

V THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

**IMMERSED
IN CHRIST**

Page 8

**A Roman
Crucifixion**

Page 18

**The Form of
Sound Words**

Page 30

**Renewing Our
Commitment**

Page 43

**America
Under Attack!**

Page 86

**You've Come
A Long Way,
Baby!**

Page 91

Thailand

Page 98



There Is No God

Barbara Cagle Ray

No God? Who sends the dew-kissed dawn
And suspends earth's nocturnal light?
Who colors the leaves on Autumn trees
And releases snowflakes on a Winter night?

Who calls forth the great rebirth of Spring
And Summer flowers robed in bright array?
Who breathes life into a newborn child
And enables the mind to recall yesterday?

No God? Who controls the ocean's tides
And sends a bountiful harvest in the Fall?
Who makes stars to shine like diamonds
And gives us the music of a songbird's call?

Who enables the heart to feel true love
And forms butterflies inside a silken pod?
Oh, so many questions could be asked
Of one who declares, "There is no God."

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

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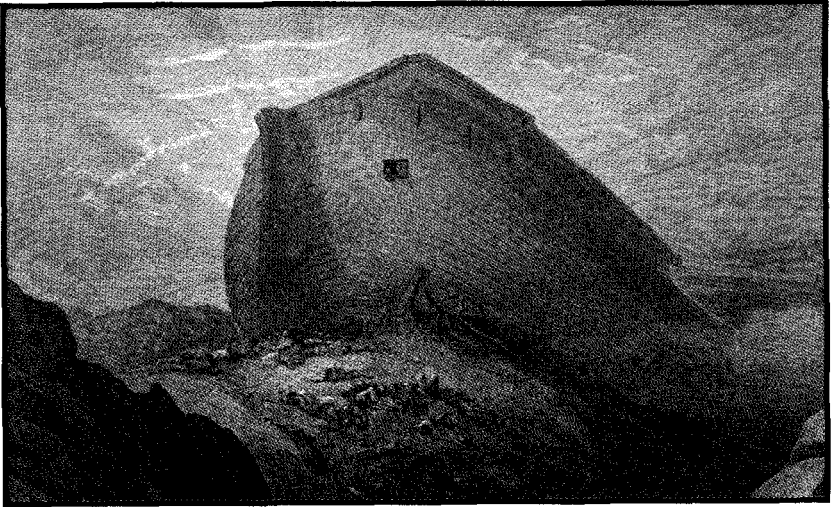
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**THE CHURCHES OF
CHRIST SALUTE YOU**
(ROMANS 16:16).

God's illustration of *HOW* and *WHEN*
salvation comes to obedient believers:
THE PARALLEL BETWEEN NOAH and BAPTISM...



*“...when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, **eight** souls were **SAVED BY WATER**.*

*“The **LIKE FIGURE** whereunto even **BAPTISM DOTH** also **NOW SAVE US...**” (1 Peter 3:20,21).*



**By inspiration of the Holy Spirit,
Paul wrote to the church of Christ in Corinth:**

*“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to **ONE HUSBAND**, that I may present you as **A CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHIRST**” (2 Corinthians 11:2).*



The New Testament portrays the called-out body of Christians “the church”, “the family”, “the bride of Christ”. How many chaste and obedient brides will He claim for Himself when He comes again?

WILL YOU PRAY WITH ME?

J. C. Choate
Editor-in-Chief



As Christians, children of God, we are so blessed to be able to pray to our Father in heaven through Christ who is not only our Saviour but is also our Mediator and Advocate (John 14:13; 1 John 2:1). Paul said that we should let our requests be made known to God (Philippians 4:6) and John

said, *“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him”* (1 John 5:14,15).

It is said that God answers *all* prayers. To some He says yes and to others He says no. The key to the Lord answering our prayers is that they be according to His will. We must understand that our Father knows what is best and will not give us anything that will hurt or destroy us and others. At the same time, Christ said, *“If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask?”* (Luke 11:11-13). He also said, *“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”* (Luke 11:9,10).

We are told that we should always pray and not faint (Luke 18:1). We are also told that we need to be taught *how* to pray (Luke 11:1).

Many times we are unwise in our prayers. We don't think things through, and we request of the Father things that He cannot give because of the ultimate harm they would do to us. We may even ask things that we are not prepared to receive. Perhaps we would not be strong enough or wise enough to handle what we desire. Or it might not be the time for a particular prayer to be answered.

I believe God has answered many of my prayers with yes. He blessed me with good parents and a good education. He has given me a wonderful wife and faithful children and grandchildren. He has given me good health, and even when I was diagnosed with cancer, the surgery was successful, and I once more have good health. I have been blessed to preach the gospel for more than 50 years and have worked 41 years in the mission fields of Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India, and other countries. I have been blessed to use literature, radio, TV, and magazines to take the gospel to the masses. And prayerfully, much more can be done before I leave this world.

During these years, I have done a lot of praying that India might be evangelized. Doors have opened to enable us to reach the masses through literature, radio, and TV, but still so many have not heard. We are dealing with *over a billion people*. We need more workers, more congregations, more radio work, more TV programs, and more literature distribution. We need more brethren to help. Even though we have prayed for many years about this, and we have worked hard to evangelize India, still our prayers have not been answered to the extent that the country is fully evangelized. Are we not serious enough? Are we not of a mind to sacrifice enough? Are we not instilling into the local Christians the urge to do more to evangelize their country? We don't know the answers, but we need help! Who will work with us? Which brethren and congregations will help to make it possible for the Lord to bless India with the victory for which we pray?

Another thing, paramount in my prayers, is that God will enable us to print and distribute more copies of our magazine, **The Voice of Truth International**, throughout the world. A few months ago my wife and I were at the New Delhi Train Station, taking the train to Bangalore. Before departure, I picked up some magazines at a book stall to have something to read along the way. One was a copy of *The Readers' Digest* in the English language. It has been printed in India for many years, but the thing that caught my eye was the statement in the lower

left hand corner which said **THIS ISSUE FOR INDIA AND NEPAL, 500,000 COPIES.** A few months later the notice read, **THIS ISSUE FOR INDIA AND NEPAL, 503,000 COPIES.** That may not be many magazines for a country of over one billion people, not to mention the 20 million in Nepal, but still that is *big circulation for any magazine in any country of the world.* I just thought, “What could we do here in India to spread the Lord’s cause if we could print a half million copies of **The Voice of Truth International?**” And think about this. It is said that for every such piece of literature that goes out, at least 10 people will read it. That means that 500,000 copies in circulation would multiply into **5 million readers!** And if that could be continued over a period of time, *just think of the many souls this magazine could reach for the Lord!* Brothers and sisters in Christ, please pray with me that we can increase our faith, our vision, and our goals to reach the lost in this world.

I pray that more and more of my American brethren, in particular, will use this magazine for the good it will do in this country. Here in Winona, in a small city, I give copies to the families of the local congregation. I also take copies to each of the banks in town, to the workers at the Post Office, and to the workers at the court house. I try to keep copies with me to give to people I meet, encouraging them to attend an assembly or to have a home Bible study. Congregations, as well as individuals, all over the country could do this in their areas. Also, the magazine would do much good in public reading racks in hospitals, medical clinics, doctors’ offices, and places of business. You can use them in personal work, send them to your contacts, give them to those who are having birthdays, anniversaries, and for other special occasions. There are so many ways to spread the gospel through this little tool.

We have also begun to send boxes, free of charge, to American congregations where the church is small and cannot afford to pay for them. We would like to saturate the mission areas of our own country with this magazine, and with your help we will do that.

We have mailed out thousands of introductory packets of **The Voice of Truth International** to individuals and congregations, encouraging them to use it. We ask individual Christians to subscribe for \$12.00 for 4 issues, \$20.00 for 8 issues, and we ask congregations to take at least a box of 35 copies of each issue for \$25.00 a month, or to send \$300.00 for one year for 35 copies of 4 issues.

Sadly, even though we have mailed thousands of advertisement

packets, there has been very little response. It is so difficult to get the attention of brethren. They receive so much mail that they often ignore most of it. **Brethren, we need your attention.** We want to convince you of your need for this magazine, and of the role you can fill in supplying it to thousands and thousands of people all over the world. How is that?

Because it is as a direct result of your use of **The Voice of Truth International** that we have funds to send more than 20,000 copies to the mission fields, **free of charge and postage paid!** Our postage bill alone already exceeds \$5,000.00 per issue! That is a lot of money, indicative of the even greater expenditure in the printing — but we are still far short of the hundreds of thousands of copies, even millions of copies, that the world needs.

What can you do to help? As an individual you can subscribe for yourself. You can make gift subscriptions for friends and loved ones. As a congregation, you can use it in your area, ordering a box each quarter or multiples of boxes. What about those of you who have web sites? You could mention this magazine, recommending it and giving information concerning where readers can order it. Do you have other promotional ideas you can share with us? We don't want our smallness of vision to get in the way of increasing the publication to 100,000 copies, 200,000, 300,000, 500,000, and a million or more. With the help of brethren throughout the States, these goals can be reached.

We need thinkers, people who have the know-how to get things done. **WHO WILL TAKE THE CHALLENGE TO HELP US TO SEND THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL TO THE WORLD?**

Are we praying for things that are too big for us to handle?

Are you the one God would use in answering these prayers and enabling us to handle what would be too great a challenge without your help?

May God open our eyes to see the opportunities and possibilities to share the gospel with the world through this magazine and through every other means possible to us. May we have the vision, the faith, and the zeal to take the initiative, so the Lord can open the doors for us to go through to do the work that needs to be done.

I believe that with the Lord's help, and with your help, we are going to see things done that will change us and will change the world. I will continue to pray for this to happen. Will you pray with me? †



IMMERSED IN CHRIST

Byron Nichols

The Bible stipulates that baptism is only by immersion. The New Testament was written in Greek, and the Greek word for baptism allow only for immersion, or burial.

The Bible also specifies that the purpose of baptism (immersion) is for the forgiveness (remission) of our past sins. This is borne out by such Scriptures as Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16, 1 Peter 3:21, and others.

The Bible further indicates that when one is baptized for the forgiveness of his sins he is immersed **into** Christ. Paul affirms this in Galatians 3:27, *"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."* He makes the same affirmation in Romans 6:3, where he says, *"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?"*

Thus, immersion is of deep significance and importance. However, there is a biblical immersion that is **not into Christ**, and it is this second immersion to which your attention is now invited.

Webster's unabridged dictionary defines the word "immerse" as follows: "to plunge, drop, or dip into or as if into a liquid, especially so as to cover completely. To plunge into a specified state; to involve or engage deeply; as he was immersed in thought." Please keep this information in mind as we proceed.

As was stated earlier, the Bible requires immersion into Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. But, believe it or not, that really is not enough! We must also be immersed **in** Christ if we are to be His true and faithful disciples. It's true that the Bible never uses the specific expression "immersed in Christ," but that idea is very plainly taught.

To be "immersed in Christ" means to be deeply involved or engaged in Christ. Yes, immersion **into** Christ is commanded by the Bible, but the Scriptures also require immersion **in** Christ. When Jesus said, *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be*

added to you” (Matthew 6:33), He was talking about our being immersed **in** Him. In Matthew 22:36 the Lord was asked, “*Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?*” Jesus responded, “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment.*” In this response Jesus was saying essentially, “Your commitment to God must include everything you have and are — you must immerse yourself in Me.”

In the familiar words of Romans 12:1, Paul advocated being immersed **in** Christ in this way, “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*” Paul brought this subject of immersion **in** Christ before the church at Corinth, as evidenced by his words in 1 Corinthians 15:58, “*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, inasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*”

Is it possible for one to have been immersed **into** Christ, but never have really become immersed **in** Christ? Most definitely so. How serious a matter is this? Just these few verses (out of a whole host that could be used) should suffice in showing the seriousness of this matter. In James 5:19-20, the Lord’s brother wrote, “*Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.*” Paul very clearly warned the Corinthians (and us), “*Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall*” (1 Corinthians 10:12). Perhaps even more noteworthy and impressive is the testimony of the faithful and unrelenting Paul regarding his own personal struggle to continue his immersion **in** Christ — “*But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified*” (1 Corinthians 9:27). There can be no doubt, then, that it is possible to have been immersed **into** Christ, to have been immersed **in** Christ for a period of time, and then to somehow have become more and more slack in our commitment to the Lord, even to the ultimate point of falling away and turning our back on Him who made possible our salvation.

Surely our study of God’s Word will help us to clearly see and firmly believe that:

1. It is necessary for one to be immersed **into** Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins;
2. It is equally necessary that we also be immersed (deeply involved) **IN** Jesus Christ in order to have any reasonable expectation of an eternal home in heaven.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GOD

The Unknown God Is Now Known	Shan Jackson	12
The Incredible Jesus	Ed Short	14
When I Survey the Wondrous Cross	Jimmy Young	16
A Roman Crucifixion	Anonymous	18

EVIDENCES

The Testimony of the Conscience	Betty Burton Choate	20
Did Man Come from the Sea?	Winford Claiborne	22

THE WORD OF GOD

It's Good to Be Sure	Jimmy Jividen	24
Don't Ignore God's Warning Signs	Jodie Boren	25

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

Salvation by Grace	Albert Gardner	28
The Form of Sound Words	Hugo McCord	30
Total Hereditary Depravity	Ron Deaton	32
SHD	Jane Maynard	35

SALVATION

The High Cost of Pharaoh's Pride ...	Royce Frederick	39
Biblical Teaching about Salvation	W. Douglass Harris	40

THE CHURCH

Renewing Our Commitment	Stan Mitchell	43
When God's Church Is on the Verge ...	David Tarbet	48

WORSHIP

Let God Do the Clapping!	Bobby Duncan	50
Authorized Music	Reggie Gnanasundaram.....	52

CHURCH GROWTH

The Secret to Waking (3)	John-Mark Wilson	57
How to Build a Fire	Marilyn Peoples	59
What Can I Do?	J.A. Thornton	61

CHURCH AND BIBLE HISTORY

Persecution and Endurance ...	Dr. Hans Grimm	64
In God's City	Bobby Wheat	67

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

The Power of the Written Word	John Thiesen	70
God's Love Compels Us	R.H. Tex Williams	72

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

Learning to Walk	Jeril (Polly) Cline	75
A Servant of God.....	Steven Wright	77
Why So Much Violence?	Ardron Hinton	79

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

An Open Letter to Christians	Brad Harrub, Ph.D.	80
What Parents Could Have Done	Anonymous	84

ETHICS

America Under Attack!	Roy Beasley	86
You've Come a Long Way, Baby!	G. W. Childs	91

PROVERBS 17:22

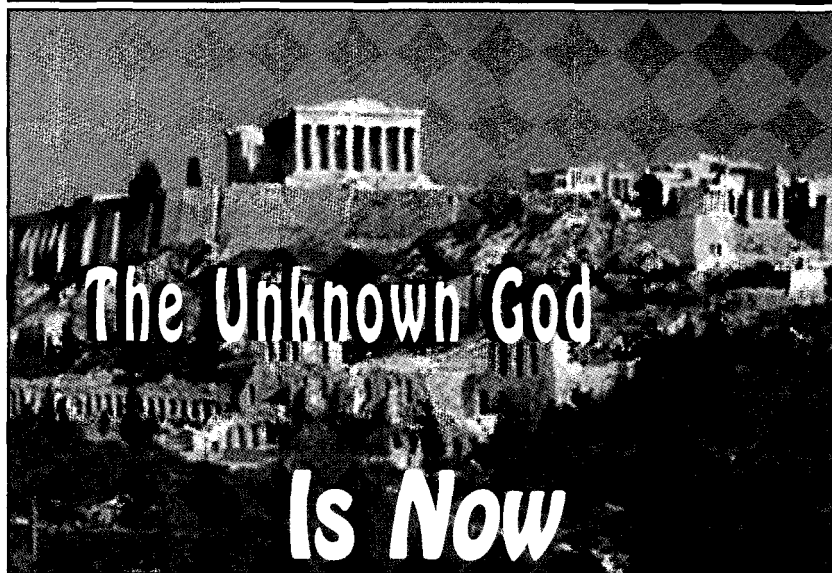
Humor		96
-------------	--	----

FEATURES, POEMS AND FILLERS

There Is No God	Barbara Cagle Ray	Inside Front
Salvation		
The Church		
Editorial: Will You Pray With Me?	J.C. Choate	4
Editorial: Immersed IN Christ ...	Byron Nichols	8
Contrasts	Charles R. Brewer	13
Whenever Crushing Be My Cares ...	Sancie King	17
Verse Search		27
Where and When Was the Church Begun?		29
How Do You Measure Up?		38
Quick Commentary on Crucial Verses		42
Since I Am a Christian	Parker Henderson	47
Upon the Sacred Altar	Mike Norwood	49
Who Am I?		63
Father... ..	Betty Burton Choate	74

FROM THE HEART OF ...

Thailand		98
The Kingdom of Thailand		98
The Beginning of the Lord's Church ...	Parker Henderson	103
Damrong	Skip Rogers	107
Lamtap	Skip Rogers	108
Siamese Twins, Siamese Cats	Parker Henderson	109



Known

Shan Jackson

The Apostle Paul was addressing a gathering of Athenian philosophers who had come to a place called Mars' hill. Their desire was to hear and discuss "new things" (Acts 17:21). Paul speaks, "*For as I passed by (on his way to Mars' hill in Athens) and beheld your devotions (statues and other objects they worshipped), I found an altar with this inscription, 'To The Unknown God.' Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him (God)*

declare I unto you." Then Paul began to preach the Word of God to them.

The apparent reason they had a statue addressed to the unknown God was just in case they accidentally missed some unnamed or unknown deity. Obviously they tried to the best of their ability to recognize and worship every deity under the sun. However, if they inadvertently missed one, then they had an extra altar to cover their

GOD

oversight. Finding this statue gave Paul an opportunity to start helping them find the true God. But let's go to the conclusion of Paul's teaching. In Acts 17:30, and continuing to the first part of verse 34, we find him saying,

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man (Jesus) whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

"And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, 'We will hear thee again of this matter.' So Paul departed from among them.

Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed."

The word "assurance" is from the Greek word PISTIS, which refers to our faith in Christ. With this believing faith (and remember that Jesus is the "au-

thor and finisher of our faith," (Hebrews 12:2), we are enabled to perceive the spiritual realities of God. Ephesians 2:8 says, *"For ye are saved through faith."* This is the saving faith we have in our Savior Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:22-26), and with this faith Jesus becomes our Lord and Master, helping us perceive God in the genuine light that His Word shines into our understanding.

Rather than God being unknown to us, or just out of our grasp, we can learn the true joys in obtaining the realities of Him through Jesus Christ which come to us by hearing *"the Word of God"* (Romans 10:17). †

Shan Jackson is the preacher for the Lord's church in Port Lavaca, Texas, USA.

Contrasts

The man who never went to school
But knows God's word, is wise.
The man who works for naught but gold
Is a poor man when he dies -
But the humblest servant of the Lord
Has a mansion in the skies.

- Charles R. Brewer



The Incredible Jesus

Ed Short

Books, magazines, TV and radio programs, movies and other forms of media all enable us to know people and to empathize with them. Through a novel or a biography, we can become very close to someone we've never met or someone who doesn't even exist. Untold millions of Chinese practically consider Bao Yu of *Dream of the Red Chamber* a blood relative.

Through the four gospel accounts of the New Testament (Mat-

thew, Mark, Luke and John), readers meet a man named Jesus. These four writers tell us that Jesus made incredible claims, did incredible things and spoke incredible words.

Jesus made incredible claims.

Think about it! Jesus claimed to be the Savior of the world, King of kings and Creator of all things! Jesus said, "*I am the way and the truth and the life.*" He called Himself the Bread of life, the Lamb of God and the Son of God!

GOD

If we were to meet on the street today someone who makes claims like these, what would we think? Most of us would question his sanity. But Jesus dared to say these things!

Jesus did incredible deeds, including miracles: The blind received sight, the lame walked and the dead were raised back to life. Jesus fed the hungry, encouraged the depressed and gave new life to sinners who repented. He knew what was in people, He understood them. Jesus was with people, He contacted them and touched them.

I once was at a children's home when a group of well-dressed women came to visit and make a donation to the home. It was obvious, however, that the women did not want to contact the children. I guess the women thought the children were dirty as they avoided even touching them.

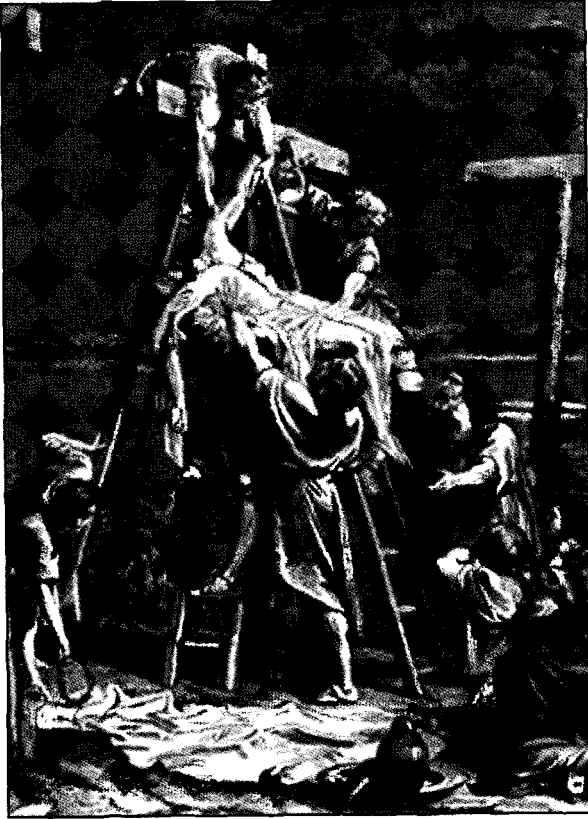
Jesus, on the other hand, didn't fear dirt, wasn't afraid of poverty, didn't fear the unfamiliar; he only cared about people. Most wonderful of all, however, is that Jesus gave himself for mankind, was crucified and was raised back to life on the third day. Through Jesus' death our sins can be forgiven and we can receive a new life. Yes, Jesus did incredible deeds!

Jesus spoke incredible words. Please listen to some things Jesus

said: *"Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them... You are like salt for all mankind... You are like light for the whole world... Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you... If you forgive others the wrongs they have done you, your Father in heaven will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive the wrongs of others, then your Father in heaven will not forgive the wrongs you have done"* (Matthew 5:3,10,13,14,44; 6:14,15, TEV). Those who first listened to Jesus speak these words really appreciated His messages; today you and I can also admire the words of Jesus, as they will greatly encourage and benefit us.

Jesus made incredible claims, did incredible deeds, spoke incredible words. May I ask what is your reaction to this man, Jesus? Do you believe His claims — Savior of the world, King of kings, Creator of all, Bread of life, Son of God? Do you want Him to do some incredible things in your life, like forgive your sins and change your way of living? Do you believe His incredible words and will you allow them to influence your life? I encourage you to read the Bible more and get better acquainted with this man Jesus. †

Ed Short works with the World Christian Broadcasting Company and lives in Nashville, Tennessee, USA.



We have read many times from the Bible regarding the cross of Christ. Countless lessons have been written about His crucifixion. The theme of New Testament preaching was Christ and Him crucified (Acts 2:22-36; 1 Corinthians 1:17-25). We often sing of the cross of Christ. One of the best of these songs is, *"When I Survey The Wondrous Cross."* What do you see when your mind goes back and surveys the cross of Christ?

"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"

Jimmy Young

The first thing we visualize is **the power of supreme love**. God's great love for man is overwhelmingly pictured on the cross (John 3:16,17; Luke 11:56; Luke 19:10; Hebrews 2:9). It isn't God's desire that any perish (2 Peter 3:9). He made a way of escape, and that was through the cross of Christ. If you want to know how much God loves you, then take a look at the cross.

GOD

When we survey the cross of Christ, we see **the ugly reality of sin**. It was sin that put Christ on the cross (2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 4:25; 1 Peter 2:24; Hebrews 9:28). There would not have been a need for the cross if there had been no sin. But because of sin, Christ suffered great pain and agony at Calvary. At the cross of Christ we see the reality of sin.

In considering that old rugged cross, we see that Jesus became **the remedy for sin**. Jesus was sinless, yet He took our sins on Himself. Man could not save himself from his own sins; he was doomed eternally, without help from God. Christ fulfilled that need (Hebrews 4:15; 7:26; 1 Peter 2:1,2). It is by the blood of Christ that we have redemption (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14), remission of sins (Matthew 26:28), and reconciliation to God (Romans 5:10). It is by the blood of Christ, coupled with our obedience to God's commands, that we are able to claim those spiritual blessings promised in the New Testament (Ephesians 1:3; Galatians 3:26,27).

In being obedient to the Lord we will hear His Word (Romans 10:17; John 5:24); believe in Christ as the Son of God (John 8:24; Mark 16:16); repent of our sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 17:30,31); confess Christ as God's Son (Matthew

10:32; Romans 10:10; Acts 8:37), and be baptized for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

When we survey the cross of Christ, we can easily see that the cross proclaims **the supreme love of God, the reality of sin, and the remedy for sin**. We need nothing more. †

Jimmy Young preaches for the Nettleton congregation in Jonesboro, Arkansas, USA.

Whenever crushing be my cares,
I take God's loving hand;
Who walks beside me day by day
And fully understands.
For His dear hand, which strengthen-
ing be,
Is always kept in mine;
Because He's won my contrite heart
And truly is He mine!

The love of God, who is my forte,
Means more to me each day;
And just because He's always near,
He hears me when I pray!

So sweet this fellowship with God,
That I can scarce explain;
Just what it means to me, His child,
Because His grace I've gained!

So even when the skies are dark
And sunlight I can't see;
I still can see God's loving face,
Who is the whole of me.

— Sancier Earman King



The cross is placed on the ground and the exhausted Man is quickly thrown backwards with His shoulders against the wood. The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drives a heavy, square wrought-iron nail through the wrist, deep into the wood.

Quickly he moves to the other side and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flex and movement. The cross is then lifted into place. The left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees flexed. The victim is now crucified.

As He slowly sags down with more weight on the nails in the wrists, excruciating fiery pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain — the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves. As He pushes Himself upward to avoid this stretching-torment, He places the full weight on the nail through His feet. Again He feels the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the bones of His feet.

As the arms fatigue, cramps sweep through His muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, and throbbing

A Roman Crucifixion
as described by a medical doctor

pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward to breathe. Air can be drawn into the lungs but not exhaled. He fights to raise Himself in order to get even one small breath.

Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream, and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically, He is able to push Himself upward to exhale and bring in life-giving oxygen.

The Crucified endures hours of endless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, scaring pain as tissue is torn from His lacerated back as He moves up and down against rough timber. Then another agony begins: a paralyzing, crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart.

It is now almost over. The loss of tissue fluids has reached a critical level. The compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues. The tortured lungs are making frantic efforts to gasp in small gulps of air. He can feel the chill of death creeping through his tissues.

Finally, He allows His body to die.

All this the Bible records with the simple words, "*and they crucified Him*" (Mark 15:24). †

— Author Unknown

Matthew 27:27-37

"Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!'

"Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.

"Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross. And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink.

"Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: 'They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.'

"Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there.

"And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him:

This is Jesus the king of the Jews."

The Testimony of the Conscience

Betty Burton Choate

Evolutionists would have us believe that there is no creator God, that “somehow” matter exists of itself, and that through another “somehow” non-living matter became living matter.

We humans are supposed to “somehow” be nothing more than a very advanced form of that life that “somehow” developed. If this is true, as entities we are actually of no more importance than a plant, a slime of bacteria, or a killer whale (if importance were based on size, we would be considerably less significant than the whale!). Evolutionists believe this and that is why there is:

(1) a growing movement to elevate animals to equal status with humans through the “Animal Rights” organizations.

(2) an agenda to obliterate awareness of, and conformity to, the idea of “moral law”, absolutes of “right and wrong” and any value system that one human would impose on another.

Of course, if humans are no more than an advanced form of life, then there actually is no difference in the *value of life* among all living things. And if this be the case, it would be just as much a crime to kill a baby bird as a human baby. The only need

is to condition our minds (as they have already been conditioned by the abortion propaganda) so that we will all share this humanistic view.

And if it be the case that there is no Creator, and no absolutes, then there is no such thing as *good* and *evil*. And no human has any right to impose his preferences on any other human. To imprison a man for a “crime” would be — well, not a *mis-carriage* of “justice” because without absolutes there cannot actually be “crime” or “justice”, for who has the authority to *pronounce* or *impose* either on others? and *who* gave *anyone* that authority?

So, if there is no Creator, if everything did just “somehow” evolve, we become a lawless world in which “might” rules.

But inside the human is a part that is never found in plants or bacteria or killer whales — or even in monkeys. There is an inborn index in humans that identifies behavior under columns headed “Right” — “Wrong”, “Good” — “Evil”. And when a human does something that is right, good, beneficial to others, even at the cost of self-sacrifice, something inside him glows with happiness and self-approval. In contrast, when a human does something wrong, even if

EVIDENCES

no one is aware of his behavior but himself, that same something inside him plagues him with guilt and self-condemnation.

What is this “something” that is unique to humans? We call it *conscience*. Sometimes that word — *conscience* — is confused in spelling with another word — *conscious*. Though their meaning is different, both are bound up in this uniqueness of humanity: “conscious” means “to be aware of”, and “conscience” grows out of our awareness of self and of self’s obedience or disobedience to the moral code that has pervaded every civilized society from the beginning of time. Neither of these words can be used to describe either plants or animals — those forms of life that evolutionists tell us are the same as human life.

But how did humans become creatures of consciousness and of conscience? From where did this sense of existence and of right and wrong arise? If we evolved, what monumental plane of development triggered the formation of “conscience” in every one of us? From where did the index of “right” and “wrong” come? Who had the authority to imprint such a list in the mind of every human being?

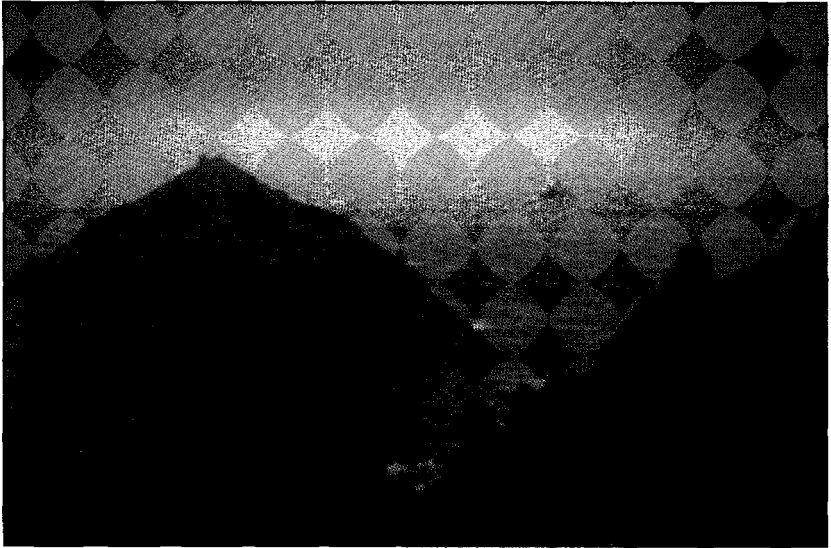
Obviously, neither the human conscience nor the code of good and evil “evolved”. We don’t “evolve” things that restrict and condemn us.

If it were our *choice*, our conscience would never condemn us. It would never tell us “no” to anything we desired to do. In fact, that is what humanists, evolutionists, atheists are trying to achieve: to “educate” us out of believing that there is a God who has the authority to impose His moral code on humanity. They are trying to train us into deafness toward our consciences until they finally cease to speak to us.

“Speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Timothy 4:2). *“To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled”* (Titus 1:15).

This humanistic culture has gone a long way toward reaching its goal. We now have such horrible crimes committed by teen-agers that they are being tried and sentenced as adults. The ultimate comment in such cases is, “There was no sign of remorse, no feeling of having done wrong or of being sorry about it.” That is a description of a human without a conscience. Do we want to live in a world where humanistic propaganda has killed both conscience and standards of good and evil? Are we eager to be lawless? †

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Did Man Come from the Sea? Is it his destiny to return to the sea?

Winford Claiborne

During the ceremonies celebrating the life of John F. Kennedy, Jr., a film was shown of his father, President Kennedy, making these observations: "We all came from the sea. We are tied to the ocean. And when we go back to the sea — whether it is to sail or to watch it — we are going back from whence we came" (President John F. Kennedy, 1962).

Many people who have not studied the theory of evolution may not know what President Kennedy was saying. Even he, himself, might

not have realized the import of his statements. But *he was affirming his acceptance of Darwin's theory of evolution*: that microscopic creatures in the sea gradually began to develop into more complicated creatures until they eventually became human beings. The fact that no such development has ever been seen seems not to affect those who accept materialistic evolution. There is no fossil evidence which sustains evolution. No experiments can demonstrate one phase of evolution. It is a theory based on the wishes, hopes

EVIDENCES

and imagination of those who prefer to live without God.

of God had given man the only reliable information about his origin

No human being came from the sea. And the final destiny of man is not the sea.

John F. Kennedy, Jr's body was cremated and then his ashes were scattered over the ocean very close to the place where he had died, as though he was being returned to the water from which he had originated. But no human being came from the sea. And the final destiny of man is not the sea. All the bodies which are in the ocean and in the earth are going to be raised for the final judgment:

*"And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. **The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works**" (Revelation 20:12,13).*

How foolish to speak of our coming from the sea and returning to it!

Long before Darwin invented his godless theory and long before John Kennedy was born, the word

and destiny: *"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them"* (Genesis 1:27). The Son of God completely endorsed the Genesis account of creation (Matthew 19:4). The book of Ecclesiastes tells us that man's body returns to the earth; but *"the spirit shall return to God who gave it."* Jesus promised His followers: *"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... That where I am there you may be also"* (John 14:2,3).

Is any theory more degrading to human beings than one that teaches that we came from microscopic creatures in the sea and that our ultimate destiny is to return to our watery source? If we convince our children and young people that they are nothing more than slime from the ocean, how can we expect them to act with the dignity and responsibility of creatures made in the image of Almighty God? †

Winford Claiborne has long been the speaker for the radio series, *International Gospel Hour*. He lives in Fayetteville, Tennessee, USA.



It's
Good to
Be Sure

Jimmy Jividen

There are many things we do not know. Some things we do not know because we have never investigated — like the average life span of a kangaroo. Some things we do not know because they are beyond the scope of our limited experience on Planet Earth — like the number of galaxies in the Universe. Some things we do not know because they are beyond our limited capacity to know as created beings — the secret things belong to God. We need only to trust Him who does know. That's faith.

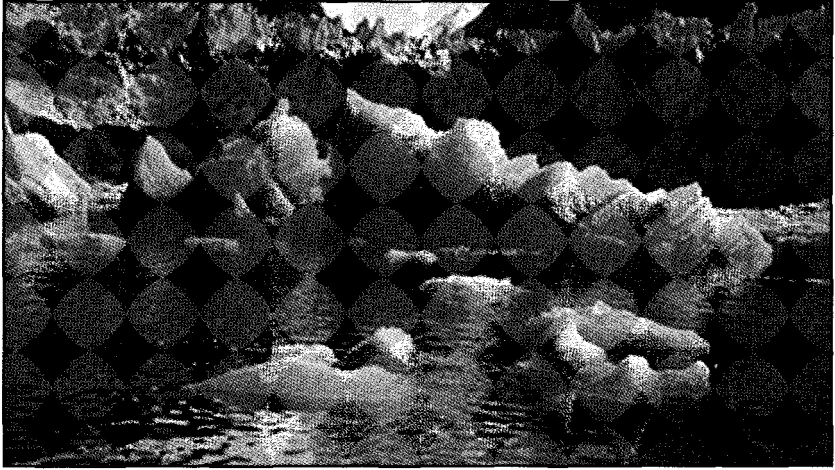
God has revealed His will for man in the Scriptures. They are trustworthy, absolute, and objective. They reveal all we need to know for

“life” and “godliness.” “Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue” (2 Peter 1:2,3).

We accept the Scriptures at face value. They answer all the big questions about life. We can be sure of the answers because they come from the God we trust.

One who doubts the Scriptures must be miserable. His questions remain unanswered. His doubts make him like *“a wave driven by the winds and tossed” (James 1:6).* Isn't it good to be sure? †

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Don't Ignore God's Warning Signs

Jodie Boren

The Cook Inlet in Alaska is mostly south and a little east of Anchorage, between the mainland and the Kenai peninsula. Just south is Kodiak Island. In Cook Inlet there is an arm of water that is called Turnagain. There is, here, a vast beachhead of many miles that is extremely treacherous. It appears inviting and harmless, but to step into this quagmire is almost certain death. As deadly as this beachhead is, strangely enough, there are no warning signs posted! Therefore,

many tragic deaths result because people are unaware of the dangers.

Not so in the spiritual realm, for God has posted many warnings of the dangers of sin. We are told plainly that "*the wages of sin is death*" (Romans 6:23). Yet, sadly, the great majority of the people today ignore God's warnings and will experience spiritual death.

To the wicked — those who do not believe and obey the Lord — Paul says the wrath of God will come upon them (Colossians 3:6).

THE WORD OF GOD

In 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10, we are told that those who do not obey the Gospel will be punished with everlasting destruction. In Luke 13:32, Jesus speaks plainly, “...*except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*”

Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 6:9,10 that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Then he spells out their evil works so that none can possibly misunderstand. Another warning sign is posted in Galatians 5:19-21 regarding the dangers of the works of the flesh. Those who ignore this warning cannot inherit the kingdom of God. God said, “*When I say unto the wicked thou shalt surely die...the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity*” (Ezekiel 3:18). The Bible is replete with such warnings to the wicked, but these will suffice for making the point.

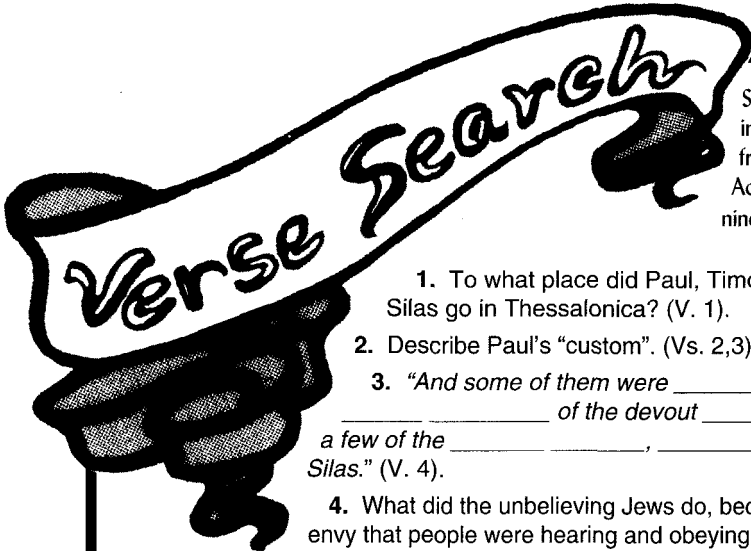
God has warning signs for the believers also. Jesus hits many of us when He says in Luke 12:15, “*Take heed and beware of covetousness.*” Covetousness is idolatry (Colossians 3:5). Another warning is posted in Colossians 2:8, where Christians are taught of the dangers of following after the traditions of men. One of the strongest warnings is found at the first of the Bible (Deuteronomy 4:2) — in the middle of the Bible (Proverbs 30:5,6) — and, at the end of the Bible (Revelation 22:18), where

God says emphatically, **do not change My Word!** Do not add to it or take away from it! Yet, many today ignore this warning and clamor for change that clearly violates these Scriptures!

We must surely remember the warning of Deuteronomy 6:12, “*Beware lest thou forget the Lord.*” If we do forget Him, God will utterly forget us and forsake us (Jeremiah 23:39). Paul implies in Acts 20:26,27 that unless we preach the Gospel to all the world, we’ll be guilty of the blood of the lost. This could be a reference to Ezekiel 3:17-20. From just these few passages we can better understand the warning of Peter that the devil is out to get us (1 Peter 5:8).

It makes our hearts sad to think of one sinking to physical death in the Turnagain clay of Alaska. But this is nothing in comparison to the multiplied millions who will experience the second death and go away into everlasting punishment — banished forever from the glorious presence of the Lord (Matthew 24:45 and 2 Thessalonians 1:9). Let us, therefore, fight the good fight of faith, that we may lay hold on eternal life and be ushered into that upper and better kingdom whose builder and maker is God. †

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Verse Search

Supply the missing information from the book of Acts, chapter nineteen, 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.]

Salvation by Grace

Albert Gardner

If anyone is ever saved, it will be by the grace of God. *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 6:23). One will receive either the gift or wages.

That means **we can never work enough, do enough, or be good enough to deserve salvation!** If we could earn salvation, the death of Christ was unnecessary.

Many passages teach salvation by grace. *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast"* (Ephesians 2:8,9).

"Through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:2).

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age" (Titus 2:11,12).

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death

for everyone" (Hebrews 2:9).

"So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

Seeing we are saved by grace, some have mistakenly concluded we are saved **wholly** by grace. They mean that there is nothing the sinner can do in accepting the grace of God.

In 1829, George Wilson and James Porter were convicted of robbing the U.S. mails, and were sentenced to death by hanging. Three weeks before the time set for Wilson's execution, he was pardoned by President Jackson.

Strangely enough, Wilson refused the pardon. The case went to the Supreme Court, which handed down this decision: "A pardon is a deed, the validity of which delivery is not complete without acceptance. It may be rejected by the person to whom it is tendered, and if rejected, we have discovered no power in this court to force it upon him!"

Salvation is by grace. There is no way to earn salvation, for it is the

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

gift of God. But it is a **pardon which must be received**. Just as Wilson refused his pardon, many today refuse salvation simply by not accepting it. The grace of God has appeared to all men, but this does not mean that all men will be saved. It means there are conditions that we must meet in accepting the pardon.

Our Lord taught clearly that some will be saved and some will be lost. *"And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life"* (Matthew 25:46). The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to **all men, but not all will be saved**. Those who accept the pardon will be saved eternally.

Grace has been extended to all, yet some will be lost. We must conclude that there are conditions that must be met in accepting grace; otherwise, everybody would be saved. We can examine the examples of those saved by grace in the book of Acts, to see what they did in accepting grace. In each case they heard the Gospel and believed it. Believers in Acts 2:38 were told, *"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."* †

Albert Gardner preaches for the church of Christ in Strawberry, Arkansas, USA.

WHERE AND WHEN WAS THE CHURCH BEGUN?

There are many churches in the world today, called by many different names. Each one was begun at a different time and place, by a different founder. Are all of these different groups part of the universal church of Christ? If not, how can we know which church is the true one?

The first four books of the New Testament tell us about the Gospel of Christ. The next book, called 'Acts', tells of the beginning of the Lord's church in the city of Jerusalem in approximately A.D. 33. According to Acts 2, the Holy Spirit was poured out from heaven, the message of the gospel was preached for the first time, and people were told how to be 'born again'. Acts 2:47 says, *"...the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."* Ephesians 3:14,15 explains that *"...the whole family in heaven and earth is named..."* after our Lord Jesus Christ. So check the history of the church you are in, or considering: What is its name? Who was its founder? When was it begun? Where? *Only one* matches the Scriptures.

NEXT: WHO IS MY ELDER BROTHER?

The Form of Sound Words

Hugo McCord

An inspired commandment is to “*Hold fast the form of sound words*” (2 Timothy 1:13). The word “sound” [*hugiaino*] first refers to your physical body, “to be well, to be in good health” (Thayer), and then refers to your spiritual body, your soul, your spirit, that it may “be well” and “in good health”. This requires teachings “free from any admixture of error” (Thayer), “correct instruction” (B-G-D).

The word “form” [*hupotuposis*] refers to a “model”, an “example”, a “standard” (B-G-D), a “pattern placed before one to be held fast and copied” (Thayer). Thomas used part of Paul’s word [*tupos*]:

“Except I shall see the print [tupos] of the nails, and put my finger into the print [tupos] of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe” (John 20:25).

Unfortunately, words are used today for which there is not an inspired “print” or an “example” or a “standard” or a “pattern” placed “before one to be held fast and copied.”

Hugh Fulford of Selma, AL in a VIGIL article reminds us:

Do Not Say:

“Church of Christ people”

“Church of Christ preacher”

“Church of Christ doctrine”

“Come hear what the Church of Christ teaches.”

“I am trying to teach him our position.”

Instead, Say:

“Christians or God’s people”

“Preachers or ministers of the gospel”

“The gospel of Christ or New Testament teaching”

“Come hear what the Word of God teaches.”

“I am trying to teach him the Word of God.”

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

"I am trying to convert her
to the Church of Christ."

"I am trying to convert her to Christ."

"The Church of Christ teaches. . ."

"The Bible teaches . . ."

"I am a Church of Christ."

"I am a Christian."

Other Mis-statements:	
Do Not Say:	Instead, Say:
"our church", "my church"	"the church" or "the Lord's church"
"We are going to church"	"We are going to worship" or "to the worship assembly".
"my pastor"	"our preacher" or "our minister"
"Our movement"	"the Lord's church"; His church is not a "movement."
"Our commitment is to 'Restoration' principles."	"Our commitment is to New Testa- ment principles."
"Our Father, thank You for Your body that was given for us... "	"... for <i>Your Son's</i> body..." (We pray TO the Father, THROUGH Christ)

Recently I noted a question: "Would you like to know more about the Church of Christ?" Actually, the word "church" ought not to be capitalized, for most readers would think of a denomination, "Church of Christ". When one reads, in Romans 16:16 of the "*churches of Christ*", the meaning is not a name, but ownership, as Jesus said, "*I will build my church*" (Matthew 16:18). Ownership is also expressed in the phrase "*the church of God*" (1 Corinthians 1:2), for what belongs to Christ also belongs to God, as Jesus said to the Father, "*All my things are yours, and yours are mine*" (John 17:10). Denominations are known by their names, as the Methodist Church, the Baptist Church, etc., but the Bible church is known by its relationship to Christ, the church that belongs to Him. †

Hugo McCord has taught at Oklahoma Christian University and Cascade College. He is presently retired and living in Vancouver, Washington, USA.

Total Hereditary Depravity

Ron Deaton

We need to define the terms of the title according to Webster.

Total means “*comprising or constituting a whole: entire.*”

Hereditary means “*a characteristic of or fostered by one’s predecessors; inheritance.*”

Depravity means “*marked by corruption or evil; to make bad; corrupt; to corrupt morally; perverted.*”

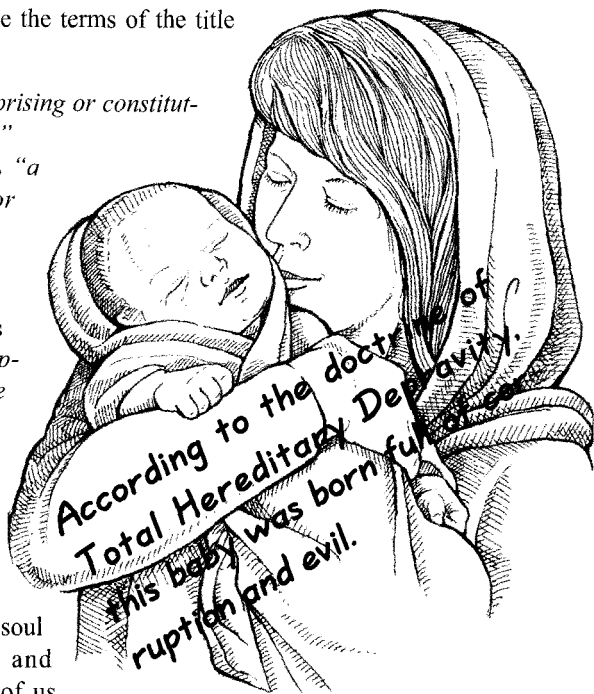
So, “total hereditary depravity” means that man’s entire being — body, soul and spirit — is evil and corrupt, and that all of us,

from the day of our birth, inherited our depraved state from father Adam.

This is a Calvinist doctrine which Webster defines as, “a state of corruption due to original sin held in Calvinism to infect every part of man’s nature and make the natural man unable to know or obey God.” This doctrine is false to the core! It is not taught in the Bible. It is but an attempt by man to blame God for His problems, just as Adam tried to blame God for his sin in Genesis 3:12.

We shall look at some of the verses which the Calvinist uses to try to prove the doctrine of “total hereditary depravity”. Then we will look at the Bible in order to see the truth of this matter.

Read Ephesians 2:1-4. Those who teach this false doctrine use specifically verse 3, “...were **by nature** children of wrath.” Therefore, their explanation of



DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

“by nature” means that *we inherited sin*. “Nature” is translated from the Greek word meaning, “figuratively, native disposition, constitution or usage.” Look at Romans 2:14,15, where Paul wrote that the “*Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things of the law.*” It was by the influence of their *surroundings or environment*, coupled with their inher-

sin. Yes, we all die physically because of the sin of Adam (the consequences of his sin). 1 Corinthians 15:22, “*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.*” The context of this verse deals with physical death and the resurrection. It was Adam who brought about physical death and it is through Christ that we are made alive. Ezekiel 18:20,

The Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, based on the **Westminster Confession of Faith**, noting the sin of Adam and Eve, says:

“...the **guilt of this sin was imputed**, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed, **to all their posterity**, descending from them by ordinary generation. From **this original corruption**, whereby **we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil**, do proceed all actual transgressions.”

ent *consciousness* of “right” and “wrong” — one of the characteristics given to man when he was “made in God’s image” — that they did the things of the law *by nature*.

In 1 Corinthians 11:14 Paul teaches that “by nature” a man having long hair was a dishonor to him. Why? “By nature” means his environment or his surroundings taught him this fact. So, in Ephesians 2:3, “by nature” means that the Ephesians had imitated their environment, therefore, they became the “children of wrath” but *not* by inheritance.

Read Romans 5:12-14. The Calvinist states that all died in Adam, so we are all **born in sin and with**

“The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son.”

Why do all sin if sin is not inherited? 1 John 5:19, “...*the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.*” Romans 3:10, “*There is none righteous, no not one.*” Verse 12, “*There is none who does good, no, not one.*” According to those who teach Calvinism, these verses prove that we inherit sin. The truth is that all become sinners as Adam did — **by sinning!** 1 John 3:4, “*Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.*” Did God create Adam depraved? Genesis 1:31 says that

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

everything was “very good”. If babies are born sinners, then babies are lost, yet, we know from the Bible that this is not so. In 2 Samuel 12:23 David’s son had died, but David stated, “*I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*” Where did David want to go to be with his son? His son was not in hell but he was with God, therefore, David desired to be with him there.

the statements he made to Job. Second, Christ was born of woman (Mary). Galatians 4:4, “*But when the fulness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law.*” Was Christ depraved? Absolutely not! He had no sin.

Those who teach “total hereditary depravity” paint themselves into a corner and can not get out. This is

The Bible teaches:

- A. “have gone astray” — not **born** astray — Isaiah 53:6.
- B. “gone out of the way” — not born out of the right way — Romans 3:12.
- C. “become unprofitable” — not **born** unprofitable — Romans 3:12.
- D. “man’s heart is evil from his youth” — not his **birth** — Genesis 8:21.

Perverted Passages

- A. Romans 5:12 — All suffer death as a consequence of Adam’s sin but not guilt and corruption.
- B. Ephesians 2:1 — not born “dead” — spiritual death is the result of committing sin — James 1:13-15; 1 John 3:4.
- C. Ephesians 2:3 — “nature” by “disobedience” as in verse 2 not by birth.
- D. Psalm 58:3 — “go astray” — not born astray — could “speak lies”.
- E. Psalm 51:5 — refers to mother at conception not David at birth — the NIV perverts this verse in translation.

Read Matthew 18:1-4; 19:14. Ezekiel 28:15, “*You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, TILL iniquity was found in you.*”

Finally, the Calvinist will quote Job 25:4, “*how can he [man] be pure who is born of a woman?*” Therefore, they conclude, babies are not spiritually clean. First, neither God nor Job made this statement; Bildad said it, and he had been wrong in a number of

false doctrine that the Devil has used to deceive man from the beginning. We must continue to fight against error such as this. None of us were **born sinners**, but we were **born into a world of sin**. We **become sinners when we commit sin**. We need to study in order to refute this doctrine of the devil. †

Ron Deaton works with the Liberty church of Christ in Dennis, MS, USA.



SHD

Jane Maynard

As teenagers, some of my children developed a hearing deficiency known as SHD (Selective Hearing Disorder). The disorder is rather strange, but it is easy to detect. You simply yell out “chore” words like “trash” or “dishes”, and when you find these chores not taken care of sometime later, you then proceed with the rest of the test. That is done by catching your children tucked away in their rooms and softly saying “fun” words like “pizza” or “movies”, and if you suddenly find them in your face wanting to know when and where, then you know your children definitely have SHD.

Children aren't the only ones with SHD. It is rampant from a spiritual perspective in the Lord's church, and especially now as it relates to women and their role in the public functioning of the church. As I travel this country speaking at various ladies events, more and more women are asking questions about the women of old and, in particular, those who were known as a “prophetess”. Many of these women inquire out of sincere, seeking hearts; but I fear others are afflicted with SHD, because they seem to be seeking some justification, by way of the examples of the prophetesses, to allow women today to take leading roles in the public worship.

It certainly is a noble thing and in keeping with God's will to look to our sisters of old for example, for instruction and to learn (Romans 15:4, 1 Corinthians 10:11). However, we need to be sure we hear *all* God had to say about the lives of those sisters and not just carefully selected parts upon which we might build an incorrect assumption. While a Scripture search on the work of a prophetess may not tell us every minute detail about them and

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

their work, God has given us a picture of how He used them in His service.

Miriam was a prophetess.

She was also a leader in Israel; God says so (Micah 6:4). But God also tells us *whom* she led (Exodus 15:20). And in Numbers 12:1 ff God clearly displayed His displeasure with Miriam when she tried to assume equal footing with the man in his male spiritual leadership role. God vindicated Moses, rebuked Aaron and punished Miriam, and God never let Israel forget how He dealt with Miriam over that incident (Deuteronomy 24:9). Nothing in these texts indicates that Miriam was a “preacher” (which is the claim of the world of preaching women about us). All we see is a very wise God providing a mature spiritual woman to minister to the needs of other women on their journey out of Egypt.

Deborah was both a judge and a prophetess (Judges 4,5).

Deborah’s situation was unique because God’s men as spiritual leaders in Israel had utterly failed (Judges 1,2). As Deborah is introduced, she had been instructed to send for the best military man Israel had to offer at the time — Barak. Even though he was a military leader, he would not even go into battle unless Deborah committed to go with him. Barak took the ten

thousand men and Deborah, and then he went where he had been instructed (Judges 4:6,10). But God tells us *who* led the campaign (Judges 4:14,22, 5:12,15). Those with SHD claim Deborah was the leader, but if so, why did she need Barak? Deborah clearly showed where she worked for God, not leading an army, as the other judges did, but sitting under her palm tree giving counsel (4:5) and she defined herself as *a mother in Israel* (5:7) nurturing and encouraging the people, just as she did Barak by riding in his company. Nothing in the text allows us to assume she was a great, public military leader like the other judges were.

Huldah was a prophetess (2 Kings 22:12-20). She was the wife of the keeper of the king’s wardrobe, and they dwelt in their own residence. When the lost book of the Law was found and presented to young king Josiah, he sent scribes to inquire of the Lord concerning the Law found in the Temple. Those scribes went to Huldah in her home for information. There is not one word anywhere to indicate a public leading and proclaiming work on the part of this woman.

Isaiah’s wife was a prophetess

(Isaiah 8:1-3). The only picture we have of this woman is certainly not on the streets prophesying beside her prophet husband, but rather con-

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

ceiving a child in the privacy of her own bedroom. That is about as non-public as you can get.

Anna was a prophetess (Luke 2:36-38). She was a widowed woman, who did not leave the temple area but served God with fasting and prayer, looking for the redemption of Israel night and day. As with the others who wore the name prophetess, you have to have a serious case of SHD to make this woman any more than a quiet servant of God. There is no way to put her in the temple publicly officiating, teaching, or leading.

Philip's daughters were never called prophetesses (Acts 21:8,9). The text says these young virgin ladies prophesied in some way. The way has not been revealed to us, and we are not told anything they said, but in their own womanly way they would certainly have used the gift they had been given to prophesy. However, we want to be sure we note what they were *not* doing. We see nothing of them being out publicly preaching with their evangelist father, Philip. They evidently could not do the work of a male prophet because it was Agabus, not the girls, who came and prophesied about the future of Paul (21:10). Therefore, again, this example sets no leading,

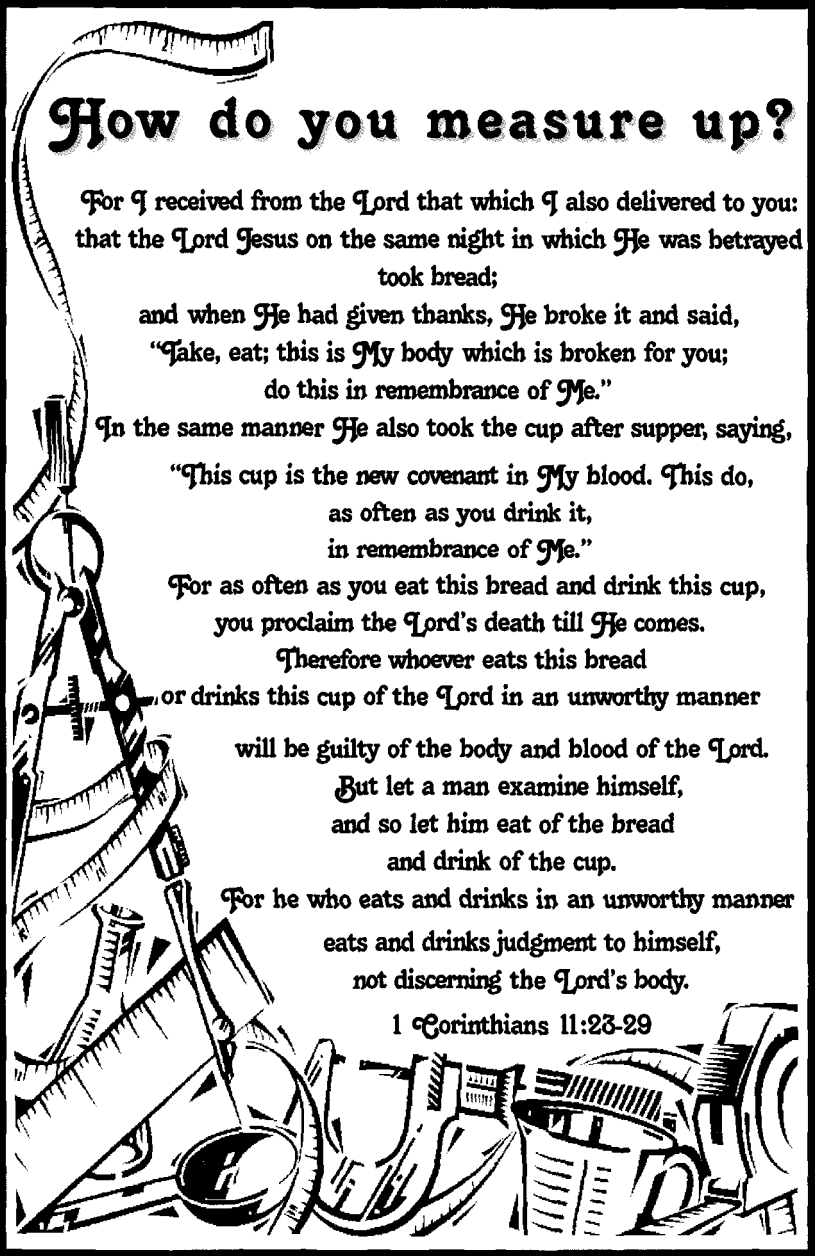
public role participation model for the woman of today.

Other than these examples, the only mention of those known as a prophetess are those named in a condemning way in the Scriptures: Noadiah, (Nehemiah 6:14), certain women of Judah, (Ezekiel 13:17) and the self-designated prophetess of Revelation 2:20. I have yet to hear any woman champion any of these as examples.

It is indeed a very foolish thing to go into the lives of our sisters of old with the attitude that we have the authority to hear what we select to hear and disregard the rest, a classic example of SHD. Teenagers may get away with a certain amount of this practice from a physical perspective because, despite our best efforts, we have human frailties as parents. Spiritually, however, God does not allow us the liberty to take what we want from any of His commands and leave the rest. He repeatedly says throughout Scripture, "*He that hath ears to hear let him hear.*" That includes *all He has to say* on any given topic. Spiritual SHD is inexcusable with God. †

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"I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve" (1Timothy 2:12,13).



How do you measure up?

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you:
that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed
took bread;

and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said,
"Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you;
do this in remembrance of Me."

In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying,

"This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do,
as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of Me."

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

Therefore whoever eats this bread
or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner

will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

But let a man examine himself,
and so let him eat of the bread
and drink of the cup.

For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner
eats and drinks judgment to himself,
not discerning the Lord's body.

1 Corinthians 11:23-29

The High Cost of Pharaoh's Pride

Royce Frederick

Moses told Pharaoh, "*Thus says the Lord God of Israel: Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness*" (Exodus 5:1). This first demand was certainly reasonable. But Pharaoh was on the throne. He would not let the God of those slaves give him orders! Pharaoh arrogantly replied, "*Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, nor will I let Israel go*" (Exodus 5:1).

Through devastating plagues, the Lord broke Pharaoh's stubborn pride — but only after terrible misery and loss. Pharaoh and his people paid a very high cost before he finally acknowledged the Lord's right to rule.

When sin is on the throne of your heart, it keeps you from obeying the Lord. By your actions, if not by words, your heart says, "Who does the Lord think He is, telling me what to do? It is *my* life, and I will live it as *I* please." Yes, it is your life. But it is not merely your life. Your decisions and actions help or

hurt many other lives. And the lives you affect the most are usually those you love the most.

The Lord does not immediately punish every sin. He delays punishment to give us time to repent (2 Peter 3:9). He would much rather bless than punish. Those plagues in Exodus 5-12 are examples to teach us the high cost of sin (1 Corinthians 10:11; Galatians 6:7,8; Romans 3:23; 6:23). A wise person learns from the mistakes of others. There is no sense in following the example of Pharaoh.

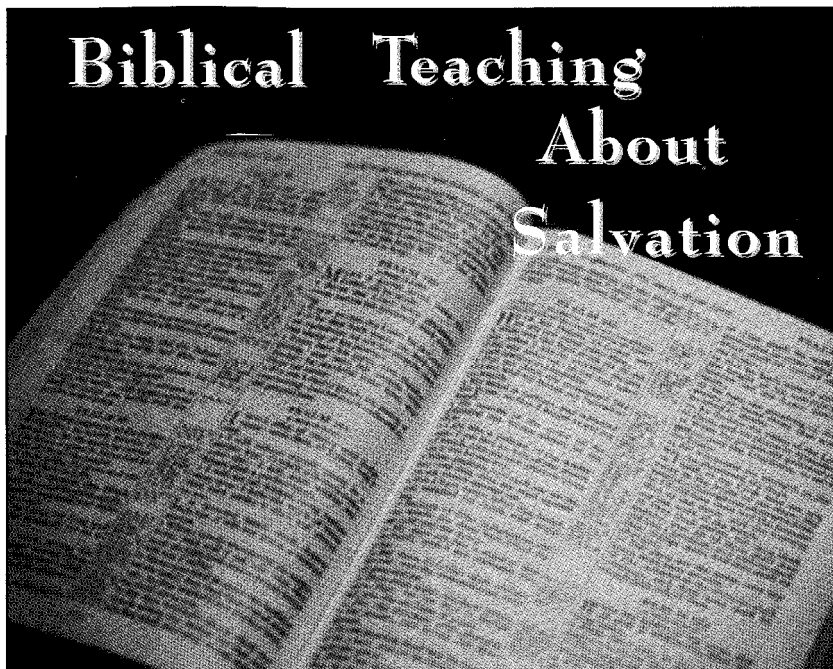
The day of opportunity will eventually be replaced by the day of reckoning (2 Peter 3:10-13). Whether we like it or not, every knee will bow to the Lord, and every tongue will confess that He is God (Romans 14:10-12). Will you and others who followed your example pay a high price for your delay? How much better it is for you and those you love to obey the Lord now! †

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SALVATION

Redemption, or salvation from sin, is the theme that provides continuity to all the books of the

rather than what he deserves, but it does not mean that it is salvation without any response on the part of



Biblical Teaching About Salvation

W. Douglass Harris

Bible. As soon as man sinned in Eden, God headed straight for Calvary. The first Gospel pronouncement in the Bible is Genesis 3:15 — the promised seed of the woman would be man's Savior. This scheme is developed throughout the rest of the Bible (see Galatians 3:8).

A Salvation Based on Grace

Salvation by grace means that God gave sinful man what he needs

man (Ephesians 2:8,9). God's grace gave the city of Jericho to Joshua and the Israelites (Joshua 6:2), but a certain response of obedience by the Israelites was stipulated by God (Joshua 6:3-5). Grace simply means that God did for sinful man what he could not do for himself. The greatest demonstration of God's grace was in the giving of His Son (John 3:16).

SALVATION

The Motive in God's Actions

God's love for mankind, who was created in His divine image, was the motive for this salvation (John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:9; Romans 5:8). But this love must be requited by obeying certain conditions that God has stipulated (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Obedience to these conditions does not *earn* salvation, but *appropriates the benefits* of God's grace and love.

The Means of Salvation

"Apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). Animal blood, as was offered in the Old Testament period of time, however, could not take away sins (Hebrews 10:4). The means of salvation is the blood of Christ (Ephesians 1:7; Revelation 1:5). Holy Writ is very specific about where and how this blood is applied to the soul. Christ shed His blood in His death (John 19:34), but this does not automatically save anyone from sin. Baptism, upon the proper prerequisites, brings one into *contact* with that blood, and *brings salvation* (Romans 6:3,5). By continuing to walk in the light of God's Word, contact is *maintained* with His blood (1 John 1:7). "What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus" (Robert Lowery).

The Agent in Salvation

It was through the agency of the Holy Spirit that the means of

salvation was revealed and confirmed through inspired men in the first century (Hebrews 2:1-4; Mark 16:19; 1 Corinthians 2:6-13). The Holy Spirit operates now through the Spirit-revealed, inspired, and confirmed Word (Ephesians 6:17, 3:1-6). Even the miraculous gifts of the Spirit to confirm the Word were only temporary in nature (1 Corinthians 13:10). Since "perfect" in the original is neuter gender, it could not refer to a person, but to completed revelation.

The Power to Effect This Salvation

One of the clearest and most unambiguous affirmations ever made by the apostle Paul was that the Gospel is God's power to save (Romans 1:16). This Gospel, or *good news*, is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-3), which is God's drawing power to salvation (John 12:32).

Location of This Salvation

When sinners become such as should be saved, by obedience of the Gospel, God adds them to His church (Acts 2:47). Christ is the Savior of the body — His church (Ephesians 5:25; Colossians 1:18). Christ established only one church, and He is Savior of *only one spiritual body* — **His** (Matthew 16:18). †

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Quick Commentary on Crucial Verses

Acts 19:1-5

And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."

And he said to them, "Into what they were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism."

Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

There was no promise of the Holy Spirit under John's baptism, a marked difference between John's teaching and that of Christ.

Paul explained that John's baptism was for a different purpose to the baptism of Christ, therefore being baptized according to John's baptism (or any baptism for any other purpose) was not a valid baptism. Today there are many people who have been "baptized", perhaps in an unscriptural way (sprinkling instead of immersion) or for the wrong purpose (believing that baptism is not necessary for salvation), whose baptism is therefore not valid.

In Paul's travels, he met twelve men in Ephesus. How he located these men is not revealed, but Paul immediately set about to identify whether or not they were true brethren. The question he asked reveals three things:

1: If they were true Christians, he expected them to be knowledgeable of the subject of the Holy Spirit.

2: Even in the absence of their doing signs and wonders, Paul asked the question, which shows that not all Christians received miraculous power.

3: The word **believed** incorporated all the responses of obedience, because Paul's next question showed that he took it for granted that they had been baptized.

When these "believers" understood the whole truth about the gospel, they were baptized (not "again", because their earlier effort had not counted as true baptism), and then they received miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, as was often the case before the completion of the New Testament in written form.

Renewing Our Commitment to Biblical Christianity

Stan Mitchell

Imagine that you have come with me to the Zambezi Valley in far northern Zimbabwe. We have dropped from the relatively cool plateau to the steamy heat of the river valley. The village we come to is within sight of the blue Zambezi. The river is half a mile wide, with palm-covered islands in the middle. It flows fast and shallow.

The villagers are from the Batonka tribe. They earn a living from fishing the river. They are “animists”, people who worship spirits residing in trees, rocks, or the river. Many of the spirits they worship are their ancestors, whom they believe care for them. Other spirits, they believe, are not so benign, and often cause sickness or death.

The village headman has consented to allow us to address these people on the subject of Christianity. I hand you a Bible and say: “Go ahead.”

What do you say? What will be their first impression of Christianity? Where will you begin?

THE CHURCH

Back to the Spring

You will want to deliver God's will in as pure a fashion as possible, undiluted by biases, opinions, traditions, or sinful and selfish desires. The ancient Israelite prophet declared: "*As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts*" (Isaiah 55:9).

Now if it is impossible for us to read each other's minds, how much more difficult would it be to read God's mind, He whose thoughts are so far beyond ours? We cannot guess what God wants, what God's will is. We cannot declare, "I *sense* that this is what God wants," or "By faith I *feel* that this is God's will." He will have to tell us what's on His mind, if we are to *know*. Especially is this true since His level of thinking is so vastly superior to ours!

When Paul arrived in Athens, he found an altar to "The Unknown God" (Acts 17:22,23). The Athenians' impulse to worship such a god was a good one, but they did so in ignorance.

Did it matter? Surely *their sincere desire* to please this God was enough to please Him! Surely all that mattered was that they *felt close* to this God! But Paul declared that **he wanted to tell them what was on God's mind**. Through the inspired Apostle, God spoke!

These days people are fond of declaring that the "forms" of worship and service to God are unimportant, and that all God wants is for us to be sincere. Make no mistake, sincerity is vital! But did you ever hear a preacher say it wasn't? Through 18 years of hearing a preacher (my father), and 24 years of my own proclamation, I have never said (or heard anyone say) that one could be acceptable to God if he was baptized, or if he sang a cappella, or worshipped with a church with elders and deacons, even though he was a hypocrite! I haven't heard it once! If you were insincere when you were baptized, then you just got wet. If you were insincere when you partook of the Lord's Supper, then you just ate crackers and juice!

But nowhere in scripture does it say that "all God requires" is that we be sincere! To assert this would be to offer a relationship with God on false premises! The Lord clearly teaches that along with sincerity there is the need for obedient action:

"Not everyone who says to me 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

"This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word" (Isaiah 66:2).

THE CHURCH

I would hate to be a missionary and have to explain to the local people why a prayer book or creed was more authoritative than the Bible! I would hate to have to defend the need for an archbishop or piano if the Bible was silent on those matters! Something other than scripture would have to be taught in order for these practices to be adopted by mission churches! **And that something is too much!**

“But,” someone objects, “Isn’t the Bible just about how God loves us, and how we should be like Jesus? Was the Bible really intended to be interpreted in this careful, detailed way?”

Again, make no mistake, the Bible tells of God’s love for us. And, there is no question, we should become more like Jesus. But please consider the following

- Drive down the highway at 110 miles per hour, and in your inevitable conversation with the highway patrolman, find out how many ways he thinks there are to interpret the Highway Code!
- The other night the news had a story about the number of times pharmacists failed to read a prescription correctly. Apparently something like 1,000 deaths a year occur due to pharmacists giving the wrong medication. The story spoke of several computer programs that would allow

doctors to print rather than write the medication they desire. Talk to your pharmacist, and ask him how many ways there are to interpret the Doctor’s prescription. Now he may misunderstand or misread the prescription (heaven forbid), but there is **only one correct way** to interpret what is written there! And you probably want him to apply what he reads with deepest respect for both that which the Doctor wrote, and what he possibly should have written but did not!

So when we speak of the importance of baptism, or partaking the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week, or singing a cappella, what we are really trying to do is to follow scripture — humbly, respectfully, and as accurately as possible.

The Danger of Arrogance

We are probably all aware of the jibe that “members of the church of Christ think they are ‘the only ones’ going to heaven,” or that they “think that they are the only ones who are right.” To the extent that these accusations carry weight, we need to repent! The Bible warns us to approach its truths with humility. The Lord loves those who “*tremble at his word*” (Isaiah 66:2).

“Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, and humbly accept the word ... which can save you” (James 1:21).

THE CHURCH

We need to constantly remind ourselves that it is not a question of *the church of Christ* being **right**. It's a question of **the Bible** being **right**. *We, as humans*, are right only to the degree that we teach scripture. We must develop a sense of humility, not just because it is bad manners to present a judgmental and arrogant face to the world, but because God demands that we be humble! We must recognize the **fallibility of the Bible student ... and the infallibility of the Bible!** The Bible is God's word. It is **always** right. But we who read the Bible are fallen, flawed human beings. We must not forget that.

We urge other religious fellowships not to hang onto "traditions of men." Do *we*? We urge other religious fellowships not to succumb to the world's agenda, but to go back to the Bible. Do *we*? We warn against the tendency of some churches to follow the teachings of well known, influential men. Do *we*?

The churches of Christ have been given no immunity to error. No one inoculated us against biases, misunderstandings, and agendas. We must always approach our study of scripture with deep humility and prayer that we will handle God's word correctly.

Some may ask, "Isn't it arrogant to say that we follow scripture, and scripture alone?" The answer is

no. It would be arrogant to say that we know what God is thinking outside of an appeal to scripture. It would be arrogant to speak for God without reading from scripture. It would be arrogant to say, "God wouldn't want this," or "I don't think God meant that" unless we read those sentiments in scripture.

An appeal to the Bible and the Bible alone is an act of contrition. We are saying, by making this "Back to the Bible" appeal, that we respect what God says. That's an act of deepest humility, not arrogance!

What Is the Alternative?

Once when Jesus watched His disciples slip away, he asked the disciples if they, too, would leave him. Peter's answer is an excellent one: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:66-69).

Are there any alternatives to seeking God's will? Is there any hope of forgiveness and eternal life outside of Christ and His word? When, for example, our African tribesmen ask us, "Why do you put believers under water" you should have a Biblical answer, or not demand that they do it.

It is true that "the times they are changing," and it is true that people's thinking and reasoning are different these days. Technology brings new challenges. Tastes change. It has been some time since

THE CHURCH

I have heard a Simon and Garfunkel recording on the radio. But herein lies the value of going back to the Bible. If society is changing (as we are constantly reminded), if we face challenges in a new millennium that we could not possibly have imagined previously, then we need to seek that which never changes, namely God's word!

"Heaven and earth will pass

away," our Lord declared, *"but my word will never pass away"* (Matthew 24:35).

While times change, the will of God never does. We must never abandon our effort to find out what God's word says, preach it, and most of all, practice it! †

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

Since I am a Christian...

I am one whose aim is to fulfill the law of Christ. I am a disciple of Christ. I'm a servant, a willing slave of Christ. I am a citizen in the kingdom of Christ. I am a brother of Christ, a soldier in the army of Christ. I am a member of the church of Christ. There are things I cannot do and places I will not go. I am forgiven of the past, blessed in the present and full of hope for the future. I am saved and secure in Jesus Christ. I am settled in Him and in his church and I can not be frightened away by friends or bought away by money. I will not faint, fall away nor quit.

I do not have to have my own way. I do not have to be first nor the one to get credit for what is done. I refuse to be offended and quit, discouraged and stop, hurt and hindered. I do not need to be flattered, commended or honored to be faithful. I do not have to be picked up, pumped up nor pampered to go to services. Funerals, weddings, family reunions and ball games will not keep me from my appointment at the Lord's table. I love His word and love His church.

I am a soldier — I will fight. I am a servant — I will serve. I am a brother — I will love. I am a son — I will obey. I am a member — I will work. I am a citizen — I will be responsible. I am a disciple — I will follow. Indeed, I am one of you, fulfilling the law of Christ.

—Parker Henderson

When God's Church Is on the Verge

David Tarbet

When a congregation of God's people has a bright future, when good works abound, when souls are being saved, the numbers are up and the kingdom is making definite progress in defeating the forces of darkness, there are certain things that we should expect.

First, we should expect that the church will become increasingly attractive to outsiders. Jesus said, *"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven"* (Matthew 5:16).

Second, we should expect that the singing in worship will be spirited. People reflect their general disposition in the way they sing. When they feel good about the Lord's work you can tell it in the way they sing. Good singing says a lot about a good church.

Third, we should expect that the members will speak positively about the church and its leaders. People like to be part of a successful team — that's a natural thing.

Gripping and grumbling go with pessimism and negativism. When early Christians were part of a growing, united, and loving fellowship, they devoted themselves to their leaders' teachings and were filled with gladness in their hearts (Acts 2:42-46).

Finally, we should expect that Satan will look for ways to attack. He will bring out every weapon in his arsenal: mistrust, anger, conflict, apathy, indifference, dissension, neglect of duty, family turmoil, power-plays, immorality, worldliness, love of pleasure, love of self, etc. He will aim his guns at every member of the church and try to fire into the heart and fiber of God's body. We must remember that the devil *"prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour,"* and we must make every determined effort to *"resist him, standing firm in the faith!"* (1 Peter 5:8,9). †

David Tarbet preaches for the White Rock Church of Christ in Dallas, Texas, USA.

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

Upon The Sacred Altar

Mike Norwood

Lanier Stevens

1. O love that sa - crificed it - self my sin - ful life to spare, O
2. Trust not your soul to of - fer - ings on al - tars made by hands, Just
3. Up - on that sa - cred al - tar all I am to Him I give. He's

heart bowed down with sor - row, while our sen - tence He did bear. What
lay down all your tro - phies and on Je - sus take your stand. Oh
hid - den my trans - gres - sions and my life in Him I live. So

gift or boast or glo - ry do we proud - ly dare to lay, Be -
Je - sus kind - est Sav - ior, what — deed could e're re - pay. The
now my hope's in heav - en, where some - day I know I'll see The

Rit.
fore the blood stained feet of Him, Who — washed our sins a - way.
life I owe, I give to you in — prais - es all my day.
face of my dear Sav - ior who — gave Him - self for me.

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From time to time a question arises concerning the practice of clapping during our worship periods, to show our approval of something said or done. This practice is, generally speaking, relatively new among churches of Christ. That fact within itself does not make the practice either right or wrong.

churches has to give way to the exhilarating experience of God that exhibits and nourishes life in the worshippers.” He also said in the same speech, “The church has got to change. If it doesn’t change, my kids are not going to stay with it.”

These statements suggest that worship must please the worshipper.

Let God Do the Clapping!

Bobby Duncan

Neither does the fact that it is a practice borrowed by our denominational neighbors from the entertainment industry, and then by churches of Christ from our denominational neighbors. The rightness or wrongness of an act is determined, not by its antiquity or its novelty, nor by who has or has not made it a practice, but by whether or not it is in harmony with the teaching of the New Testament.

Clapping during worship fits into the agenda of those who are trying to *change the church*. Some of them have made it plain that they feel that worship must be changed to make it more appealing to the worshipper. One brother wrote, “I also believe we should let individuals and congregations use the musical format they like without judging them.” Another said, “The tired uninspiring event we call worship in traditional

They ignore the fact that worship is designed to honor God. When the design of worship is to entertain the worshipper, we expect those being entertained to show their approval by clapping.

There is the same authority for clapping in Christian worship as there is for playing a piano or organ — None — in the New Testament. So, to do either of these things is to do something for which there is no divine approval. Furthermore, those among our brethren who first started clapping in worship are the same ones who have stretched the tent of fellowship over the denominational world, and who will not say that those who use the instrument in worship sin in so doing. While clapping has now caught on with some who would not yet fellowship denominations or bring a piano into the building, it should be remembered that

WORSHIP

hand-clapping in worship was originally borrowed from the denominations by some who believe those in denominations have God's approval.

Who is being applauded when there is hand-clapping in worship? Are those who clap their hands doing so to honor God? If so, they are seeking to honor God in some way He has not authorized, instead of how He has directed. *"God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"* (John 4:24).

If hand-clapping is something of value in our worship, then why didn't God prescribe it? Could it be that those who initiated this practice think they have thought of something good that God overlooked? Or, did God simply not know of its great value? Brethren with such wisdom would do well to read First Corinthians 3:18-20, *"Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And, again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain."*

Those really interested in the peace and harmony of the church will not insist on clapping in worship. They themselves will agree that clapping is not necessary in

order to have scriptural worship. They will acknowledge also that clapping is not an act God has prescribed. Therefore, they must confess they can worship scripturally and conscientiously without applauding. In love for those who conscientiously oppose it, and in the interest of peace and harmony, it should be omitted.

Occasionally one will be heard to say that hand clapping is no different from saying, "Amen". But there is one slight difference: saying "Amen," is authorized in scripture: I Corinthians 14:16, *"Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?"* Where is the verse which sanctions clapping hands in worship?

I would emphasize that I am not one who is opposed to change, provided the change is in harmony with the will of God, and provided the change will be an improvement. However, if we are to improve our worship, it will not be by adding other acts, but by improving the worshippers.

If there is to be applause in connection with our worship, let it be by God; He is the only audience. All of us are participants. †

Bobby Duncan, preacher of the gospel, is now deceased.



Authorized Music for New Testament Worship

Reggie Gnanasundaram

When one considers how his life is to be governed in matters of religion or religious service to God, the source of authority must be established. With regards to Christianity there can be only one authority, and that is the New Testament scripture. The Scriptures alone are the inspired word of God. Therefore, when we attempt to determine what is or is not acceptable to Him, the scriptures become His voice of authority. Opinion loses its power if opposed or unsupported by scripture.

Over the years the church of Christ has stood firm in its conviction that the scriptures do authorize vocal music in worship to God, and that this position can be supported from scripture. However, the use of instrumental music in worship is not found to be authorized in the New Testament, nor is there an example of the New Testament church engaging in such in its worship service. Does God want only vocal music? Does He want vocal music

WORSHIP

accompanied by an instrument, or **does it really matter?** The key is, what do the scriptures say?

Instrumental music in itself is not improper. It is only when it is used in relationship with church worship that we have a problem. Why? Because mechanical music is never commanded or exemplified for use in the worship of the New Testament church. The matter becomes quite simple when considered solely from the Biblical viewpoint.

REASONS TO SING

The purpose of singing is clearly defined. First, as Christians we are **commanded** to sing. *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God”* (Colossians 3:16). Paul’s command to the church was **to teach and admonish one another by singing.**

Another purpose of our singing is **to praise and glorify God:** *“..Singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord”* (Ephesians 5:19). God is to be the object of our praise through song.

Another reason to sing is for **joy:** *“Is any among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praise”* (James 5:13). The joy of salvation should stir our souls to sing.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In the Old Testament it is quite obvious that instrumental music was authorized and used in worship to God. One passage, among many, that establishes this fact is: *“And he set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps ... for so was the commandment of the Lord ... and Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering ... and when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also ... and all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished”* (2 Chronicles 29:25-28).

This passage makes it crystal clear that God approved of the use of instrumental music in worship. However, this was for a worship service conducted under **the Old Covenant, the Law of Moses**, which has since been done away with in Christ (2 Corinthians 3:14; Romans 7:4-6).

Did you notice that the worshippers, as described in the passage in 2 Chronicles 29, were also offering animal sacrifices? Do those who would use this passage to authorize instrumental music in worship today also advocate and practice the offering of burnt offerings, in order to be consistent?

WORSHIP

As a matter of fact, in each reference to music in the New Testament with regard to the church and its worship, the only specification is for vocal music. If in the Old Testament the use and authorization of instrumental music was so obvious and plain as in the above cited passage, isn't it a bit strange that, if God were *indifferent* to the continued use of instrumental music in worship to Him, there is not even one command or example for its use?

VOCAL MUSIC IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

* *“And when they had **sung a hymn**, they went out to the Mount of Olives”* (Mark 14:26).

* *“And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: ‘For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And **sing to Your name**”* (Romans 15:9).

* *“What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also **sing with the understanding**”* (1 Corinthians 14:26).

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

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

* *“Saying: ‘I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will **sing praise to You**”* (Hebrews 2:12).

* *“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him **sing psalms**”* (James 5:13).

What is obvious in each New Testament passage is **the command to sing**. Nowhere is there a command or example of instrumental music accompanying the singing in a worship assembly of the church in the New Testament. When God, by inspiration of the scriptures, commanded vocal music, all other kinds of music were excluded. The same principle is true concerning the emblems of the Lord's Supper. By directing the use of the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine, Jesus excluded the use of anything else. He did not have to say, “Do not use fish,” or “Do not use milk,” or “Do not use anything else.” By stating exactly what is to be used, He automatically excluded everything else. By directing us to sing, all other forms of music were eliminated.

WORSHIP

EVIDENCE FROM HISTORY

It is also interesting to note that, from the historical standpoint, most all scholars from virtually every denomination agree that the church of the first century practiced vocal music only in its worship services. No one knows exactly when instrumental music was first introduced into the worship, but some scholars feel that it may have been as late as the seventh or eighth centuries. Interesting also is the history of the expression “A Capella”, which has come to stand today for vocal music only. Originally it meant “as it is done in the churches.” What does this say to us about the music of the Lord’s church, as it was formed in the hands of the apostles under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit? The whole question comes down to one of authority. **Does the New Testament authorize any music for worship other than vocal music?** The answer, from the viewpoint of scripture, is obviously a definite and positive, NO!

DECLARATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS CONDEMNING THE USE OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

John Calvin, outstanding as one of the founders of the Presbyterian church: “Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps, the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The Papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things, from the Jews.” **John Calvin’s Commentary, Thirty-third Psalm.**

Adam Clarke, the greatest commentator of all time among the Methodists: “Music as a science, I esteem and admire; but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music; and here I register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the Author of Christianity.” **Clarke’s Commentary, Vol. IV, p. 686.**

John Wesley, the reputed founder of the Methodist Church, is quoted by Adam Clarke to have said, “I have no objections to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither seen nor heard.” **Clarke’s Commentary, Vol. IV, p. 686.**

Martin Luther, a distinguished reformer, “Called the organ the ensign of Baal.” **McClintock and Strong’s Encyclopedia, Music, Vol. VI, p. 762.**

Charles H. Spurgeon, recognized as the greatest Baptist preacher that ever lived, preached for twenty years to thousands of people weekly in the Metropolitan Baptist Tabernacle, London, England, did not have musical instruments in the worship. **M.C. Kurfees, Instrumental Music in the**

Worship, p. 196.

Conybeare and Howson, famous scholars of the Church of England, in commentary on Ephesians 5:19, say, "Make melody with the music of your hearts, to the Lord let your songs be, not the drinking of heathen feasts, but psalms and hymns; and their accompaniment, not the music of the lyre, but the melody of the heart." **Life and Epistles of St. Paul, Vol. 11, p. 408.**

Frequently the Psalmist David is quoted to justify the use of musical instruments in worship of God. David not only used musical instruments but he also danced (Psalm 150:4), he had many wives, he

burned incense, offered animal sacrifices, observed feast days, and did many other things according to the laws given through Moses.

Today, we do not do any of these things merely because David did them, so why should we follow him in the use of mechanical music in worship, particularly when it violates what the Holy Spirit specifically asked of worshippers? Jesus — not David — is certainly our authority for all that we do in Christian worship (Matthew 28:20, Hebrews 1:12, Galatians 1:8,9). †

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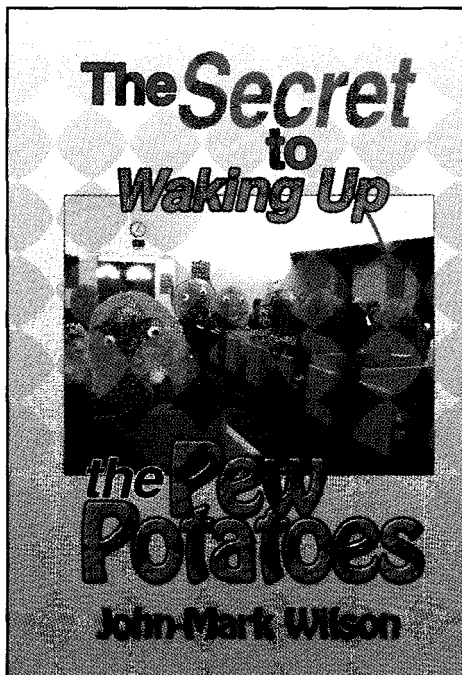
Why Would God Not Command the Use of Mechanical Instruments in Worship Today?

▲ Perhaps He wants an instrument of His creation (our vocal chords) to be used in His praise, rather than an instrument of our creation.

▲ One person cannot pray or partake of the Lord's Supper for another. Neither can one worshiper sing for another. If **playing an instrument** had been commanded, along with singing, then each person would be required to play. However some people do not know how to play any instrument, most do not own their own instruments, and the noise of 200 instruments going at the same time would render "teaching and admonishing" impossible.

▲ In any circumstance it is possible to sing; it would not always be possible to play (in prison, as with Paul and Silas).

▲ Mechanical instruments and choirs often become means of audience entertainment. Worship is intended as praise of God.



Evacuating the Padded Pew

The Hidden Power of the Potato Clock

Many of the potatoes occupying the pew have great talent, and we must work to unlock this potential. Talent that goes un-used will fade away (Matthew 25:28); therefore, we must find the spark of life left within the dormant member. Each of us has great and powerful things we can do to further the kingdom of

Christ; we just discount them as being small and invaluable.

When I was in kindergarten, my teacher brought in a clock. It looked like an ordinary clock, except that it had a pocket on each side. She held the clock up and asked what we thought should be used to power the clock. Some suggested batteries, while others said it should simply be plugged in. All our guesses were wrong and after a while, she pointed to a couple of potatoes in a nearby bowl, then said, "How about those?" I remember thinking, "Did she just say potatoes?" But she did and placed one in each pocket of the clock. She then stuck a wire into both potatoes and something amazing began to happen; the clock started running! These potatoes, which seemed for all obvious purposes worthless, were powering a device that looked to be beyond their capability. Friends, just like those spuds, members who have been trapped in the comfort of the padded pew can accomplish great things through the power that works with us (Ephesians 3:20)! It's important that we discover whose power we're using. We never accomplish anything for God all by ourselves. Christ works through us, providing

CHURCH GROWTH

strength to continue as our weariness invades (2 Corinthians 4:6).

During the summer a few years ago, I was teaching the Gospel in the northern region of Ghana, West Africa. There were eight of us on this particular trip and some who had never before preached. Yet, they had come to proclaim the message of Christ. During the first few days, I was sitting listening to a gentleman teach a whole village about Jesus' one true church. He was not a seasoned speaker and his delivery worried me. When the invitation was given and 63 people came forward to be baptized into Christ, I realized the power wasn't in the delivery. It's not important that we speak with any eloquence of speech or have two or three degrees before evangelizing. The power is in the message! It truly hit home that we are only a vessel for a divine message, and it humbled me to be counted worthy to share with people the simple message of Christ.

Beloved, if we can breathe, we have the ability to teach the lost in our communities! Some give the excuse of, "I enjoy teaching just by example." It's true that the example of the faithful Christian can have an impact on people, but it doesn't tell them what it takes to become a Christian. We have two shoes and a mouth to do that!

We should always encourage those who haven't been very active

in the past to test the waters outside the padded pew. By taking little steps, no one will become frightened and run back to its comfort.

The beauty of this step-by-step method is that members are empowered to serve Christ in small ways that when culminated become a beacon of light for the lost. Just as the potato clock had hidden power, we too can energize one another to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24,25). †

Power Points

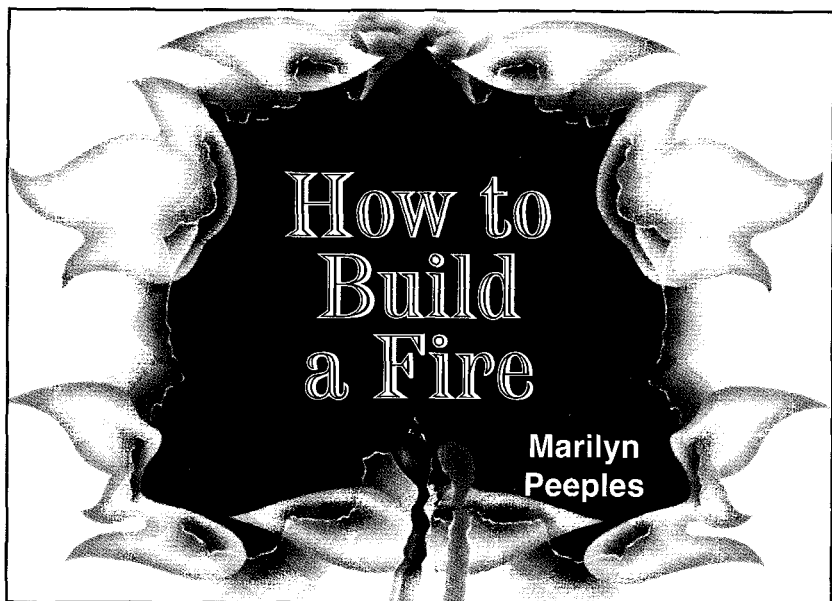
Older congregations need a good spring cleaning! If the facilities look old and worn out, visitors will think the faith of its members must be the same!

Review Questions:

1. What areas need to be cleaned and prepared?
2. How does one deal with rotten potatoes?
3. What was so amazing about the potato clock?
4. How are Christians similar to potatoes?

(Chapter three 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.



Crumple about two dozen half sheets of newspaper. Put them in the middle of the fire area between the andirons. Place small pieces of kindling, stacked in an "Indian teepee" shape, over the newspaper. Place one large log at the back and one large log at the front. Put several middle size sticks over the kindling but across the two larger logs. Strike a match and light the paper at the front, back and sides of the pile.

As the fire burns, make sure the logs stay close together with only minimal space between them. If any coals fall away from the fire, move them under the burning logs.

Recently we stayed in a dear friend's cabin in north Georgia.

One of my favorite tasks was to build the fire in the Buck stove. If you have never done it, I will assure you that there **is** a certain way to build a fire that is guaranteed to burn properly. Will burn completely. Will give the maximum heat. Will not go out. There *is* a proper way to build a fire.

While watching one of my roaring fires one evening, I thought about how some of the principles of building a fire apply to the church. Let's look at some of those observations.

First, just as a fire must be built properly to be efficient, a congregation must be "built" correctly in order to serve God effectively.

CHURCH GROWTH

God's design for the church is to have elders (Acts 14:23), deacons (1 Timothy 3:8-13), an evangelist (Ephesians 4:11) and a working membership (Ephesians 4:12-16). If we try to build a congregation any other way, it would not be according to God's design. It should be no surprise, therefore, that a congregation grows when God's design is followed. God's design is perfect!

Second, just as a fire burns more efficiently when the logs are close together, a congregation works more effectively if the members are close to each other. Romans 14:19 states: *"Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another."* Paul again tells us in Galatians 6:10: *"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."* How can we know the needs of our fellow Christians if the only time we are around them is at church services? We must make a real effort to get to know each other. Must find time to observe any needs. Must see ways they struggle. Only then can we truly minister to the others in God's family.

In the **third** place, however, logs in a fire must not be so close together that they smother each other. In getting to know each other as fellow Christians, we must be patient with our brothers and sisters

in their struggles. Attempt to assist without alienating. Help without being judgmental. Point out scripture without being condescending. Love genuinely. Minister, but don't smother. It's that simple!

Lastly, the logs that have burned longer help the logs that have been added later. Help them catch fire. Help them burn efficiently in the group. "Older" Christians can have the same effect on younger Christians. Both 2 Timothy 2:2 and Titus 2 teach this: *"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also"*. Older Christians can help newer ones grow and be effective in service to God. Can be an example. Can share wisdom gained from years of being in the Family. What a wonderful opportunity God has given to the older Christians!

In learning how to build a fire properly, let's apply these principles to the way we serve God. Our ministering can be more effective. The church as a whole will benefit from our improved methods. My prayer is that these insights will help each of us be a better servant to God and to others. †

Marilyn M. Peeples works with her husband, ministering to the needs of the Chaffee Road Church of Christ in Jacksonville, Florida, USA.

WHAT CAN I DO?

J. A. Thornton

The Lord's work is the greatest work on earth. We are exhorted to be always abounding in it (1 Corinthians 15:58; Hebrews 4:11). Christianity is a **DO** religion (James 1:27). **What we do, does influence where we will be for all eternity.** *"Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven but he that doeth the will of my Father"* (Matthew 7:21). Those who do nothing will be lost. Jesus said concerning the judgment: *"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did*



not visit Me.' Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then He will answer them,

CHURCH GROWTH

saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matthew 25: 31-46).

Often people have said, "There is nothing I can do. If I could do something, I would be glad to do it." I have heard this so much that I began to think of things *any Christian* can do. I am listing ten of those suggestions for consideration. This means, dear reader, that YOU can do them! Do not fool yourself into thinking that you can't.

1. I can live right (Titus 2:11-14).
2. I can attend every service of the church possible (Hebrews 10:25).
3. I can cooperate with the work being done by and for the church (1 Corinthians 3:9; Philippians 1:27; 4:2,3).
4. I can study diligently (2 Timothy 2:15).
5. I can pray for the church (Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Timothy 2:1-8).
6. I can teach others (Acts 8:4; 5:42)
7. I can visit the sick and needy (James 1:27; Matthew 25:31-46; Ga1atians 6:10).
8. I can speak encouraging words (1 Thessalonians 5:14).
9. I can show hospitality (1 Peter 4:9)
10. I can stand for truth (Ephesians 6:10-18).

Someone else may be able to do these things better than I, but I CAN DO THEM TOO! I must not deceive myself into thinking that I cannot do them. If I do, I will have an entire eternity to regret it.

If every member of the Church would do these ten things, all the efforts of men and Satan combined could not impede the progress of the church.

If a man would be a soldier, he'd expect, of course, to fight,
And he couldn't be an author if he didn't try to write.

So it isn't common logic — doesn't have a right true ring —

That a man to be a Christian, doesn't have to do a thing! †

J.A. Thornton works with the Booneville Church of Christ in Booneville, Mississippi, USA.

Who Am I?

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

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

1. **100** I had a daughter named Tamar, after my sister, and a granddaughter named Maacah after my mother (2 Samuel 14:27; 2 Chronicles 11:20).
2. **90** My name meant "father of peace".
3. **80** I had my half-brother killed in retribution for the wrong he did to my sister (2 Samuel 13:28,29).
4. **70** For three years I lived in exile in Geshur, the home of my in-laws (2 Samuel 3:3; 13:37,38).
5. **60** After returning home, I was finally reconciled with my father (2 Samuel 14:33).
6. **50** I was a handsome man and very vain about my long hair (2 Samuel 14:25,26).
7. **40** I planned treason and insurrection against the king by raising a following among the northern tribes of Israel (2 Samuel 15).

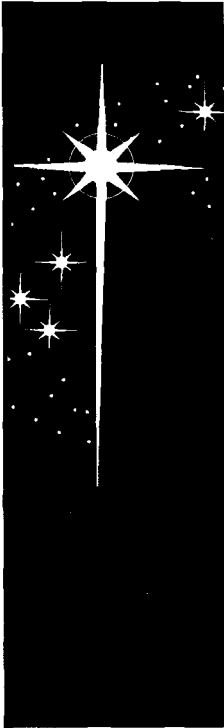


8. **30** In the battle between my army and that of my father, thousands of my fellow-countrymen were killed (2 Samuel 18:7).

9. **20** In violation of my father's orders, General Joab killed me when he found me caught by my long hair in a tree (2 Samuel 18:14).

10. **10** My father's indulgent family love, and lack of discipline of his children when they committed grave wrongs, were the root of my rebellion (2 Samuel 18:5, 10-14).

My Score _____



Editor's Note:

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

We must realize, of course, that from this distant point in history, and with the paucity of historical records left to us, it is not always possible for us to discern just who would have been counted by God as a true Christian or a true congregation of His people. In those days, as is sometimes the case in more recent history, Christians were labeled as heretics because they were going against the majority; they were often called by a leader's name (as early congregations in the US were called "Cambellite churches" by those outside the body); they were called by other names in derision; and in some cases those names were the ones that survived, historically, rather than the name by which they called themselves.

There is always the problem, too, of not knowing the degree to which people of past centuries understood and practiced the full range of doctrines in the New Testament. But to the best of his ability to ferret out the story of true Christianity as it existed in centuries past, brother Grimm has written this account. We leave it to God to determine, finally, those He numbers in His family. **The story continues...**

Persecution and Endurance

Dr. Hans Grimm

The itinerant preachers who worked in Venetia (later Venice) from about 1150 came mostly from Macedonia (Salonica), Albania (Koritza), and

CHURCH HISTORY

Dalmatia (Dragavitzza), but even 70 years later in Brescia and Viterbo there were congregations of several hundred; in Milan, Ferrera and Florence, churches of several thousand members. Even the Catholic Dictionary of Addis and Arnold was forced to acknowledge:

These teachers manifested a great simplicity of behavior, of dress, and way of living. They directed their attacks against the worldliness of the clergy, and there was also too much truth in their censure; thus their hearers were also willing to believe everything else that they said, and to despise what they despised.

The Reformed church historian states:

It is impossible to be more exclusively filled with religious interest than the Catharists were ... The Catharists have seen goodness in all its shining fulness. One cannot speak of the good God more sublimely and more persuasively than they have done. These people received the "kiss of God" ... as death was already named by them ... with greatest rejoicing while striding towards the time beyond, time full of blessed intoxication of death.

In spite of monstrous cruelties, or really through the monstrous cruelties with which church and state tried to oppose the further diffusion of the truth of salvation, the message of redemption by grace was quickly spread across the Alps. There they found the surviving churches which were once brought to life by the activity of the disciples of Priscillian and the Irish-Scottish messengers, but had been almost exterminated by severe persecutions.

In 1118 Gregory Grimm was tortured in Ensisheim in Alsace as a "Patarene" and put to death, because he had been baptized by his grandfather, who on his part had been baptized by immersion for the forgiveness of sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit by a traveling merchant from Venetia of the church, which according to his words was the only church of the saints.

In the year 1052 Emperor Henry the Third had executed in Goslar "Manichean heretics" whose crime consisted in that they had preached before monks that everything which belonged to the world of the Babylonian beast must be avoided, and that only that was genuine fasting which Christ demanded of us. In 1118 Gregory Grimm was tortured in

CHURCH HISTORY

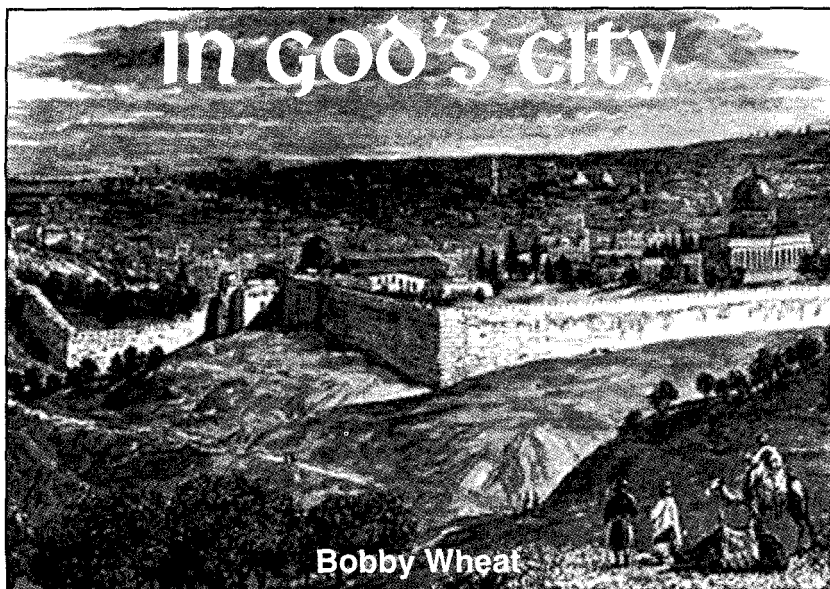
Ensisheim in Alsace as a “Patarene” and put to death, because he had been baptized by his grandfather, who on his part had been baptized by immersion for the forgiveness of sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit by a traveling merchant from Venetia of the church, which according to his words was the only church of the saints.

In the year 1143 an elder and more than one hundred orthodox Christians were seized on the lower Rhine. These confessed under torture that their congregations were in existence everywhere, but in concealment; their greatest center of members at that time was Greece, by which term doubtlessly the Byzantine Empire was meant. Out of the stronghold of the heretics at Montwimer near Chalons-sur-Marne, which already 150 years previously had sheltered the evangelist Gundulf as he came from Lombardy — Gundulf, who at that time journeyed through the Walloon and Picardy district of north France and Belgium as a preacher of apostolic poverty and opponent of christening of children, and had called into life important churches both in Luetzick and in Arras — out of Montwimer came the establishment of the brotherhood in Rheims in about 1200. ‘Here the New Testament believers were called “Publicani” — probably not to brand them as receivers of custom but as a mistaken word-form of their Macedonian designation of “Paulikanoi,” which the French crusaders had brought back with them.

In Provence and in sunny southern France it was the disciple of the sharp-thinking Breton thinker Abelard, who was so discerning and therefore so suspicious of heresy — it was his disciple Pierre de Bruys who caused the herald’s call of Christ to resound far and wide until he died at the stake in 1137. Likewise his friends Henry, a former Cistercian monk from Lausanne, and the elder Pontius of Perigord were killed by the united state and church forces. When the witnesses were silenced itinerant brothers from the Balkans came to their rescue, so that far and wide in France the term “Bulgare” became the equivalent of “heretic” and the mutilation of the word bougre is still used there as one of the basest terms of abuse (cf. “bugger” — sodomite). By the year 1162 Flanders was covered with such a close net of small New Testament churches that the believers even ventured to request the rulers of this region, the counts of Flanders, the dukes of Artois, and the archbishop of Cambrai, to permit them to preach publicly. †

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

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



"In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; God makes salvation its walls and ramparts" (Isaiah 26:1).

In the midst of a series of oracles against the surrounding nations, Isaiah breaks into a song of praise to God for His protection of Judah and Jerusalem. While God states clearly that He will destroy the cities of the surrounding idolatrous and ungodly nations, He promises protection for His own people.

In fact, though, God did allow the destruction of Jerusalem, as well; He allowed the people of Judah to be overrun and taken into captivity. Even as Isaiah wrote the words of chapter 26, disaster was

imminent. Why? Could God not protect His people, or was He not faithful to keep His promises to them?

Many years prior, when Israel was taking possession of the Promised Land, Joshua had warned, by inspiration, in Joshua 23:14-16: *"You know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed.*

"Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all the good things have come upon you which the LORD your God promised you, so the LORD will bring upon you all

harmful things, until He has destroyed you from this good land which the LORD your God has given you, when you have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed down to them, then the anger of the LORD will burn against you, and you shall perish quickly from the good land which He has given you."

God's promises are always conditional. To physical Israel, He promised that He would bring only good to them as long as they were faithful to Him; but when they turned to other gods, He warned that their destruction would surely follow. Because of their unfaithfulness as a physical nation, the prophets had repeatedly said that they would soon be taken into captivity.

If that is true, how could Isaiah praise God for being the protector of His people? The answer lies in the fact that this text, like many others in Isaiah and the other prophets, points forward to a time when the *true Israel* would be restored — not the physical nation but the spiritual heirs of Abraham, according to the promise of faith. When that restoration came, Judah and Jerusalem (spiritually speaking) would be protected by the hand of God.

"But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they

are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called.' That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed" (Romans 9:6-8). *"And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise"* (Galatians 3:29).

It is worth noting the things Isaiah told his people, and continues to tell us, which will bring God's protection:

1. The gates were to be opened for the "*righteous nation*", the "*nation that keeps faith*" (v. 1). The most basic message of the Bible concerning man's response to God's love is that **God requires faithfulness of His people.** *He will not tolerate for long a people who constantly turn their allegiance to other nations, gods, or things.*
2. An essential part of faithfulness is "*trusting*" (vs. 3,4). One reason Israel continued to have problems was her tendency to look to other sources for protection. God had promised to care for Israel **as a father cares for his son and a husband his wife.** But Israel kept looking to and trusting in other "lovers" for protection.
3. As the righteous person, or

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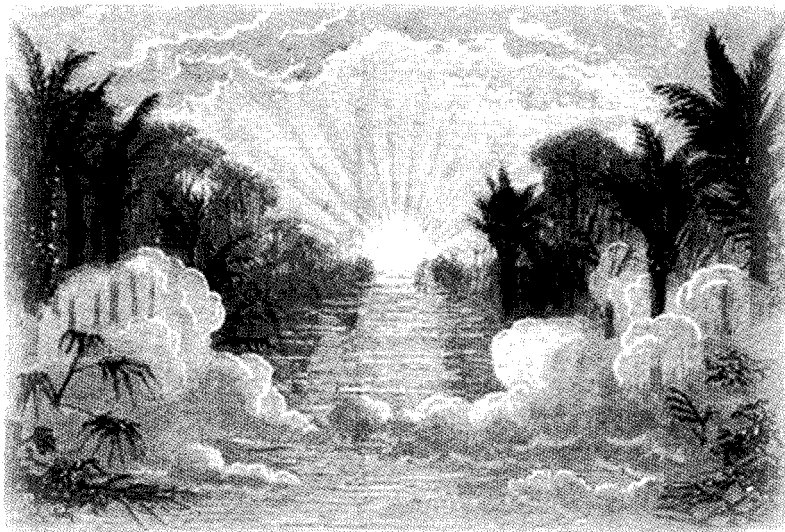
nation, trusts God and “waits” for His protection, he displays and lives by a certain attitude. That attitude is expressed in Isaiah 26:8,9: **the people are consumed by a desire to know God.** They say, *“Your name and renown are the desire of our hearts”* (v. 8). The righteous person says, *“My soul yearns for you in the night; in the morning my spirit longs for you”* (v. 9).

It is not the physical, unfaithful Israel that is the heir to God’s promises of love and protection, but spiritual Israel, those who have become “children of Abraham” through being one with Christ, who is the Seed of promise.

As a people, and as individuals within the spiritual nation of God (the church), it is mandatory that we learn the lessons of Isaiah’s song. We must learn faithfulness and avoid the temptation to give our loyalty to things other than God. We must trust God, allowing Him time to work in our lives. And we must develop the attitude of the righteous one, whose life is consumed by the desire to know God better, to be close to Him, and one day to see Him.

May God fill us with the desire to be righteous and to live within the walls of His protected city. †

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THE POWER OF THE WRITTEN WORD

JOHN THIESEN

There is great power in the written word. From the time of Moses, God has used this method of preserving His redeeming message for the world. When Moses had received the law from God on top of Mt. Sinai, he came down to the children of Israel and told them what God had said. They replied, "*All the words which the Lord hath said will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord...*" (Exodus 24:3,4). He first delivered the message orally and then wrote it down for their perpetual remembrance.

Later, the children of Israel forsook God, worshiped idols, and practiced wickedness. During this time, the law of God was forgotten, and the book of the Covenant was discarded and no longer read. Then, one day Hilkiah the high priest found the book of law which had been lost in the Temple and gave it to Shaphan the scribe, who read it to king Josiah. When the king had heard the words of the book, he was greatly moved, tearing his clothing in shame and repentance (2 Kings 22:11). He commanded that all the people of Judah and Jerusalem be

gathered together to hear the book of the covenant read. Then he and all the people whose hearts were stirred by the words of the book "*made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and with all their soul*" (2 Kings 23:3). This shows the great power of the written message of God to touch hearts and bring about repentance in the readers.

When Jesus Christ came into the world, died on the cross, was raised from the dead and returned in a cloud to Heaven, He left the message of His gospel in the hands of personally chosen eyewitnesses who came to be called His apostles. Once again, these men not only spoke the gospel to the people of that time, but they wrote it down in permanent form for all future generations. Through their written testimony, we believe in Christ today (John 20:30,31).

That same effectiveness of a written message is powerful in the hands of gospel preachers and teachers today. What they speak publicly face to face with people,

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

they can also continue to speak through the printed page in order to produce faith and obedience to the gospel of Christ in their readers, and to teach Christians to observe all things whatsoever Jesus has commanded (Matthew 28:20).

We encourage you to make use of literature available to you, to lead people to Christ and to build up yourself and others in the most holy faith. Along with the Bible, sound literature can be a very useful tool in your hands.

There is the story of a man in Burma many years ago. He was not a Christian, but he had an open mind and heart towards the truth. A man from India, J.J. Rock, came to Burma because of work responsibilities, and the two met and talked — eventually, their conversation turned to a study of God's word. The Indian man had a hobby of studying Bible correspondence courses. He gave Garth the address of Ken Sinclair in Malaysia. Garth wrote for the course, studied each lesson carefully for himself and then went through each one with his family. They became the first members of the Lord's church in modern times in Burma.

A man and his wife in the Philippines had an interesting background in religion. Both had studied and prepared to give their lives to spiritual work — he as a priest and she as a nun. But they came across a

book, **The Bad Popes**. It changed their lives completely. They married, left the religion of their parents, and educated themselves to become professors in the university. One day, riding in a jeepney, they saw a small orange book that had been left behind by someone. The title read, **The Church of the Bible**. With great interest they took it home and studied it. Then they made contact with the church in their city and obeyed the gospel. Making use of what they have learned, they now study regularly with a group of students at the university.

A young man in Romania, on his way home by train from Bucharest, spotted a copy of *The Voice of Truth International* which someone had left behind. After reading it and seeing the truths being taught, he sent an e-mail to ask for directions on how to locate the church in his country.

The written word is a powerful tool available to Christians, enabling us to leave God's word or guidelines in its study in the hands of people we love and want to teach — or even in the hands of strangers. Let us be thankful for this age of wondrous printing and circulation capabilities, and let us use them in every way possible. †

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God's Love Compels Us

R.H. Tex Williams

Anyone who has spent anytime reading the Bible cannot help but be moved by the love and personal concern that God has for all of His creation! The amazing statement made by Jesus in Matthew 10:29,30 is evidence of God's extensive love to birds as well as to mankind: *"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny. Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered."*

Though God is concerned for all of His creation, man is the focal point of His greatest love. The first mention of God's love in the Bible is expressed in the song of Moses and Miriam following Israel's deliverance from the Egyptian armies at the Red Sea. *"In your unfailing love you will lead the people you redeemed"* (Exodus 15:13).

The second time God's love is mentioned in the Bible was when the Ten Commandments were given, and God is portrayed as punishing those who would worship graven images. But His statement *"...showing love to a thousand generations of those that love me and keep my commandments"* (Exodus 20:6) is evidence of His great love

for all men. This statement is also a positive manifestation of where God's love is really evident; that is, it is for those who return His love by keeping His commandments.

These statements do not mean, however, that God's love is limited to only those who know Him and who keep His commandments. His love is universal and His purpose is to let His love be known.

That is why He sent Jonah to Nineveh to preach against their sins. In spite of Jonah's negative feelings, his preaching was successful. The people repented, and God's delight in the results was evident. *"When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring the destruction he had threatened"* (Jonah 3:10). He explained why He was concerned about Nineveh: *"But Nineveh has more than 120,000 people who cannot tell their right hand from their left and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?"* (Jonah 4:11). Note the expanse of God's love to a people who did not know Him, and even to the cattle as well.

Then, of course, Jonah finally

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

verbally recognized God's purpose in sending him to a foreign people to preach repentance. *"I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity..."* (Jonah 4:2). The universality of God's love is emphatically expressed in the familiar passage of John 3:16: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

As God loves us, so are we to love as well. In Mark 12:28-31 we are made aware that the most important commandment is *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart."* The second most important commandment is *"Love your neighbor as yourself."* This is the love that compels us to reach out to others as God's love reaches out to us.

Let me illustrate this principle using an experience that I had as a missionary in Africa. I was preaching over a short-wave radio station that reached all of southern and central Africa. Due to the many requests, I sent out copies of the sermons to a wide audience.

One day I received a letter from a Zulu man, John Gomedede, who lived in Zululand and who had picked up one of my printed sermons off of a dirt road. He stated that a truck had run over the sermon and he

could not read all of it, but was able to read enough to feel he needed to know more. My address was still legible, and he asked me to come to his home and preach. I was glad to comply, having a vague idea of where he lived, and I finally found his home. I was not welcomed by the animistic people who lived in that area, and they threw rocks at my car when I came to John's home.

Over a period of time John and his family were converted, but he suffered the consequences of his faith. His neighbors killed his chickens and goats and pulled up the corn, pumpkins, etc. that grew in his garden. I suggested that he move from such a hostile environment, but he loved his kinsmen and neighbors, and so he endured and preached. Today, because of his love, there are now 14 congregations of the Lord's church in his immediate and surrounding areas.

John's love was compelled by God's love ... and it produced fruit. *"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love"* (1 John 4:7,8). So can it be with us if we love as God loves. †

R.H. Tex Williams is director of World Bible School, an outreach program of evangelism by churches of Christ. He lives in Austin, Texas, USA.



Father. . .

I stand here in my smallness as a human

Looking up and up

into the vastness of Your works,

Your trees,

soaring, a hundred feet and more into Your sky.

Your sky,

stretching out into the endlessness of space,

Your rain,

falling from a leaden sky,

suddenly, abundantly,

to fill the thirsty mouths

of all Your living things in all

Your glorious earth

lying here beneath my feet

and stretching to horizon's edge

to meet again the endlessness of sky . . .

I am stricken, Father,

humbled

by the awesome gulf between

the might of Your great power

and the nothingness of mine;

I am awed,

brought to my knees in wonder

at Your works

Brought to my knees in wonder

that You put into my heart

the word, most precious gift of all,

“Father”. . .

Betty Burton Choate

Learning To Walk

Jeril (Polly) Cline

Our granddaughter is eighteen months old now and wants to walk everywhere. She will bring her shoes to you and even go get yours...just to go for a walk. You see, when you *learn* to walk, you *want* to walk. It's exciting! It moves you out of your own little world into a bigger one, from where you were to where you want to be.



Where are you? Where do you want to be?

How are you trying to get there? God knows we need help. It reminds me of the time our daughter was about two and her little brother was born. Now he went on our walks, and got to ride in the stroller. She had a seat in the back of it, but most often she wanted to walk on her own, until she got tired. Then she'd cry and say, "It's hard to walk." As her daddy would bend down, pick her up and throw her over his shoulders, she would squeal with delight. From this height she could see forever.

Our God is like that. Through His Word we have been lifted high so that we can see where we are going...from here to eternity.

When we become His child, God is the One taking the walk with us, helping us, protecting us, bringing us out of our darkened death march to walk in His marvelous light of life (2 Corinthians 6:16; Colossians 1:13; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 5:8; John 8:12 and 10:27,28). Each step becomes motivation to take another. Further and further we venture into the light, His light, leaving our sinful, murky existence in the past.

This is a walk of faith. It is so designed by God that it cannot be done by sight, trusting our physical senses and making judgments according to the flesh, by what *appears* to be right (2 Corinthians 5:17; John 7:24; Ephesians 4:17). Instead, we are learning to trust Him as He matures us into His spiritual people (1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Ephesians 4:10-16). Having His truth (1 John 1:6; 2 John 1:4; 3 John 1:3,4) empowered by His Spirit (Romans 8:1-17), we are beginning to experience what He intended, walking in newness of life (Romans 6:4; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10). His

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

life in us is transforming our life into the likeness of His own.

As His children, children of light, we must be careful how we walk (Ephesians 5:8,15). He has called us to walk in a manner worth of the Lord, *"to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light"* (Colossians 1:10-12). His life in us is bearing fruit. Our knowledge of Him is increasing. Being strengthened by Him, we are learning to patiently endure. We rejoice with thanksgiving to the One who has made our new life possible.

"We are His workmanship (He is the One Who is at work, Philippians 2:13), *created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them"* (Ephesians 2:10). Our walk is not for us alone. It is bigger than we are, just as His walk on this earth was bigger than He seemed in the flesh. So we walk as He walked (Colossians 2:6). This is not easy. It was not for Him. It will not be for us (1 John 2:6; 1 Peter 2:21-24). *"For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not*

only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Philippians 1:29).

This walk is in love — like His walk. And love is costly. *"Walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma"* (Ephesians 5:2). You knew it would come to this...giving our "self" up. It is the only way we can walk with Him. We cannot hold onto His hand and continue to pull in the other direction.

He will let us go. He will allow us to walk away. That is how much He loves us, enough to give us our freedom. We must *want* to walk with Him. And as we do, we give up more and more of our self to Him...becoming like His Son, having the fragrance of Christ Himself as our essence (2 Corinthians 2:15).

Keep on walking. Don't let Satan hinder you. Hold on tight. Fix your eyes on Him. *"Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you may excel still more"* (1 Thessalonians 4:1).

When you *learn* to walk...you *want* to walk...*more and more.* †

Jeril (Polly) Cline is a writer and preacher's wife living in Blue Ridge, Georgia, USA.

I have always wanted to be somebody **great**. Not just good, but great! I thought about being a great baseball player — they make lots of money and are very popular. They are on TV and you read about them in newspapers and magazines. Everybody likes to see and watch them. But it doesn't last long and people soon forget about you.

Or, I could become a politician. Everyone wants to be your friend and you are always receiving honors. You have a lot of power to do things for

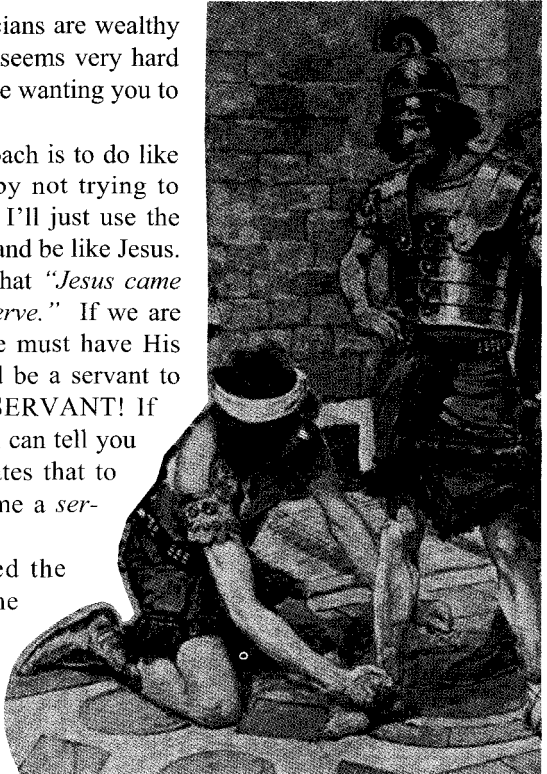
A Servant of God

Steven Wright

people. And, most politicians are wealthy when they retire. But, it seems very hard to be honest, with everyone wanting you to “do something” for them.

Maybe the best approach is to do like Jesus — become *great* by not trying to become great. That's it, I'll just use the talents God has given me and be like Jesus. In Mark 10:45 we learn that “*Jesus came not to be served but to serve.*” If we are going to be like Him, we must have His attitude about service and be a servant to others. **I WILL BE A SERVANT!** If **you** want to be a servant I can tell you how. Matthew 20:26 states that to be great, you must become a *servant*.

After Joshua had led the children of Israel into the promised land, he told them to “*choose you this day whom you will serve.... but as for me and my house we will*



DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). I think this is what Jesus would want me to do.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus teaches many things that will identify a servant, and He makes a promise to all who serve. For example, "*blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.*" The Good Samaritan was a servant to a stranger and showed mercy to him. Jesus said that we should "*go and do likewise*" (Luke 10:36,37).

John tells about Jesus washing the feet of His disciples in John 13:4-17. Jesus tells us that we should follow this example. To follow Jesus, we should serve with gentleness, kindness and humbleness. It is hard to be like that today when it seems like everyone is concerned only with himself — but Jesus expects us to be concerned for others.

Can we as servants have any influence in the world today? Yes. In Matthew 5, Jesus said "*You are the salt of the earth and the light of the world.*" This makes it personal.

Salt and light in these verses stand for our influence on others. I am responsible to see that **my salt** does not lose its worth and **my light** is not hidden. For **my** influence to be effective I need to be serving others. And serving is not a sign of weakness but of courage and obedience.

Our service is measured by *how well* we serve, not how *big* the service is. In Hebrews 6:10 we see that God will not forget our works of love. Little things can begin a life of service — a card to an elderly person, a phone call to the lonely, a visit to the nursing home or just a hug to encourage. For example, in Matthew 10:42 we learn that if you "*give just a cup of cold water you shall not lose your reward.*"

If we are followers of Christ, we are "His hands". If Christ is to help the poor, it must be by *our* hands. If He is to take care of the sick, it must be by *our* hands. If he is to help those who are lonely, it must be by *our* hands. Do you see anything that Christ needs to do today? Remember the song: "Christ has no hands but our hands to do his work today."

I want to be **great** at something that prepares me for eternity. Being a great ball player or politician counts only while I am living. Being a great **servant** prepares me to meet God in heaven and to hear Him say well done.

I intend to be like Joshua and serve the Lord. What about you? What do you want to do with your life? †

Steven Wright is a young Christian man who is a participant in the Lads to Leaders program in the Austinville Church of Christ in Decatur, AL, USA.

Why So Much Violence?

Ardron Hinton

Things that happen have causes. So let's raise the question: What is causing our national epidemic of violence? Obviously, there is no simple, one-shot explanation, but in this brief article we'd like to suggest one major contributing factor.

Romans 8:16,17 (quoting from Isaiah 59) gives this explanation: "*Destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known.*" Peace, like other aspects of life, has to be **learned**. Now, just as in Isaiah's day, many have learned how to foster **destruction** and **misery**, but not how to promote **peace**.

In Romans 8:6 Paul wrote, "*For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*" A mind filled with the ways of the world will have difficulty even seeing the peaceable path, much less understanding it. In 14:19 of this letter Paul urges us to "*pursue the things which make for peace.*" He is telling us to look for ideas and possibilities for promoting peace. Recall the words of Jesus, "*Blessed are the peacemakers.*" In Romans 12:18 Paul pursues this same positive approach to our subject, "*If it is possible, as much as*

depends on you, live peaceably with all men." Paul makes it clear that promoting peace is not only something that CAN be taught, but something that we NEED to be teaching.

Since children learn their social skills and patterns of behavior in actual situations, it takes time and deliberate effort to do the needed teaching. A peaceful person would need to be a kind, gentle, caring, and patient person. You possibly recognized these as qualities arising from Biblical love. They are essential in the promotion of peace, and they can readily be taught to small children. In a world that is well supplied with violent people, and violent "entertainment", it will take even more effort to train anyone, young or old, to be a person who is peaceable in his or her own life and who promotes peace in their world.

Jesus, whom Isaiah called "the Prince of Peace", has taught us that true peace is not achieved by sacrificing truth and principle, but by sacrificing self-interest, and by developing self-discipline and a serving heart. Are we really teaching peace? †

Ardron Hinton preaches the gospel in Blair, Oklahoma, USA.

An Open Letter to Christians who will one day meet my children:

Brad Harrub, Ph.D.

We are dreading it like the plague — and yet, we know there is nothing we can do about it. Our children will grow up, and one day leave home to build their own family. God blessed my wife and me with two precious souls who have brought a lifetime of joy and happiness in the few years He gave them to us for care and safe-keeping. With bedraggled hair and lines on their faces, we have soaked up their morning time smiles. And with comforting arms and a plethora of nightlights, we have conquered nighttime monsters, all the while, watching their beautiful handprints fill our house. But the time will come when they grow up and move away, no longer under our guidance and care. Thus, this open letter to you.

I don't know what day it will be, or in what town you will likely see them. But chances are, in this "small world", your paths will cross one day. I hope on that day, you will remember this letter and help their mom and me out. Believe me when I tell you that we are praying for that day. For you see, as parents, we want nothing more than to hear Almighty God say to our children "Well done good and faith-

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

ful servants...enter thou into the joy of the Lord" (Matthew 25:23). We want them in Heaven! Their souls mean more to us than all the material possessions on this planet. We are simply asking you to do all you can as a Christian to help us get them there.

Now please do not think we are unloading our responsibility on you. This is certainly not the case. We know that children are like arrows in the hand of a mighty man (Psalm 127:4), and it has been with forethought and determination that we have launched them towards the goal that we so lovingly call Heaven. In fact, we have centered their lives around God and His Word from the day they were delivered into this world. Bibles do not collect dust on our shelves. We try to seize every opportunity available to teach them about God, Jesus, the Bible, and His creation around us.

We not only "talk the talk" of Christianity, but we humbly "walk the walk." When the doors of the church building are open, our children are there. We have lost count of the many gospel meetings, vacation Bible schools, and area-wide singings they have attended. They are being raised at the feet of men whose Bible knowledge and Christian example are nothing short of exemplary. But there will come a day when mom and dad's voices will

not be heard as loudly as others. And sadly, there will come a time when we will not load them into our car to go to worship with us. And so, we are soliciting your help.

My wife and I do not subscribe to the idea of "political correctness". Thus, even while they are still under our care, but in instances where they may be out of our sight, if you ever see them doing something they shouldn't, correct them and, if need be, add a good swat as a reminder. Should they be running, playing, and acting like the auditorium is a gymnasium, block their path and rebuke them — remind them that tracks and playgrounds are for running. If our children look sleepy or tired in worship, please ask them what was more important the evening before that caused God to take a backseat. If they are late to worship, tell them to buy a watch. If they leave the auditorium during the sermon, kindly remind them to get "their business" done before worship begins. If they walk by without speaking to (or worse yet, almost knocking over) elderly members in the church, take them by the arm and nip the problem right then and there. If they appear to be passing notes or not paying attention, kindly take a minute to ask them what they learned in the lesson that day, and ask them why we worship. Do not be afraid to tell them if they are dressed inappropriately.

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

And if for any reason you do not see them in a worship assembly that they should be in, please pick up the phone and call them (and us) immediately, to check about whatever might be wrong. For you see, we want our children not only to be "Christians" in name, we want them to live faithful Christian lives.

If you have the opportunity to teach either one of our children in school, or in a Bible class, please challenge them. I know many "specialists" warn that we should not push our children too hard, but we would like to see ours wrestle with a few problems. Part of learning is knowing how to think on your own. This lesson will never be learned if they are given the answers each time something is challenging. How will a child learn perseverance or diligence if he or she is handed everything on a silver platter? As parents and teachers, we must expect more from them, but be there for them when they sincerely need help. We must not accept mediocre performance, and we must not allow them to become bored with the process of learning. Please help motivate and educate them. God blessed them with brains, and we expect them to use them.

We also do not buy into this idea of building our children's self-esteem in an unnatural way. If they lose at a sporting event, please do

not immediately run out and buy them something. If they make a poor grade, please do not curve it because they are nice. Some of the best lessons in life come at the expense of pain and tears. How will children ever learn to improve if they are rewarded for everything in life, even for mediocrity? We want our children to understand that life will not always hand them roses, and that they need to be Christians whether they win or lose, in good times and in bad. We ask you to help us use times of adversity or set-back to motivate them to do better, so that they can win in the future.

Both of our children have grown up surrounded by love and are complimented quite often. But we don't believe some guy, selling bestseller "how-to" books about self-esteem, knows what is best for our children. Our nation is suffering from the self-deceit of the "me" image, convinced that "I" am the biggest, the brightest, and the best, not because of personal development and integrity, but simply because everyone around has always said so. A good self-image must be built on a good name and a worthy character. Call us old fashioned, but we still believe God's inspired Word knows what is best for us and for our children.

If you happen to be the parents who are currently rearing the children who will be our children's future

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

spouses, know that we are praying for you as well. We recognize that the values, character, and spiritual emphasis you are currently placing in your children's life will one day greatly affect our own children.

Our children are being taught that marriage is for life — period. And they will walk into their marriages able to quote God's one and only acceptable reason for divorce and remarriage. We hope your children are hearing the exact same message.

We beg you to “do your homework now”, teaching your children to love God more than anything in the world. Maybe, as parents, if we focused more on loving God, instead of only “Thou Shall Not's,” then our children's own hearts would be convicted when they face something God would not approve of.

As our children's future mates, your offspring will likely be one of the most influential factors in getting our children to heaven. Please do not take your job lightly!

And finally, dear Christian, please notice what type of example and influence you are being for our children. While they may sit by you in worship on Sunday, what message are you teaching them throughout the remainder of the week? Will they see you walking into the corner grocery for alcoholic beverages? Will they hear you belittle your family members or curse out the waitress

in the restaurant? Will they watch you work overtime to buy more and more material things, and yet have no time or money for the church? Will they hear you gripe and complain about the preacher and elders all the way home? Will they learn about your priorities and commitment to sporting events as they look at Sunday night and Wednesday night attendance? Will they observe elders who enjoy the “title”, but are not strong enough to stand up for the Truth, especially if it means there will be confrontation? Will they witness preachers who claim to love God, but then act in a way that proves otherwise? We hope when they look at you, they will see nothing less than a Christian faithfully trying to serve our Almighty Creator.

The devil desperately wants my children. He would love nothing more than to have them as his own. However, he knows that as long as their mother and I still have breath in our lungs, we will be fighting for their souls — a fight that we do not intend to lose. And with you in our Christian family, we know that the devil will fail. We want you to know that we are eternally grateful for your help, and we ask for your continued prayers as we do all we can to get our children to Heaven. †

Brad Harrub works with Apologetics Press in Montgomery, Alabama, USA.

What Parents Could Have Done

Note: This article was written by a Juvenile Probation Officer in Galveston, Texas. He gives parenting tips from interviews with teens who were in trouble with the law. They answered the question, *"What could your parents have done to keep you out of trouble."*

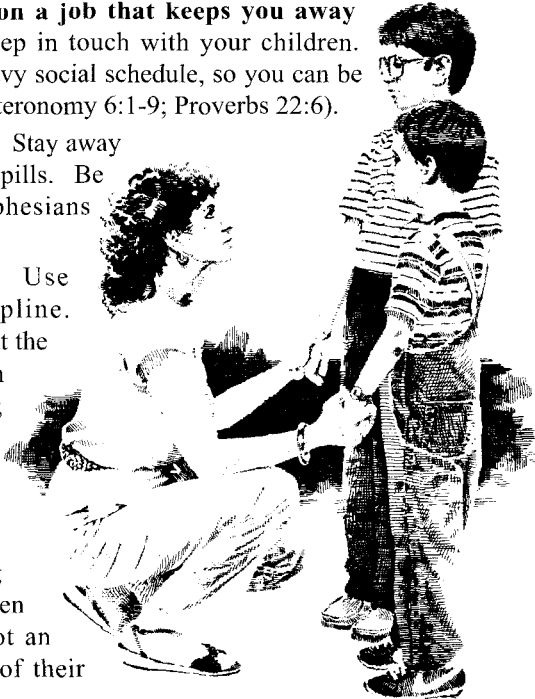
Look at their answers.

✓ **Don't get hung up on a job that keeps you away from home.** Fathers, keep in touch with your children. Mothers, cut away the heavy social schedule, so you can be at home to supervise (Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Proverbs 22:6).

✓ **Don't get strung out.** Stay away from liquor and sleeping pills. Be normal, be "square" (Ephesians 5:17,18; Proverbs 20:1).

✓ **Bug them a little.** Use strict, but loving discipline. Don't let them just ride out the storm. Give them an anchor (Proverbs 13:24; 23:13).

✓ **Don't blow your class.** Keep the dignity of parenthood. Don't dress, act, talk, or swing like the teens do. Children need a loving parent, not an adult who acts like one of their peers (Proverbs 19:18).



THE CHRISTIAN HOME

- ✓ **Take the world off their shoulders.** Share your children's problems. Let them know that your love for them is constant, and make your home a peaceful harbor (Psalm 119:9-16; Galatians 6:2).
- ✓ **Light them a candle.** Show your children a living faith (Titus 2:7,8).
- ✓ **Shake them up when they need it.** Punish them when they first go wrong. Tell them why and convince them that more severe punishment will come, if they disobey again in the same manner. Don't punish them out of anger (Proverbs 13:1; Ephesians 6:4). When you punish your children in anger, you usually provoke them to anger.
- ✓ **Call their bluff.** Stand firmly on what is right, even when your kids threaten to run away or drop out of school (Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 15:5).
- ✓ **Be honest with them.** Tell the truth at all times. Praise your children when you can, but criticize when you must. Never keep your children in doubt of where you stand on important matters (Romans 12:9; Colossians 3:9; Ephesians 4:29).
- ✓ **Keep your cool.** Don't lose your head in every crisis. Children need confidence and a steady hand (Galatians 5:22,23; Ephesians 6:4).

"Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward as arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth" (Psalm 127:3,4).

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

"You will have no greater joy than to hear that your children walk in truth."

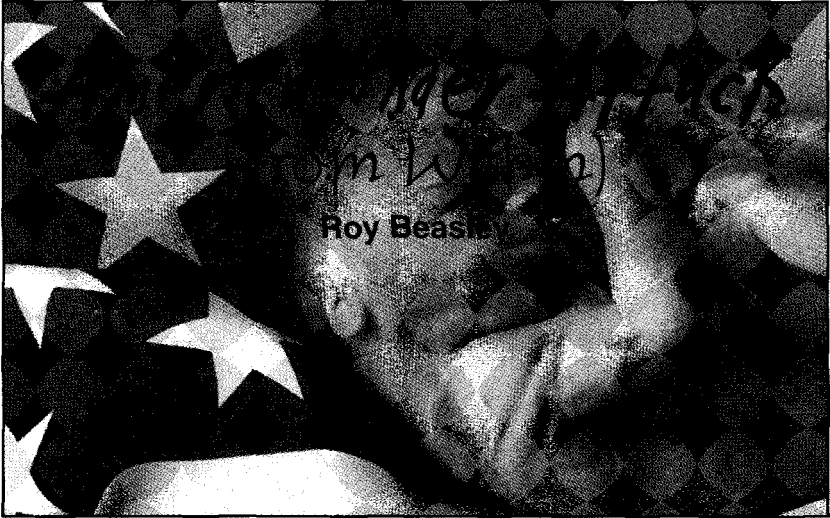
"Teach your kids responsibility early."

"The idea of 'let them be children; they have to carry responsibilities soon enough' is wrong. Lazy, indulged children become lazy, indulged adults who never reach the point of *wanting* to be responsible."

"Motivate your children; don't denigrate them."

ETHICS

Where were you the morning of September 11, 2001? You will probably always remember where you were and what you were doing when you first heard of the terrible tragedy that took 3,000 lives in the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York City and the fortress-like Pentagon building in Washington, DC. The images will always be there, in our minds, of the second hijacked airliner full of people being rammed into the WTC tower, of the great explosion high above the street, of people jumping out of windows, and of our stunned silence and sheer disbelief as both towers collapsed to the ground. It couldn't be happening, we were thinking. But, it did!



There was a fourth plane hijacked and heading toward an unknown target, but it never got there. It crashed in an empty field in Pennsylvania, evidently brought down by some brave passengers who rushed the hijackers in an effort to take back the plane. They were all heroes in my estimation. They did this, knowing that they were all going to die anyway and that their sacrifice would save countless lives on the ground. This was the first victory in America's new war.

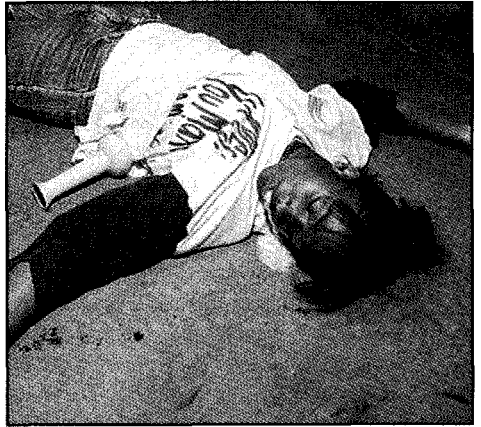
Yes, America is under attack. This is the war against terrorism. It will be, we are told, a new kind of war. But, our President has declared that every effort shall be put forth — militarily, economically, and politically —

ETHICS

to identify and utterly crush this faceless, cowardly enemy. How wonderfully our people have responded! Not since Pearl Harbor have I witnessed more display of patriotism and unity of purpose among us. It may take months and even years, but I have every confidence that America and her allies will prevail in this war against terrorism.

But, let us not forget and ever be aware that terrorists are not our ONLY enemy. Perhaps the most dangerous and vicious enemies that we face are those from within. These have the potential of bringing America to her knees, as no other enemy has been able to do.

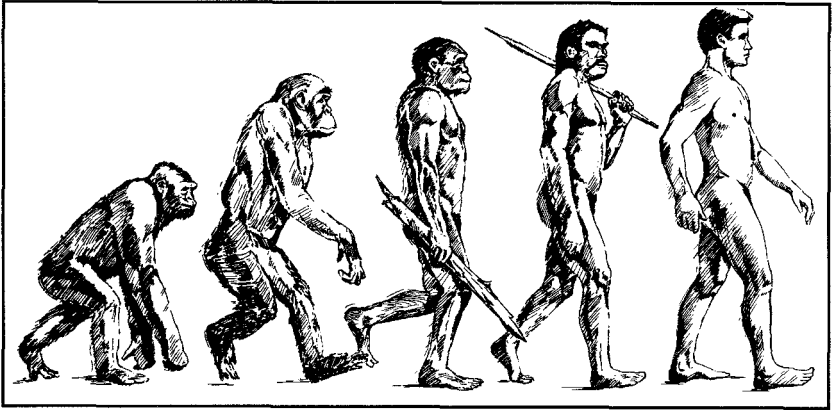
* **ILLEGAL DRUGS.** A war on drugs was declared a decade ago, but it seems that we are no closer to victory than we were then. Drug dealers are selling out their own country for profit. Think of homes **wrecked** and young lives **ruined** — not to mention lives **lost** in this battle.



* **PORNOGRAPHY.** This is Satan's weapon to undermine the morals of our nation, and it is extremely effective.

He seeks to separate our people from God. This tactic has worked well for him in the past. He knows that *"righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people"* (Proverbs 14:34). It is so easy for Satan. With TV and the internet, pornography can be brought into the living room and made available to our children as well as to everyone else with the click of a button. We must be on guard.

* **ATHEISM.** Someone remarked to me the other day that during this national crisis the atheists have been silent. No, they haven't had much to say. And no wonder! There is little of value that they can say. They have no hope to give. They have no one to whom to pray. They have no sustaining faith to share. But, still they are there, standing in the wings, watching for opportunities to undermine the faith of our children. They have succeeded in taking God out of the schoolroom. In 1962 the Supreme Court ruled that praying and Bible-reading in the public school system are unconstitutional.



The results have been devastating. Since then there has been a multiplied increase of violence in schools. After a tragic incident which took the lives of several teachers and students, a memorial service was held by a local church of Christ. A TV interviewer asked one of the elders: "What is the answer to what is happening in our society?" His answer was brief and to the point: "Quit teaching that man came from monkeys." He told me the lady was not impressed with his answer, and I said, "No, and it won't air!" I was right.

Atheists teaching children that man is a two-legged animal! No wonder some of them grow up to act like animals! Animals live by instinct. They have no code of morals, no rules to live by, no concept of right and wrong. If man came from an alkaline solution instead of God, who is to say what is right and what is wrong, and who can impose his particular morals on anyone else? Do not underestimate the power of the atheists!

* **HOMOSEXUALITY:** It is estimated that homosexuals make



ETHICS

up only about 2% of our nation's population, but they have been very vocal, and businesses, religious organizations and even our government have wilted to their demands. Homosexuality is against nature. It is a violation of the laws of God. It is a shameful and disgraceful blot on our society, and is an invitation to a long and painful death process — AIDS. In the beginning God instituted the family with a father and a mother. Homosexuality is a perversion of this sacred relationship. It is listed along with the greatest sins of the Romans (Cf. Romans 1:24-32). The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah has stood for thousand of years as a vivid reminder of those who would corrupt society by this perversion. America is under attack!

* **ABORTION:** Abortion is a national disgrace, a national tragedy, and a national crime. During America's 225-year history approximately 1.25 million soldiers have been killed in wars. But, **there have been approximately 40 million unborn babies killed since 1973!** What if there was a cemetery for 40 million aborted babies? Such a cemetery would cover **60 square miles. At 55 miles per hour it would take more than 5 hours just to drive around the perimeter of it. Placed in a straight line, side by side, these little graves would reach from New York City to Los Angeles more than nine times!** The heart of the issue is not "women's rights", but the taking of human life. Life begins, not at birth, but at conception. (Read Isaiah 44:24; Job 31:15; Jeremiah 1:5). Do we forget the rights of unborn children? Is there no one to champion

their cause? I remember during WW II that

Americans were appalled to learn of abortion's being practiced by the Nazis. It was unthinkable! It was considered an act of barbarianism.

Now, unbelievably, it is being practiced in our own society, among our own

people and is being protected and even

sanctioned by our own government! Murder by government, medical, and parental endorsement!



ETHICS

CONCLUSION: No, I don't believe that America will be brought down by any terrorist organization. Nor will it be destroyed by the marching armies of any enemy nation. We are the most powerful nation on earth. We are a sleeping giant and, when aroused, no other nation on earth can match our resolve.

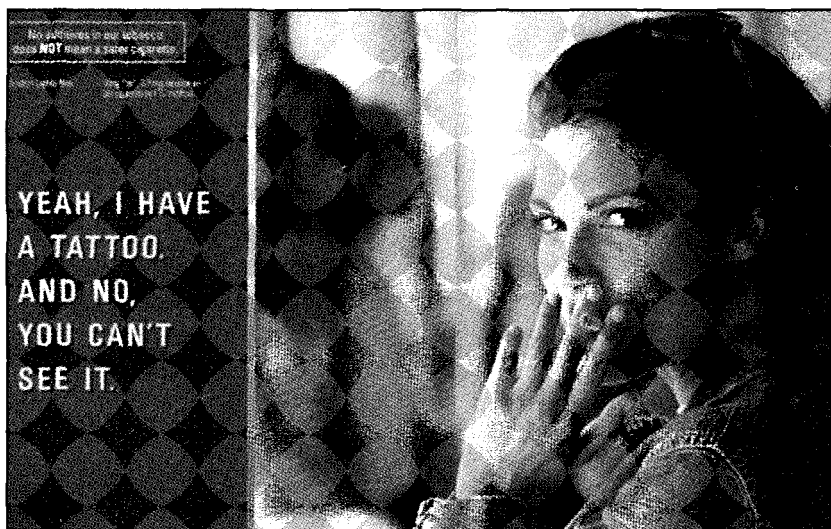
Over 40 million abortions have been performed in the US since the Supreme Court's historic Roe vs Wade ruling of 22 January 1973 authorized the legal killing of unborn children nationwide.

Former abortionist Bernard Nathanson, in his "Confession of an ex-abortionist" in which he admitted to being personally responsible for 75,000 abortions, described the tactics he (and others) used to change the law as a founding director of NARAL (National Abortion Rights Action League): "We persuaded the media that the cause of permissive abortion was a liberal enlightened sophisticated one. Knowing that if a true poll were taken we would be defeated, we simply fabricated the results of fictional polls. We announced to the media that we had taken polls and that 60% of Americans were in favour of permissive abortion laws. This is the tactic of the self-fulfilling lie. Few people care to be in the minority. The number of women dying from illegal abortions was around 200-250 annually. The figure we constantly fed to the media was 10,000. These false figures took root in the consciousness of Americans."

1.3 million American women still have abortions every year and despite recent gains the Pro-Life movement's goal of overturning Roe vs Wade has remained elusive. (from Eutyclus website)

However, we must be warned: Our nation is vulnerable. It can fall like an over-ripe fruit falls to the ground, brought down by the rot of our own ungodliness. If we fall, it will not be because of the enemy from WITH-OUT but because of that sickening rot from WITHIN. †

Roy Beasley is the Director of Restoration Radio Network International and lives in Nashville, Tennessee, USA.



YEAH, I HAVE
A TATTOO.
AND NO,
YOU CAN'T
SEE IT.

“You’ve Come a Long Way,
Baby” —
in the Wrong Direction!

G.W. Childs

“You’ve come a long way baby” was the caption in years past on a billboard showing a young woman smoking. There was a time when it was considered a shame for women to smoke. If they smoked, they hid themselves and hoped not to be discovered. During those times, when women smoked very little and drank very little, their average life span was considerably longer than that of men. Today that is changing! Women are rapidly catching up with men in the areas of heart disease, lung cancer, strokes, sclerosis of the liver, and STD’s which lead to early death. It just occurred to me that *women have come a long way*, but **in the wrong direction**. If women want to look older than their years and die younger than necessary, then the above habits will surely help them to achieve that goal.

ETHICS

One young woman, less than thirty years old, told the boys in the office where she worked, "I just want to be one of the guys!" Sorry, ma'am, you can't be one of the guys — you simply aren't a guy! She had formed one habit which I suppose made her feel more like the guys, and that was cursing. That habit eventually got her fired when she decided to curse the boss. *She had come a long way*, but **in the wrong direction**. The same woman evidently thought she had discovered a better way than the sexual purity taught by the Bible. She ran with wild men, and seemed rather proud of having slept with many different ones. By the time she was fired, she was scared to death that she might have AIDS. Also, in spite of all the men who came and went, she was the sole support and care-giver for her child. Now, had she not *come a long way* — **in the wrong direction**?

Another young girl, before she was twenty-five years old, had three children born out of wedlock by three different fathers. Her first child was fathered by a twelve-year-old boy whom the girl was "babysitting" while both moms were out on the town enjoying themselves. Now you talk about a young mother who looked down and out, depressed, distraught, and miserable — she was one of them. This picture can be duplicated thousands of times across our land. Sadly, these out-of-wedlock pregnancies that are so routinely accepted were once looked on with shame. The change in attitude may relieve some of the social pressure, but it doesn't remove the sin or the devastating effects on all involved. Why do young girls get themselves in such life-long trouble? Well, *they have come a long way* — **in the wrong direction**. These girls just want to be one of the guys. That can't happen — the guys don't get pregnant.

Then, there are those women who really feel they have come a long way, and they think they don't need a man in their lives except for a short time to father their child. This is especially common among movie stars. Of course, they have the money to support themselves and their child, so they see no need for a man as a permanent fixture in the home. Here, the person who really suffers is the child, who often grows up like a kitten — not knowing who his or her father is, or at least having no contact with him. Whether they realize it or not, these women have *come a long way*, but **in the wrong direction**.

Other women have good homes with husbands who love them and their adorable children. However, they may feel that they are "stuck in a rut" and need to spread their wings and "have some fun". So, they divorce that good husband and father who worked hard to provide for his family and run off

ETHICS

after wild men who will only take advantage of them. These stupid women find men who are like the line in a song a few years ago: "Although I'll never love you, I'll stay with you one year ...and we'll sing in the sunshine. You know we'll laugh every day! We'll sing in the sunshine, and I'll be on my way!" One woman who lived this kind of life later said with regret, "I was a ___ fool for ever leaving ___ (her husband)." She had *come a long way* — **in the wrong direction.**

Why in the world have women gotten themselves into such predicaments? Perhaps there are several factors.

● The Bible provides the recipe for a happy home and family, and it still works wonderfully when it is followed. Husbands are told to "*love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it*" (Ephesians 5:25). They are also to "*love their wives as their own bodies*" (Ephesians 5:28). In return, wives are to "*revere*" their husbands (Ephesians 5:33). Then, both are to care tenderly for their children (Ephesians 6:4; Titus 2:4-5). However, too many people have ignored the Bible plan. Husbands, at times, have been really mean, cruel, and abusive to both their wives and children. Such husbands, then, have contributed to the problem discussed above. Women want to be free from such a trap. There was a time when they could not because of financial reasons, but today women can support themselves and be more independent.

● Then, there's the change in attitudes toward women. During World War II, our soldiers spent time with the French and the English girls. One English lady told this writer in Beirut, Lebanon, that, "Your American soldiers came over to our country and ruined our girls." That may have been the case, but it ruined our boys, too, in many respects. Remember that post-war song that went, "How ya' gonna keep 'em down on the farm, after they've seen Patee?" These boys thought they wanted wives like those French and English women.

During the war, many women had taken public jobs to support the war effort, and others began public work afterward. That gave these women some extra freedom. However, the results were not always rosy. When women and men were together in close quarters in the work place, families were often destroyed.

Women soon realized they did not receive the same wages as the men for the same work done in the factories, so that created unhappi-

ETHICS

ness and resentment. Some women tried to become like the French and English women the soldiers remembered, which did not work out well in a family setting. Many women also felt entitled to spend the money they earned as they pleased. This tended to cause friction with husbands who disagreed.

● As time went on, what developed almost simultaneously were the feminist movement and the sexual revolution. The founders of these movements felt these changes would serve women well. In reality, about the only positive change has been that women have made more money in certain selective jobs. But soon the “luxuries” they meant to buy seemed like “necessities”, and they felt they *had* to work. Meanwhile, Junior and Sis were raised by day-care, everybody was harried and hurried, and there was no relief in sight. We have to ask ourselves if what they gained was worth what they lost and what their homes and our country have lost?

These feminists did not appreciate commonly accepted courtesies from men, such as having car doors opened for them. They were perfectly capable of doing that for themselves. So what do they have today? They have the men slamming the doors closed on their heads. Think about it! Don't you see women driving these men or boys around in nice automobiles that the women have worked for and purchased? The men and the boys are happy to ride in the women's cars and let them burn their gas, feed them, buy their cigarettes, beer, and dope! Some of these women and girls are also working to support children these lazy men and boys have fathered out of wedlock. Have they not slammed the door on their heads? These men do not work. They may use the woman's car to take her to work, and then return to get her at the end of the day. In years past, those men used to be called “go getters!” Now you tell me, have these men not slammed the door closed on the women's heads?

Now some of you women may be thinking, “Oh well, that's just a man's viewpoint.” O. K., let me give it to you straight from the mouth of a feminist, Kay Ebeling. Her take on feminism was published in Newsweek (November 19, 1990). This woman left her husband, and a little later gave up custody of her son, to pursue the feminist dream. Here's what she wrote: **“Feminism freed men, not women.”** Of her husband she says: **“In the last 15 years my ex has married or lived with a succession of women. As he gets older, his women stay in their 20s. Meanwhile, I've stayed unat-**

ETHICS

tached. He drives a BMW. I ride buses.” Ebeling further states, “Feminism made women disposable. So today a lot of females are around 40 and single with a couple of kids to raise on their own.” She mentioned how one man she met left her so fast “he let the door slam back in my face.” Did I not say the men are slamming the doors closed on women’s heads? Well, Ebeling admits, “We asked for it!”

So, there you have it — a feminist’s viewpoint. It’s a terrible state of affairs for women who have rejected the pattern of the Bible for a home and family. Both men and women are responsible for it, and ultimately both are losers. However, for the women we still have to say, “*You’ve come a long way, Baby, in the wrong direction!*” †

G.W. Childs works with the Wenasoga Church of Christ in Corinth, Mississippi, USA.

The Biblical contrast....

...the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

PROVERBS 17:22



It is well documented that for every minute that you exercise, you add one minute to your life. This enables you at 85 years old to spend an additional 5 months in a nursing home at \$5000 per month.



“Oh, Aunt Sue, I’m so glad you’re coming to our house. Now maybe Daddy will do his new trick.”

“What trick is that, my dear?”

“Well, I heard him say that if you ever come again, he’ll climb the walls.”



It has been said that the mind is like a TV set – when it goes blank, it’s a good idea to turn off the sound.

The man who fell into the upholstery machine is now fully recovered.



My Bonnie looked into her gas tank,
To see how much gas she could see,
She lit up a match to assist her,
Oh bring back my Bonnie to me.



Sometimes it is nice to be told things. I am reminded of a young couple who were sitting out on a porch swing. She asked, “George, do you think my eyes are beautiful?” George answered, “Yep.” In a few moments, “George, do you think my hair is attractive?” Again George answered, “Yep.” In a while, “George, would you say that I am lovely to look at?” Once again George answered, “Yep.” “Oh George,” she said, “you say the nicest things.”



Robert Orben says, “My wife claims I’m a baseball fanatic. She says all I ever read about is baseball, all I ever talk about is baseball, and all I ever think about is baseball. I told her she’s way off base.”

PROVERBS 17:22

It is a fact that some women talk a lot. Please understand that the following statement cannot be verified from the Bible, but rumor has it that Adam was created first so that he would have a chance to say something.



There is absolutely no way that I would want to reveal who the preacher was, but brother “So and so” had been preaching for quite a while one Sunday morning when the microphone went dead.

He raised his voice and asked a man in the back row if he could hear.

“No,” was the reply.

Immediately, a man in the front pew stood and shouted back, “I can hear, and I’ll change places with you.”



One fellow caught a fish so big that he dislocated both shoulders trying to describe it.



I like long walks, especially when they are taken by people who annoy me.

When you’ve seen one shopping center you’ve seen a mall.



Mack and Jack were avid baseball fans. One day they were talking, and they began to wonder if baseball was played in Heaven. They agreed that the first one to die would contact the other to let him know.

Not long after that Mack died. As promised, he got in touch with Jack and said, “I have good news and bad news. The good news is that they do play baseball in Heaven.”

Jack then asked, “Well, what is the bad news?”

Mack answered, “You’re pitching on Thursday.”



Brother Jones was the preacher for the Main Street congregation for over 30 years, in spite of the fact that he was not known for short sermons.

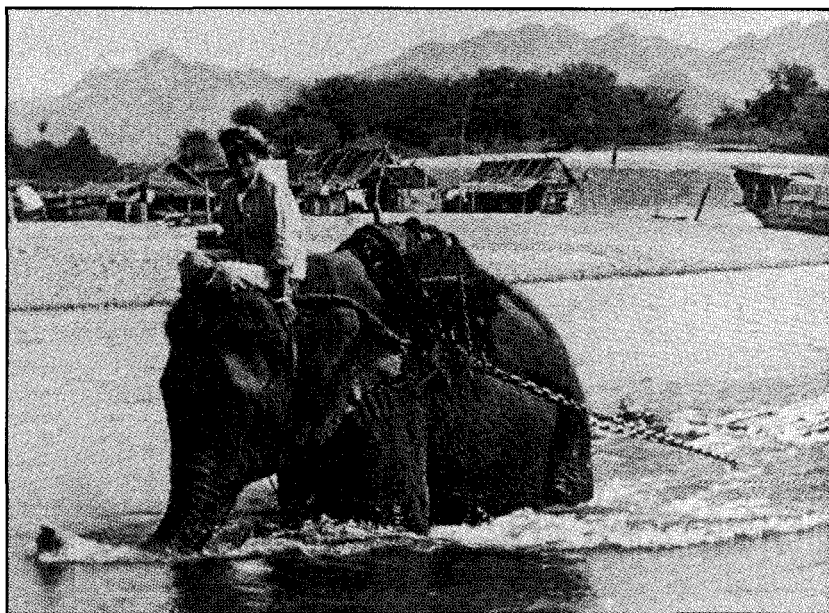
On the 10th anniversary of his work with the church they gave him a watch.

On the 20th anniversary they gave him a large clock.

Finally, on his 30th anniversary, they gave up and gave him a calendar.

FROM THE HEART OF...

Thailand: The Ancient Kingdom of Siam



A work elephant pulling a bamboo raft.

The Kingdom of Thailand, the ancient Kingdom of Siam, occupies the Indochinese and Malayan peninsulas in Southeast Asia. The ancestors of today's Thais began their migration out of China during the eleventh century. The kingdom was established in 1350 and is the only country in Southeast Asia never to have been taken over and colonized by a European nation. King Mongkut and his son, King Chulalongkom, together ruled for more than

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

sixty years. The modernization they brought to Siam and the trade relations they established with European powers kept them independent.



The famous “Bridge over the River Kwai” built by Allied prisoners under Japanese occupation during World War II.

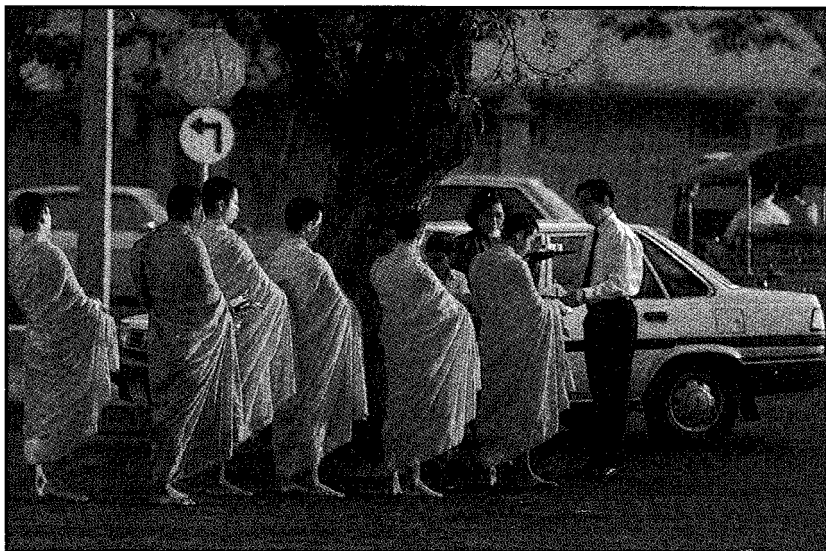
A bloodless revolution within the country in 1932 limited the power of the king, and the country became a “Constitutional Monarchy”. Thailand was allied with Japan during World War II, but with the U.S. in the post-war years. The country was taken over by the military in 1976, but allowed democratic elections. There have been political upheavals since that time, economic crises, and a massive epidemic of the HIV/AIDS virus. By the end of the 1990’s it was estimated that three quarters of a million people were infected.



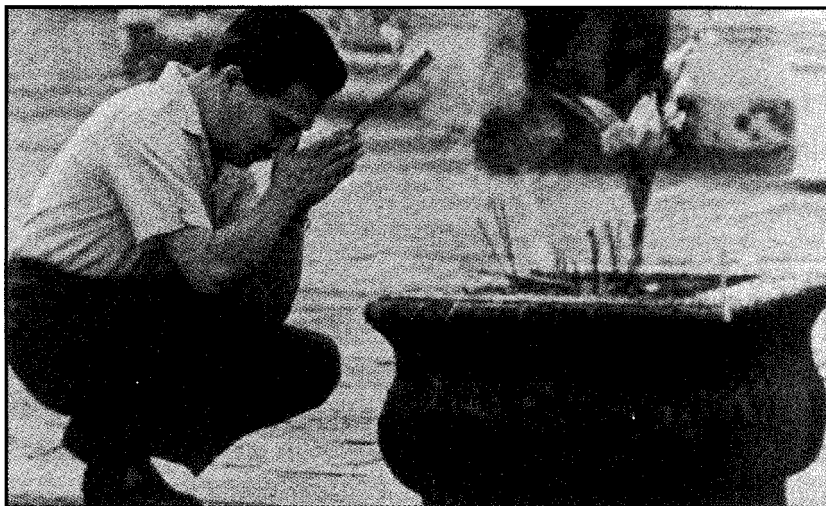
Thailand’s very regal Queen Sirikit.

Economic problems throughout Asia continued to plague Thailand’s economy until the end of the 90’s.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .



During the morning hours, Buddhist monks make their rounds, begging for food. The faithful support them, believing that they gain merit by their gifts.



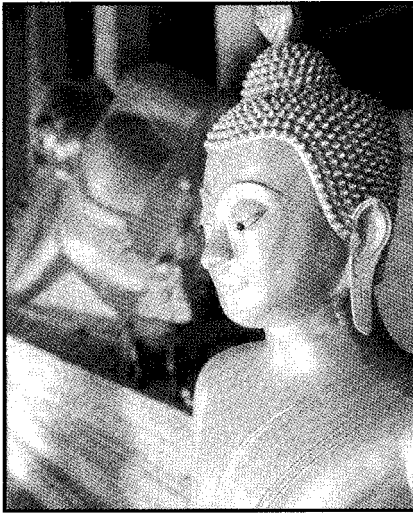
A Buddhist man offers a traditional prayer, with burning incense.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

The baht sank to its lowest rate in comparison to the US dollar in 1998 but the GDP has improved since then, due to growing exports. In 2002, increased local consumption and investment spending edged the growth rate to 5.2%, considerably ahead of the global economy. Tourism is a major source of revenue, as well as textiles and garments, light manufacturing such as jewelry, electrical appliances, computer parts and furniture. Thailand is the world's second largest producer of tungsten and the third largest producer of tin.



Huge “temple guards” stand on each side of the entrance.

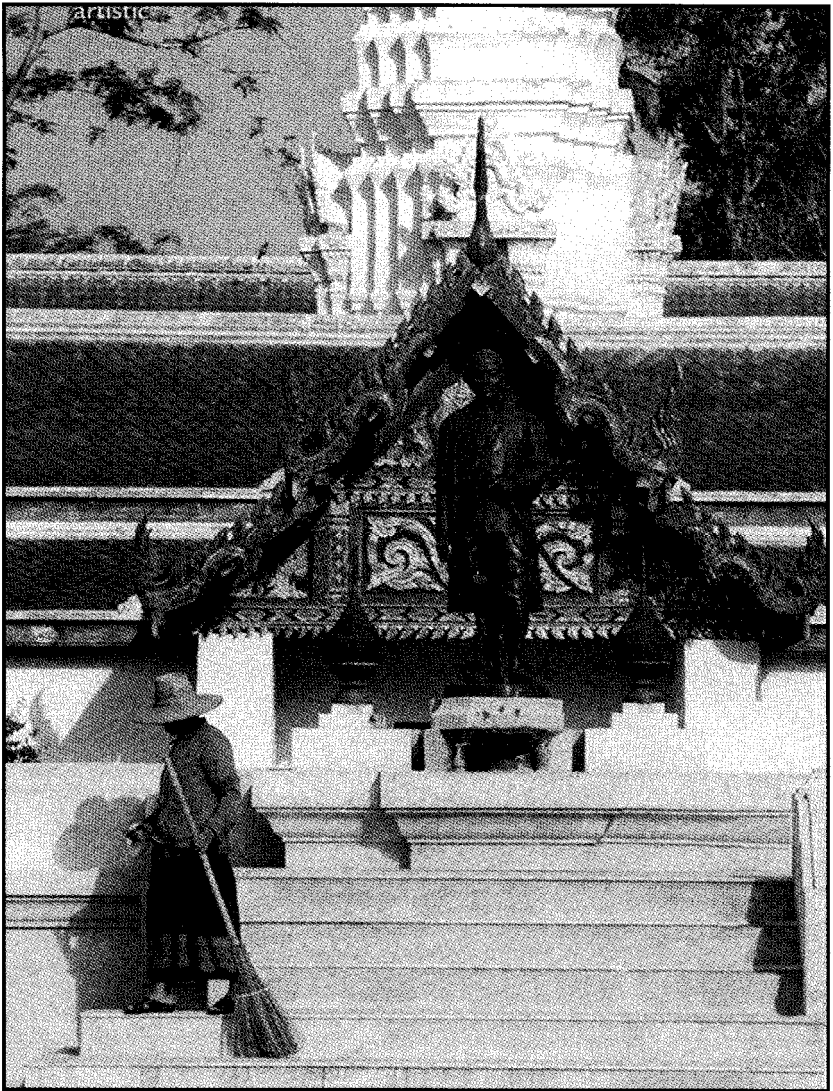


The Thai people are predominantly Buddhist in religion. As is the case in all Buddhist countries, every temple houses numerous statues of the man who has been elevated to the stature of being worthy of worship.

When Thaksin Shinawatra became prime minister in 2001, he embarked on a nationwide hunt for drug dealers. Illicit drugs continue to be a problem, with Thailand being on the route to the international drug market from Myanmar and Laos.

Violence created by a Muslim Separatist group in the southern part of the country is also a disruptive force. Government officials long denied that the violence was an organized effort to create a separate Muslim state, but serious measures are now being taken to deal with the fundamentalists and their terrorist connections. †

FROM THE HEART OF . . .



Kings and various other prominent officials have constructed temples and shrines throughout Thailand, as is typical of the Buddhist culture. The temples are intended as places of worship for Buddha, but they also ensure that the memory of their builder will live on. This one bears the name of Rama II.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

The Beginning of the Lord's Church in Thailand

Parker Henderson

One hundred years ago, a gospel preacher from England, H. E. Hudson, worked as a missionary in Burma among the Mons Tribe, a tribe that extended into Thailand. In 1903, Hudson came to Thailand to continue working with the Mons people, but after about two or three years he lost his health and returned to England. From England, the family migrated to Canada, where he remained as a faithful gospel preacher until his death. Hudson's work in Thailand was left in the hands of a young couple from England, Dr. and Mrs. Clark. That work had been started well, but these were the days of digression of the church in England so that the overseeing congregation of the Clarks departed from the pattern of New Testament teaching. The work in Thailand was so affected that when the Hendersons arrived in February, 1958 there were no known faithful Christians in the



Parker and Donna Henderson, with their children, at the end of the first five years they spent in Thailand.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

country. By that time, Dr. Clarke had died and Mrs. Clark, old and weak, had turned her work over to others. The plea of New Testament Christianity was lost and nothing remained of Hudson's work.

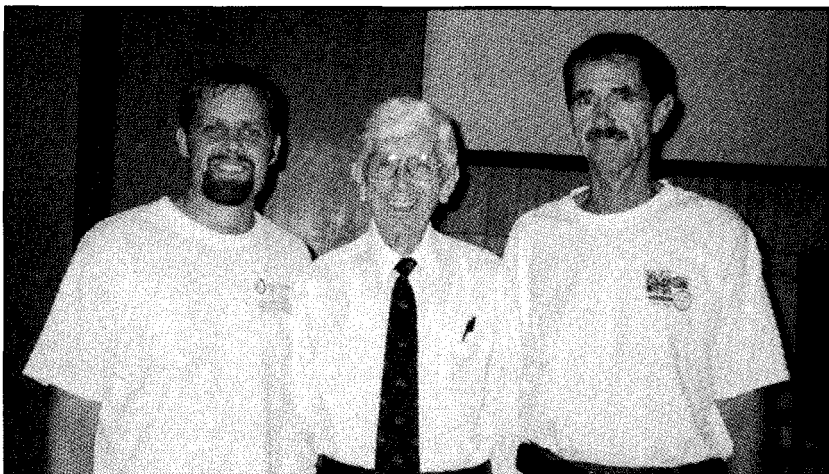
In 1957, Wayne E. Long, an elder of the University Avenue church of Christ in Austin, Texas, and a teacher in the University of Texas, had opportunity to go to Thailand to teach in that country's most prestigious college, Chulalongkorn University. He and his wife, Edna, agreed to accept the teaching appointment if the University Avenue church would send a preacher. The elders agreed to this and in 1957, with the help of Bob Hunter (long time Vice President of Abilene Christian University), they invited Parker and Donna Henderson to go. Parker had been in the U.S. Military, stationed in India and China, and was aware of the masses in Asia where the gospel was so little known. Adding to his Asian experiences and training at Abilene Christian College, Parker had been preaching for ten years in Texas, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Florida. Donna, having been reared in a preacher's home and having also been trained at Abilene Christian College, was a good co-worker for this task.

In Bangkok, Wayne and Edna found a few Americans who were already members of the church. Charles and Marian Otree and Betty Cole, along with their children, added much to the church services conducted in the Hendersons' home. Including the Longs and Hendersons (Parker and Donna with their three children: Larry, Jeanie and Rebecca), 14 Americans, plus the Thai contacts, made up the nucleus of the group at the beginning. Soon they were joined by the Kenneth Rideouts and the Floyd Dunns.

The church met in the Henderson home for about three and one-half years with the other Americans helping them teach the many English Bible classes in our home. The first year four were baptized. The second year 11, the third year 22, and the fourth year about 150. Other workers joined the effort to evangelize Thailand: Jesse & Naomi Fonville, Dorsey & Ola Traw, Bill & Betty Beck, Bob & Myrt Davidson, George & Hilda Carmen, Ken & Jean Fox, Loren & Penny Hollingsworth, the Joe Bagbees, the Ted Lingrins, the Norman Bonnets, the Bob Brandons, Ken and Mary Fox and many more.

The first congregation was established in Bangkok. The next work was 500 miles north in Chiangmai. Several congregations were begun in that province and a large number of the missionaries moved there to work. Several great things began to happen. (1) Graduates from Sunset School of Preaching began coming to Thailand to work. (2) Children of the first American missionaries began to come back as missionaries themselves:

FROM THE HEART OF . . .



Three generations of Hendersons who preach in the Thai language: Grandson, Caleb; Parker, and son, Larry.

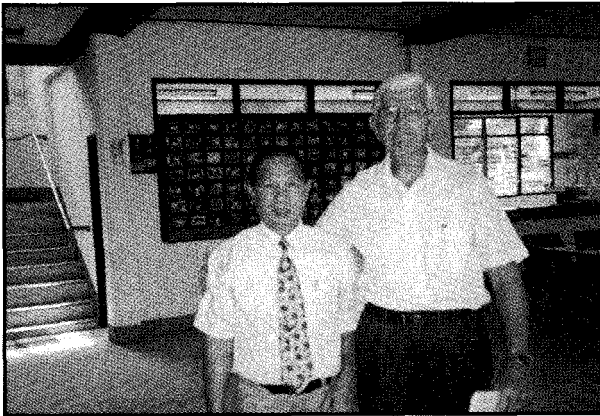
Larry & Pam Henderson, Kelly & Sarah Davidson and Priscilla Henderson as a single, self-supporting missionary and then with her missionary husband Mike Jones (his parents missionaries in Pakistan). Those reared in Thailand came with much better language skills and no culture shock. (3) Another important factor was the development of national leaders with training and experience. This included men like Chua Pramulwong, Subin



Missionaries and local Thai preachers.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

Panboon, Kim Vororitsikul (third generation Christian), Prateep, Pratinya (nephew of the first man baptized in our work), Udom, Pralard, Utt, Glome, Prasit, Dej and many more. (4) A source of added strength came from Bible training schools conducted in four different areas of the country. (5) An additional boost was provided by Bob Davidson's "Aggies for Christ", a group of young Christian men and women who came from Texas A & M University year after year. Also, more and more students from various Christian Universities came and worked for weeks, and months and some for years. Out of all of these young people with personal experience in Thailand has come a wave of new missionaries, with some knowledge of the language, people and culture, who have been able to bring in a harvest of souls.



Parker with Subin Panboon, a gospel preacher in Bangkok who leads a great printing work. He has record of over ONE MILLION persons enrolled in Bible Correspondence Courses in Thailand.

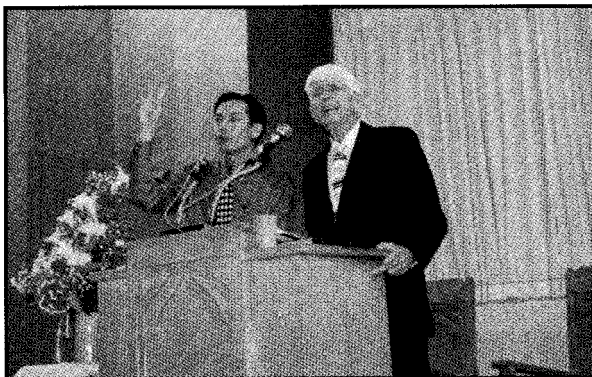
that God gives the increase, and so we express appreciation to Him and to all — known or unknown — who have worked to teach the thousands who have become Christians, to establish approximately 100 congregations, and to introduce the gospel to more than one million enrolled in Bible Correspondence Courses. In addition are the tools — the church buildings, Bible schools, literature and other types of outreach — making it possible today for millions in Thailand to learn of Christ, His church, and His gospel.

In 1961 after we had studied with a Bangkok woman for several

The many workers and their supporting congregations have helped to see that our beginning efforts did not die as did the efforts from England of 100 years ago. So many people have had a part in this fine work that it is impossible to even know all the ones who made the success possible. We do know

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

months, she asked me, “Brother Parker, if what you are teaching me is true, why did not God lead me to you seven years ago when I became a Seventh Day Adventist?” Then I had to admit that **not only was I not in Thailand,**



Khun Glome and Parker preaching in two languages in Bangkok. Over two hundred members make up this self-supported congregation.

but that there was not one preacher of the church to be found there, not one church, not one person to whom she could have gone!

I continued to teach that dear lady and she obeyed the gospel. She then reached back and taught her mother, taught

her medical doctor husband, and 7 of her 9 grown children. She was faithful till death and leaves children who are faithful, grandchildren who are faithful, two sons who are preachers, one brother-in-law preaching until death in Taiwan, a deacon grandson and a multitude of people, who not only call her “blessed” but who stand in Thailand as defenders of the faith, to whom the Lord can now “lead” honest souls. †

Damrong Skip Rogers

I first met Damrong about seven years ago in Vientiane, Laos. Damrong drove a samlor, one of those three-wheeled bicycle taxis you see in Southeast Asia. He attended a Laotian leadership training seminar, although he himself was not a leader. In fact, Damrong was a chronic alcoholic, but he wanted to get better and to grow in the Lord, along with his three children whom he cared for by himself. During the seminar, Damrong took careful notes and sang loud, making sure that his kids sang out as well. Eighteen months later, Damrong was one of the almost sixty Christians arrested in Vientiane at a meeting like the one in which we had participated. Since he was not a leader and had those three children, he was released after a few hours.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

Three years ago, his two youngest children, Hong and Ning, were with my wife's parents, Tommy and Mary Alice Allison, in Udorn, Thailand, just across the Mekong River from Laos, where we were teaching in a Bible school for some of the Lao Christians who had finally been released after eighteen long months of imprisonment. Damrong crossed the border to see us. He was still driving his samlor and still struggling with alcohol, but he came, and we were thankful to see him and thankful for his continued, albeit weak, faith. His oldest son, Songprasong, was, and still is, studying in Songkhla, Southern Thailand at the preacher training school there.

On November 12 of last year we received word that Damrong suffered a heart attack in his sleep and passed into eternity. Songprasong was in Vientiane to renew his Thai visa, so all three of his children were there. The Lao Christians asked permission from the local authorities to have an assembly to honor Damrong's passing, and they granted the meeting. It was the first time since before their arrests that Christians legally assembled in Laos. They sang together, prayed together and listened together as the Word of God was preached. And in a way that only God could have provided, Damrong finally became a leader.

Remember Damrong's children, and all of the Christians in Laos who continue to suffer for the Name. †

Lamtap Skip Rogers

In 1974 my future father-in law, Tommy Allison, moved his family (including my future bride, D'Aune) from Bangkok to Songkhla, Thailand and became the first American missionary among churches of Christ to locate in the extreme Southern part of the country. After I married D'Aune, we joined them in Songkhla in 1977. In 1981 we were still working together, but with the church in Denver City, Texas, where we remained very active in the work in Thailand.

The Denver City church developed a plan to evangelize the nine major cities that dot the long southern Thai peninsula. "Start with the largest cities," we thought. "Go where the most people are," we thought. We printed a slick brochure entitled "*The Cities of Southern Thailand*" and went to work. We made trips to Thailand. We encouraged other churches to help us. We recruited native preachers to begin going to those selected cities. It was a good plan, we thought, and missiologically sound. But God had a better idea.

In 1987, Brother Patana, one of the native preachers we had located in

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

the large city of Nakorn Sri Thammarat, was contacted by a man from a group of God-fearing people with denominational ties in the remote village of Lamtap in a nearby province. They had been neglected for many years and were searching for someone who might teach them. Very few people even knew where Lamtap was. Those who did know it was a tiny hamlet with very few people and difficult to access on its badly maintained roads. It certainly would not have made our “major cities” list. Even the name of the town, in any language, sounded insignificant ... that is, except in the language of heaven.

That call to Patana was to be a Macedonian call. God was saying, just as He said in ancient days, *“I have many people in this city”* (Acts 18:10). Patana called Larry Henderson, a missionary serving in Bangkok. When Larry found out where Lamtap was, he went there and met the folks who had asked for a teacher. Only a few weeks later, Larry baptized about seventy of them into Christ over a single weekend. Since that time the church has continued to grow, and last summer, when we visited Lamtap, I preached to a congregation of more than 200 members, now the largest church in all of Thailand. Our youngest son, Ross, taught a teenage class of more than fifty young people, and one of our Denver City elders, David Reves, spoke to the adults about the eldership, which will surely be the next move for the Lamtap brethren.

God’s promise is to accomplish *“more than you can ask or imagine”* (Ephesians 3:20). We can plan and dream about great works for God, we can use all the insights that missiologists can conceive, and certainly God wants us to dream big and plan wisely. But God has plans of His own. He knows best where there are areas of receptivity. He knows where His people are. Pray that God will show us His will. Pray that He will open the doors. Pray that we will hear His call. Pray that He will bring those who seek the lost and those who seek salvation together, so that all men may know the salvation of the Lord. †

Siamese Twins, Siamese Cats, and “Oh, What a Goose I Am”

Parker Henderson

(Excerpts from an article written by Parker L. Henderson in 1966 for the book **The Lord Will Find A Way ... For Me**; Joe McKissick, editor; Copyright: 1966 by Christian Publishing Company, Dallas, Texas.)

What do you know about Siam or Thailand? If you are like many people, you know three things: Siam has cats; it produced a set of twins whose

When I arrived in Thailand in 1958, my nearest preaching brother was nine hundred miles to the south in Singapore (Ira Y. Rice, Jr.). To the east, the nearest congregation was in the Philippine Islands (2,000 miles). In any other direction, there was no preacher from America supported by our brethren within 5,000 miles! We had no missionaries in Burma, India, Pakistan, Cambodia, Laos, South Viet Nam, Ceylon, Indonesia, Sarawak, Taiwan or China!

bodies were attached; and there is an old game that children have played in which a newcomer was told to bow and repeat some magic words very slowly. Those words were, "Oh ...Whata...Goo...Siam." When repeated rapidly, it sounds like "Oh, what a goose I am!" After learning that I was going to Thailand, one man asked me, "Where in Texas is that?" Most of us have been pretty ignorant about Asia, and the "Goose game" quite aptly describes our efforts there for nineteen hundred years.

When I arrived in Thailand as the only gospel preacher supported in the whole country by loyal churches of Christ in America, it was pitiful! To have one preacher in a country of 26,000,000 people was just plain pitiful! But this was not the worst of the matter! My nearest preaching brother was nine hundred miles to the south in Singapore (Ira Y. Rice, Jr.). To the east, the nearest congregation was in the Philippine Islands (2,000 miles). In any other direction, there was no preacher from America supported by our brethren within 5,000 miles! We had no missionaries in Burma, India, Pakistan, Cambodia, Laos, South Viet Nam, Ceylon, Indonesia, Sarawak, Taiwan or China! To think that there were only two preachers of the church to that whole area was a very lonely thought.

During the past eight years, the picture has changed rapidly and there are now many American and national preachers in this part of Asia. Within a few years, we trust that national workers from Thailand and other countries in Asia will be covering their countries with the good news. The church is no longer playing "What a goose I am" in reference to mission work. Brethren everywhere are interested and enthusiastic about all men having the right to hear the gospel. †

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We want to give \$_____ each month to help send this magazine to mission fields of the world.

We want to give \$_____ each month to help send this magazine to congregations in mission fields in the US.

As a congregation we want to help print and circulate 100,000 copies of each issue of this magazine by making a special contribution to this effort. We can specify where the copies we pay for will be used, whether in our personal work, in jail ministry, overseas, or . . .

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

NAME _____

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CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____



ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

Verse Search — 41 (from page 27)

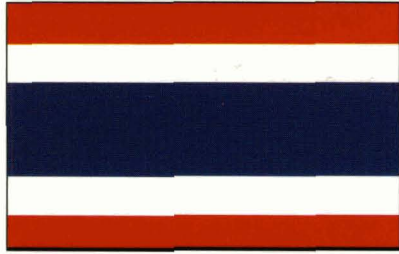
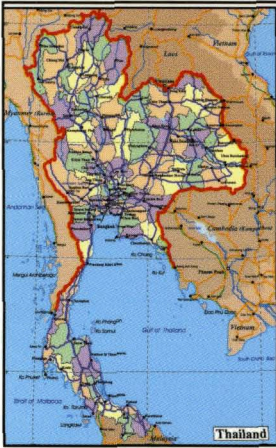
1. A synagogue of the Jews.
2. He met with the Jews on three Sabbath days, reasoning with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating to them that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah who was prophesied.
3. Persuaded; great multitude; Greeks; leading women; joined.
4. Instigated mob violence to 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 you 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.



Absalom

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Kingdom of Thailand



Government: Constitutional Monarchy

Head of State:

King Bhumibol Adulyadej

Head of Government:

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra

Secular Facts:

Location: Southeast Asia, bordered by Myanmar on the W., Laos on the N., Cambodia on the E., and Malaysia on the S., the Andaman Sea and the Gulf of Thailand.

Land Mass: 514,000 sq. mi.

Population: 64,265,276, with 23% of the population under 15 years, and 7% over 65.

Major Cities: Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket, Chiang Rai, Udonthani.

Language: Thai, Chinese, English.

Literacy: 96%, compulsory edu., ages 6-14.

Religion: Buddhist, 95%, Muslim, 3.8%; Christian, .5%.

Ethnic Groups: Thai, 75%, Chinese, 14%, other, 11%.

Economy: *Arable land:* 33%; *Agriculture:* Rice, cassava, rubber, corn, soy beans; *Labor Force, Agriculture,* 54 % *Services,* 31% industry, 15%; *Industries:* tourism, textiles and garments, tungsten; *Communications:* TV's: 274 per 1000; *Radios:* 234 per 1000; *Phones:* 10 mil; *Transportation:* 2.7 mil. private cars; *Health:* Life expectancy, male, 69; female, 73; infant mortality: 22 deaths per 1000 live births.

Monetary Unit: Thai Baht.

The Church:

Congregations: Approximately 100.

History: More than 100 years ago the Lord's church in England sent H.E. Hudson and his family to Burma and then to Thailand to work among the Mons Tribe. As a result of the apostasy that swept through the church during that period of time, that early work was eventually lost.

In 1958, Parker and Donna Henderson entered Thailand to work with the few American Christians already there and to establish the church among the Thai people. In the succeeding years they were joined by many other families. Among these were Jesse Fonville, Dorsey Traw, Bill Beck, Bob Davidson, George Carmen, Ken Fox, Loren Hollingsworth, and Frank Fox. From the beginning made in Bangkok, the work has spread throughout the country, resulting in thousands obeying the gospel.

Many college students have spent time working with local missionaries in Thailand, and Bob Davidson has brought teams of "Aggie" students from Texas A & M University year after year. Bible schools have been conducted to train Thai preachers, and Subin Panboon has a large literature and Bible course outreach.

Front Cover: Floating markets on Thailand's many canals bring produce and wares to villages.