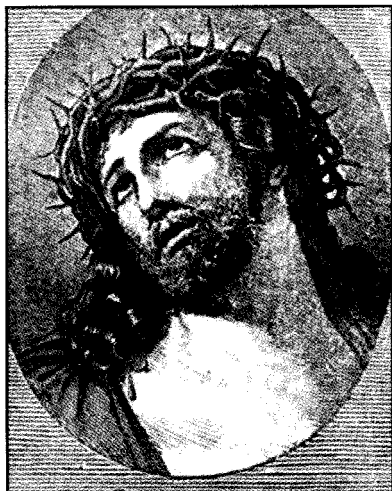
**Basil Overton**

*"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).*

No words should mean more than the words "*our Savior Jesus Christ*", Son of God, son of man, and born of the virgin Mary.

Before Jesus was born, Joseph took Mary to be his wife, but he "*knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and she called his name Jesus*" (Matthew 1:24,25). This means Joseph and Mary did not consummate their marriage in physical union until after Jesus was born. "He knew her not" in this sense.

Mary was a virgin when God, through miraculous power, caused her to conceive (Matthew 1:20). She remained a virgin until after Jesus was born. Then she and Joseph followed the natural plan for husbands and wives, which God ordained. They had four boys and at least two daughters after Jesus'



birth (Matthew 13:55,56).

Jesus is fully qualified as God's Son to be the Savior of all who are accountable to God! Peter wrote of Him, "*Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth...*" (1 Peter 1:22). The reason the death of Jesus means so much to us is not merely because He suffered so much, but because He lived a perfect life! Had He sinned, He could not save sinners! Had He sinned, His blood would have no power to cleanse us of our sins!

Oh what a Savior!

This man of Galilee.

What grand love displayed

When He died for you and me!†

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

# God's Son, by His Resurrection from the Dead

Jim Gaskill

Jesus of Nazareth was dead. He had been crucified by the Romans at Golgotha. Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus, who had come to Jesus by night, had prepared the body of Jesus for burial and laid Him in Joseph's tomb through the Sabbath.

As the sixteenth chapter of Mark opens, it is now very early in the morning on the first day of the week. At the rising of the sun we find Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bringing sweet spices to anoint the dead body of Jesus.

Jesus, while yet alive, had promised a sign. "*As Jonah was three days and nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*" (Matthew 12:40). He told His disciples that He would be killed and the third day be raised again (Matthew 16:21). If He did not keep His word, if He was not raised, then our preaching is vain, and our faith is also vain. In addition, we would be hearing false testimony from the writers of the New Testament, and we would still be in

our sins (1 Corinthians 15).

Surely, we see that this is a most important issue. It is vital. There is much evidence to consider concerning Jesus' claims and the events that followed. We will now confine our discussion to the text of Mark 16. What is the evidence for Jesus being raised from the dead, as found in this particular chapter?

## An Empty Tomb

The tomb was empty on the first day of the week under consideration in our text. How did the tomb become empty? The story told by the guards who had been bribed has a serious, obvious flaw. They said that *while they slept*, the disciples came and stole the body. If they were asleep, *how would they know what happened?*

Another important element to be considered is that the news of the empty tomb, because of Jesus' resurrection, *was first broadcast in Jerusalem, where the tomb was!* If the report was not true, anyone could have disproved it by simply going to the tomb and showing that it was occupied, yet no one was able to controvert the story. The people



who were closest in history to the event and who would have wanted most passionately to stop such a report were powerless in the face of the facts at hand. **The preaching of a resurrected Christ was begun within a few days of the event, in the very place where it was possible to check every piece of evidence, to interrogate every witness, and to expose every indication of a hoax or of fraud.** Most assuredly, the enemies of Christ would have done everything in their power to expose the hoax, if that was all it was. But they were not able to discredit the evidence. Neither has anyone else, since that time, been able to do so. Our only conclusion is that the tomb was empty because Jesus was resurrected!

### Eye Witnesses

The significance of eyewitnesses to the resurrection is two-fold. First, it is the kind of evidence which modern science is so insistent upon in determining the reality of an event. This is empirical evidence. And second, it is the evidence that is valid in the legal sense. Under Jewish law a truth was established by the mouth of two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15; Matthew 18:16). There were in excess of five hundred witnesses who bore eyewitness testimony to the resurrection of Jesus! (1 Corinthians 15:5-8).

Those eyewitnesses present in Mark 16 included: (1) Mary Mag-

dalene at the sepulchre (John 20:11-18; Mark 16:9-11); (2) two disciples, Cleopas and another, on the road to Emmaus (Mark 16:12,13; Luke 24:13-25); and (3) the eleven as they sat at meat (Mark 16:14; Acts 2:32).

### The Angel's Testimony

We must not overlook the important testimony of a young man — an angel — who told the women that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they sought in the tomb, was not there, being risen (Mark 16:5,6).

These various pieces of evidence from our text chapter are sufficient (there are many other evidences and infallible proofs, such as the words of God, who cannot lie) for us to reasonably, logically, and legally conclude that Jesus of Nazareth was raised from the dead. He is the Son of God with power, and by the power of the resurrection.

As the Son of God with power, His claim for the absolute authority to commission the preaching of the Gospel (which includes His resurrection) to every creature in all the world is a valid claim (Mark 16:15,16).

As the resurrected Christ, He is the first-fruits from the dead and is the resurrection and the life, through whom we may have immortality. By His perfection He became the author of salvation to all who obey Him. †

**Jim Gaskill is a gospel preacher living in Harrison, Arkansas, USA.**

# Reports of Evidence for the Genesis Flood

Wayne Jackson  
([ChristianCourier.com](http://ChristianCourier.com))

This article addresses recent reports of possible evidence in the Black Sea for the Genesis Flood.

A few weeks ago, a fascinating piece appeared in the prestigious magazine **U.S. News & World Report** (September 25, 2000, p. 38). Authored by journalist Michael Satchell, the article was titled, “An enduring mystery—Evidence points to a flood of biblical proportions.” Satchell’s essay called attention to an amazing archaeological discovery beneath the surface of the Black Sea, a massive body of water (170,000 square miles—greater in size than the state of California) between Europe and Asia, and linked to the Mediterranean Sea.

The article rehearsed a recent find by an archaeological team led by Robert Ballard (who found the Titanic). According to Satchell, these scientists have been exploring beneath the surface of the Black Sea off the Turkish coast “for evidence of an apocalyptic natural event that could have inspired the Genesis account of the great flood.” In mid-September, the expedition discovered “a large wooden building 12 miles offshore at a depth of more than 300 feet.” Ballard described the find as “beyond our wildest imagination.”

Apparently there is an “ancient coastline some 550 feet below the present sea level.” It is speculated that several thousand years ago, melting glaciers “sent the Mediterranean Sea pouring through a natural dam across the Bosphorus Strait, inundating a huge freshwater lake and creating the Black Sea.”

Hershel Shanks, editor of **Biblical Archaeology Review** (a liberal journal), suggested that “those who believe in the *legend* [emp. WJ] of Noah’s Ark will find great comfort in this [find] . . . Any connection between Noah’s flood and this new finding is speculative, but it cannot be disproved.”

It cannot be known for certain, of course, whether or not the evidence cited above bears any relationship to the Genesis Flood — either directly or indirectly. The Bible student does not need any modern “discovery” to confirm his faith in the integrity of the sacred record. If such comes, we would be delighted; our faith, however, is not left hanging — awaiting modern scientific testimony.

Here is what we do know:

- The Genesis record consumes four chapters (6-9), detailing the narrative of a cataclysmic Flood, and the sole family (Noah’s) preserved therefrom.
- This inundation was world-wide in its proportions (Genesis 7:19; 2 Peter 3:6). The idea of a “local” flood does not appear in any Jewish or Christian literature prior to about A.D. 1655 (see Don C. Allen, **The Legend of Noah**, Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1949, pp. 66-112).
- The Flood was sent by God as a penalty for ancient humanity’s unrestrained wickedness (Genesis 6:5-7; 2 Peter 2:5; 3:3ff).
- Its historicity was widely accepted, both by Biblical writers and secular sources (cf. Psalm 104:6-9; Isaiah 54:9; Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 3:3-7). Some 250 to 300 “Flood” traditions exist in the literature of various nations (Howard Vos, **Genesis and Archaeology**, Chicago: Moody, 1963, p. 32).
- The Son of God Himself endorsed the reliability of the Old Testament record regarding the Flood (Matthew 24:37-39). Since he is an eternal Being (Micah 5:2; John 1:1), and therefore witnessed the Flood (cf. John 8:58), His testimony must be accepted as fact.
- There are geological evidences that buttress the Genesis account relative to the Flood. Marine fossils are found around the world in mountainous areas that are now high and dry. Old shore lines (or strand lines as they are called), are spaced in mountain ranges at parallel heights on both sides of the Atlantic. For further study, see our Feature article on this site, “*Lessons from the La Brea Tar Pits*,” (July, 2000).

If solid evidence for the biblical Flood is forthcoming, we will rejoice. We must, however, be cautious in evaluating the data, and in making unsupported claims. Ultimately, our confidence is grounded in Biblical revelation. There is evidence aplenty that this is reliable. †

**Wayne Jackson is a preacher of the gospel and operates the web site, [Christian Courier.com](http://ChristianCourier.com) which features countless articles and reports regarding Biblical and Christian evidences.**

# Has Space Exploration Changed the Christian's View of the World?

**Robert T. Clark**

Astronauts have reason to believe that a planet such as ours — of about the earth's size and temperature, and with as much light — is a rare and improbable event in the universe. Although this probability is small, the universe is so large that it is conservatively estimated at least 100,000 planets somewhat similar to the earth exist in our galaxy alone, and there must be over 100 million galaxies that lie within the range of our most powerful telescopes. Our present scientific activities in this outer space pose two questions of interest:

1. What is the origin of the planets?
2. Is there life on other planets?

The structure of the solar system alone has caused even the most classical evolutionist considerable concern. All of the major and minor planets orbit in a definite counter-clockwise path around the sun. Likewise, most of the planets turn in a counterclockwise direction — each one maintaining an equidistant relationship with all other planets. Such an orderly arrangement caused Isaac Newton to conclude that the universe was placed here by an "act of God." Just before he retired a few months ago, the famous British astronomer, Smart, stated, "...to many of us, scientific and non-scientific belief in a divine Creator is necessary."

On the other hand, other scientists through the ages have postulated various hypotheses as to the origin of the universe through materialistic means. Laplace hypothesized that the planets were formed by a hot gas that spun around the sun until the centrifugal force equalled the pull of gravity. This mass then contracted and broke into planets. Most scientists were willing to accept this idea until the twentieth century; then several modifications were suggested.

I believe that the more we learn of the things around us, the more each of us will be strengthened in the knowledge it has to be due to the all-powerful handiwork of God. No other explanation is reasonable. Jean stated that the universe must have been formed by the attraction of a massive star that wandered too close to the sun. As the star swept by, huge streaks of planetary material could have been pulled away into space. This possibility seemed too remote and was soon replaced by more current ideas. One held that the present universe is merely the result of an explosion of hot gases from a previous universe that had been collapsing. Another modified the hot gas hypothesis to include a gas-dust cloud as the nucleus of all matter.

## EVIDENCES

### Always the Unsolved

These scientists must know that no such materialistic concept can expect to reach past the theory stage. There is always the unsolved problem involving the origin of the sun and stars to block their way. They have even looked in vain through powerful telescopes at remote areas in our universe expecting to see hot gas clouds and the beginning of future planets. All they have found are millions of additional stars — already mentioned in the Bible to be as numerous as sand by the seashore.

As man continues to explore deeper into space by more modern techniques, he will have to discount completely all known evolutionist approaches and either accept the Bible accounts in the first chapter of Genesis and the eighth chapter of Proverbs or attempt to formulate a new hypothesis. I am convinced that our space explorers will find the evidence so overwhelmingly in favor of the Bible that they will hesitate to attempt a different explanation.

The problem of life on other worlds is a subject which stimulates the imagination of mankind tremendously. The invention of the telescope has brought the celestial bodies closer to us optically, and the successful development of the rocket has given us the potential of bringing them closer physically. There are certain ecological factors indispensable for the existence of life: the presence of an atmosphere, water in its liquid state, a biologically suitable temperature, carbon dioxide, and oxygen. By screening the known planets in this way, only Mars remains as a conceivable bioplanet. Even in this case the oxygen atmosphere is so rare that animals as we know them cannot live. The highest that any warm-blooded animal has been able to adapt to is at altitudes between 18,000-25,000 feet, yet the atmosphere on Mars corresponds to an altitude of approximately 55,000 feet. This far exceeds man's limitations, even through generations of highly selective adaptive processes.

Therefore, in the new worlds which man will undoubtedly scientifically explore within the next few years, he will have to carry with him his own atmospheric environment; food; shelter; clothing, and, in addition, his social requirements and religion. Such explorers will have to live within small bubble colonies in close harmony one with another. Those who have not been able to accomplish this on earth certainly cannot expect to do so under conditions requiring extreme trust and faith in their fellow man. Man, as created by God, was given the unique ability to think, plan, and to dominate his environment. When he does conquer new worlds, he will find them exactly as they were created by God. †

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## THE WORD OF GOD

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During the closing days of Jesus' earthly ministry, He came to the temple and drove out the money-changers and merchants. This greatly displeased the Jewish elders and priests — men who were already plotting His death (John 11:53). This action of Jesus spurred them to ask Him: "By

*what authority are you doing these things?*

*And, who gave you this authority to do these things?"* (Mark 11:28).

Evidently Jesus did not think their

questioning the authority for His behavior was improper since He agreed, upon condition, to reveal the source of His authority (Mark 11:29).

In much of modern religious activity, the question of authority is regarded as superfluous. In fact, the masses do not feel that any authority, beyond human approval, is needed. If it seems good in their eyes and if multitudes are practicing it, why is there need for any further authority?

Well, if the Lord Jesus had established *a democracy* wherein "the supreme power is vested in the people," such an attitude toward authority would be necessarily right.

But He established *a kingdom* over which He is the supreme power (Matthew 16:18,19; Colossians 1:13,14; Revelation 1:9)! Even the chosen apostles of Christ recognized that they had *no* authority to institute rites and ordinances, but only to make known those things re-

vealed to them by the Holy Spirit, who was in turn the medium through whom Christ was speaking (John 16:12-14; 1 Corinthians 2:12,13;

14:37). Christ, then, is indeed "*head over all things to the church*" (Ephesians 1:22).

Some are great at citing Scripture for certain things. These may include: current moral issues, immersion for baptism, observance of the Lord's Supper, missionary enterprises, and other things which they preach or practice. Yet, if questioned about their organizational structure, worship activities, and other matters, they seem to feel that they need no scriptural authority. As the proverb says: "Verily, the legs of the lame are not equal!" †

**Hershel Dyer is a gospel preacher living in Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA.**

**IS  
RELIGIOUS  
AUTHORITY  
IMPORTANT?  
Hershel Dyer**

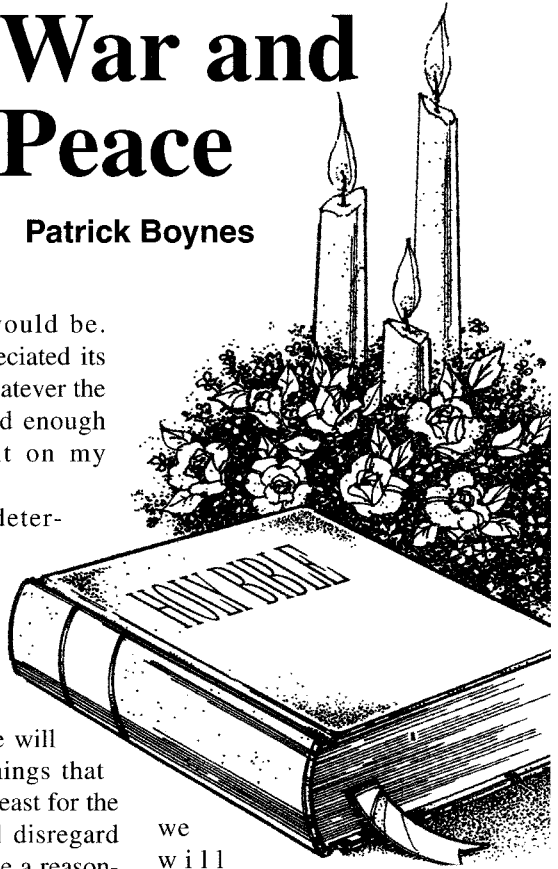
“Have you ever read Tolstoy’s **War and Peace**?” he asked, “and why not?” I felt as if I should have read it, but I hadn’t. I had never taken the time. It had never been that important to me. Maybe I just didn’t know how useful it would be. Maybe I had never appreciated its relevance to my life. Whatever the reasons, I had never had enough interest in it to put it on my “books-to-be-read” list.

Our interests are determined by our life’s priorities. If our main concern is the pursuit of pleasure, then we will be interested in things simply for their entertainment value. We will engage in the sort of things that make us feel good — at least for the moment — and we will disregard anything that doesn’t have a reasonable “I feel good” factor.

But if we’re concerned with deeper things, if our pursuits go beyond what the eye can see, then we will be interested in the sort of things that make better people out of us — the sort of things that will help us to serve others. If we are convinced that life has purpose beyond the physical and the present,

# War and Peace

Patrick Boynes



we will want to pursue those things that help us to realize that purpose. The books and magazines that we read will reflect this — so, too, will the things we watch.

Of all the good books available to be read (and there are many), sixty-six stand head and shoulders above the rest. Yes, sections of them can become tedious — espe-

## THE WORD OF GOD

cially if we are not sure of their relevance to the big picture — but that's true of almost any pursuit, and there is far too much good material to let those difficult or "tedious" parts be of any real concern. These are books that are packed full of adventure, intrigue, mystery, romance, justice, heroism, and devotion as the story is told over and over again of a God who loves people and who wants to live in a loving relationship with them.

A collection of sixty-six books can sound a bit daunting at first, but it makes things easier when we realize that some parts are more important, and worth reading more often, than others. How many of us have started reading from the beginning and got bogged down in Leviticus or Numbers? I'd once had enough before reading to the end of *Exodus*! If you have made it all the way through all sixty-six books, didn't you notice some points that, though they were important, just didn't mean all that much to you — particularly, some of the geneology, some of the prophetic statements that are difficult to understand, and even some of the history?

I want to recommend to you, though, that the Bible is a book that's worth the reading, not as a selection of proof-texts or some manual from which to compile sermons, but *as a book to be enjoyed in*

*the fullest sense.*

Why don't you pick up a copy of Luke's Jesus: His Acts and Teaching, and read it as if you'd never read it before? Why not read his adventurous sequel, Acts of Apostles (and watch out for the unexpected twist towards the end of the story!)?

Moses' Genesis will let you know how everything began, as well as provide a useful introduction to various people and promises referred to in other books. And his Exodus is a must for any who want some essential background to the redemption of mankind. Books like Ruth, Esther, Psalms, and Paul's to Philemon are just *begging* to be read. And speaking of the letters, Paul's to the Philippians and John's First Letter will certainly move you to greater heights.

We need to be a people of "the books". We need to be reading and breathing the living words of our living God. Maybe you have established some sort of a reading schedule already — that's great. Maybe you're not quite sure what to read next; *ask* somebody. Maybe you have never really made the time to pick up one of these good books and start reading. I wish I could excite you to do so today. †

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# Biblical Truth and Tolerance

Hans J. Dederscheck

The apostle Paul was a passionate fighter for the truth of the Gospel, which is always in danger of being changed. He did not approve or accept any alteration (Galatians 1:6-9).

Paul's viewpoint does not fit into our time in which not much value is put on doctrinal purity. Those who call themselves "Christians" are divided into many groups, which contradict Christ's plain teaching. The Scriptures tell us quite clearly that any division is sinful. A fleshly (ungodly) attitude will carry human souls into eternal condemnation (1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:1-4). Whenever it comes to questions of faith and doctrine, there is no tolerance to be applied. There is a need of being faithful to Christ's Gospel *without change!*

Whoever goes ahead and does not stay in God's teaching does not have the Father, neither the Son (2 John 9). That means that where God spoke, there is only one way to respond — by obedience! If we tolerate changes, we declare ourselves to be guilty of disobeying God's authority.

**Christ's Gospel is the truth.**

We may think we are extremely

holy, Christ-like, and dedicated to God, but if we go away from God's Word we are sinning against the Lord because of self-willing disobedience. We show love toward Him as we obey His Word. Just believing and teaching the Word does not mean anything. What makes the difference is obedience in matters of doctrine (the Gospel). **Saying "Lord, Lord"** but **doing nothing** is the easy way which brings people nowhere, except to destruction (Luke 6:46).

The law given to Israel at Mount Sinai was to be considered "an educator" for God's people. That was Paul's interpretation, without doubt. The Old Testament history is literally filled with unbelief and disobedience. The Law of Moses served to educate the people toward Christ.

The New Testament shows that disobedience will have eternal consequences of being separated from God (Hebrews 2:1-4). Many times we are lacking in reverence toward God's Word. When are we going beyond Christ's Word? Whenever we add to or take away from the Lord's teachings.

It is possible to sin with a good

## THE WORD OF GOD

conscience. It is possible to deny the truth of Christ by tolerating false doctrines of all kinds. People may be blinded because they verbally confess a false love toward God but feel nothing in their hearts (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12; John 17:17).

Whenever God's Word is changed into man's theology and traditions, man is sinning; he is going too far, going out of Christ's way of life. Personal opinions and emotions are not reliable guides in such matters. Our feelings need to be according to Christ's teaching! We are disciples of Christ as long as we do His will (John 8:31,32). Whoever keeps His commandments, he it is who loves Him (John

14:21-24). "*You are my friends if you do what I tell you*" (John 15:14).

It is just too easy to be deceived by our own emotions and feelings. What is of value is obeying Christ's Gospel, and **knowing** that what we have done has God's approval (Matthew 7:21-23).

The Gospel is as clear today as it was two thousand years ago. The same God is in heaven. Christ has not changed. Why should people change the Gospel for their own condemnation? "*Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life*" (Revelation 2:10). †

**Hans J. Dederscheck is an evangelist in the country of Austria.**

### *Aim Your Life*

Plan the kind of person you should be. Get these targets clearly in view. Take careful aim at each one!

Life should be aimed at being the kind of person who is  
**always** —

**Maturing** in judgment. ( Life is filled with decisions.)

**Growing** in character. (It is grown one quality at a time.)

**Gaining** in knowledge. (This is the key to functioning well.)

**Increasing** in caring. (Humanity is at its best when it's merciful.)

**Improving** in following. (The Christian life is walking in  
His footsteps.)

# Verse Search

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

1. To what place did Paul, Timothy and Silas go in Thessalonica? (V. 1).
2. Describe Paul's "custom". (Vs. 2,3).
3. "And some of them were \_\_\_\_\_; and a \_\_\_\_\_ of the devout \_\_\_\_\_, and not a few of the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ Paul and Silas." (V. 4).
4. What did the unbelieving Jews do, because of envy that people were hearing and obeying what Paul and Silas were teaching? (V. 5).
5. Dragging Jason and other brethren before the rulers of the city, what was the accusation made against Paul and Silas? (V. 6).
6. What second accusation was made? (V. 7).
7. When the brethren sent Paul and his company away to Berea, what attitude did he find there? (Vs. 10,11).
8. When antagonistic Jews came to Berea from Thessalonica, what did the brethren do? (V. 13).
9. In Athens, what situation stirred Paul's spirit? (V. 16).
10. Paul immediately made opportunities to teach, resulting in what famous sermon? (Vs. 17-19).
11. He began, "Men of Athens, \_\_\_\_\_; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: \_\_\_\_\_." (Vs. 22, 23).
12. How did Paul describe God? (V. 24).
13. What does God give to His creation? (V. 25).
14. "...in Him we \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and have \_\_\_\_\_..." (V. 28).
15. What does God command of each one of us? Why? (Vs. 30,31).
16. What were the three types of responses to Paul's sermon and his statements about the resurrection of Christ? (Vs. 30-34).

[See inside of back cover for answers.]

# Cooperating with Grace

**Frank Chesser**

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James pointed to God as the source of all good things (James 1:17). Every good thing that man enjoys is a gift from God and a manifestation of His grace. God is not in debt to man. God does not owe man anything. If a man could live a million years, he could never perform enough good deeds to place God in His debt. Whatever God does for man is based on grace, not merit.

However, the appropriation of grace is dependent upon the obedience of faith. God wanted to pour out His grace upon the world of Noah's day, but He was unable to do so because He *"saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually"* (Genesis 6:5). *"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord"* (Genesis 6:8). Why? Because Noah was a *"just man and upright in his generations, and Noah walked with God"* (Genesis 6:9). Did Noah's obedient faith nullify God's grace and transform His gift of salvation from the flood into human merit? Certainly not!

God instructed Noah to build an ark. Was not the construction of the

ark an essential act of obedience in the salvation of Noah and his family? *"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house"* (Hebrews 11:7). Noah listened attentively to God's instructions, and, *"according to all that God commanded him, so did he"* (Genesis 6:22).

Noah cooperated with God by responding to His will in obedient faith. He was characterized by the *"work of faith"* (1 Thessalonians 1:3). He possessed a *"faith which worketh by love"* (Galatians 5:6). Noah did not trust in the ark or his construction of it for his salvation. He did not rely upon his own efforts. His trust was in God and His grace. Yet he knew that his salvation by God's grace could not be a reality apart from his obedience of faith. It is futile for people today to plead for the display of grace apart from the exercise of faith. *"And why call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"* (Luke 6:46). †

**Frank Chesser is the preacher for the Panama Street Church of Christ in Montgomery, Alabama, USA.**

# Great Things the Grace of God Does

Sunny David

Reading from Titus 2:11-14, we observe: *“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”*

First, we should understand what grace means. An incident in the life of King David is a perfect illustration (2 Samuel 12:1-13). David had committed a great sin, worthy of death. Yet, when he confessed his sin before the Lord, he was instantly forgiven. In other words, *because of his penitent heart*, he got what he *needed*, and not what he deserved. That is grace.

In Romans 3:23 we read concerning sin and humanity, *“All have sinned.”* And, *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is*

*eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 6:23). Sin has separated all accountable people from God, but God’s grace has appeared to all men. Because of sin, all sinners were destined to live in hell, separated from God, forever. But God gave us something that we all need, and not what we all deserve.

The grace of God has provided the means of salvation for all mankind, for God is not *willing* — it is not *His choice* or *His desire* — that any should perish, but that all have eternal life in heaven (2 Peter 3:9). God gave His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole of humanity (John 3:16). Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2; 4:10). While we all deserve to die in sin, He died for our sins; or instead of us (Romans 8:5; 1 Corinthians 15:3). Jesus, by the grace of God, tasted death for everyone (Hebrews 2:9). Christ said, *“He — or anyone — who believes and is baptized shall be saved”* (Mark 16:16).

The grace of God that saves us

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Since we have been baptized into the death of Christ, we have been raised to walk in the newness of life (Romans 6:3-6). Before obeying the gospel of salvation, we had been the servants of sin, but now we have become the servants of righteousness (Romans 6:16,17). We should not be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of our mind (Romans 12:1,2). Therefore, we need to set our minds on the things of heaven and not on the things on earth (Colossians 3:1,2).

The grace of God teaches us to live on this earth soberly and righteously and godly. Those who have received the grace of God and have been saved by His grace should know that they have been called to follow the steps of Christ (1 Peter 2:21), and to possess the mind or disposition of Christ (Philippians 2:5).

The grace of God teaches us to look for the blessed hope. Christ said, *“Let your heart not be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also”* (John 14:1-3). Paul said, *“For we know that if our earthly house,*

*this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”* (2 Corinthians 5:1). Again, in Philippians 3:20,21 he said, *“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body, that it may be conformed to His glorious body.”* John said that when Christ appears, we shall be like Him (1 John 3:1-3).

The grace of God teaches us to look for the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Christ is one of the Persons in the Divine Nature (Acts 17:29), or the Godhead (Colossians 2:9). He is God (John 1:1,14; Philippians 2:6-8). When He will come, He will appear up in the sky, or the atmosphere, with His mighty angels and in flaming fire (2 Thessalonians 1:7,8). His saved ones will meet Him, being caught up in the air to go and live with Him in heaven forever (1 Thessalonians 4:16,17).

The grace of God teaches us that by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, Christ gave Himself up for us, to redeem us from every lawless deed (Acts 2:23). The Jews had plotted His death. The Romans had permitted His death on the cross. But He was put to death on the cross by the will of God. Peter wrote that we were

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not redeemed by the corruptible things of the earth, but by the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18,19). That blood is priceless. There is no sin that cannot be covered by the sacrifice of Christ.

The grace of God teaches us that sinners must be purified in the blood of Christ; washed and sanctified and justified (1 Corinthians 6:11). And thus obedient people become God's own special people, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, to proclaim the praises of Him who by His grace called them out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

*"For by grace you have been saved through faith,"* said the

Apostle Paul, *"but that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them"* (Ephesians 2:8-10). No amount of our own good works can save us. It is by the grace of God that we are saved from our sin, through faith; that is, when we have enough faith in God to do whatever He asks us to do to be saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:26,27). †

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### The Rule of Three

Three things to govern:

Temper, Tongue, Conduct.

Three things to cultivate:

Courage, Affection, Gentleness.

Three things to commend:

Thrift, Industry, Promptness.

Three things to despise:

Cruelty, Arrogance, Ingratitude.

Three things to wish for:

Health, Contentment, Friends.

Three things to admire:

Dignity, Intellectual Power, Gracefulness.

Three things to give:

Alms to the needy, Comfort to the sad,

Appreciation to the worthy.

# What Is the Basis of Fellowship?

Albert Gardner

It is obvious to all that religious division is very pronounced and widespread. This is in the face of many verses in the Bible which call for unity.

*“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment”* (1 Corinthians 1:10).

Jesus prayed for unity. *“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me”* (John 17:21).

We are living in such a tolerant age that people want to overlook sin and false teaching, and actually endorse everyone in the name of kindness, tolerance, and unity. What does the Bible teach is the basis of fellowship? There should be no misunderstanding on this matter, for the standard is clearly stated.

*“But if we walk in the light, as*

*he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”* (1 John 1:7). This is if both of us walk in the light. This means to *“walk after his commandments”* (2 John 6). It means to *“walk in truth”* (3 John 4). We are given clear instructions about what to do if one does not follow the right teaching.

*“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed: For he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds”* (2 John 9-11).

We can never unite on the creed books that run mainline churches, but all of us can accept and unite on the Word of God. It is our prayer that this will be our goal. †

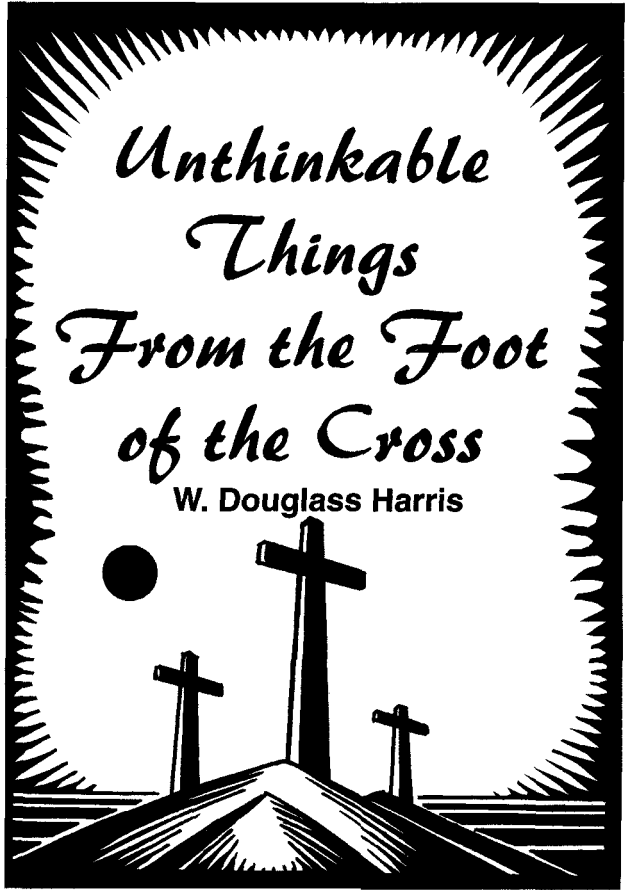
**Albert Gardner is a gospel preacher living in Strawberry, Arkansas, U.S.A.**



Some actions are made unthinkable by their very nature, such as tunneling through a mountain with a toothpick, clipping the wings of a cyclone with scissors, sweetening an ocean of quinine with a pint of sugar, lighting a darkened city with one small candle, etc. In the same way, when one figuratively stands at the foot of the cross of Christ, by nature there are some things that are unthinkable. Paul expressed his surprise and amazement that

some of the Galatian Christians were returning to Judaism after the crucifixion of Christ had been portrayed before their eyes in such a vivid way (see Galatians 3:11). What are some things unthinkable in the light of the crucifixion?

**1. That Religious Division Is Desirable.** Prayers are heard in



religious circles, thanking God that there are so many churches and that one can attend the church of his choice, which is equal to saying this is a desirable way. But can one stand at the foot of the cross and be honest in saying such things? Does not this attitude reveal either ignorance or lack of concern for the

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Lord's prayer in John 17:20,21? Did not the shadow of the cross loom over this prayer? Is not a prayer, which thanks God for division, in defiance of Paul's inspired command (see 1 Corinthians 1:10)? Notice his question to the Corinthians: "*Was Paul crucified for you?*" (1 Corinthians 1:13). It is impossible to view the crucifixion of Christ in the right way and say that religious division is desirable.

**2. That the Cost of Loyalty to Christ Is Too High.** Pitiable excuses are offered so often for not being more loyal in daily living for Christ, in attendance, giving, etc. There are demands that are made, to be sure, and the cost should always be considered, but when the crucifixion is clearly viewed, can one say that God's demands are too severe? Peter and John met this test and passed without hesitation. They were offered safety by the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem if they would not speak any more in the name of Christ (Acts 4:18,19; 5:28,29). How could they have kept quiet while being loyal to Christ?

What did the cross demand of Jesus? Answer: (see Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 12:2-4). Faithfulness to His Father's will was His first duty (Matthew 26:38-44). He faced the hostility of a blood-thirsty mob, suffered three mock trials, and died an ignominious death, but was

His loyalty too high? In view of His excruciating death by crucifixion, is the cost and demand of loyalty to Him too high?

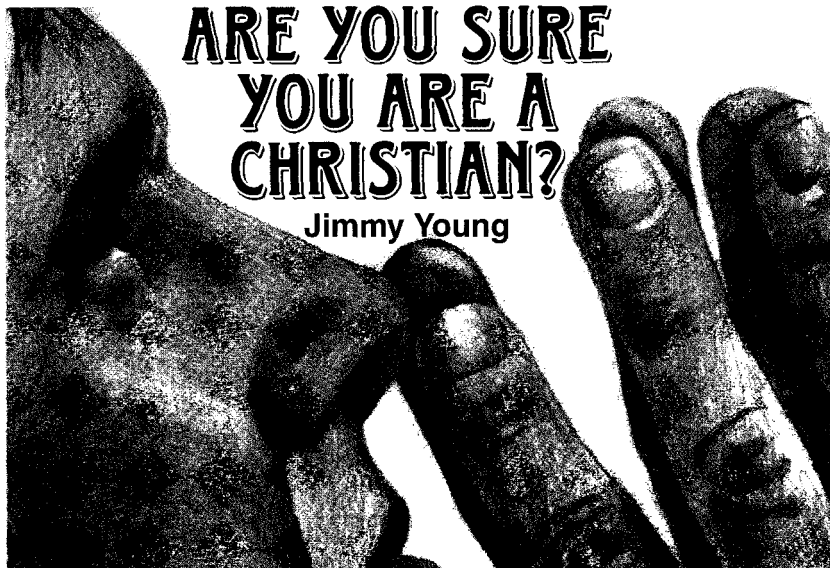
**3. That the Church Is Less Than "All Important".** Our question refers to the church that Christ purchased with His blood (Acts 20:28); and He purchased only one church, one spiritual family (Ephesians 4:4; 1 Corinthians 12:20b). He died that He "*might reconcile them both (Jew and Gentile) in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby*" (Ephesians 2:16).

In the light of Christ's teaching, His church is all-important (Matthew 6:33). Its all-importance is seen in the concern His apostles had for it — they suffered incredible persecution, even martyrdom for it; it is seen in all the letters addressed to the churches of the first century; it is seen at the foot of the cross by the fact that Christ gave Himself for it (Ephesians 5:23); it is seen in the way Paul impressed the elders of the church at Ephesus with its importance — "*which he purchased*" — the price being His life's blood (Acts 20:28). Could Christ have paid a higher price to bring the church into existence? He paid too much, if it is not all-important. †

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

# ARE YOU SURE YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN?

Jimmy Young



It is a fact that many words have been abused and misused. Two of them are the words, "church" and "Christians". Think about this — Abraham, Moses, and John the Baptist were not Christians. They lived prior to the establishment of the church. We are privileged above all three of them. That is, if we have truly obeyed the Gospel, we have been added to the church (Acts 2:47), and by such, we are Christians. Are you sure you are a Christian? Please note the following facts:

One may be religious and not be a Christian, but one cannot be a Christian and not be religious. The Chinese have a "god-shelf", they are willing to worship any "god" they hear of. The apostle Paul ran

into a similar situation at Athens (Acts 17:22). Many religions today worship Buddha, Mohammed, etc. Countless claim to serve Christ but have exalted their creed above the Bible. Yes, one must be religious, but his/her religion must be right, Scripturally speaking (James 1:26,27; 1 Corinthians 15:58; 1 Corinthians 16:13,14).

One may be a good moral person and not be a Christian. Being a good moral person with high standards does not make one a Christian. Yet one cannot be a Christian without being morally upright. Some believe personal goodness is enough to take one to heaven. Cornelius was a good man, but he was not a Christian (Acts 10-

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11). Regardless of how good one is, only a Christian can glorify God (1 Peter 4:16). Yes, individuals must be good, but just being good doesn't make one a Christian (Titus 2:11,12; 2 Peter 1:5-12).

One may believe the Gospel and not be a Christian. King Agrippa was "*almost persuaded to be a Christian.*" He must have believed, but refused to obey (Acts 27:28). The demons believed (James 2:19). What about the chief rulers (John 12:42)? Many have been misled into some human organizations instead of the true church. Yes, belief (faith) is essential, but faith alone does not make one a Christian (Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16).

One may repent and not be a Christian. It is possible for a person to repent without obeying the Gospel. Many a criminal on death row has repented, but has never become a Christian. Many repent too late to obey God. Many in the religious world are taught that they are "saved" when they repent and believe. Can we truly repent if we leave out the rest of God's plan of salvation? Repentance is necessary (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:38; 17:30; 2 Peter 3:9), but repentance or belief alone does not make one a Christian.

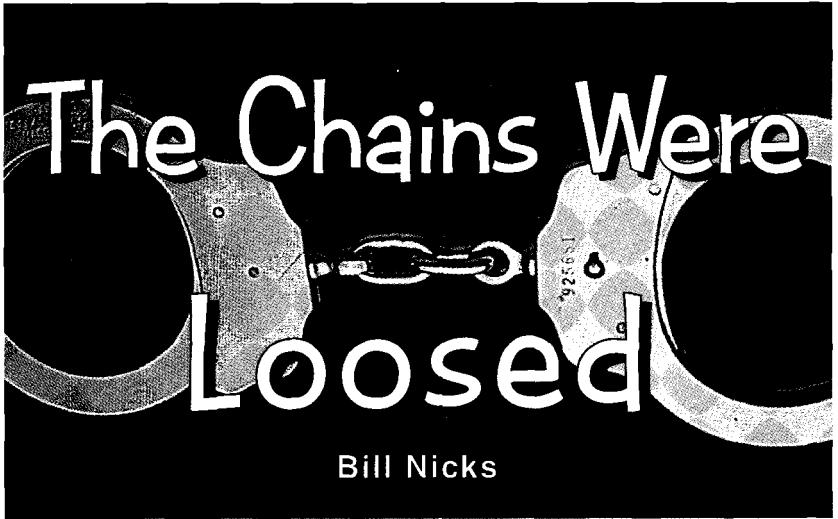
One may even go through the act of baptism and not be a Christian. Many have been immersed without proper teaching

or purpose. Because of a lack of understanding, they are not Christians. Many even call sprinkling or pouring baptism. They may go through a "form" of obedience, but they aren't Christians. Yes, one must be baptized to obey God, but it must be for the right purpose and in the Scriptural manner (Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:20,21; Galatians 3:26,27; Mark 16:16).

One can worship God and not be a Christian. Jews still worship God according to the law of Moses. Many worship in religious institutions created by man. They worship according to their creeds (Matthew 15:9). Worship is a Christian act (Acts 2:42; 20:7; John 4:24). Christians must worship God. But just because one worships God doesn't make one a Christian.

Many have their names recorded on church rolls, but their names are not written in heaven. The same thing (obedience, in faith) that makes one a Christian makes one a member of the Lord's church (Acts 2:47). To be "in" Christ is to be "in" His body, the church (Ephesians 1:22,23; 4:5; Colosians 1:18). We must be sure we are Christians. Those who have been taught correctly and have obeyed God's plan are Christians. †

**Jimmy Young is a gospel preacher working with the Nettleton congregation in Jonesboro, Arkansas, USA.**



Bill Nicks

The officer brought the two men handcuffed together from pod A-1 in the Martin County jail. It was time for them to be baptized in our mobile baptistery. I had studied with them for the past few weeks, and again that afternoon we had studied reasons why they were to be baptized, namely, that they would be forgiven of their sins and become new creatures in Christ. They were told that the Lord would add them to His church, and that it was a rare privilege to become a part of the redeemed of the earth.

Chris and Justin seemed elated that they could have such blessings. They had committed crimes, had been incarcerated and were treated as felons. What hope did they have of a "normal" life in this world?

But how wonderful for them to realize that though men regard them as felons, God in His grace forgives them and enrolls their names in the Lamb's book of life!

As these two were lowered into the water, after making the good confession of their faith in Jesus as the Son of God, I thought of two other men in the long ago who were languishing in the Philippian jail. They were not felons but, as Christians, were following in the footsteps of their Master, suffering for the cause of Christianity. Paul and Silas were suffering wrongfully, but God, in His great mercy, sent an earthquake which "*loosed the chains*" of all the prisoners in that jail. The jailer, frightened for his own fate if prisoners should escape,

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*“drew his sword and was about to kill himself”* (Acts 16:27). When he was assured by Paul that *“we are all here,”* the jailer called for a light and fell at the feet of Paul and Silas. He brought them out and said, *“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”* This led to the conversion of the jailer and all his house. Paul and Silas taught them the Word of the Lord, the jailer evidenced repentance by washing their stripes, and in the same hour of the night he and his house were baptized. After this, the jailer set food before them, and *“he rejoiced having believed in God with all his household”* (Acts 16:28-34). It is clear that believing in God involved obedience to the will of the Lord.

I cannot tell what the fate of Chris and Justin will be, whether they will have a long or short sentence. But I know that, just as the chains were loosed from their hands in order for them to be baptized into Christ, the chains of sin were removed as they submitted to the commands of their Savior. When men break the laws of man, they must pay the penalty for their crimes. The severity of the punishment depends on the heinousness of the crime.

When men break the laws of God, they also must suffer, *“But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteous-*

*ness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior”* (Titus 3:4,5).

The sins of Chris and Justin found them out. Moses said in Numbers 32:23, *“Be sure your sins will find you out.”* God allowed Jews to be punished by being taken captive, He allowed Chris and Justin to be captive. At the same time, by their obedience to the Gospel, the chains of sin have been removed, and in a spiritual sense, they are free.

*“Stone walls do not a prison make nor iron bars a cage”* (Richard Lovelace). Chris and Justin are in chains temporarily, but their souls have been set free. There is no greater freedom than that given by *“the author of eternal salvation”* (Hebrews 5:9). *“And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free”* (John 8:32). As long as Chris and Justin remain in jail, I will continue to study with them. They need encouragement to become better Christians, better husbands, better fathers, and better citizens. †

**Bill Nicks is a gospel preacher living in Hobe Sound, Florida, USA, after having done mission work in Africa and Trinidad.**

# Prepared for the Unprepared

**Rod Kyle**

Do you have an opinion on hell? It seems that everyone does. But the Bible says we must listen to Jesus on this subject (Mark 9:7). So what does He say about this prepared place for the unprepared?

He teaches about it through His parables (Matthew 13:39-42), by way of illustration (Matthew 7:19), in His reference to authority (Matthew 7:21-23), in His condemnation of religious error and errorists (Mark 12:38,39), and in His use of the Old Testament (Mark 9:48). In fact, no other Bible character touches on it so much.

Jesus describes hell as a place of unspeakable horror (Matthew 8:12; Mark 9:48). He also clearly teaches that it is a realm of eternal consciousness (Matthew 25:41,46). Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, taught that God made hell for the devil and his angels (Colossians 1:16). But the vital message for humanity is this: Hell is a prepared

place for the unprepared person (Matthew 24:45-51)! Or to put it another way — everyone in hell will have earned their place there (Romans 6:23, Revelation 21:8).

Such is the love of the Creator for the created that He was willing to leave heaven to rescue mankind from its sin-induced destiny (Luke 19:10; John 3:16; Philippians 2:6,7). But the success of His mission depends upon *your choice*. Are you choosing to go with the majority to hell? Or are you searching for that narrow way home to heaven (Matthew 7:13,14)?

The Good News is this — a redemption price has been paid for your sins (Romans 5:8; Hebrews 5:8,9). But you must accept God's offer of help through obedient faith (John 3:36)? Hell is prepared only for those who are unprepared for heaven! †

**Rod Kyle is an evangelist in New Zealand.**

It is easier to get folks to agree to do better tomorrow  
than to get them to do their best today.



# The Church of Christ — Non-Denominational, Not Interdenominational

Glenn Colley

Hopefully, after reading this publication, (perhaps several issues of it), your interest is growing in the church of Christ. We welcome your questions!

The purpose of this article is to clear up some confusion concerning whether the church is “non-denominational” or “inter-denominational”. What do these words mean? Can they be used interchangeably to apply to the church? Actually, no.

Interdenominational churches are those that accept any creed, feeling that one is just as valid and useful as any other. According to this view, it matters little what denomination a person is tied to, because all faiths are equally pleasing to God. This is a very common view, and many of our friends and family members hold it: the “inter-denominational view”.

Yet this view doesn't come



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from the Bible, but from men. The New Testament (under which we live today) says a great deal about the church, but it is never even called a “denomination”. In fact, the concept of religious people forming sects or “denominating” into different groups in order to teach and practice different doctrines is spoken against in the Word of God:

*“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, My brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?”* (1 Corinthians 1:10-13).

Surprisingly enough, the Bible teaches about only one church, which is the house of God, bought with the blood of Christ (Ephesians 5:25; 1 Timothy 3:15). What we see in the New Testament is that the church is made up of all the saved, and there are no saved outside of His church.

The members of the church of Christ today seek to be just that — the church of Christ. We want to restore New Testament Christianity and thus be just Christians, nothing more or less. We want the Bible to be our final authority for faith and practice. Therefore, we encourage people to ask, “What does the Bible say...?” rather than “What do you teach about...?” This is why we are non-denominational, not inter-denominational. †

**Glenn Colley preaches for the church of Christ in Collierville, Tennessee, USA.**

### Jesus

Whatever the question,  
He is the Answer (John 14:6).  
Whatever the problem,  
He is the Solution  
(Matthew 11:28,29).  
Whatever the hurt,  
He is the Healer (Luke 4:18).  
Whatever the bondage,  
He is the Liberator (John 8:32).  
Whatever the burden,  
He is the Overcomer  
(John 16:33).  
Whatever the need,  
He is the Supplier  
(Matthew 7:7,8).  
Whatever the sin,  
He is the Forgiver  
(Hebrews 10:12-17).

# Precedents

Owen Cosgrove

One may wonder why the Supreme Court of the United States of America would ponder so long and deliberately on some case that seems very insignificant. The reason for such carefulness is simple: the court is afraid of taking a step, however small, that may become a precedent for other cases with far greater consequences.

A precedent is a preceding instance or case that may serve as an example or justification in subsequent cases. Bad precedents can wreck an individual, a group, or a society. "Well, he did it. Why can't we?" "Where are you going to draw the line?" "We've done such and such before. I don't see any difference between that and this!"

Sometimes in religion, people tend to forget their original purposes for existence and the principles that have guided their history. Separated and insulated by time and experience from their predecessors, old restraints can lose meaning and relevance. Finally, someone makes a daring move, and, if it is not checked, it can become a precedent for apostasy.

Precedents can take priority over reason, and even over revelation. The grave apostasies that beset the original church of the New Testament usually came after some questionable

action had been taken that set a precedent for others to follow.

That is why brethren need to be so watchful and careful about preserving the patterns given in the New Testament. One departure calls for another and another and another... Once a bad precedent has been set, the gate is open, and people will appeal to that action for justification.

Watchful leaders can spot a point of departure from the faith that seems innocuous and benign, but which really opens avenues of great wrong and error. Little by little, one seemingly harmless breach of principle occurs after another, and soon the church has lost its doctrinal purity.

May we be patient with those church leaders and others who are fearful of misguided actions which can take the church away from its moorings (and may we be very concerned about those who are *not* vigilant in these matters). "*Prove all things. Hold fast to that which is good. Abstain from the very appearance of evil*" (1 Thessalonians 5:21,22). God has a reason for these words of warning. Are we paying attention? †

**Owen Cosgrove is involved in printed evangelism in many countries and preaches for the Northside congregation in Waxahachie, Texas, USA.**

# I Dwell Among the People

Michael L. King



John Henry Newton wrote, "I sought to hear the voice of God and climbed the topmost steeple, but God declared: 'Go down again — I dwell among the people.'"

It is an amazing concept that God would see fit to entrust His Word to the custodial care of "*earthen vessels*" (2 Corinthians 4:7). Each vessel is unique and serviceable in its own way. The diversity of persons, not teachings, contributes to the strength and outreach of the "*body*" in that it "*has many members,*" none of which fulfill the same role.

Bruce Barton wrote, "If you have anything really valuable to contribute to the world, it will come through the expression of your own personality...." When one reads the 12th chapter of 1 Corinthians, inspiration is found establishing the premise from which Mr. Barton wrote. The strongest asset that we

have in communicating the Gospel, not considering the Word of God itself, is our own person. What a challenge it is to insure that we are the right kind of person!

What a beautiful picture Paul painted in his letters to the Roman and Corinthian brethren regarding the nature of the Lord's church! That *spiritual body* is but a composite of beautiful people merging their various strengths and talents to honor and glorify the Lord, in addition to being a blessing to humanity.

There are no insignificant members in the body of Christ. Each, though some are "*more uncomely,*" is vital to the body (1 Corinthians 12:23). The inference is that those we think to be less honorable are given more abundant honor "*to that part which lacked*" (verse 24).

During the Middle Ages much

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emphasis was given to the “clergy and laity” issue. In part, the Reformation Movement was fueled by these distinctions. Elders, deacons, and preachers are not “above” anyone in the church today. They are merely men who have dedicated themselves to the cause of Christ in a leadership capacity. To serve in this capacity is not a function of arrogance, but of considerably increased responsibility and answerability. Those who assume the responsibility of leadership and teaching shall “*receive the greater judgment*” (James 3:1). Each member, regardless of the role they fulfill in the body of Christ, is but a member and is to be found “*Submitting...one to another in the fear of God*” (Ephesians 5:21).

The Lord taught in His parables that when “*...ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do*” (Luke 17:10). The statement has been made that “the ground is level at the foot of the cross.” That is where we should be, none standing taller or more important than the next; we are all in the presence of the Almighty and Eternal God!

True servants lose themselves in the greatest effort known to mankind. Peter and the apostles were beaten by the Sanhedrin for

preaching Jesus and left “*the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name*” (Acts 5:41). So, when we have finished our life of service here on earth and honored the commands of God, we must still see ourselves only as “*unprofitable servants,*” not desiring to be exalted merely because of the accolades of our accomplishments.

Remember, God dwells among the people, but is not to be found in those who have exalted themselves high on the pinnacle of self-indulgence and recognition. Jesus challenged the conventional by declaring, “*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth*” (Matthew 5:5). He also implored people to come unto Him, for He was “*meek and lowly in heart*” (Matthew 11:28).

In many cases, “We are the only Bible the careless world will ever read. What if the line is crooked? What if the type is blurred?” Jesus promised, “*If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me*” (John 12:32). It stands to reason that dwelling among His people is the means by which He can fulfill His promise. Is He being represented properly through your life? †

**Michael L. King is the pulpit minister of the Lakeside Church of Christ in Orange Park, Florida, USA.**

# *Straightening Up What Is Lacking*

**Cecil May, Jr.**

Paul left Titus in Crete to complete unfinished business. Elders needed to be appointed wherever congregations had been established (Titus 1:5). To ensure the spiritual health and growth of local churches we should help them secure conscientious, faithful shepherds.

Men of exemplary character are to be appointed. They are to be above reproach, not quick-tempered or greedy, but hospitable, disciplined and honest (Titus 1:7,8). They are to have proven their leadership and shepherding abilities by successfully leading their families to spiritual wholeness (Titus 1:6).

Elders are stewards (Titus 1:5,7). The church belongs to the Lord, but He has entrusted it into the care of these men of impeccable character. They are to protect and nourish it, remembering that each redeemed person is God's precious possession, and they are responsible to give an account for each one under their care (Hebrews 13:17).

The primary task of elders is to

shepherd: to feed, guide, and protect. Every person in the flock is to be nurtured when weak, encouraged when discouraged by obstacles, and lovingly sought when he or she strays.

Because teaching is an important part of the task of elders, a primary qualification is to "*hold fast to the trustworthy word.*" They are to instruct the church in healthy teaching and also to correct and convict those who teach anything contrary to the word (Titus 1:9).

They should be able to oppose with clear Biblical references those who would lead the church into the confused doctrinal morass and division of "the broader Christian community". And they should also, with equal vigor and spiritual wisdom, oppose those who would reinvent the church in their own image by making new laws and fiercely denying association with anyone who disagrees with anything they have personally and arbitrarily decided to believe or disbelieve.

Preachers, elders where there

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are any, and members of the congregation share responsibility for seeing that things are set in order. Titus, an evangelist, was commanded to appoint elders, but appointing is not the same as selecting. In an earlier Biblical model, the church selected according to specified criteria and the apostles appointed (Acts 6:3). When new elders are being selected, present elders should lead in the process, as they should lead in all of the work of the church, but present elders should not select new elders. The church should be given the criteria and told to find such men among themselves to be appointed to the task.

Often today, preachers come in with an agenda and lead off to the right or to the left, often far from the middle of the Biblical message, and disrupt the peace of the church. Godly, wise and knowledgeable elders can stop that, or better yet, can head it off before it starts. But they cannot learn enough to do that by listening to one preacher, one journal, or one lectureship or workshop. They need a broad-based study of the Bible itself.

The Biblical solution to most church problems is a qualified, knowledgeable eldership performing its shepherding functions. †

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

### What You Can Control

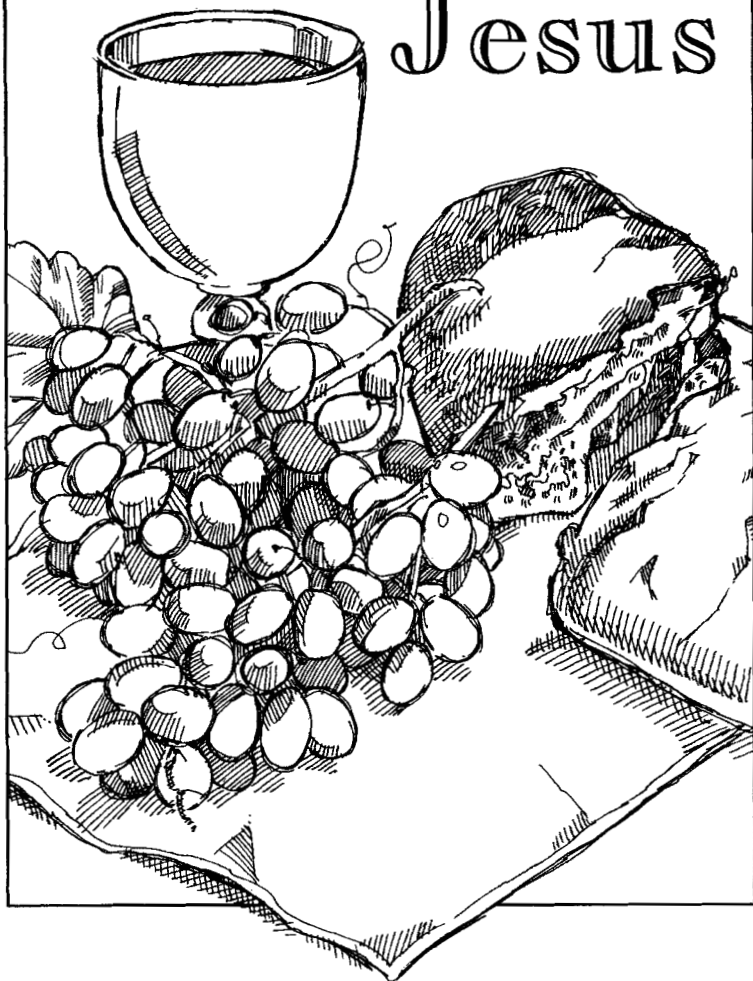
**You can't control the length of your life — but you can control its width and depth.**

**You can't control the contour of your face — but you can control its expression.**

**You can't control the weather — but you can control the atmosphere of your mind.**

**Why worry about things you can't control, when you can keep yourself busy controlling the things that depend on you?**

# Communing with Jesus



Roger E. Dickson

## WORSHIP

On the first day of the week, Sunday, Christians bring their worshipful spirits together in order to praise God as an assembled group. They come together to remember Jesus and the grace of God that was poured out for them when Jesus died on the cross (Titus 2:11).

An important part of this Sunday assembly is the communion of Christians with one another and with Jesus around the Lord's table. Early Christians came together on the first day of each week in order to partake of the Supper (Acts 20:7), and Christians today also participate in this memorial feast which was instituted by Jesus. Matthew 26:26,28 states: "*And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.'*" Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "*Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*"

Concerning the bread of the Supper, Jesus revealed that Christians must remember Him when they eat of the bread. "*Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you, do this in remembrance of Me*" (1 Corinthians 11:24). Concerning the fruit of the vine, Jesus said that it represented the blood of the new covenant that Christians have made

with Him. He said, "*This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me*" (1 Corinthians 11:25).

The bread that Jesus used when the Supper was instituted was unleavened, that is, without yeast. It was unleavened because Jesus and His disciples were at the time eating the unleavened bread of the Passover Feast of the Jews (Exodus 34:25; Leviticus 7:17). The fruit of the vine was juice from vines, specifically the juice from grape vines (Mark 14:24,25). The New Testament does not say that either the bread or fruit of the vine turn into the literal body and blood of Jesus. Neither does it say that Jesus' body and blood are present in the elements. The bread and fruit of the vine *represent* Jesus' body and blood.

Jesus used these two physical things — bread and fruit of the vine — to represent two spiritual truths of Christianity. These truths are that He gave His fleshly body and poured out His blood for our salvation. When we partake of the Supper, therefore, we remember Jesus. We proclaim that He died for us. In doing this, we examine ourselves. The Bible says, "*For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes*" (1 Corinthians 11:26). Christians must



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search their hearts at the time they eat and drink of the Supper. *“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup”* (1 Corinthians 11:28).

### **Remember the Unity of the Church**

Another important remembrance involved in partaking of the Supper is to consider the oneness of the body of Christ. The Bible says, *“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread and one body;*

*for we all partake of that one bread”* (1 Corinthians 10:17).

When we partake of the bread, therefore, we must remember the unity of the church. We are one church, one spiritual family, because we have obeyed the one Gospel by immersion into the body of Christ. The Bible says, *“For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...”* (1 Corinthians 12:12,13). †

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## **In Christ We Have...**

- A life that can never die;**
- A love that cannot be fathomed;**
- A glory that can never be clouded;**
- A beauty that can never be marred;**
- A light that can never be darkened;**
- A purity that can never be defiled;**
- A joy that can never be diminished;**
- A peace that can never be understood;**
- A hope that can never be disappointed;**
- A strength that can never be enfeebled;**
- A happiness that can never be interrupted;**
- A righteousness that can never be tarnished;**
- Resources that can never be exhausted.**



## THE SUBJECT AND OBJECT OF TRUE WORSHIP

Roy Bryant

The word “worship” comes from an Old English combination: *Weorth*, which means “worth,” “worthiness,” and “honor;” and

*scipe*, meaning “to create,” “to bestow”. God’s honor is real, and He is worthy, whether we are cognizant of it or not. Worship is the

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recognition and the endeavor to honor Him. It is ever with an awareness that we ourselves are unworthy and that our attempts are inadequate that we seek to worship God. Yet, in worship we give ourselves to His glorification and we bow the knee in adoration, reverence, praise, and obedience.

God alone is worthy; He alone is the rightful object of true worship. And it is to be insisted that an activity that is not God-centered cannot be worship, for worship is God-centered. It is also to be insisted that when an activity that is regarded to be worship, or that is held to be worship, loses its God-centeredness it ceases to be worship.

Consider the following: Prayer is conversation with God, and is worship. If our prayers become other than conversation with God they cease to be prayers; they cease to be worship. Praise is the adoration, the blessing, the glorifying of God, and is worship. If our "praise" becomes other than the adoration of God, it ceases to be praise; it ceases to be worship. The Lord's Supper is primarily communion with God. If the Lord's Supper is reduced to something other than communion with God it ceases to be the Lord's Supper, and the activity ceases to be worship. In the preaching of the Gospel and in the receiving of the Gospel, Christ is preached and

Christ is received. If the Word is received, the presence of Christ is received. However, if Christ is not honored in the preaching of the Word, worship has not occurred.

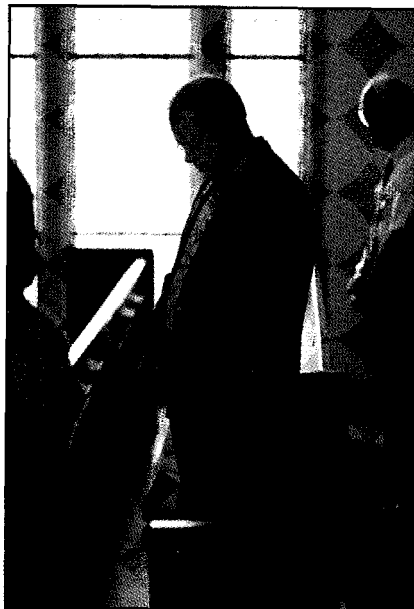
Worship has everything to do with drawing near to God, spiritually, with exalting, honoring, magnifying Him. And it is to be urged that in the worship of God the worshippers are to be guided by the words of eternal life, and are changed by the Lord himself. In true worship God communes to elevate the thinking processes, to change the heart, and to mold the character of the worshipper. Yet, these can occur only in the "God-centeredness" of worship.

It may be redundant to speak of "true worship". If it is "worship" it is "true", it is both in harmony with truth (reality) and is based in real devotion. Additionally, it seems to be altogether incorrect to speak of "improving worship". The reason: If it is worship — it is worship. **Worship** cannot be improved. Worship of God is of divine order, and is not subject to human tweaking or adjusting. The **worshippers** may need to be improved! They may need to prove themselves in the God-appointed ways of faith, love, repentance, humility, and sacrifice! †

Ron Bryant preaches the Gospel in Flagstaff, Arizona, USA.

# Should We Wave Our Hands in the Air as We Pray?

Dalton Key



Fads come and fads go, and not all fads are confined to the world of fashion. The church has certainly endured her share over the years. Among the more recent: congregants holding in the air, and often waving about, their “holy hands” as prayers are offered and selected songs are sung.

Justification for the practice is said to be based upon 1 Timothy 2:8: *“I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”* It does seem odd, though, that we have not been asked to embrace a literal application of Paul’s words until lately, following the leadership of a number of denominational groups (charismatic, as a rule) that have begun hand-waving as part of their praise fests.

True, 1 Timothy 2:8 encourages “holy hands” to be lifted during prayer.

Consider as well Ephesians 3:14, which speaks of bowing the knee in prayer. While kneeling was once in vogue among many brethren in years past, the practice has largely been forsaken. In most congregations, the fad has long since run its course.

But there is more. The publican, whose prayer allowed him to go *“to his house justified,”* prayed while smiting his breast (Luke 18:13,14). I have yet to hear of any “breast-smiting” congregations.

And what of Stephen, who

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accompanied his final prayer with both kneeling down and looking up "steadfastly unto heaven" (Acts 7:55-60)?

Should we bow the knee and smite the breast as we gaze toward heaven and lift up our hands during prayer? That might require that we hold one hand in the air while keeping the other one free for breast-smiting.

No, one's posture in prayer is not the important thing; neither is the positioning of one's hands. A cleansed and sincere heart is what matters. The phrase "lifting up holy hands" is but another way of saying what James taught: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:16). The "holy hands" by imagery, denote "a righteous man," one who has been sanctified of heaven and continues to live as one thus set apart. By means of metonymy, the expression suggests the holiness inherent in the whole of one's life. (Note a similar usage in James 4:8: "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners." The hands here are meant to represent the whole of one's life, as well

— everything must be cleansed.)

No doubt we would be better served during prayer to concern ourselves more with our hearts than with our hands. †

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

### The Possessions of Jesus

In the lifetime of Jesus we do not hear Him speak of:

"my house,"  
"my land,"  
"my farm,"  
"my books,"  
"my business," or  
"my money."

We do, however, hear Him speak of:

"my Father" (Matthew 10:33),  
"my friends" (John 15:14),  
"my disciples" (John 15:8),  
"my church" (Matthew 16:18),  
"my name" (Matthew 18:20),  
"my words" (Mark 8:38),  
"my sheep" (John 10:27),  
"my joy" (John 17:13).

It is significant that our example thought more of spiritual possessions than of material ones.

via Manhattan Messenger  
Tampa, FL

# Spiritual Loneliness

Bobby Dockery

One of the most disheartening human experiences is loneliness — the empty feeling of being cut off and isolated from other people. The greatest loneliness, however, is not that of a person who is separated and isolated from other human beings. The greatest loneliness of all is loneliness of the soul — the spiritual isolation of a person who is separated from God!

Sadly, spiritual loneliness is a common condition in our world. Far too many people feel cut off and remote from God. For them God seems unapproachable, withdrawn, and unconcerned. They feel isolated from Him primarily because they have failed to take advantage of the following ways in which God seeks to maintain vibrant fellowship with His people.

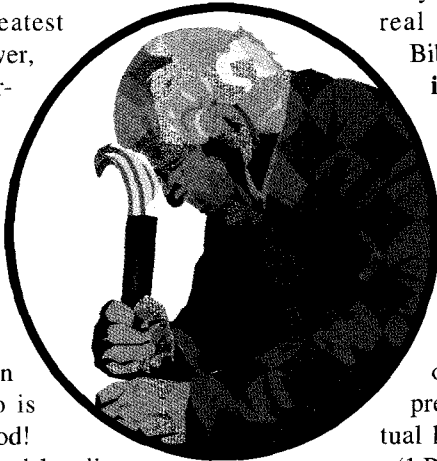
❖ **Bible Study.** The Bible is a divinely authored account of God's dealings with men and women of the past, as well as an authentic record

of His will for men and women today. It claims to have been inspired or "breathed-out" by God (2 Timothy 3:16). In a very

real sense, then, the Bible is **God speaking to man.** Spiritual strength, comfort, and hope are available in the Word of God. Peter urges us to develop an appetite for the sincere milk of the Word as a prerequisite to spiritual health and fulfillment (1 Peter 2:2)

❖ **Prayer.** Prayer is the spiritual life-line which binds the Christian to God. Prayer is a reservoir of spiritual strength. **It literally ushers the Christian into the presence of God.** The tragedy of spiritual loneliness is that it is so unnecessary! We need only to speak to be heard! Jesus taught: "*Ask and it shall be given unto you, seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you*" (Matthew 7:7).

❖ **Worship.** Worship offers a third bridge between God and man.

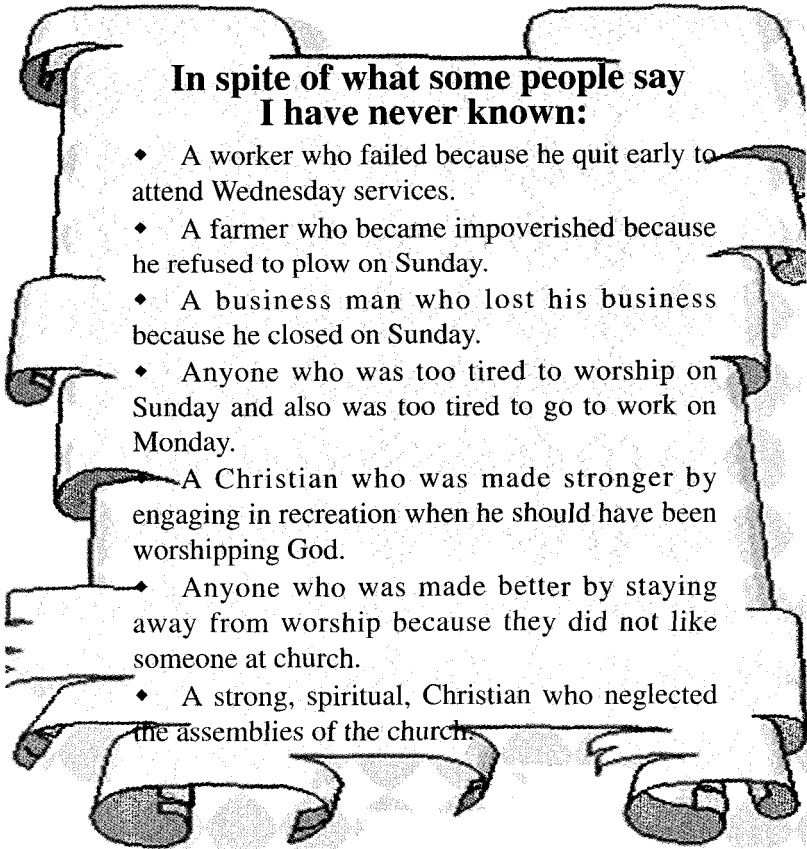


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**In worship, humanity calls upon divinity, and God draws near to man.** Jesus promised: *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"* (Matthew 18:20). Assembling with like-minded Christians for the purpose of praising God and celebrating His power and goodness is an act of fellowship which dispels spiritual loneliness.

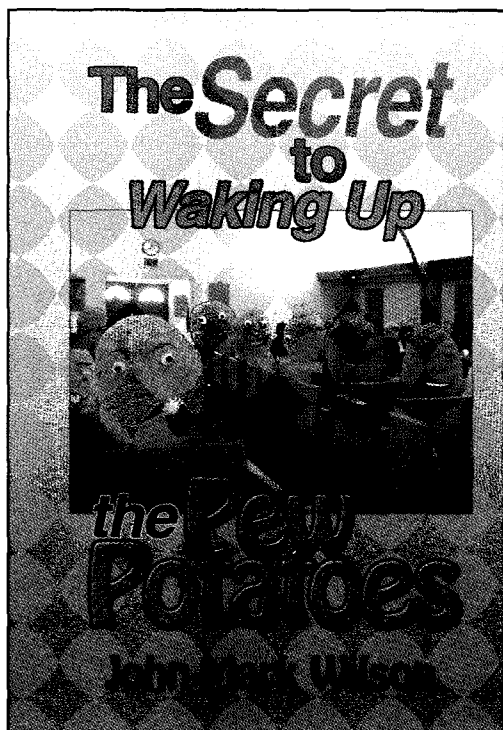
When you feel isolated and alone, seek the presence of God! *"Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you"* (James 4:8). And remember that God has promised to those that come to Him: *"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"* (Hebrews 13:5). †

**Bobby Dockery works and worships with the Lord's church in Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA.**



### **In spite of what some people say I have never known:**

- ◆ A worker who failed because he quit early to attend Wednesday services.
- ◆ A farmer who became impoverished because he refused to plow on Sunday.
- ◆ A business man who lost his business because he closed on Sunday.
- ◆ Anyone who was too tired to worship on Sunday and also was too tired to go to work on Monday.
- ◆ A Christian who was made stronger by engaging in recreation when he should have been worshipping God.
- ◆ Anyone who was made better by staying away from worship because they did not like someone at church.
- ◆ A strong, spiritual, Christian who neglected the assemblies of the church.



## Evacuating the Padded Pew

### Part One: Cleaning out the Potato Bin

One of the first things older church buildings need is a good spring-cleaning! If the facilities look old and worn out, visitors will think the faith of its members must be the same. Our buildings should say, "Welcome to our services, you are our honored guest!" In meeting this

need for cleanliness, one should begin in three highly noticeable areas.

First, if your building has a nursery, check to see how the toys look. Like many older congregations, your toys may be thirty to forty years old, and no visiting mother would want them to even touch her new baby. You need to throw them out and buy some new, child-friendly toys which will be easy to keep clean. Make sure there is a place also for babies to be changed and an area stocked with clean sheets, baby wipes and diapers. If there is a bulletin board in the nursery, put something colorful and inviting on it. Also, if you have a P.A. system where a speaker can be placed in the nursery, do that, and keep it turned on so they don't miss the message.

Secondly, make sure the directions to the bathrooms are clearly marked. As the visitor looks around, he can be comfortable in knowing which door to go through. Some older buildings have the bathrooms all the way down front through a door beside the pulpit. If your building is made this way,



## CHURCH GROWTH

and you have signs explaining this, your visitors won't be wandering around during worship feeling uneasy in their search. If visitors seek to be directed to the restrooms, only to discover they must walk up front where everyone will watch them, their lack of comfort might be just enough to keep them from attending again.

Third, the baptistery needs to be prepared. It could very well be that you haven't had many baptisms in the past few months, so the baptistery is either dry, green or freezing! If this is the case, now is the time to clean it and fill it with fresh water. Buy a box of chlorine tablets to keep it fresh and free of algae. I would also recommend getting some kind of circulating system to keep your water at a bearable temperature. If you baptize the elderly or some who are sick, you run the risk of putting them into shock or making their condition worse. As your "recapturing the vision" program begins to take shape and baptisms become more frequent, don't drain the baptistery between immersions. The water must be ready at all times!

As you are cleaning out the potato bin, I want you to look around in your auditorium and see what posters are up and take them down. Some congregations have posters or announcements up that

have been hanging for ten to fifty years. I can guarantee that no one notices the poster anymore, even if it contains a sound message.

If you have a record and attendance board, clear it of your old record attendance. I spoke for a congregation in Alabama that had a record attendance of 150, but only about 30 were in attendance on that particular Sunday. I asked when the record was set, but no one remembered. Now friends, records like that can only serve to discourage you. If you have to stare at a number that's more than quadruple what your attendance is, how do you expect to feel accomplishment when you double and have 60!

Another thing you need to do, as you're getting your facilities prepared, is to provide pew Bibles. Many of the visitors who will be attending during your program will not have a Bible. They can either sit and wonder if they're in the church that teaches the truth, or you can provide them a Bible so they can see for themselves.

As visitors are in the foyer before and after worship, have a tract rack available. It needs to be stocked with tracts that deal with issues that affect the non-Christian, issues surrounding the family, the true church, suffering, smoking, dealing with loss, etc. — things they can apply right away.

## CHURCH GROWTH

Another good thing is to change your bulletin boards — and continue to do this on a regular basis, so that the message will remain fresh to members as well as visitors. Put bright, colorful messages about recapturing the vision of the early church. Make them big and bold enough to stand out. If this is done right, no one passing the board will miss its message of hope and change!

The fellowship hall also needs to be prepared. The tables must be cleaned and chairs counted to know just how many visitors and members may be seated during a fellowship meal. Wash and count your silverware to make sure there is enough.

Once the potato bin is clean and ready for visitors, you can move on to the next phase of increasing your attendance. If you try the program and don't clean up your facilities, making them appealing to the public, you won't have nearly as much success. Once you get the visitors in the door, they will see that you cared enough about them to make things as comfortable as possible; then, the door of their heart will begin to swing open! †

(Chapter two of John-Mark Wilson's study book and work-guide, **The Secret to Waking Up the Pew Potatoes.**)

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

### WHAT IS THE FAMILY OF GOD?

Perhaps you are thinking you would like to meet the 'Family of God' we have talked about in this magazine. You might ask, "Who are they? When do they gather for worship? Where do they assemble?"

God's Family is made up of all of those people, throughout the world, who believe in God and in Jesus as His Son, who have chosen to be born again through turning away from a worldly life and being baptized in water, picturing in their lives the Gospel: the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They have, thus, become Christians and have been added to God's Family (Acts 2:40-47).

Christians in a community make up the local church of Christ or the local family of God. They fellowship each other as brothers and sisters, worshipping together each first day of the week (Sunday), and helping each other to grow to be more Christ-like in their daily lives. They may also help each other with special physical, emotional, or spiritual needs, just as a physical family cares for its own.

**NEXT: WHEN AND WHERE WAS THE CHURCH BEGUN?**

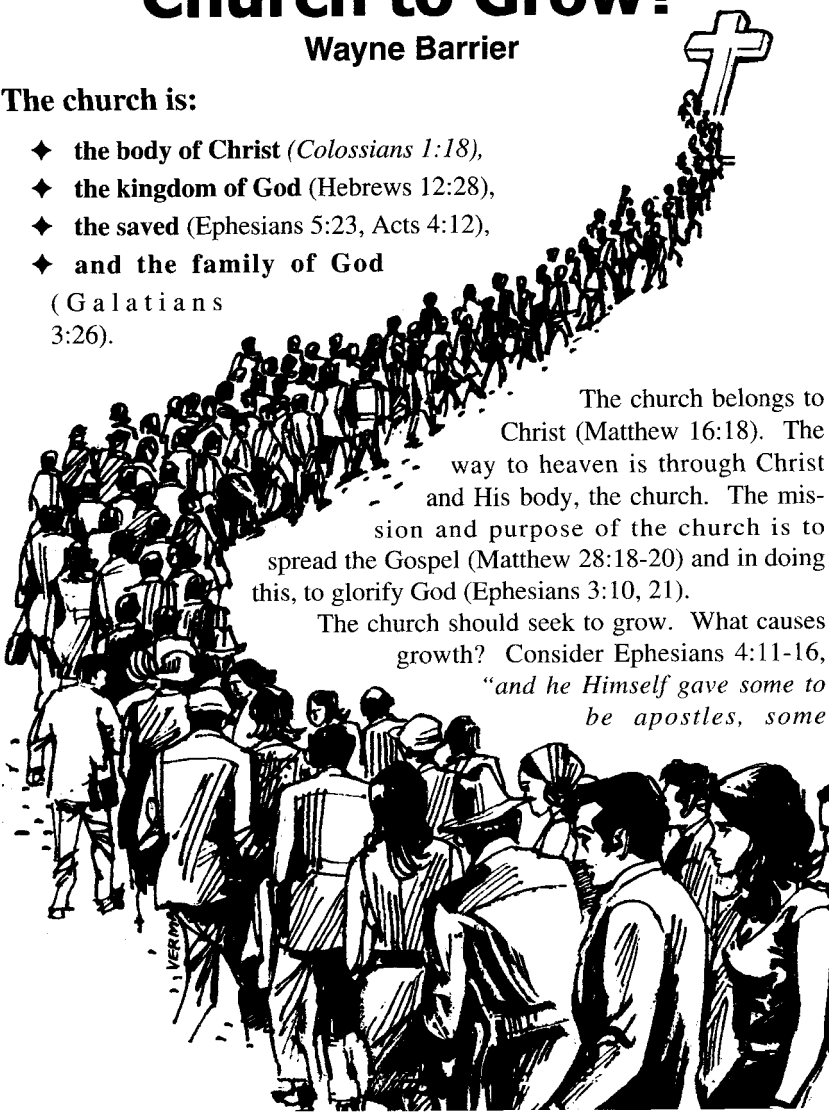
# What Will Cause the Church to Grow?

Wayne Barrier

The church is:

- ◆ the body of Christ (*Colossians 1:18*),
- ◆ the kingdom of God (*Hebrews 12:28*),
- ◆ the saved (*Ephesians 5:23, Acts 4:12*),
- ◆ and the family of God

(*Galatians 3:26*).



The church belongs to Christ (*Matthew 16:18*). The way to heaven is through Christ and His body, the church. The mission and purpose of the church is to spread the Gospel (*Matthew 28:18-20*) and in doing this, to glorify God (*Ephesians 3:10, 21*).

The church should seek to grow. What causes growth? Consider *Ephesians 4:11-16*, "and he Himself gave some to be apostles, some

## CHURCH GROWTH

*prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is head — Christ — from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body, for the edifying of itself in love.”*

Growth results from every part (member of the church) of the body doing its share of ministry. The body must be stable, sound, pure, and vigilant to stay on course. Each

member must be Christ-like, love-filled, submissive to Christ, and properly “*joined together with every other part*” to do their share of work. **Everyone must work.**

Every member is equipped by following the teaching of the apostles, prophets (as recorded in the Scriptures), evangelists, pastors, teachers and elders. These men prepare the saints for the work of ministry.

Also, from Ephesians 4:1-6, we know that there must be unity among brethren — there is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God. We are to walk and work “*with all lowliness and gentleness, with long-suffering, bearing with one another in love.*”

The church can and should grow. The basis of growth is easy to understand, but must be followed in detail. †

**Wayne Barrier lives in Florence, Alabama, USA, and works in the World Evangelism program.**

### **A Thought**

**In His personal ministry Christ didn't call the qualified. He qualified the called! The church should be doing the same thing. Those called by the gospel should be trained for and guided into positions of service.**

**— from “Mountain Echoes”**

The "land" that the Lord "searched out" (*tur*, "spied out") for the twelve tribes of Israel was the "most glorious of all lands," said the Lord, flowing "with milk and honey" (Ezekiel 20:6, NRSV). Daniel called Palestine "the Beautiful Land" (8:9; 11:16, 41, NASB).

The land promise of Palestine to Abraham and his descendants, fulfilled in stages, thus came to an abrupt termination in 70 A.D. when the Lord allowed the Romans to destroy the temple at Jerusalem. That long context of *`olam* in Genesis 13:15, 17:8, stretching from

# The Beautiful Land

Hugo McCord

Some 2000 years before Jesus was born, God promised Abraham that He would give to him and to his descendants all of "the land of Canaan" (now called Palestine) "forever" (Genesis 13:12,15) for "an everlasting possession" (Genesis 17:8). But if the word God used, *`olam*, which is translated in most versions as "forever" and "everlasting," is rightly translated, then the Lord is "slack about his promise" (cf. 2 Peter 3:9), for from 70 A.D. down to 1948, none of Abraham's descendants owned any of Palestine.

The word *`olam*, derived from *`alam*, to hide, conceal (Davidson, 601), means a time hidden, indefinite or unlimited. The duration of *`olam* time is therefore hidden and indefinite. The context in which it is used tells how long a time is being considered.

Abraham's day (c. 1921 B.C.) until the Jews lost all of their "holy land" (Zechariah 2:12), leads to the translation of God's words to Abraham: "I will give it to you and to your descendants on and on."

In reference to God personally, the context of *`olam* is not to an "indefinite" span of years, for God is "eternal" (1 Timothy 1:17; 6:16). Consequently, the word "everlasting" as a translation of *`olam* in Psalm 90:2, "And from everlasting [*`olam*] to everlasting [*`olam*] you are God," is accurate.

Likewise, in reference to the everlasting existence of heaven and hell (Matthew 10:28; 18:9; 25:46; John 5:29; 1 Peter 1:4), the context of *`olam* in Daniel 12:2,3 is not of an "indefinite" span of years, but "everlasting [*`olam*] life" and

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*“everlasting [ʿolam] contempt.”*

In other references to *ʿolam* as circumcision, the New Testament context shows that the *ʿolam* circumcision of Genesis 17:13 is not “forever” and “everlasting” (Galatians 5:6; 6:15). Similarly, the length of a certain man’s life in this world is *ʿolam* — indefinite — (Exodus 21:6), but it is not “forever” (Hebrews 9:27). The same thing is true about the sabbath (Exodus 31:16) and the Aaronic priesthood (Exodus 40:15) and the duration of the earth (Ecclesiastes 1:4): all are *ʿolam* — indefinite — but not “forever” (Colossians 2:16; Hebrews 7:12; 2 Peter 3:10). Jonah’s time in the stomach of a fish was *ʿolam* (Jonah 2:6), which the context shows to be “three days and three nights” (Jonah 1:17), not “forever,” as in the KJV, NKJV, ASV, NASV, NIV, NASB, NRSV, and the NEB.

The context around the *ʿolam* promise to Abraham and to his seed shows that the land would be forfeited if the twelve tribes misbehaved. The *ʿolam* land was **conditional**. Examine all the “ifs” connected with it: Deuteronomy 28:1, 2, 9, 13, 15, etc.; “*if you . . . do all his commandments.*”

In stages **the land promise was fulfilled** (Joshua 21:43, 45; 1 Kings 4:21; 2 Chronicles 9:26), but **sin brought expulsion** from the land: **first**, the people of the northern

kingdom were removed to Assyria in 721 B.C. (2 Kings 17:6-23); and **second**, the people of the southern kingdom were removed to Babylon in 586 B.C. (2 Kings 25:11; 1 Chronicles 9:1).

God could see penitence among the Jews in Babylon and he “*stirred the spirit of Cyrus, the king of Persia*” to issue a proclamation:

*“Whosoever there is among you of all his people, his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of Jehovah, the God of Israel”* (Ezra 1:1-3).

Among those accepting the king’s invitation were “*the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin, and of the children of Ephraim and Manasseh*” (1 Chronicles 9:3).

At the completion of the second temple in 516 B.C., “*the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity*” kept “*the dedication of the house of God with joy*” (Ezra 6:15,16). Among the hundreds of animal sacrifices “*for a sin-offering for all Israel*” were “*twelve he-goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel*” (Ezra 6:17).

During the captivity Ezekiel (c. 570 B.C.) predicted that God would return the Jews to their “*own land*” (37:14). Vividly he pictured the joining of two sticks, portraying the

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joining of Israel's two kingdoms, making them "*one nation in the land*" (37:22). That "*one nation*" would have "*one king*", said the Lord, "*my servant David*" (37:22, 24). What a shock! **David?** He had died in 970 B.C., some 400 hundred years before Ezekiel's prediction! What is the explanation?

God was planning for the coming of a *second David*, and so the New Testament begins: "*The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David*" (Matthew 1:1). As David the son of Jesse was a king, so Jesus the Son of God was born to be a king (John 18:37). However, the kingdom of the second David would be "*not of this world*," a non-military kingdom sheathing only "*the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*" (Ephesians 6:17).

But the Jews would not accept a spiritual kingdom of "*righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*" (Romans 14:17), an invisible kingdom "*within*" (*entos*) the hearts of its citizens (Luke 17:20,21). Because the Jews "*rejected*" the One born to be king, "*the kingdom*" was "*taken away*" from them, and was given to a "*holy nation*" that would bear "*the fruit of the Spirit*" (Matthew 21:42,43; Galatians 5:22,23). The result of Jesus' kingdom that "*comes not with observation*," that is inside each person born again "*of water and Spirit*" (Luke 17:20,21; John 3:5), is

visible, but the change that occurs in a Christian's heart is invisible: "*so is everyone who is born of the Spirit*" (John 3:8).

Sadly, one reads of Jesus that "*his own people did not receive him*" (John 1:11). They "*killed the Lord Jesus*," and God permitted the Romans to bring "*wrath*" upon "*them to the uttermost*" (1 Thessalonians 1:15,16). Jesus loved His people, and He loved their land:

*"O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! . . . How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings! But you were not willing"* (Matthew 23:37).

On Sunday before He died, as He approached the city, tears came into His eyes, and He said:

*"If you, even you, had known today the things that make for peace! But they are hidden from your eyes...your enemies...will completely destroy you, and your children with you. They will not leave one stone on another"* (Luke 19:42,43).

On July 16, A.D. 70, the last sacrifice was offered. The "*great tribulation*" had begun (Matthew 24:21). Children were eaten! On August 9, the Romans broke through the walls, and complete "*desolation*" followed (Luke 21:20). One million and one hundred thousand Jews were killed, and one hundred thousand were sold as slaves.

The second temple, finished in

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516 B.C. in the days of Zerubbabel, had since 18 B.C. been refurbished and beautified by King Herod. In 27 A.D. the Jews said that the restoration had been going on for 46 years (John 2:20). On Sunday, April 2, 30 A.D., Jesus' disciples commented on the beauty of the temple: "*Teacher, look! What stones! What buildings!*" (Mark 13:1).

Even though the white marble stones were mammoth in size (50 feet by 24 by 16), not one was left on another, as Jesus had predicted (Matthew 24:2). Foundation stones, on which melted gold from the burning of the temple had run down, were excavated. An eyewitness reported that the area looked as if it had never been inhabited. No Jew was permitted in what had been called the "*Beautiful Land*", which Jesus also had foretold: "*Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled*" (Luke 21:24).

An attempt has been made to show that Jesus was wrong. After Constantine became the first "Christian" emperor of Rome, he was succeeded by Julian (331-362). At first Julian also was a believer in Christ, but then he turned savagely against Jesus and became known as "Julian the Apostate". To prove that Jesus was wrong, Julian set about restoring the Jews to Palestine. In addition, with the wealth of the

Roman treasury, he began the rebuilding of a temple in Jerusalem for the Jews. Unsuccessful in both projects, finally he gave up, exclaiming, "Galilean, you have conquered!"

Another determined effort to restore the Jews to Palestine is political Zionism, fathered by Theodore Herzl in 1897. His work came to a fruition in 1947 when the United Nations approved the partition of Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state. On May 14, 1948, the Zionists proclaimed the establishment of the State of Israel. The Arabs have protested from the beginning, but they were defeated in the Six-Days War, June 5-11, 1967.

The majority of the Israelites (as modern day Zionists are called) are secular. Many are atheists. The modern State of Israel was not founded by God, making one think of the Lord's statement through Hosea, "*They have set up kings, but not by me*" (8:4). God was forced to give up on the Jews when they turned against Jesus: "*the kingdom of God*" was "*taken from*" them (Matthew 21:3). Since their rolls of genealogy were destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D., no Jew today knows of what tribe he is a descendant.

However, there are devout, religious Jews who reject Jesus, not believing that He was the Messiah. They still look for His appearance, but they are not Zionists. They do



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not believe in human efforts to create a Jewish state. These anti-Zionist Jews are called the Satmar Hasidic sect, headquartered in Brooklyn, N.Y. Their chief rabbi has said that the modern State of Israel is "an abomination that can only delay God's redemption of the Jewish people."

On the other hand, some Jews believe that the existing State of Israel is a providential step on the way to the coming of the Messiah. Dr. B.L. Turner has written that there will be "a gathering of the Jewish people which is to occur following the coming of the Messiah."

In 1975 a Jewish tourist guide, a veteran of the Six-Days War (June 5-11, 1967), told our group, as we completed a tour of Palestine at Joppa, that he believes, when the Messiah comes, he will take over the present State of Israel and begin a world-wide reign as an earthly king. He was surprised that I did not believe him. He said, "Don't you believe it? Billy Graham does!"

Then there are some Jews, and many non-Jews who believe in Jesus, who say that Jesus will come again to restore all Jews to the "Beautiful Land" and that He will begin a thousand-year reign over all the earth. All of these Jews and non-Jews ignore the fact that God has no "holy land" today, anymore than any other land is holy. Biblically-based Christians do not look forward

to living in a corrupted and defiled Palestine, but to "*an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled,*" that "*fades not away, reserved in heaven*" (1 Peter 1:4).

Biblically-based Christians do not believe that Jesus will set a foot on this earth again, for they live in the faith that Jesus will "*descend from heaven*" to meet them "*in the air*" to take them, not to Palestine, but to "*my Father's house*" (John 14:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17). Their minds are "*set*" on "*things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth*" (Colossians 3:2). Their yearning is not for "*the Jerusalem that now is,*" but for "*the Jerusalem that is above,*" the "*city which is to come,*" having "*the splendor of God*" (Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 13:14; Revelation 21:11).

**Sadly, the Jews of Jesus' day rejected Him because they were looking for an earthly king to set up an earthly kingdom. Today, the masses who profess faith in Jesus make the same mistake, expecting the Lord to come back to the earth to reign in Jerusalem for a thousand years. Yet Jesus, Himself, said plainly, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight..." (John 18:36) †**

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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** My name means "Yahwe is my strength", and I was a righteous king in Judah, unlike my father and my son (2 Kings 18:1).
2. **90** In the first month of the first year of my twenty-nine year reign, I repaired the temple and reestablished the worship of God (2 Chronicles 29:3-19).
3. **80** Up to this very time the bronze serpent that Moses had made in the wilderness had been worshipped by the Israelites, but I destroyed it (2 Kings 18:4).
4. **70** It was said of me that I trusted the Lord, "so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him" (18:5).
5. **60** Unlike many of the kings, I even tore down the high places of idolatrous worship (18:4).
6. **50** Because I served God with all of my heart, God blessed my reign so that I was able to rebel against the king of Assyria and to throw off the oppression of the Philistines (18:7,8).
7. **40** Sennacherib, king of Assyria, boasted against God, saying that God could not save me and the people of Judah, but God intervened through a death angel who killed 185,000 of the Assyrian army (2 Kings 19:35-37).
8. **30** The prophet Isaiah was contemporary with me (19:20).



See answer on inside back cover.

9. **20** I asked God to remember the good that I had done and to extend my life. During those years, a son was born who became Judah's most wicked ruler (20:1-11).

10. **10** To provide water for Jerusalem in time of seige, I dug an aqueduct that bears my name (20:20).

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

Is evangelism optional? Is anyone responsible for evangelism? Why are we, as individuals, not more evangelistic? In this article I will attempt to answer each of these questions.

Is evangelism optional? In Mark 16:15 Jesus told the eleven: *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”* Matthew 28:19,20 records the command in these words: *“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, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* These clearly teach that evangelism is not optional.

Is anyone **responsible** for evangelism? Both the passages above plainly teach that the apostles had a responsibility for evangelism. Most within the church would readily accept that those men had such a responsibility, and most Christians may also tend to believe and accept that ministers and church leaders, today, have a responsibility for evangelism. However, the majority fail to appreciate the responsibility imposed upon themselves by the

The  
Need  
To  
Be  
More  
Evangelistic



Owen B. Moseley

phrase in Matthew 28:20 — *“...teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...”* The “them” of this phrase refers to disciples that were made by those early Christians, and **their** disciples, and **their** disciples.... If you are a disciple of Christ, then the phrase applies to you!

Obviously, a part of what the eleven had been taught was to **GO** and **teach** and **make disciples** and **baptize**. It seems clear that each

## CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

disciple has an individual responsibility for evangelism.

Why are we, as individuals, not more evangelistic? Some may suggest that we don't have time to be evangelistic because we are so busy merely trying to survive in today's society. Others may suggest that we don't have the necessary skills and abilities. We should think long and hard before we use these as excuses. Either excuse suggests that God expects something of us that we are unable to do. God has never required anyone to do something which was impossible for him to do.

I suggest that the primary reason that we, individually, are not as evangelistic as we should be is because we do not see sin for what it truly is. We do not take sin seriously. We do not see sin as God sees sin. We do not see the repulsive nature of sin. We do not see that sin will damn our souls and the souls of our friends and loved ones. We do not really believe that the only hope of the world is the Gospel.

If you would insist that these statements are not true, then I suggest that the alternate reason we are not evangelistic may be that we just don't care enough. But while it may be true that there are some who really don't care, I think that in most cases we fail to evangelize because we don't fully appreciate the damning nature of sin.

When we see the damning

nature of sin, we will become more aggressive in our efforts to do as Jesus said: Go, teach, make disciples, and baptize. We will not only have an increased interest in going and teaching the alien sinner, but we will also be more concerned about going and teaching erring members. When we do this, rebuke is often involved. In Proverbs 13:18, Solomon said, *"Poverty and shame will come to him who disdains correction, but he who regards a rebuke will be honored."* Proverbs 15:32 counsels, *"Rebuke is more effective for a wise man than a hundred blows on a fool."* In 1 Timothy 5:20, Paul said, *"Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear."*

These four verses teach us at least seven things: (1) Rebuke is for the purpose of providing correction and/or instruction; (2) Rebuke responded to properly results in reward or honor; (3) Rebuke is more effective for a wise person; (4) Rebuke is needed for those who are sinning; (5) Rebuke must be administered by someone; (6) Rebuke is expected by God; (7) Rebuke does have some positive aspects.

May each of us determine to become more evangelistic in attempting to reach the alien sinner and the erring Christian. †

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# Seeking the Lost

Maxie B. Boren

Nothing in all this world is more important than soul-saving! If the church were just convinced of this, we not only **could**, but we **would** literally saturate this world with the message of salvation!

Jesus came to earth to "*seek and to save the lost*" (Luke 19:10). Don't we realize that Jesus knew what was really important? And remember, He left us an example, that we should follow in His steps (1 Peter 2:21).

But what are most members of the church today doing in this matter of soul-saving? The sad fact is that we are doing practically nothing

in the area of saving souls, the most important thing in the whole world.

Indifference to the primary mission of the church is prevalent among us. So few seem to care much one way or the other whether lost souls are saved or not.

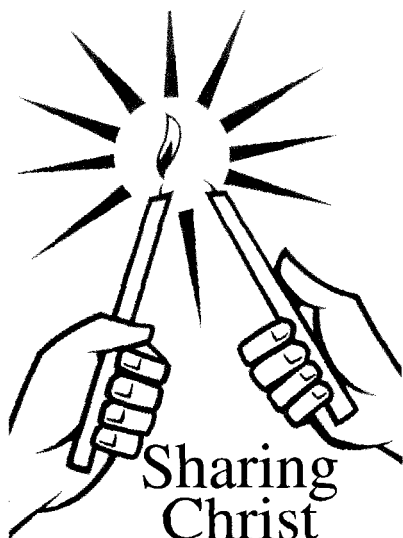
From what the Bible teaches, I don't believe the Lord is going to say "well done" to any professed follower of His who was very unconcerned about what He was most concerned! Do you? †

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## Omissions

It is not so much the things I do that cause me to regret.  
It's the little things I leave undone, the things that I forget;  
It's words I fail to utter, the songs I fail to sing,  
The letters I forgot to write, that may great comfort bring.  
It's the little acts of kindness, the joy I fail to give,  
The smiles I fail to scatter, as day by day I live.  
It's the sick I fail to visit, flowers I fail to send,  
It's the hand I fail to offer unto a fallen friend.  
It's not so much the things I do that cause me to regret.  
It's the little things I leave undone, the things that I forget.

— Anonymous



### Sharing Christ

**Dale Grissom**

All the technology, all the computers, all the televisions and radios, all the papers and books, the workshops, and the programs cannot take the place of personal evangelism. These things can be used as helps, but there still needs to be the one-on-one involvement to lead lost souls to Christ. Many great plans are made to reach the lost without having to personally teach face-to-face, but nothing can take the place of being there and sharing the Word of God with some poor lost soul.

Love plays such a great part in carrying out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 16:15, 16). It was love that God showed in giving His Son for us (John 3:16).

It was love that Christ had for man that caused Him to establish His church (His kingdom). And we must have love in our hearts for the souls of all men, which will motivate us to carry the message, the Gospel, to the lost (Romans 1:16).

For a Christian to be a successful soul winner, he must be a devoted Christian, sure that his own soul is saved. His heart must be on fire to teach the Gospel of Christ. He must be a self-starter, have a knowledge of the Word, and be committed to winning lost souls.

One who would be effective in reaching the lost must also be willing to learn from his mistakes. Life is too short and too precious to neglect carrying out the Great Commission, to neglect obeying the commandments of the Lord. The world starts just outside our doors. It is all around us in our community, and everyone comes in contact with it.

Now is a good time to meditate upon our lives and see just what we are doing to reach people for Christ. Now is a good time to make a resolution to reach more for Christ. The shadow of death is approaching each of us; every moment we grow closer to meeting our Lord in judgment. Wouldn't it be wonderful to take someone to heaven with us! ✠

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# How do you measure up?

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.  
Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away;  
and every branch that bears fruit He prunes,  
that it may bear more fruit.

You are already clean  
because of the word which I have spoken to you.  
Abide in Me, and I in you.

As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself,  
unless it abides in the vine, neither can you,  
unless you abide in Me.

I am the vine, you are the branches.  
He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit;  
for without Me you can do nothing.  
If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch  
and is withered;  
and they gather them and throw them into the fire,  
and they are burned.

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you,  
you will ask what you desire,

and it shall be done for you.  
By this My Father is glorified,  
that you bear much fruit;  
so you will be My disciples."

John 15:1-8



**As a faithful Christian, the most important thing in your life is serving Christ.**

The Bible does not teach that as Christians we cannot participate in the ordinary activities and relationships of life, such as family, friends, recreation, school, job, etc. But we must always put Christ first and all else second.

Too often people do not understand the kind of self-sacrifice and

dedication that is involved in being a true follower of Christ. If you do not understand this you may easily become "lukewarm" (Revelation 3:16). This means being *indifferent* to the duties and privileges of serving Christ.

Read the following passages and consider how they apply to you. Remember, this is not mere theory, but something that needs application in your life.

**Matthew 6:24-33.** ("Mammon"



## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

refers to wealth, worldly possessions.) Sometimes a person will be willing to live a Christian life until he sees an opportunity to make more money by compromising his Christian principles (see 1 Timothy 6:9,10). Can you divide your loyalty between God and the world? Can anything in this world be more important than the kingdom of God?

**Mark 10:17-22.** Jesus knew this man's heart. He knew what he loved most. If you were confronted with the same requirement, what decision would you make? The point is not that it is wrong to have possessions, but that it is wrong to make them more important than pleasing Christ.

**Luke 9:23-26.** Which means more, Christ or physical safety? What will happen to those who are ashamed of Christ?

**Philippians 3:4-8.** If you are familiar with the conversion of Paul (Acts 9:1-8; 22:1-16; Galatians 1:13,14), you will be better able to appreciate these verses. Paul is describing his former prominence in his own nation and in his previous

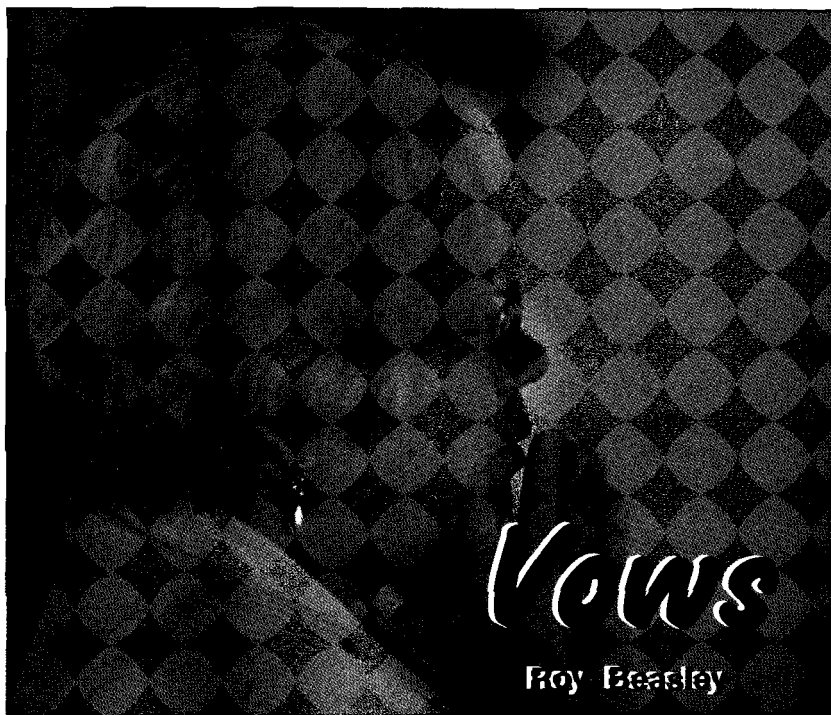
religion. **But he gave it all up to follow Christ.** Look carefully at verses 7 and 8.

You should realize that as you grow spiritually you will be stronger and better prepared to make the right choices in life. God will not allow you to be burdened more than you are able to bear. But you need to realize that the Lord expects to occupy first place in your life.

It sometimes happens that a person seems to do well as a Christian until there is a significant change in his circumstances, such as finishing school, becoming engaged or married, a change in career, moving to a new city, etc. When such new circumstances develop, one can become so involved in these new interests that he begins to overlook spiritual things. In order to prevent this, one must recognize that there is such a danger (see 1 Corinthians 10:12) and then study, pray, and live in such a way as to develop lasting spiritual strength and maturity. †

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It is important to speak to men about God,  
but it is more important  
to speak to God about men.



When Jacob came to Bethel he vowed a vow. He vowed: *"If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee"* (Genesis 28:20-22).

No one forced Jacob to make this vow. He did it of his own free will. He had seen in his dream the

ladder that reached from earth to heaven and the angels ascending and descending upon it. He had seen the Lord standing at the top of the ladder and had heard repeated to him the promise that had been previously given to Abraham and Isaac. In his exuberance, he set up a monument and vowed a vow. Years went by. God did bless him, and Jacob kept his vow.

Vows are quite common in the Old Testament, and here is what God had to say concerning the making of vows: Ecclesiastes 5:1-6:

## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

*“Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few...When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools; pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.”*

This says that God does not require one to make vows. But, if one does make a vow, he must keep it. Therefore, one should be careful about making vows.

A vow is a solemn promise before God. We make promises. We make promises to one another. Honesty demands that we put forth every effort to keep our promises and commitments. When a couple gets married they exchange vows. Those are solemn promises to one another that they should keep.

We are to keep the vows we make to other humans, but especially are we to keep those promises that we make to God. When a person becomes a Christian he makes a commitment to God. This is a serious matter. It is not to be taken lightly. He has vowed a vow and he is expected to keep that vow. He promises to give himself to God as a living sacrifice. This means that he gives his life to the service of God. He gives his time, his talent, and his

material wealth. As Solomon wrote, it would be better not to have vowed the vow than to have vowed and not pay.

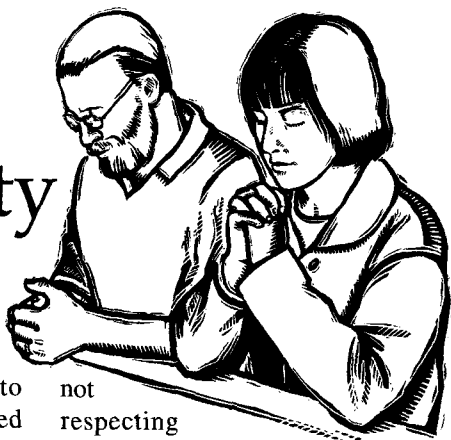
When I was a boy growing up on the farm, we had a neighbor who — I thought — was rich. It was during the depression, and we had no car, but he traded for a new car every year. He had more than 400 acres of land and lots of cattle. I had heard that he made \$600 per month. To me that was a lot of money, and *it was a lot of money* in those days! But, he was an erring Christian. One time, I remember, he got sick and was flat of his back. My parents went to see him, and with tears in his eyes he said that if God would restore his health, he would come back to the church and live a Christian life. He did get well. He went back to work. But he never darkened the doors of the church building. The only time I ever saw him in the church building was at his funeral. He vowed a vow. He made a solemn promise to God, but he did not pay his vow.

David wrote: *“I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble”* (Psalm 66:13,14). †

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# Practical Christianity

Ancil Jenkins



Most have heard the old story of the man who refused to stand up when the preacher asked the audience how many wanted to go to heaven. "Don't you want to go to heaven when you die?" the preacher asked. "Oh, I want to go to heaven when I die," the man replied. "I thought you were getting up a group to go today."

How true of so many to see heaven as the only reward of Christianity. Paul said that godliness is profitable, not only for the life to come, but for this life also (1 Timothy 4:8). Even if there were no spiritual, eternal benefits from being a Christian, there are enough temporal benefits to make such a life worthwhile.

**Christianity is profitable physically.** The Christian regards his body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and therefore respects and cares for it (1 Corinthians 6:19; Ephesians 5:29). Harmful abuse from carelessness or use of drugs is

not respecting the temple of the Holy Spirit. With such an attitude on the part of many people in the world, a Christian should naturally live longer, but because he has taken care of his health, his quality of life should also be much higher than average. He feels good enough to enjoy so many of life's blessings.

**Christianity gives an economic benefit.** We are called to be honest in all things. As Christians we are to give a full day's work for a day's pay. God's children do not work to please men, but work for their secular masters as if they worked for the Lord. Christian business should provide courtesy, service, and honesty, and such a business should prosper (Romans 12:17; Ephesians 6:6,7). Yet, personal satisfaction and security are not the only reasons a Christian earns money. He desires to have

enough to share with those who have less (Ephesians 4:28).

**Christianity is also profitable from an emotional standpoint.** I am constantly amazed and even amused that so many self-help programs are based largely on Biblical teachings. This does not say that some Christians will not have to seek help, guidance, and even therapy. However, unlike the non-Christian, God's child has the resources to meet life's stresses and make life's decisions, if he will only avail himself of them. The resulting security and self-assurances provide strong, healthy, and lasting relationships, strengthening every phase of life.

Even with all these wonderful physical benefits, still the greatest blessings of Christianity are the spiritual ones. One can endure a lifetime of sickness, pain, and disability and still have hope of the richest of all blessings. Even living in abject poverty without any of life's luxuries is not the greatest loss in the world. The greatest loss is the loss of the soul. And contrary to what most humans think, the greatest gain is to depart from this world and be with Christ, to live eternally with Him. What a blessing it is to serve the Lord! It pays both now and throughout eternity. †

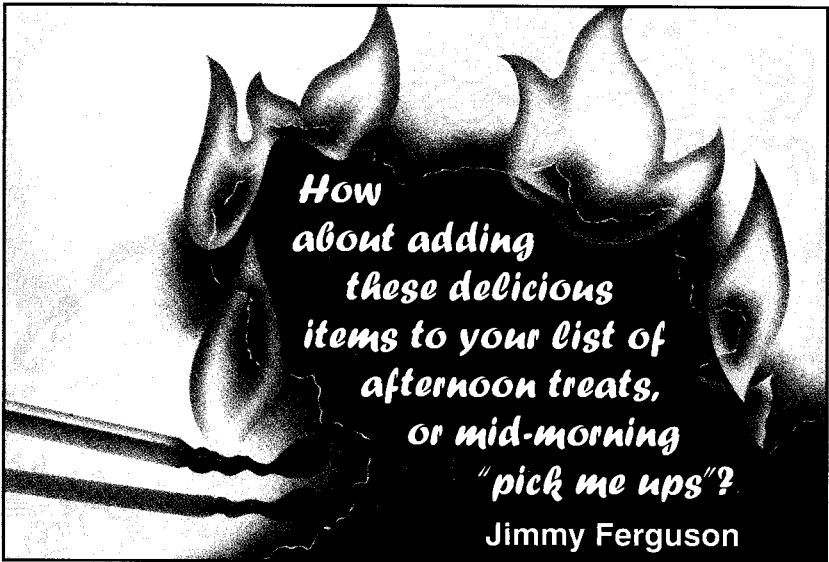
**Ancil Jenkins is a writer and preacher in Jamestown, Tennessee, USA.**

## The Person Down the Road

In thirty, forty, or fifty years you will meet a person down the road. Whether that someone is kind and gentle or selfish and demanding depends on what you do today. If you live only in terms of what you can get out of life, this person will be crabby, self-centered, and spiteful. But if you open your life to others and live as a giver, this person will be kind, open, and generous.

This somebody whom you will meet down the road some day is you. The person you will be tomorrow depends on the life you live today. Every day, in every way, you are becoming more and more like yourself. Make sure the person you are becoming is someone whom you will enjoy being around.

— Anonymous



**1. Acetone** — A flammable, colorless liquid used as a solvent. It is one of the active ingredients in nail polish remover. The tobacco industry refuses to say how acetone gets into cigarettes.

**2. Ammonia** — A colorless, pungent gas. The tobacco industry says that it adds flavor, but scientists have discovered that ammonia helps you absorb more nicotine — keeping you hooked on smoking.

**3. Arsenic** — A silvery-white very poisonous chemical element. This deadly poison is used to make insecticides, and it is also used to kill gophers and rats.

**4. Benzene** — A flammable liquid obtained from coal and tar and used as a solvent. This cancer-causing chemical is used to make everything from pesticides to detergent to gasoline.

**5. Benzoapyrene** — A yellow crystalline carcinogenic hydrocarbon found in cigarette smoke. It is one of the most potent cancer-causing chemicals in the world.

**6. Butane** — A hydrocarbon used as a fuel. Highly flammable, butane is one of the key ingredients in gasoline.

**7. Cadmium** — A metallic chemical element used in alloys. This toxic metal causes damage to the liver, kidneys, and the brain, and stays in your body for years.

**8. Formaldehyde** — A colorless pungent gas used in solution as a disinfectant and preservative. It causes cancer, damages your lungs, skin and digestive system. Embalmers use it to preserve dead bodies.

**9. Lead** — A heavy bluish-gray metallic chemical element. This toxic heavy metal causes lead poisoning which stunts your growth, and damages your brain. It can easily kill you.

**10. Propylene Glycol** — A sweet hygroscopic viscous liquid used as antifreeze and as a solvent in brake fluid. The tobacco industry claims they add it to keep cheap "reconstituted tobacco" from drying out, but scientists say it aids in the delivery of nicotine (tobacco's active drug) to the brain.

**11. Turpentine** — A colorless volatile oil. Turpentine is very toxic and is commonly used as a paint thinner.

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There are over 4000 chemicals/compounds found in tobacco. The U.S. Department of Health says that many of these compounds make cigarettes deadly. We have considered eleven of the most toxic. Keep in mind that each time you smoke, this is what goes into your body.

READ ALSO I Corinthians 6:19,20; Matthew 5:13-16;  
1 Thessalonians 5:22.

THE TOXINS IN CIGARETTES

# Murmurings and Disputings

Allan E. Flaxman

It is one thing to speak up forcefully and with determination in defense of God's Word (the truth), and quite a different thing to become involved in "*murmurings and disputings*" (see Philippians 2:14). Standing in defense of the truth, as recorded in God's Word, has God's strong approval (Philippians 1:27; 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 3:8; 2 Thessalonians 2:15). However, to be guilty of murmurings and disputings is to disobey a direct command from God, recorded through the pen of the Apostle Paul.

What then is meant by "*murmurings and disputings*," as spoken of in Philippians 2:14? Murmuring gives the suggestion of a sneaky, underhand, mumbled, semi-private complaint, made perhaps behind a "cupped hand." Surely we would not want to be guilty of that, would we?

What, then, about disputing? This is not simply a defense of the truth, but a discussion that has left the high level of strong reasoning and descended to the level of undignified, quarrelsome argument, often leaving truth itself quite lost in the

fierceness of the delivery and of the language employed. Again, we would not want to take part in such antagonistic confrontations. Yet it seems all too easy — even for us Christians — to find ourselves tarnished and stained by being guilty of this condemned behavior.

But Paul tells us that if we control ourselves, and put "*murmurings and disputings*" out of our lives, we will be looked upon as "harmless" (sincere), beyond reproach — worthy to be called "*the sons of God*" (Philippians 2:15).

And what will that do for us as we endeavor to proclaim the Gospel — which is our duty, under the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)? It will cause us, by contrast, to "*shine as lights*" in a world that is both crooked and perverse! As we "*hold forth*" the wonderful Gospel of a crucified Saviour, risen from the dead and coming again, our lives will cast no shadows that may in any way dim the Good News. †

**Allan E. Flaxman is a preacher of the Gospel in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.**



How many times have you cried tears in your heart (if not literally) because you could not assist someone toward accomplishing what needed to be done? Perhaps all Christians have had such experiences. There are examples in the Bible that illustrate our feeling of helplessness when nothing can be done.

Abraham did not want the city of Sodom destroyed. He pleaded with the destroying angel to spare the city if fifty righteous people could be found in it, but such a number could not be located; not even forty-five, forty, thirty, twenty, or ten. What could Abraham do? The situation was out of his hands. Because Sodom was such a wicked city, the text says: "*And Abraham returned home*" (Genesis 18:33).

When the wealthy young ruler inquired of Jesus what he needed to do, he was poorly prepared to hear the Lord's reply. He loved his money more than he loved Jesus. When he turned and walked away Jesus remained still, not running after

him or calling him back or begging him to reconsider (Matthew 19:16-22). Jesus knew the young ruler's heart, and He knew that only the

young man himself could make the change that needed to be made.

The Jews at Pisidian Antioch rejected the preaching of the gospel (Acts 13:46). No apostle could have done more to convince them than Paul and Barnabas did. Luke records Paul's response to the rejection of his preaching thusly: "*It was necessary that the word of*

*God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.*"

The Bible recognizes that when one has done all that can be done, there is nothing else left to do. Jesus taught three steps in efforts to restore an erring brother (Matthew 18:15-17). When the third step has been taken and has proved futile there is nothing more anyone can do to bring about reconciliation. Jesus taught that the one refusing to

What Does  
One Do  
When  
Nothing  
Can Be  
Done?  
Hollis Miller

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repent and be reconciled is to "*be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.*" Yes, it hurts! But such is the Lord's instruction.

Paul taught Titus that after a first and second admonition a divisive person is to be left to himself. Such a one, instructed the apostle, is warped and sinful, being self-condemned (Titus 3:11).

John recognized sin that was unto death, and stated: "*I do not say that he* (a fellow Christian) *should pray about that*" (1 John 5:16). From the teaching of 1 John

1:9 it seems conclusive that sin unto death is sin which a brother in the Lord will not confess.

How sad the Lord must have been when He uttered these well-known words: "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!*" (Matthew 23:37). †

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

### What Kind of Sheep Are You?

Anonymous

#### *A Straying Sheep?*

If you are an accountable person and have not returned to Christ through obeying the gospel, then you are still astray (Isaiah 53:5; Romans 6:17,18).

#### *A Hearing-Following Sheep?*

To have Jesus actually be your Shepherd, you must be heeding His instructions. "*My sheep hear My voice,*" He declared (John 10:27).

#### *A One-Fold Sheep?*

The Lord adds His saved sheep to the safe and secure sheepfold. His church. Loyal sheep know where they belong and stay put (John 10:16).

#### *A Lost-Again Sheep?*

A sheep that wanders away or one that resists the leading of the Shepherd will soon be lost again, away from the Shepherd's protection (Luke 15:4).

#### *A Phony Sheep?*

Not all the "sheep" in the Lord's flock are genuine. Some are disguised as sheep when actually they are ravenous wolves. Their motives are wrong. And Christ knows they aren't His (Matthew 7:15).

# Walking by Faith



## Tribute to Roy Mullinax

When my family and I moved to Taiwan as missionaries in 1968, Roy and Joyce Mullinax picked us up at the airport and drove us to a hotel in downtown Taipei. The next morning, they picked us up again and took us to Tien Mou, a suburb north of the city. There, we met missionaries Enoch and Jeannine Thweatt and Edward and Sharon Short and worshiped with the Tien Mou church. After the morning worship, the Mullinaxes took us out to lunch, and my family and I learned to eat with chopsticks.

On Monday morning, Roy drove us back to Tien Mou in his blue Volkswagen micro-bus, introduced us to a Chinese realtor, and spent the day helping us find a place to live. As we drove around in the hot September sun, Roy and the realtor communicated in Chinese. Again and again, I heard the word “fangdz”, the Chinese word for “house”. Once we rented a house, Roy stayed with us until we had purchased kitchen supplies and a house full of inexpensive furniture.

All the missionaries in Tien Mou were kind to us. They went out of their way to help us get settled and to make us feel at home. Roy, however, went the extra mile, and then some. My mother, who was with us, said, “Roy is a generous and loveable man.”

In Taiwan, I was responsible for teaching, training, and working with six Chinese preachers who had been baptized into Christ prior to our arrival. Within two weeks, I knew I was “in over my head”. I had inherited some serious problems that seemed to have no solutions. If it had not been for Roy’s wise counsel and loving encouragement, I might have given up in despair. In the end, however, everything worked out. My family and I enjoyed one of the most productive, satisfying, rewarding, and meaningful experiences of our life.

During those wonderful years in Taiwan, Roy and Joyce Mullinax became some of our closest friends. Maudine and Joyce developed a bond similar to the one that bound David and Jonathan together. Roy and I and the other missionaries had many long talks about the work of God. The relationships that the missionaries developed in Taiwan in the 60's and 70's have remained strong and sweet through the years.

In 2001, when Roy was diagnosed with cancer, we were all distraught. That summer, the World English Institute campaigners in Tirana, Albania prayed for Roy every day for six weeks. In February 2002, when Maudine and I visited the Mullinaxes in Sherman, Texas, we learned that the doctors had given Roy only two weeks to two months to live.

But God is full of surprises. A year later, Roy was still alive. By February 2003, he had moved his family to Abilene, Texas. When Maudine and I attended the Abilene Christian University Lectureship, we stayed with Roy and Joyce. They insisted. Roy had lost the use of his voice, and like Zachariah of old, he had to write his messages down on paper. Yet, he never lost his sense of humor. Early in the week, he entertained us with his teasing. Following the evening lectures on Monday and Tuesday, Roy and I watched western movies on television and laughed. Toward the end of the week, his strength failed, and he spent most of his time in bed listening to sacred music. Three weeks later, around midnight on March the 25th, Roy passed from this life.

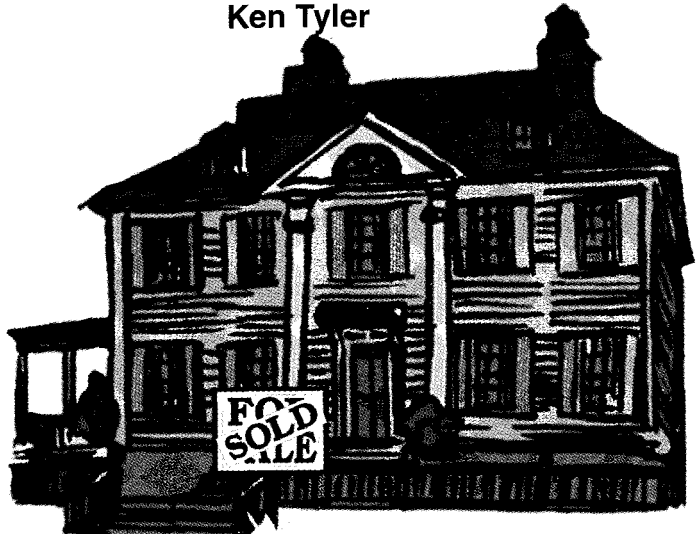
To the very end, Roy's faith never wavered. For him, death had no sting. With serenity, Roy looked forward to his reward in heaven.

— Dick Ady

**Dick and Maudine Ady served as missionaries in Taiwan between 1968 and 1974. He founded World English Institute in Gresham, OR, and currently serves as its president.**

# Is Your Home for Sale?

Ken Tyler



The large hand-lettered sign in the front yard read simply: *Home For Sale, By Owner*. Unfortunately, many are selling their homes! Homes are sold by *moral and spiritual bankruptcy...by social pressures, permissiveness, and materialism...by unfaithfulness, bitterness, and divorce*.

**Batsell Barrett Baxter suggested these as examples:**

**A. Preoccupied Fathers.** Several surveys indicate that most fathers spend very little time with their children (Ephesians 6:4).

**B. Working Mothers.** As more and more mothers have left

the home because of economic pressures, social problems with the home have increased (Titus 2:4,5).

**C. Disappearance of extended family.** Few children grow up today surrounded by close relatives (see 2 Timothy 1:5).

**D. The invasion of television into the home.** It intrudes itself into the home place, exposing us to attitudes, philosophies, and life styles which undermine the family (Psalm 101:3; Philippians 4:8).

**E. A deluge of outside-the-home activities.** Often, the home is simply a motel — a place to eat, sleep, and change clothes before

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rushing to the next activity (Ephesians 5:16; Matthew 6:33).

**F. A disregard of Biblical standards by which families have traditionally been maintained** (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

**How can we safeguard our homes?**

**A. Realize God's purpose for the home.** The ideal home must be built on God's ideal for the home. Homes are sold because God's rules for the family are ignored (Psalm 127:1).

**B. Get the family together.** Go places together; do things together; eat together. Take time for each other.

**C. Communicate.** Talk things out. Answer questions. Discuss life, conduct, goals, hopes, values, and spiritual concerns.

**D. Let God have His way with your family.** Research has repeatedly shown that happy families are those with a spiritual purpose and a sense of values. "In God they trust!" Regular worship, prayer, and Bible reading bind families together.

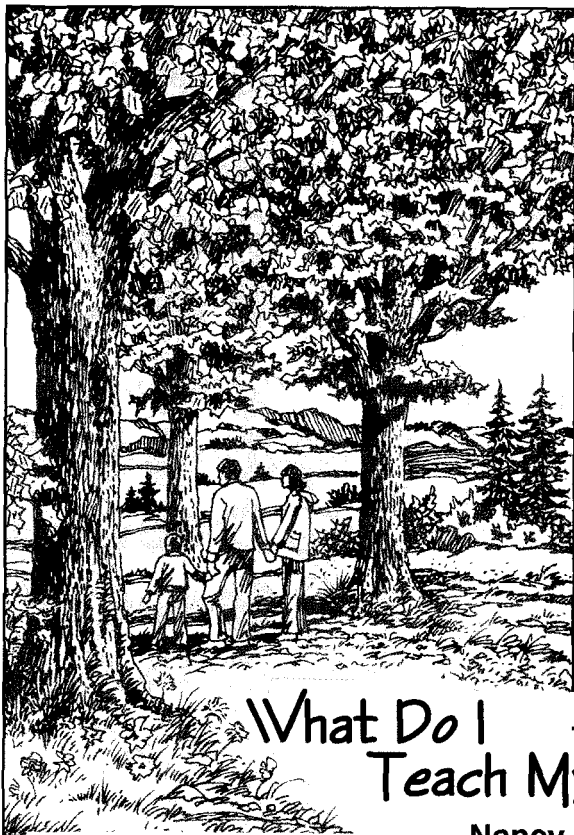
### Conclusion

In this busy world in which we live, the choice of what to do with our families is ours. Are we selling our homes, and for nothing? †

**Ken Tyler works with the church of Christ in Arab, Alabama, USA.**

### Advice to Parents from Children

1. Don't spoil me. I know quite well that I should not have all that I ask for. I'm testing you.
2. Don't be afraid to be firm with me. I prefer it; it makes me feel more secure.
3. Don't let me form bad habits. I have to rely on you to detect them early in my growing years.
4. Don't make me feel smaller than I am. It only makes me behave as if I'm older and more mature.
5. Don't correct me in front of people if you can help it. I'll pay greater attention, with less resentment, if you talk quietly with me in private.
6. Don't make me feel that my mistakes are sins. It upsets my sense of values.
7. Don't protect me from consequences. I need to learn the painful way sometimes.
8. Don't nag. If you do, I will have to protect myself by pretending to be deaf.
9. Don't take too much notice of my small ailments. Sometimes this is just my way of begging for attention.
10. Be careful about the example you set for priorities. If physical and secular things come before spiritual things, I will put them in that order too. (copied)



Many young mothers ask me what their kids should know by certain ages. This really encourages me, as it tells me that there are serious-minded parents out there who pray and plan for their children's spiritual growth. We all know doctors have a check list for where most kids should be in growth and development by certain ages. Shouldn't we make some sort of plan or benchmark for this much more important growth?

# What Do I Teach My Kids?

Nancy Wheat

Our children are 20, 18 and 14, so in some ways we are finished with their training. However, we still try to encourage them to keep growing and challenging themselves in the Lord. Here are some of the goals we set for them as they were growing up in our home. I hope this will not be seen as a legalistic list but rather as a help to map out a plan for continual growth. Couple this with HUGE servings of humility and TONS of prayer...

### One to Four Years

Learn the books of the Bible in order. (Kids learn their numbers and the alphabet at this age, why not God's books?) Modify this goal according to the child's ability. But try it; you will be amazed how quickly they catch on. Do it every day for just two or three minutes when you have your family devotions.

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Teach parts of memory verses such as Ephesians 6:1: "*Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right*"; or John 3:16, Genesis 1:1, etc.

Using an accurate Bible story book, start reading to them about every major Bible character. Some good ones are the **Beginner's Bible** or Egermeier's and Hurlburt's. Show them in your Bible where these stories can be found. Tell them the Bible story is based on God's word. They need to see us upholding God's word all the time. Explain that these stories are different from the fairy tales or make-believe stories that we read to them.

Remember that repetition at this age is the way they love to learn so don't worry when they want the same story read over and over again. Read with expression, ask lots of questions, review past stories, and make application lessons for their own lives. Use flannel-graph, have them draw pictures about the characters.

### Five to Eight Years

Learn the 12 sons of Jacob; the 12 apostles, the divisions of the Old and New Testaments, Psalm 1, Psalm 23, and the Sermon on the Mount. Use **Hurlburt's** and **Egermeier's** now, because children of these ages need more detail.

Make a simple time line that you can roll up and store, adding as

you learn new events. Show the different dispensations, Patriarchal, Mosaic and Christian. Show them where we are on that time line. Have them look up the text for each story so that they begin to know how to find things in their own Bible. Make a game of finding passages quickly.

Have them find the text of the sermon during the lessons on Sundays. Challenge them to see how many times the speaker uses certain key words such as faith, grace, baptism, holy spirit and so on. All of this helps them see that they are part of the congregational worship period.

### Nine to Twelve Years

Learn selected passages as a family, such as Philippians 2:1-11, or start memorizing certain Proverbs. This is the age where discussion of attitudes, motivations, etc., can be met with passages from the word. Show them how very practical and applicable the word of God is.

We had our children complete some of the Bible correspondence course that we offered at the church. This is important as they grow toward the decision to become a Christian.

Show them how to establish a daily time alone with the word. Our children have a one-year Bible which has a reading for every day of



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the year. Each day has an Old Testament passage, a New Testament passage, and a proverb and psalm for the day. Even if they read only a small part of the daily allotment, the habit of daily time with God will begin to be established. Ask them periodically if they are doing their own reading. We ask about school home work; how much more is there a need to ask about this more important area of their lives?

Help them understand that you struggle with setting this time aside and that failure one day does not mean that it is time to give up.

### Thirteen Years and Up

This is a time to study selected doctrinal subjects. Discuss areas that they are being challenged with. We used the book of Proverbs extensively during this period, and still do. Help them see passages that deal with attitudes like anger, lust, laziness, language, entertainment.

Provide good study aids, concordances, commentaries, Bible dictionary, maps, and other reference materials, and teach the use of them. Read good articles, books and inspirational biogra-

phies with them. Subscribe to good Christian magazines and critically analyze articles together. Help them see that the walk with Christ is a growing one. Let them see you reading and challenging yourself. No child will do any of these things if they see you as fake.

Talk to them about areas you have struggled in and how you want to keep growing. This is a really rich time for parents and teens or young adults. Be a listener; don't jump on them if they express doubts or questions. Be patient, answer lovingly, using "Let's see what the word says" every time.

Finally, pray, pray, pray. God will bless your efforts. †

**Nancy Wheat is a Christian wife and mother in Topeka, Kansas, USA.**

### I Asked God Jennifer Baptiste

I asked God if in His great love  
He drove you near to me.  
I asked God if in His great love  
He made you protect me.  
I asked God if in His great love  
He made you so kind to me.  
I asked God if in His great love  
We were meant to be, and,  
In His great love, God asked me,  
"Be patient, and you will see!"

# Who Will Tell Them?

Jack W. Carter

As I have been involved in my daily Bible reading the past several days, I have noticed a thread of continuity that I want to bring to your attention.

I was reading about the instructions of God to Moses and then to Joshua. Relating all that He had done for them, God called upon them to keep His words on their minds and in their hearts. He also called upon them to do something else — something that would perpetuate the devotion of the people for generations to come.

In a simple statement, His instructions amounted to “talk to your children about me, tell them every day that I am their God and that I watch over them.” “Tell them to respect me and my laws.” “Tell them every day.” “Tell them when you awake, when you lie down to sleep, when you are walking with them along the way.” In other words, “do not miss an opportunity to tell them about me.”

God was giving His people a plan by which they could be certain that future generations would remain

close to Him. Sadly, we learn that the very next generation was uninformed about God and began to live lives that were not only unacceptable to Him, but also vulgar and depraved by any normal standard.

Why do people do that? Why do we let our children grow up, not really knowing God and all that He means to us? Why do we do this, knowing full well, from example after example, that children who are not taught about God turn their back on Him?

Dear parents, it is not the responsibility of the elders, preachers, or Bible class teacher to shape your children’s relationship with God...it is **your** responsibility. Don’t let a day go by without telling your children about Him.

If you do not teach them, it is very likely that they will not listen to anyone else. And, if you are demonstrating a lack of zeal for God, they will most likely do the same. †

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



## Perspective

*Twenty years ago we dreamed a house.*

*Years of talking,*

*Planning,*

*Months of sweat and toil*

*Transformed the dream*

*To full reality*

*With walls and windows, floors and doors.*

*OUR house...*

*But we freely loaned our house to God.*

*For all those years, the joy of ownership was sweet.*

*Then the horror:*

*FIRE! FIRE!*

*Flames, leaping, licking, crackling*

Engulfed our house

Our things,

Our lives —

A monster of a size no one could stop:

All — all we'd loved of things, all we'd known and owned —

Were OURS no more;

Stark fear and panic filled my heart

And then, at last, acceptance:

The raging fire had burned my world away

And in that awful hour of severance and defeat

I let it go.

Now, how strange the feelings in my heart

As I paint and varnish,

Make decisions, measure cuts

And work

Raising up replacement walls

On the funeral pyre

Of the house that once was OURS,

I am thinking always

That this tool is being readied

As equipment in God's hands;

THESE walls — THIS lamp — THESE chairs

Are HIS;

But, for some little frame of time,

He's lending them to us

As stewards,

To tend and use for Him.

I own nothing any more

And not a thing owns me....

— Betty Burton Choate

# Ethics

Emmett Smith

This just in! Some organization called the World Technology Network has issued to Peter Singer, professor of bioethics at Princeton University, the 2003 World Technology Award for Ethics. Now, I don't know just what these folks consider ethical, but the guy they've honored with this award is infamous for his contention that newborn babies up to 28 days old should be put to death if their life is deemed substandard due to some diagnosed "disability".

It's not too difficult to see where that philosophy is headed, is it? Don't you know that "*the one who has the power of death,*" as stated in Hebrews 2:14, is chortling? He's already got us putting, on average, 3,500 per month to death in the name of "choice". Now the prospect of untold thousands of additional innocents slaughtered must be highly pleasurable to the evil one. Of course, Singer, et. al., don't at all mean to stop with infants. If they have their way, any, of any age, who are judged "unfit" (read inconvenient), will be killed. Singer also has been very influential among the so-called animal rights activists, and believes animals should be valued as highly as humans. Of course, all these ideas are really only the logical outcome of belief in naturalistic humanism's denial of God.

Please note the following remarks made in an article entitled "*Peter Singer Gets A Chair*" by Wesley J. Smith, an attorney for the **International Anti-Euthanasia Task Force** and the author of **Forced Exit: The Slippery Slope from Assisted Suicide to Legalized**.

"...the intellectual genesis that led directly to the killing of disabled infants and disabled adults had little to do with racial theories. Rather, it came from a book, **Permission to Destroy Life Unworthy of Life**, published in 1920, long before Hitler took power.

"Written by a famous law professor, Karl Binding, in collaboration with a noted physician, Alfred Hoche, and called "the crucial work" by Holocaust historian, Robert Jay Lifton, **Permission to Destroy Life Unworthy of Life** advocated ideas that are strikingly similar to Singer's. Binding and Hoche were not motivated by hate or the desire to create a master race. Rather, they believed that killing certain categories of people was compassionate, in their words, a 'purely healing treatment'.

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Those eligible for 'the healing work' of being killed by doctors were terminally ill or mortally wounded individuals, cognitively disabled people, and the unconscious. These are virtually the same categories of people whom Singer says can be killed ethically: those who voluntarily and autonomously decide to die, or those who do not but must face the same end because of their supposed status as 'nonpersons', or, in Binding and Hoche's idiom, because they are 'empty shells of human beings'.

"The 1920 publication of **Permission to Destroy Life Unworthy of Life** set off a national discussion about euthanasia among the German intelligentsia and eventually among the general public. These dehumanizing ideas deeply influenced German popular attitudes toward medically defenseless people. As reported by British author Michael Burleigh, in his book on the euthanasia movement in Germany, **Death and Deliverance**, a 1925 survey taken among the parents of children with mental disorders disclosed that 74 percent of them would agree to the painless killing of their own children. (One can only imagine the attitude of the nonparents.) Thus, while the Nazis certainly propagandized energetically against the value of the lives of the disabled after they came to power, they were working in a field already made fertile by the general acceptance by doctors and the general populace of the Singer-like notions of Binding and Hoche.

"One of the first people murdered in the Holocaust, as described in Lifton's, **The Nazi Doctors, By Death and Deliverance**, and Hugh Gallagher's book on German euthanasia, **By Trust Betrayed**, was an infant known as Baby Knauer. Baby Knauer was born in late 1938 or early 1939. The child was blind and had a leg and an arm missing. Baby Knauer's father was distraught at having a disabled child. So, he wrote to Hitler requesting permission to have the infant 'put to sleep'.

"Hitler had been receiving many such requests from German parents of disabled babies over several years and had been waiting for just the right opportunity to launch his euthanasia initiative. The Knauer case seemed the perfect test case. He sent one of his personal physicians, Dr. Karl Rudolph Brandt, who would later be hanged for crimes against humanity at Nuremberg, to investigate. Dr. Brandt's instructions were to verify the facts. If the child was disabled as described by the father's letter, Brandt was to assure the infant's doctors that they could kill the child without legal consequence. With the Fuhrer's assurance, doctors willingly murdered Baby Knauer at the request of his father. Brandt witnessed the baby's killing and

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reported back to Hitler. The Baby Knauer incident convinced Hitler that his plan to permit doctors to kill disabled infants should go forward.

“He signed a secret order permitting infanticide of disabled infants in 1939. Soon thereafter, adult disabled people could also be killed in what came to be known as the ‘T-4’ Program (named after the address of the German Chancellery, Tiergarten 4).

“The euthanasia program did not remain secret for long. Too many people were being killed. Himmler called it ‘a secret that is not a secret.’ As a consequence, in 1941, Hitler rescinded the T-4 program which had permitted euthanasia of disabled adults. (He did not order an end the killing of disabled babies, however.) But despite Hitler’s partial tactical retreat, euthanasia continued unabated until a few weeks after the end of the war, carried out by doctors who believed they were acting ethically, compassionately, and responsibly in their killing work, based on theories first promulgated by Binding and Hoche more than twenty years before.”

**(Wesley J. Smith is an attorney for the International Anti-Euthanasia Task Force and the author of *Forced Exit: The Slippery Slope from Assisted Suicide to Legalized Murder*.)**

**Let us Beware: Satan is in the process of bringing history to repeat itself with the evil of “selective murder”. Since the world-wide condemnation of Hitler’s reign of murder, 50 years of humanistic, atheistic brainwashing has taken place in the US as well as in many foreign countries. Is the world mentally and emotionally again prepared to follow Hitler?**

How ironic that our Lord defeated the evil one with his own weapon! Hebrews 2:14 (ESV) says, “*Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil.*”

The evil one uses death as his primary tool. He knows that once he succeeds in getting us to embrace a culture of death, his company in hell will be increased proportionately.

Jesus, on the other hand, came “*that they may have life and have it abundantly,*” according to John 10:10 (ESV). The contrast should be eye-opening: A culture of death versus the abundant life.

Hmmm...I wonder which I should choose? ...





# The Valley of Trouble

**J. Randal Matheny**

At Jericho, Achan's eyes were filled with the spoils of war. Instead of obeying God's orders of "total destruction", this son of Judah hid a beautiful Shinar mantle, along with shekels of gold and silver, in his tent. Because of his sin, the small city of Ai defeated Israel and brought death and mourning upon God's chosen people.

Once Achan was discovered, Israel took him and his family with the banned goods and all he owned to the Valley of Trouble (Achor). Joshua



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said to him, *“Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day”* (Joshua 7:25).

With that, they stoned Achan and his family, and, for good measure, burned them. They raised over them a great heap of stones as a memorial. By Israel’s action, *“the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the valley of Achor to this day”* (v. 26).

Centuries later, Hosea delivers his messages of repentance to wayward Israel, as God passes the divine sentence upon her, *“I will punish her for the days of the Baals when she used to offer sacrifices to them and adorn herself with her earrings and jewelry, and follow her lovers, so that she forgot Me,’ declares the Lord”* (Hosea 2:13).

This very punishment would be Israel’s opportunity for restoration. Using the memory of the terrible experience with Achan, Hosea mentions the Valley of Achor as the place of punishment, but also as the place of a new beginning: *“Then I will give her ... the valley of Achor as a door of hope”* (Hosea 2:15a, NASU).

Israel’s Valley of Trouble would be exile at the hands of the Assyrians. In fact, the northern kingdom would cease to exist, except for a remnant which would join itself to Judah. By that experience, the spiritual adultery of idolatry would be purged from the people.

Hosea says God will reverse Israel’s fortunes. He will turn His people around. It will be a painful, “troubling” process, but it will also be where the Lord’s anger will be turned away. The Valley of Trouble becomes the Door of Opportunity.

Many of us have been to the Valley of Trouble. God uncovers in our lives some banned goods, some unclean thing, some filthy practice. And He brings us defeat because of it, as Israel experienced at Ai.

He will let us go no further until we have dealt with our wrong — until we have expelled it from our lives, stoned it, burned it. But when we recognize the trouble it has brought us, and rid ourselves of it, we will find His anger turned away, and His blessing returned.

Our Valley of Trouble becomes the Door of Opportunity. And Achor becomes the metaphor by which we learn to respect the holiness of God, to enter into the sacred mission of His people, and to return to our first and only Love. *“And she will sing there as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt”* (Hosea 2:15b) †

**J. Randal Matheny hosts the website [www.forthright.net](http://www.forthright.net), while working with the Lord’s church in Brazil.**

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## PROVERBS 17:22

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“How was your blind date?” a college student asked her roommate.

“Terrible! He showed up in his 1932 Rolls Royce.”

“Wow! That’s a very expensive car. What’s so bad about that?”

“He was the original owner!”



Last year I helped deliver lunches to elderly shut-ins, and I used to take my 3-year-old son with me on my afternoon rounds. He was unfailingly intrigued by the various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers, and wheelchairs.

One day I found him staring at a set of false teeth soaking in a glass. As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, he merely turned and whispered, “The tooth fairy will never believe this!”

I signed up for an exercise class and was told to wear loose-fitting clothing.

If I **had** any loose-fitting clothing I wouldn’t have signed up in the first place!



I’ve learned that if you upset your wife, she nags you. If you upset her even more, you get the silent treatment. Don’t you think it’s worth the extra effort?



A fact learned from experience: A bumble bee is faster than a John Deere tractor.



A little boy opened the big family Bible. He was fascinated as he fingered through the old pages. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible. He picked up the object and looked at it. What he saw was an old leaf that had been pressed between the pages.

“Mama, look what I found,” the boy called out. “What have you got there, dear?” With astonishment in the young boy’s voice, he answered, “I think it’s Adam’s underwear!”

## PROVERBS 17:22

A new resident was approached by his neighbor's dog, which appeared at the door and politely asked for a copy of the local newspaper. Later, when he met the dog's owner, the newcomer expressed his amazement at the little dog's abilities. "Don't let that mutt fool you," replied the owner. "All he does is look at the comics."



The trial was ending, and the judge called a recess and told the defense lawyer to withdraw with his client and give him the best advice he could think of. After 15 minutes, the lawyer returned to the courtroom, minus the accused.

"Where is the prisoner?" the judge asked.

"He skipped," the lawyer answered. "It was the best advice I could think of."



A woman was trying hard to get the ketchup to come out of the bottle. During her struggle the phone rang, so she asked her 4-year-old daughter to answer the phone.

"It's the preacher, Mommy," the child said to her mother. Then the mother heard the little girl say,

"Mommy can't come to the phone to talk to you right now. She's hitting the bottle."



The old narrow roads where two cars could barely pass without colliding are being replaced by splendid highways on which six or eight cars can collide at one time.



Bill: "So, Joe, you married your wife for looks, did you?"

Joe: "Yes, but not the ones she's been giving me lately."



### 3 Rules for Good, Healthy Teeth

1. Brush after every meal.
2. See your dentist twice a year.
3. Mind your own business.



Barbara said to Eulene, "When you die, I want you to leave me your big palmetto fan."

Eulene, who is very hot-natured and always fanning, made the immediate response, "Nope, you can't have it. I might need it!"

## Quick Commentary on Crucial Verses

## Malachi 1:6-8

*A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am the Father, (Where is My honor?) And if I am a Master, (Where is My reverence?) Says the LORD of hosts to you priests who despise My name.*

*Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?'*

*You offer defiled food on My altar.*

*But say, 'In what way have we defiled You?'*

*By saying, 'The table of the LORD is contemptible.'*

*And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably? says the LORD of hosts.*

Throughout time, God has deserved and expected His creation to honor and love Him. Sadly, beginning with Adam and Eve, and continuing to today, the awe and respect He should have are not there. Today, a godless evolutionary theory is offered to explain all that exists. And even those who claim to serve God do not respect His commands.

When humans set aside what God clearly says in His word, it is the same as the defiling of the altar in the Mosaic age, and the offering of lame and blind sacrifices.

In the religious world there are hundreds of different churches, and as many ways taught for how to be saved, how to worship God, how to live. In one group or another, almost anything is allowed.

Just as the priests of old times mocked God by asking hypocritically, "How have we despised Your name?" religious leaders today mock Him by creating their own rules concerning religion. They then expect God to accept the systems THEY have set up, and to save their followers.

God's challenge then — and His challenge now — is, would even a human governor be honored by having his laws disregarded? Would such lawless behavior please the authorities? would they accept it? Of course not! If we must obey even secular laws, how much more the law of God?

If we expect to be accepted as God's children today, are we concerned that our behavior, our speech, our dress, our habits, our worship, our attitude, and our allegiance be pleasing to Him?



### Edward Short

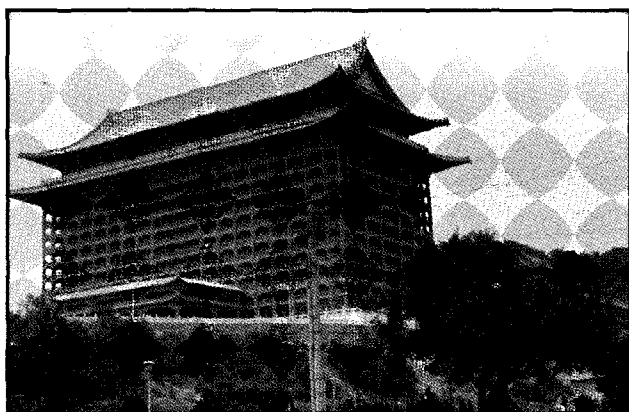
Taiwan, officially known as The Republic of China or The Republic of China on Taiwan, is home to over twenty-two million people. In 1949 the government of the Republic of China fled the communist takeover of the Chinese mainland and moved to the island of Taiwan, which only four years earlier had been released from Japanese occupation. Today Taiwan is a bustling area of hard-working people who live under a democratically elected government. While the Taiwanese government and the government of the Chinese mainland debate over who will ultimately control the nearly 36,000 sq. km. that is Taiwan, the world recognizes the reality of the political split and tries to figure out ways to do business with both entities.

On a map, or from space, Taiwan looks like a tobacco leaf floating in the Pacific Ocean, the size of Holland. It is separated from the Chinese mainland by the Taiwan Strait — only 130 km. of water at its narrowest point. Taiwan is almost equidistant from Shanghai to the north and Hong Kong to the south.

Less than thirty percent of the total land area of Taiwan is arable. The western strip of flat land houses the majority of the island's industrious people and provides the area to grow their food. Taiwan is 394 km. long and



Whether on bicycles or in cars, there are crowds of people on the streets.



The beautiful Grand Hotel in Taipei.

includes five north-to-south mountain ranges which occupy almost half of the island. There are more than two hundred peaks with elevations of over 3,000 meters, and Jade Mountain (also known as Mt. Morri-

son) in central Taiwan is taller than Japan's famous Mt. Fuji.

From the mid-1950's until the present, intensive economic development transformed Taiwan from a poor and backward society into a major world economy. Rapid industrialization, urbanization, and modernization dramatically transformed the lives of the island's residents. In spite of interference from China, Taiwan gained world-wide recognition for economic prowess, especially in the area of computer technology and other high-tech business.

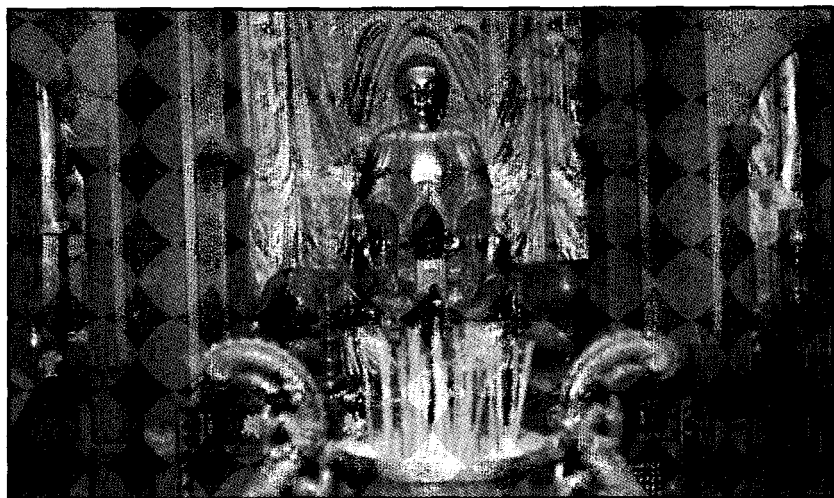
## FROM THE HEART OF . . .



Highway along the mountainous east coast of Taiwan. Quite a drop-off!

After martial law was lifted in 1987, new political parties were formed and Taiwan's people gained more freedom as well as political power. This climaxed in 1996 when, for the first time in the history of the world, a head-of-state was elected on Chinese soil by the popular vote of the people. His name was Lee Teng-hui; the current president is Chen Shui-bian.

Taiwan's constitution also guarantees freedom of religion. Government surveys indicate that about half the population expresses religious belief, but the influence of religion in society indicates a much stronger impact. Indeed, most adults in Taiwan, regardless of whether or not they worship regularly at a temple or subscribe to a



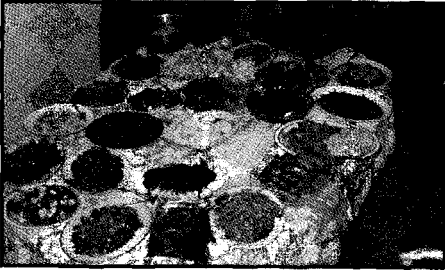
A statue of Buddha inside one of the elaborate temples.

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .



A large multi-story building in Taipei. The Tien Mou Church of Christ meets on the first floor.

particular religion, engage nonetheless in religious practice. These expressions of religious belief are based in traditional Chinese folk religions, and often are a combination of several. Large temples and small shrines are found throughout cities, villages and in the countryside, and most families have a small altar inside their home. More people consider themselves Taoists than Buddhists, but for the unin-



Tempting dishes of "real Chinese food" offered at a fellowship meal of the church. Right: "Please remove shoes when entering for worship." (And do not exchange for a better pair when leaving!)



Members of the Tien Mou congregation in Taipei, established in 1958 through the initial efforts of Christians in the military and the Thweatt and Mullinax missionary families who arrived in 1959.



## FROM THE HEART OF . . .



**Yin jih, his wife Coral-Li Shan and their two children, with Enoch and Jeannine Thweatt, one of the first two missionary families to live in Taipei.**

formed “outsider” it is difficult to tell the difference. Indeed some Taiwan temples house images that are associated with more than one religious tradition. Chinese religion is both polytheistic and syncretic. It is dominated by ancestor worship, Taoism, and Buddhism, but has never excluded the addition and development of other religions, whether indigenous or foreign. Although each religion may appear to advocate its own independent doctrine, some cannot be strictly differentiated. “For example, the Taiwan folk deity Matsu, Goddess of the Sea, and Kuanyin, the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy, are often worshiped together in the same temple. This reveals the special character of the Chinese religious outlook, which can accommodate seemingly contradictory beliefs simultaneously” (<[www.gio.gov.tw](http://www.gio.gov.tw)>). This helps explain why some Chinese object to the exclusive nature of Jesus (John 14:6) and Christianity (Acts 4:12).

Churches of Christ first became known in Taiwan via American military personnel in the mid-1950’s. They established a congregation and also found some Chinese groups who had deep convictions toward God’s word and a very conservative understanding of Scripture, similar to their own. Roy Mullinax and Enoch Thweatt and their families went to Taiwan as mis-

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .



missionaries in 1959 and stayed for many years. Other families followed in their footsteps, while several Chinese evangelists were trained over the years. Today there are congregations in Taipei, Taichung, Kaoshiung, Hualien and other areas. Please pray for the propagation and acceptance of the gospel of our Lord and for the expansion of the church in Taiwan. †

**Edward and Sharon Short served as missionaries in Taiwan between 1967 and 1983. He currently works with the Chinese Service of World Christian Broadcasting in Franklin, Tennessee, USA.**



**The Sars virus had a profound effect on public gatherings in Taiwan, as shown in these pictures of Christians assembled for worship during the height of the out-break.**

# *How I Became a Christian*

Edward Ho

It was a Thursday night in 1974, in Taipei, Taiwan, when, after supper, I decided to take a walk. My house was only a few blocks away from a busy thoroughfare where businesses and shops usually stayed open until nine o'clock in the evening. Also near this main street, Xin Yi Road, there was a small church. Later I was to find out that the church derived its name from the busy street and was known as the Xin Yi Road Church of Christ.

On the outside wall of the church building there was a bulletin board in a glass case. On the board were large Chinese characters which pointed to Bible verses, articles, drawings and other items, all of which grabbed the attention of passers-by. Through these brief items people could learn about the Christian faith without having to enter the church building. The bulletin board was illuminated in the evening and provided pedestrians a chance to read even when daylight was long gone.

Thursday night was Bible study night, but I was not aware of it. The sky was already dark, as it was about seven o'clock when I passed the building. The bulletin board light was on and I was attracted by its artful arrangement. I walked over to take a closer look.

While I was reading, a gentle hand touched my shoulder. A thin and elderly gentleman smiled and greeted me. He introduced himself; "My name is Huang Yuan," he said. "Would you like to come in and study the Bible with me?"

I had nothing to do at the moment and did not need to go home immediately. Mr. Huang was an elderly man and, as such, he deserved respect in my society; so I entered the church building with him.

Some ten young people had gathered for the meeting, all about my age. We sang and studied the Bible. They left a good impression on me and invited me back. Soon I was glued to their friendship and before long I began to attend the services on my own. At that period of my life the one thing, more than anything else, that attracted me and pulled me close to God was the friendship of Christians.

The minister, Samuel Huang, was a retired general. His sermons attracted my attention and his personal life persuaded me that God's guidance was real. I hoped that one day God would guide me also in a personal way like God was guiding him.

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

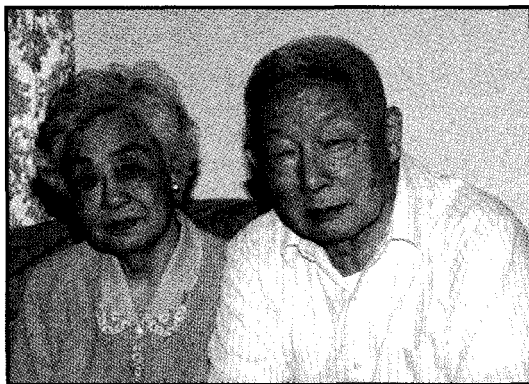
The studies convinced me that the moral teachings of the Bible were good and correct. What I heard at meetings was exactly what I wanted to see in the society in which I lived. Although my life was not right in many areas, I enjoyed the association with Christians in that church. The church also had activities, such as special singings and summer Bible camps, which provided opportunities for fun and new activities. These things were very much welcomed by young people like me.

I was baptized into Christ Jesus on May 15th, 1975, during a Thursday evening Bible study. Mr. Huang Yuan was there too. He also was a retired military man but, unlike Brother Huang the minister, he had no other family in Taiwan. Regrettably, due to our age difference, I was never close to Huang Yuan. As I reflect on him and others, however, my memory suggests that he was lonely and insignificant, even in the church. Yet, his significance becomes clearer to me year after year as I seek to grow in Christ. Many unsaved souls are waiting for a hand like his, a hand that would pat their shoulder and extend a kind invitation to the church of the Lord. †

**Edward Ho serves as writer, producer and program host for the Chinese Service of World Christian Broadcasting in Franklin, TN. His wife, Salina, also writes and voices segments.**

## *My Boss Is Bigger than your Boss*

**A Living Tribute to  
Lo Tang Lo-Sung  
Jeannine Thweatt**



**Lo Tang Lo-Sung and her husband Lo Yi-jen. Sister Lo is the founder and superintendent of the Ti Hwei Children's Home in Taipei. Through that facility she and her husband have provided for the needs of hundreds of children. Twice sister Lo has been honored as "Woman of the Year" by the government of Taiwan, for her great humanitarian service.**

Imagine a pompous person who cannot understand why a small white-haired woman refuses to agree to his

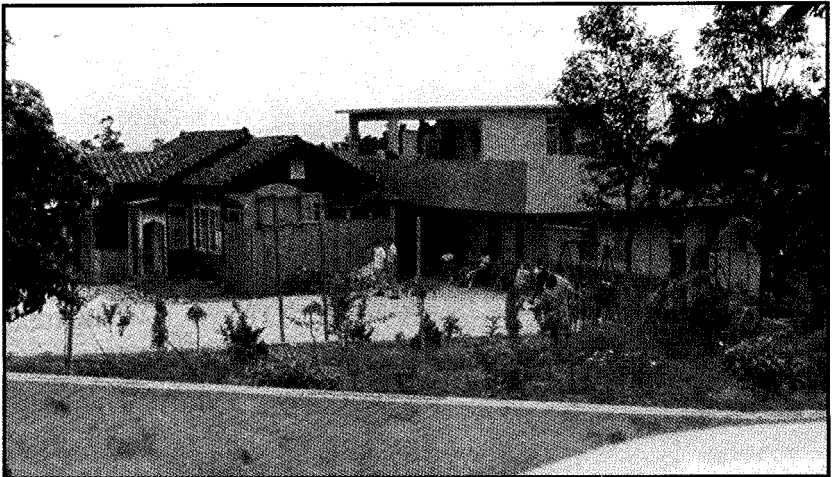
## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

demands. They have met time after time, and he has presented several plans to her; she always stubbornly refuses to budge from her decision.

Whenever he tries to tell her that she will have to agree, she simply says: "My Boss is greater than your boss. If He wants us to move the children from Ti Hwei, they will be moved. If He wants them to stay, no power on earth can move them."

Mrs. Lo Tang Lo-Sung is the founder and superintendent of the Ti Hwei Children's Home in Taipei, Taiwan. Measured by the world's standards, she is not a financial success. She and her husband still live in the small government-issue house where they reared their four children. When her success is counted by the Lord's measure, however, it is a different story, as the hundreds of children who have lived at Ti Hwei rise up and call her blessed.

Brother and Sister Lo became Christians in 1968. They have been strong in their faith since that time, as they have encouraged every good work. They have been active in the Tien Mou Church of Christ, a local congregation in northern Taipei, and have been leaders among all the Christians there. In their work of caring for children from broken homes, their faith has been tested many times. They will always say, "It isn't what we have done, but what the Lord has done." The children are well fed and cared for, and the Los give God thanks and praise and glory. †



The property of the Ti Hwei Children's Home in Taipei, operated by Christians for many years.

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

Throughout the years, Ti Hwei has accepted children whom other institutions labeled as “undesirable,” such as those handicapped physically or mentally. These children are never turned away, and God’s love has been seen at work in that community.

Children at Ti Hwei grow up, establish homes and become productive citizens. They choose varied careers in business, education, airline services, sales, military service, etc. Wherever these young people go, they still remember Ti Hwei as home; they stay in contact with the Los and express their appreciation to those who loved them as children.

Sister Lo has been selected as Taipei’s “Woman of the Year” at least twice, and has received other humanitarian awards as well. She uses the acceptance of the awards as an opportunity to mention God and tell how He has led her and her husband through all the problems they have faced.

In recent years some unscrupulous individuals have used their positions to try to force Ti Hwei to close its doors and let them take over the property. Ti Hwei is situated in a prime location, and on the market would be worth millions. Her faith in the Lord has made it possible for Sister Lo to answer the attacks and stand firm in her refusal to give in.

People of the world do not understand why Lo Tang Lo-Sung fights so hard to keep “her children” at Ti Hwei, ignoring bribes and threats with equanimity. People of the world do not know who her Boss is, but they are learning something about His power. †

**Enoch and Jeannine Thweatt served in Taiwan as missionaries from 1959 until 1992. They continue to make trips there to teach Bible classes and encourage churches. Enoch is on the board of directors of the Ti Hwei Children’s Home and is the only American to serve in that role. He was honored by the government of Taiwan in 1995 for his service to Chinese people.**

## *A Buddhist Becomes a Christian*

**Peter Chen**

(Translated by Clinton Xue)

In my work as a Chinese evangelist in Taiwan, I meet many people, including many “Buddhists”, but not many of the Buddhists I have met are Buddhists in a strict sense. It is usually not easy to tell the difference between Buddhism and Daoism in Taiwan, as in most cases the two religious beliefs are intermixed.

On a special occasion in 1996, however, I met a gentleman who was 84 years old and was receiving treatment for hepatitis in a hospital. As we

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

talked and interacted I realized that this man was a rather devoted Buddhist. Although it was his custom at home to burn incense and to worship both the Buddha and his ancestors as well, nonetheless he consented and allowed me pray for him in the hospital. Indeed, since he was not ready to



**Peter and Bi Ling Chen**

accept the gospel, the only thing I could do was to pray for him. That this gentleman was hard of hearing and spoke a Chinese dialect which I did not quite understand made it even more difficult for me to share the gospel with him.

In order to communicate more effectively, we began to talk to each other by writing our words on a piece of paper. Each time we studied, we used at least ten sheets of typing paper! It took us almost a year to discuss different religions, and during most of this time he was talking and I was listening!

A year later, however, he told me that he wanted to study the Bible. We started with the Psalms, and then went on to the four gospels and salvation. As is my custom, I also led him in a thorough study of Acts 17:22-34. From the very beginning of our acquaintance, I treated this elderly gentleman with love and care as if he were my own father. Eventually our study of the Scriptures brought him face-to-face with Jesus and the resurrection, and after two years of Bible study, he finally accepted Jesus as his Savior and became a Christian.

**Peter Chen became a Christian in 1972 after studying the Bible by correspondence with Enoch Thweatt, from whom Peter later received advanced Bible training. Peter currently serves as minister for the Greater Taipei Church of Christ, assisted by his wife, Bi Ling.**

## CHINESE CHARACTERS AND THEIR MEANINGS

### Luke 19:10

“人子來，為  
要尋找拯救失  
喪的人。”

"for the Son of Man has  
come to seek and to save  
that which was lost."

### Crisis

危機

Generally speaking, in Taiwan, Buddhists do not often convert to Jesus Christ unless they encounter a major crisis in their lives. The Chinese word for "crisis" is made up of two characters; one means "danger" and the other means "opportunity". Danger in the life of a non-Christian becomes an opportunity for Christians to serve and thus open doors for the gospel message to penetrate hearts.

### Jesus Christ

耶穌

Jesus Christ

### Gospel

福音

fu yin; fu= blessings, happy;  
yin= sound

### Righteousness

義

Yi

羊

The top part of "righteousness" is "yang" which means sheep or lamb.

我

The bottom part is "wo" which means I (myself, me).

### Boat

船

In classical Chinese (dating to about 2500 BC) the first symbol means "vessel", the second part means "eight", the third means "mouth" or "person"! Isn't that a "coincidence"?



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

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

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## ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

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### *Verse Search* — 39 (from page 25)

1. A synagogue of the Jews.
2. He met with the Jews on three Sabbath days, reasoning with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating to them that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah who was prophesied.
3. Persuaded; great multitude; Greeks; leading women; joined.
4. Instigated mob violence to set the city in an uproar and to attack the house of Jason, who had been converted.
5. *"These who have turned the world upside down have come here too"*.
6. That Jason had harbored Paul and Silas, and that all of the accused were acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there was another king — Jesus.
7. They were more fair-minded than the Jews of Thessalonica, they received the word with readiness, searched the Scriptures daily to see if the things being taught were actually so.
8. They sent Paul away to Athens by sea, but Silas and Timothy remained.
9. He found that the whole city was given over to the worship of idols.
10. The sermon on the Areopagus or Mars Hill.
11. *"...I perceive that in all things your are very religious...**To the Unknown God.**"*
12. He made the world; He does not dwell in temples made with hands.
13. He gives life and breath and all things.
14. *"...Live; move; our being..."*.
15. He commands all men everywhere to repent; because He has appointed a day in which He will judge the world by Jesus Christ, whom He raised from the dead.
16. Some mocked; some said they would hear him further; some joined him.

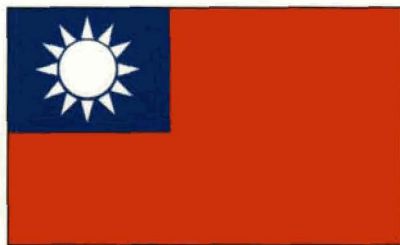


Hezekiah

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**



## Taiwan, Republic of China



**Government:** Democracy

**Head of State:**

President Chen Shui-bian

**Head of Government:**

Prime Minister Yu Shi-kun

### Secular Facts:

**Location:** Off the Southeast coast of China, between East and South China seas.

**Land Mass:** 12,500 sq. mi. Down the middle of the island runs a mountain range; the western slope is arable while the eastern side is steep and craggy.

**Population:** 22,548,009, with 21% of the population under 15 years, and almost 9% over 65.

**Major Cities:** Taipei, Kaohsiung, Taichung.

**Language:** Mandarin Chinese, Taiwanese.

**Literacy:** 94%, education is free, ages 6-15.

**Religion:** Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian, 93%; Christian, 5%.

**Ethnic Groups:** Taiwanese, 84%, mainland Chinese, 14%.

**Economy:** *Arable land:* 24%; *Agriculture:* Vegetables, rice, fruit, tea; *Labor force,* 55 % services, 37% industry; *Industries:* electronics, oil refining, chemicals, textiles; *Communications:* TV's: 327 per 1000; *Radios:* 402 per 1000; *Telephones:* 35 mil; *Transportation:* 5 mil. private cars; *Health:* Life expectancy, male, 74; female, 79.7; infant mortality: 6.8 per 1000 live births.

**Monetary Unit:** New Taiwan Dollar.

### The Church:

**Congregations:** Approximately 9, with perhaps 500 Christians worshipping each Lord's day.

**History:** American servicemen began the first congregation in Taipei in 1957. Enoch Thweatt and Roy Mullinax and their families, the first missionaries, arrived in Taipei in 1959. The Ed Shorts and the Bob Fraziers also joined the work force. In 1963, George Tien became a Christian. Tien, Mullinax and later Thweatt, did radio work for several years. Samuel Hwang preached in Taipei until his death in 1995. Hwang's sermons and tracts influenced many people, and he edited and published a Christian hymn book.

Mullinax and Thweatt edited a weekly publication on doctrinal themes. Bible correspondence courses and leadership training programs laid the groundwork for congregations. Chinese ministers serve in several localities.

Bible camps, some for Christians and others for non-Christians, have been used very successfully in Taiwan. Al Henderson produced a set of Bible study literature specifically for teenagers. Taiwan was also served by lady missionaries such as Christine Ady and Georgia Carver. Eugene Brzozowski and family moved to Kaohsiung in 1981; he continues to live and preach in south Taiwan.